

Way We Were

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Title: Susie, Utah's own Silver Queen

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Susanna Bransford Emery Holmes Delitch Engalitcheff was just one of the many millionaires that the mines of Park City produced. Susanna's larger than life name aptly fits her dramatic life story. Susanna, often referred to as "The Silver Queen," epitomizes the *nouveau riche* of the Gilded Age, when America saw a rise in new millionaires who had made their fortunes in mining, manufacturing, industry, shipping, and railroads. Park City's own mining history roughly corresponds with the beginning of the Gilded Age. Park City's mines produced jobs for hundreds of men and supported the development of businesses in the booming mine town. Park City mining produced millions of dollars in wealth for the mine owners, such as Susanna.

Susie, as she was known to her family and friends, visited friends in Park City in the summer of 1884 and met Albion Emery, the postmaster. After a brief courtship, they married in November 1884 and settled in Park City. They saved \$8,000 over the next few years and invested in the Mayflower Mine, a move that would change Susie's life forever. By 1893 the Mayflower Mine, renamed the Silver King Mine, began to pay rich dividends enabling the Emery's to buy a nice new home in Salt Lake City. Susie's life seemed complete, but in June 1894 Albion passed away at 48.

After a legal battle with R.C. Chambers, the millions Albion left to her was deemed Susanna's. And her wealth was growing—at one time, it was reported that Susanna was receiving \$1,000 a day in dividends from the mine. In 1895, Thomas Kearns, another investor in the Silver King Mine, introduced her to the wealthy Colonel Edwin Holmes. They were married in 1899 and Holmes purchased the Gardo House in Salt Lake. Their combined wealth meant they owned multiple homes, traveled the world, and enjoyed many parties. One of their homes was the Oakwood Estate, six acres and a two story home by East Mill Creek, which served as a summer escape.

Col Holmes passed away in 1925 and Susanna would remarry twice, once to a Serbian doctor and once to a Russian prince. Though worth millions for most her life, at the time of her passing in 1942, Susanna had spent the vast majority of her wealth.

In the spirit of the Silver Queen's parties, The Park City Museum will host its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Silver Queen Ball, on Thursday, December 27 at the Montage Deer Valley. This fundraising ball will feature dinner, dancing, auction, and performance from Otis Day & the Knights.



Caption: East Mill Creek had been home to mills in early settlement of Salt Lake, but it became a country summer escape for the wealthy, such as this estate, Oakwood, where Susanna and Col Holmes entertained many.



Caption: Susanna, seated far right, and friends on the porch at Oakwood.

*Photos courtesy of the Park City Historical Society & Museum, the Raye C. Ringholz Collection, and the Dr. Harold Lamb Collection.*

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