

Way We Were  
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Money in the Hole

Have you ever taken a hike up Woodside Gulch, noticed the timbers on the northwest side of the trail just above the trail head, and guessed that must be an old mine site? Well, you would be correct! It is the location of the Alice Mine. The Alice Mine is a testament to the optimism and determination of the early miners and entrepreneurs who founded Park City. And it is also a reminder that most mine claims did not result in great riches.

The Alice Mine story begins in the early 1890's. The *Park Record* in May, 1892 noted that 400 shares of Alice stock were sold in New York. Early in September, 1892 the *Record* reported that the owners were pushing developments on the property with "vim" and that they had two shifts digging the shaft. A "commonsense whim" (a device similar to a windlass used for hauling heavy materials to the surface) would arrive soon to speed up production. The article also noted that the shaft was being well timbered and was first class in every respect. The owners felt that depth was all that was necessary to find a good mine. Later in September, 1892 a follow-up story reported that the commonsense whim was in place and that good news may be reported any day.

A subsequent story in the *Park Record* in 1896 reported on encouraging finds but no production yet. And then in January, 1897 another story noted that the shaft was 280 feet deep and that as soon as the 300 foot level was reached cross cutting would commence. The lessees "were sanguine of developing the Alice into a paying proposition".

In April of 1899 the *Park Record* again referenced the Alice:

"Work is steadily going forward at the Alice Mine and the lessors feel encouraged with its outlook. The *Record* wished the promoters every success in this venture for they truly deserve it. They are men of limited means but are benefiting the town by expending their money in developing a property that we hope will repay them tenfold." Unfortunately, the investors never did receive a return on their investment in the Alice Mine.

In 1909 the *Park Record* noted that the site for the new reservoir had been selected on the flat opposite the Alice Mine. And with that final reference the Alice Mine slipped away into the history of the many mines that did not pay out.

The Alice Mine shaft was reported to have reached a depth of 500 feet! They followed a fissure 200 feet along its strike and then a drift was cut another 400 feet beyond the fissure.

Why did they continue digging for all those years? One can only speculate that there was probably just enough promise in the ore body to tempt them to continue work. In the end the Alice is a classic case of a lot more money going in the hole than what was coming out.

*The Park City Historical Society & Museum is celebrating 30 years of preserving, protecting, and promoting Park City's history and heritage.*



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Caption: Early view looking up Woodside Gulch, probably taken from above the Alice Mine.  
Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum, Kendall Webb Collection