



VAIL Preservation Society

Connecting Community Through Local History

Preservation is not just bricks and mortar. Its true importance comes through its power to bring people together, building relationships and community as we work together to preserve our stories and cultural resources.

From Marsh Station With Love - Letters to Santa

White smoke curled from the chimney, reaching towards the stars. Small fragments of paper carried northward by the cold breeze held hopes and wishes as they floated skyward. Rita, Dolores, Willie, Oriel and their brothers and sisters, 14 in all, had poured over every page of the Sears and Roebuck catalogue given to them by their mother as Christmas approached. It was good to dream. Perhaps Santa would come to the yellow house with the green wood shingle roof at Marsh Station. Arizona was a long way from the North Pole, but they were hopeful.



The children wrote letters to Santa taking turns running inside for their parents to put their letters into the cast iron stove. Excited, they would run back to the porch to watch the smoke rise toward the stars, drifting north on the winter breeze. Sitting on the big front porch of their home near the railroad tracks at Marsh Station and gazing at the twinkling points of light overhead was one of their favorite pastimes, even when they weren't sending Christmas wishes to Santa. They could swap stories, share their day and dream about what they would be when they grew up, all on the safety of the big front porch.

Maybe they would work for the railroad like their father who was the Section Foreman at Marsh Station. Or, perhaps they would get a job in Tucson, it was a big place. They liked to dream about the future. The children grew up and left home. The house at Marsh Station grew quiet. The large family that had filled it with laughter, squabbles, running footsteps and the welcoming smell of their mother's beans and rice pudding bubbling on the stove was gone.



The big yellow house would be home to other families before being sold by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1964. The house was loaded on steel rails, pulled by a truck and moved to Rita Station, the U of A Tech Park in 2019. In 1968 when IBM expanded, it moved again, to Ross Acres, Kolb and I10 in 2019. There it sat for over 40 years.



The big yellow house would be home to other families before being sold by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1964. The house was loaded on steel rails, pulled by a truck and moved to Rita Station, the U of A Tech Park in 2019. In 1968 when IBM expanded, it moved again, to Ross Acres, Kolb and I10 in 2019. There it sat for over 40 years.

In 2013 the Marsh Station Section Foreman house moved a third time to, the under construction, Esmond Station K8 through a partnership between the VPS and VUSD. By 2018 it was filled again with the laughter, work, and dreams of a new generation of children. The house provides unique educational experiences at Esmond Station K8. Rehabilitated by Cienega High School construction technology JTED students, the 1915 home is ready to be a part of Vail's future.