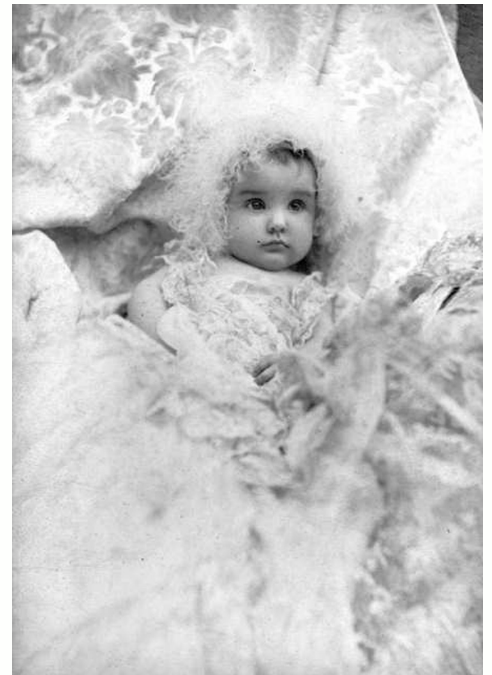


ELIZABETH “BABY DOE” McCOURT TABOR

When: 1854-1935

Where: Born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and moved to Colorado.

Why Important: Baby Doe rose from a simple life to become “The Silver Queen” of Colorado. Baby Doe was known for her beauty, outgoing personality, and drive to become famous.



Baby Doe Tabor. Studio portrait of Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt “Baby Doe” Tabor, wife of millionaire Horace Tabor, wearing curls, a bonnet with a bow around her neck, and a lace dress. 1883? Denver Public Library, Western History Collection. Call Number: Z-231.

Lillie Tabor Rose & Co. Denver. Studio portrait of Elizabeth Bonduel Lillie Tabor (daughter of Horace and Baby Doe Tabor), wearing a scarf and down bonnet. Between 1890 and 1895? Denver Public Library, Western History Collection. Call Number: X-22014.

Silver Dollar Tabor age 19 weeks. Studio portrait of Rose Mary Echo Silver Dollar Tabor (daughter of Horace and Baby Doe Tabor), in a lace dress and down bonnet. 1890, April. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection. Call Number: X-22007.

ELIZABETH “BABY DOE” McCOURT TABOR

Baby Doe was born Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt in 1854 in Wisconsin. She was beautiful, hard-working, and determined to achieve fame and fortune.

In 1877 she married Harvey Doe. They moved to Central City, Colorado where her husband began mining for gold. The miners found Elizabeth so beautiful that they started calling her “Baby Doe,” and the nickname stuck. After three years, her husband fell into debt and began drinking. Baby Doe sued him for a divorce. She soon met the ‘Silver King,’ Horace Tabor. They fell in love, but Tabor was married at the time. After his divorce, Baby Doe and Horace got married.

The couple was known as “The Silver King and Queen.” They lived an elaborate life together in a Capitol Hill mansion in Denver. They had two daughters, Elizabeth “Lilly” and Rose Mary “Silver Dollar.” Many of Denver’s elite disapproved of divorce and the Tabors.

The Tabor mines made millions of dollars, allowing the Tabors to travel, wear expensive clothing, and attend grand parties. Horace Tabor bought several mining companies and donated large amounts of money to build the Tabor Grand Opera House in Denver.

The Silver Crash of 1893 made the value of silver fall. The crash destroyed the Tabor’s wealth. The family quickly went from extreme wealth to rags, as the Tabor silver mines no longer made money. They lost their mansion and rented a small cottage. In 1899 Horace died. Baby Doe, loyal to her husband and hoping to regain her wealth, moved to Leadville to oversee the mines. She got permission from the new owners to live in the supply cabin at the Matchless mine. Baby Doe spent the rest of her life in the small one room cabin.

The Tabors exemplified the American Dream, earning their way up the social ladder by hard work and determination. But, they also experienced a rapid fall from the top.

Sources:

Adapted from “Baby Doe Tabor,” by David F. Halaas, Colorado History NOW, October 1999.

“Rags, Riches and Scandal – The Tabor Triangle.” Legends of America. Rocky Mountain Legends. <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/co-tabor.html>