

Volume XII Number 1

April 2018 through July 2018

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## Palmer Lake Historical Society

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## Mark your 2018 Calendars

**Sunday, June 17, 2018, 2-4 PM**

**ANNUAL FATHER'S DAY**

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL**

**FREE pie and ice cream!**

**Music on the Green and**

**Special Antique Car Show**

### **Program Schedule: April 2018 – July 2018**

**April 19, 2018, 7:00 PM** – "Film: Forging the West" – Host, Victoria Miller

**May 17, 2018, 7:00 PM** - " Daughters and Fathers: Family Secrets Behind Colorado's Indian Massacres" - Katherine Scott Sturdevant

**June 21, 2018, 7:00 PM** - "Otto Kuhler: Colorado's Renaissance Man" - Mike and Sigi Walker

**July 19, 2018, 7:00 PM** - "Hard Travelin': Woody Guthrie's Life and Songs" - Dan Blegen

*Palmer Lake Historical Society –  
Making History more than a Memory!*

### **Contributing to this issue:**

Tom Baker VFW Post 4051

Roger Davis Mike & Sigi Walker

Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!

# A Newsletter of the Palmer Lake Historical Society and the *Lucretia Vaile Museum*

## Honoring a Hero: Medal of Honor Recipient William J. "Bill" Crawford is remembered in his native Pueblo, in Colorado Springs, and in Palmer Lake

He was only a 25-year old infantry private, but he would be awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in September 1943. President Roosevelt's Citation reads:

Private *William Crawford*, U.S. Army, Company I, 3d Battalion, 142nd Infantry, 36th Infantry Division, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Altavilla, Italy, 13 September 1943. When Company I attacked an enemy-held position on Hill 424, the 3rd Platoon, in which Pvt. Crawford was a squad scout, attacked as base platoon for the company. After reaching the crest of the hill, the platoon was pinned down by intense enemy machine-gun and small-arms fire. Locating one of these guns, which was dug in on a terrace on his immediate front, Pvt. Crawford, without orders and on his own initiative, moved over the hill under enemy fire to a point within a few yards of the gun emplacement and single-handedly destroyed the machinegun and killed three of the crew with a hand grenade, thus enabling his platoon to continue its advance. When the platoon, after reaching the crest, was once more delayed by enemy fire, Pvt. Crawford again, in the face of intense fire, advanced directly to the front midway between two hostile machine-gun nests located on a higher terrace and emplaced in a small ravine. Moving first to the left, with a hand grenade he destroyed one gun emplacement and killed the crew; he then worked his way, under continuous fire, to the other and with one grenade and the use of his rifle, killed one enemy and forced the remainder to flee. Seizing the enemy machinegun, he fired on the withdrawing Germans and facilitated his company's advance.

A few days later, during another battle, Crawford was captured and presumed dead. His father accepted his son's Medal of Honor presented by President Franklin Roosevelt in February 1944. Two months later, it was found out that he was alive. He had survived a 52-day, 500-mile winter march. And, the champion boxer had knocked down a German guard who tried to beat him. On April 13, 1945, Crawford was liberated.

**Pueblo:** Life hadn't been easy for young Bill Crawford, but he had learned to cope. Shortly after his birth on May 19, 1918, Bill's mother passed away. His father, George Crawford, found it difficult to both work and raise his family, which included Bill's older brother and two older sisters. Caring relatives took them in and raised them through their teens. Bill saw his father only occasionally, the elder Crawford working long hours to provide support where he could, and struggling to live beyond the grief that had torn his life apart at losing his wife.

The children did remarkably well, learning to mix recreation and responsibility. Young Bill's first job was delivering groceries for a local neighborhood grocery store. He also delivered newspapers for "The Pueblo Star-Journal", now "The Pueblo Chieftain." For recreation, the slender but wiry youth began boxing. He did remarkably well, boxing Golden Gloves and becoming a champion. In school, he worked hard, graduating from Pueblo Central High School in 1936. Crawford considered becoming a professional boxer, but World War II interrupted his plans.

Pueblo, known as the "Home of Heroes," has created a memorial to this native son. He is one of four Medal of Honor recipients from that city. Photos of this memorial are included in "Then and Now" on page 2.



*(continued on page 4)*





## *Upcoming PLHS Programs and Events April 2018 through July 2018*

**Social Hour at 6:30 PM, Presentations begin at 7:00 PM in the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent Street**

**Thursday, April 19, 2018 – "Film: Forging the West"**

**Hosted by Victoria Miller, Steelworks Center of the West**



**Forging the West**, a 2016 film by Jim Havey, is the story of Pueblo's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I). Colorado Coal and Iron Company (CC&I) was the utopian vision of Civil War General and Colorado Springs founder William J. Palmer. John C. Osgood merged his Colorado Fuel Company with CC&I in 1892 to create CF&I. At the turn of the 20th century, CF&I was the largest private landowner and employer in Colorado.

Victoria Miller is a contributor to the film. A Pueblo native, she has served as Steelworks Center curator since 2006, holds a B.A. degree in History and an M.A. in Museum Science, and has experience in museum educational programming and collection management.

**Thursday, May 17, 2018 – "Daughters and Fathers: Family Secrets"**

**Presenter: Katherine Scott Sturdevant**



Katherine Scott Sturdevant shares her research about Sarah Chivington Pollock Girardin, daughter of Colonel John Chivington, as well as Sarah's daughter Jessie. She has gathered Chivington family recollections – with the unsung work of local women historians and genealogists – and releases a "skeleton" from the family closet to unlock new understanding of Colorado massacre motivations.

Katherine Scott Sturdevant, Professor of History at Pikes Peak Community College, has worked with the Pikes Peak Library District and the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum as a speaker, consultant, writer, and editor, has authored and edited numerous books, and has won local, state, and national teaching awards.

**Sunday, June 17, 2018, 2-4 PM**

**SPECIAL EVENT – FREE**

**Annual Father's Day Ice Cream Social**



We continue a decades-old tradition. The Palmer Lake Historical Society, with donations from the Rock House Ice Cream Shop and the Monument Village Inn restaurant, invites Dads and their families from the local area to join us in this annual event. Special music will be provided for this event. Special this year, a private antique car show: Model T's, Model A's, Corvairs, a Jensen Interceptor, and more. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and relax on the green.



**Thursday, June 21, 2018 – "Otto Kuhler, Colorado's Renaissance Man"**

**Presenters: Mike and Sigi Walker**



From early on, Otto Kuhler loved railroads and exhibited great talent in sketching them. He was born into a family of industrialists in Remscheid, Germany. After World War I, Kuhler began a new life in the U.S. He became known for his etchings, creating 250 of them, and then brought his talent to industrial design, streamlining many steam locomotives. In 1947 at age 54, he left it all behind to become a Colorado rancher and landscape artist.

Mike and Sigi Walker are PLHS volunteers who have volunteered with a number of historical societies and railway museums. For this program, they combine their interest in all things "railroad" with the story of a unique Colorado transplant whose art is exhibited in Colorado at the Colorado Railroad Museum, the Denver Public Library, and the Forney Museum.

**Thursday, July 19, 2018 – "Hard Travelin': Woody Guthrie's Life and Songs"**

**Presenter: Dan Blegen**



Woody Guthrie was the Oklahoma balladeer whose simple but evocative songs have enriched America's musical landscape for generations. First rambling the country in the 1930s, Guthrie connected with Americans from all walks of life and dignified their lives in song. Dan discusses Guthrie's life and sings a dozen of Guthrie's best-known works, including *This Land Is Your Land*, *Hard Travelin'*, and *So Long It's Been Good to Know You*. Plan on singing along!

Dan Blegen initiated his unique docu-concert format in 2012 with the premiere of ***Hard Travelin': Woody Guthrie's Life and Songs***. A retired secondary and college teacher, he is a published author, poet, and playwright, and has written extensively about the arts for local newspapers and national magazines.

## Medal of Honor Recipient William J. "Bill" Crawford

(continued from page 1)

**Colorado Springs:** Crawford retired as a master sergeant in 1967 and went to work at the Air Force Academy in 1970. In 1984, the commencement speaker was President Ronald Reagan. Looking over the sea of young faces that represented the very best our nation had to offer, he said, "America's men and women of today have made us a great nation." And then the president turned his attention to the past, calling forward a 66-year old janitor crisply dressed in a uniform that still fit his trim frame.

Forty years after his heroism at Altavilla and 17 years after his retirement from a military career, the president hung the Medal of Honor around the janitor's neck. It was the cadets themselves who had decided proper recognition of their janitor was long overdue, and so, on May 31, 1984, they jubilantly witnessed a long time "oversight" corrected.

In 1945, Bill Crawford helped found Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4051 in Colorado Springs. His membership card number is "6." Elected Post Chaplain, he is honored by a memorial at the post. Post 4051 is a charter member of the Colorado Veterans Resource Center, which operates the Crawford House on South Weber Street, established in 2000 and named in Crawford's honor. Safe, healthy emergency housing and community-based residential care, treatment and rehabilitative services are provided for homeless veterans and those who suffer from substance abuse or chronic mental illness. It is the only program of its kind in Colorado: a private, nonprofit veteran's residential treatment facility. (For photos, see "Then and Now" on page 2)



**Palmer Lake:** Following the war, Bill married Eileen Bruce on January 13, 1946. The couple moved to Palmer Lake, where they bought a home and where Bill was an active member of the community. He served at various times as director of the Lucretia Vaile Museum, president of the Palmer Lake Historical Society, a Yule Log lighter, an election judge, superintendent of Sunday School at the Little Log Church, and a member of the Kiwanis Club.

In 2001, the Palmer Lake Historical Society and the Town of Palmer Lake completed a memorial honoring William (Bill) J. Crawford, dedicating it on May 26th. Two flower gardens were planted in his honor. Later, on March 24, 2011, a section of Colorado Highway 105 was designated the Master Sergeant William J. Crawford Highway. Recently, after completion of an extensive renovation of the memorial site, a rededication was held on November 11, 2017. (See "Then and Now" on page 2)

The Palmer Lake Historical Society commissioned the production of a video, produced by Jim Sawatzki, entitled *Above and Beyond*, which tells the story that led to his being awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously in 1944. It is a true account of one man's "conspicuous gallantry in action at risk of life beyond the call of duty during World War II. The 30-minute DVD is available at the Palmer Lake Historical Society's Lucretia Vaile Museum.

MSG William J. Crawford died on March 15, 2000, and is buried at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Portions of this article were excerpted from the following: *Stories of American Heroes - from the "Home of Heroes" - Pueblo, Colorado*; the Palmer Lake Historical Society website; *Outside the Beltway, July 4, 2014*; VFW Post 4051 newsletter Volume 39 Issue 01-02; and Wikipedia.

### Lucretia Vaile Museum Hours:

Saturday 10 AM–2 PM all year  
 Wednesday 1–3 PM September–May  
 Wednesday 1–4 PM June–August  
 1st Thursday of month: 10 AM–noon  
 Tours: Call 559-0837 and leave message



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Note: All submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space allocations, and become the property of the Palmer Lake Historical Society unless other arrangements have been made. Digital word submissions in .doc or .docx, photos in .jpg format, please. Submit pieces and photos to Editor at mikensigi@comcast.net

*August 11, 2018, from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.*

*Your FREE ticket to a living Palmer Lake Past  
 and the Tri-Lakes Library Ice Cream Social*

