

Volume XII Number 2

August 2018 through November 2018

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Palmer Lake Historical Society

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Mark your 2018 Calendars

Saturday, August 11, 2018
11 AM until 4 PM

RETURN OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAUTAUQUA

A "truly American experience"
Vintage arts, crafts, re-enactors,
music, walking tours, children's
activities, and free ice cream

FREE and open to all!

Program Schedule:

September 2018 – November 2018

September 20, 2018, 7:00 PM - "The Harvey Girls Story" – Jane Milne and Kathy DeHerrera

October 18, 2018, 7:00 PM - "Above and Beyond: A Hero's Story" - Jim Sawatzki and Bob McLaughlin

November 15, 2018, 7:00 PM - "The WWI Flying Ace from Denver" - Charles D. Dusch, Jr., PhD

Note: There is no program in December

Contributing to this issue:

Jack Anthony Tom Baker

Mike & Sigi Walker

Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!

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

Ghost Tank Towns of the Palmer Divide:

The Communities of Breed, Edgerton, East and West Husted, and Pring/Borst

In the early 1870s, when the Denver & Rio Grande RR built through the Palmer Divide, large quantities of water were needed to create the steam that powered the running gear. Water stops, located along the track, were necessary every seven to ten miles; their spacing determined by the location of available water, the running weight of the train, and the grade of the track (e.g., upgrades consumed considerably more water than downgrades). The frequency of taking on water and fuel consumed a great deal of the total travel time.



Above: Early "tank" engine

Towns sprang up along railroad routes to provide the water and fuel, usually wood or coal. Large, trackside filling stations were located where convenient, such as at a crossing of a stream or in a town/city where a train would stop to pick up freight and passengers. This was the origin of the term "tank town." Water sources included natural springs, uphill lakes or rivers, small creeks which had been dammed, or a nearby well. To accumulate the water, water tanks, water towers, or tank ponds were constructed. The water was initially pumped by windmills, watermills, or by hand pumps, often by the train crew themselves. Later, small steam and gasoline engines were used. Elevated storage tanks gravity-fed water to the locomotive tender via a large spout and used an automatic refill mechanism for refilling the tanks. Many water towers had sandstone foundations; suitable timbers were used where sandstone was not readily available.



The introduction of the tender, (a special car containing water and fuel), enabled trains to run 100 to 150 miles without a refill, leaving behind many railroad ghost towns. Examples in our area are Breed,

Edgerton, East and West Husted, and Pring/Borst, all located in the vicinity of Interstate 25 and the Air Force Academy. Few remnants remain, but some can be glimpsed by biking or hiking the New Santa Fe Regional Trail.

Breed: We start near what was once the community of Breed, located just north of the Interstate 25 Woodmen exit. Marion Porter and his family first visited the area in 1896. The family moved to Colorado Springs in 1913 after Marion successfully battled tuberculosis at the Woodmen Sanitarium. Following World War I he purchased land east of the Breed Santa Fe Railroad train station, where he built a gas station and grocery store and later converted a number of used railroad refrigerator cars into one and two unit motel rooms. Periodically upgrading it, Porter operated his Denver Highway "Tourist Court" until 1949. Along with raising chickens, farming, and gardening, he operated a *moonshine still* on Monument Creek north of the Woodmen Road bridge during Prohibition!

Edgerton: Located on the Academy just northwest of Interstate 25 and South Gate Road, Edgerton was an important first stop for the Denver & Rio Grande Western RR. It was a "real" railroad community with a depot, water tank, and ice house - and came right through David Edgerton's land, homesteaded in 1872. The town grew from a railroad station to a village of 50 citizens; by 1890 it had a post office, the VC Lewis Hotel, and a local doctor. W. M. Smith established a general store and was postmaster. By 1902 the town had grown to 350 people, many of whom were suffering from lung disease. District 20's first elementary school was built here in 1874 and held classes until 1915. An unsolved 1886 murder in the area remains a mystery to this day.

(continued on page 4)

President's Message



The Historical Society marked the mid-point of 2018 programming with our traditional Ice Cream Social on Father's Day. This year's event brought an estimated 285 folks together on the Village Green for free ice cream and pie and music by singer/guitarist Nick Davey. As an extra treat, attendees enjoyed a display of antique cars across the street in the Bella Panini lot. Thanks go to the Rock House and Monument Village Inn for ice cream and pies, and to Wayne Russert for coordinating the car show. More exciting programs are planned for this summer and fall, highlighted by the eleventh annual Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua on August 11.

I hope you enjoy the feature article on some once thriving communities in the area that are now lost to the past. If so, you can look forward to learning more when the Historical Society publishes a new edition of *Monument's Faded Neighbor Communities and Its Folklore*. Lucille Lavelett's 1979 book has been out of print for some time, and PLHS is excited to again make it available.

This year, Palmer Lake Historical Society will be among 96 area nonprofits participating in the Give! campaign sponsored by the *Colorado Springs Independent* and the *Colorado Springs Business Journal*. The campaign is a year-end philanthropic initiative aimed at encouraging everyone in the Pikes Peak region to give back and get involved with local nonprofits. The campaign will be active in November and December, but we have plenty of work to do to be ready—including finding supporters who will consider becoming matching donors for PLHS.

As you can see, these are busy times. The Historical Society and the Lucretia Vaile Museum operate exclusively through the efforts of volunteers. We have a variety of jobs for willing hands, so please consider donating some of your time and talents. Contact the Society by e-mail at PLHS@PalmerDivideHistory.org or call 719-559-0837 for more information and to volunteer.

Tom Baker

Below: Photo of re-enactors, 2017 Chautauqua



Mike Walker photo

THEN AND NOW: Palmer Divide Photos Past and Present

Historical photos courtesy of USAFA Special Collections and Vaile Museum; all current day photos by Jack Anthony



Photo Courtesy USAFA Special Collections



Photo by Jack Anthony

Burgess Cabin on the Air Force Academy, built around 1875, photo ca 1955, and as it looked in 2015 in Jack Anthony's photo



Photo Courtesy USAFA Special Collections



Photo by Jack Anthony

Timber-framed Santa Fe Trestle over Dirty Woman Creek after July 17, 1895, train wreck and as it looks filled in today 1/2-mile south of Monument in Jack Anthony's 2014 photo

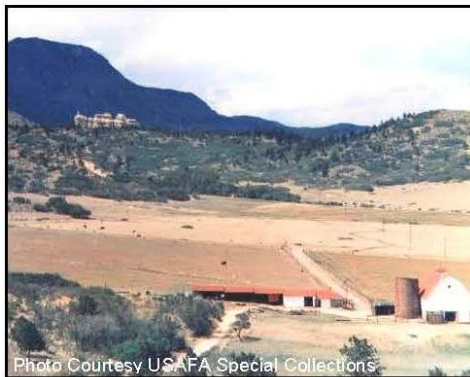


Photo Courtesy USAFA Special Collections



Photo by Jack Anthony

Cathedral Rock Ranch ca 1950 looking north before acquisition by the Air Force Academy and as the area looks today in Jack Anthony's March 2018 photo looking across the Academy soccer field.



Photo Courtesy Palmer Lake Historical Society 1889



Photo By Jack Anthony 2014

The New Regional Santa Fe Trail ends at the north end of Palmer Lake. Pictured is the AT&SF depot, looking west, now long gone; today the area is a park on the east side of the lake.

Upcoming PLHS Programs and Events August 2018 through November 2018

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

Saturday, August 11, 2018, 11 AM-4PM

SPECIAL EVENT

“Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua”



Chautauquas began in New York state in 1874 and spread throughout rural America until the mid-1920's. It was an adult education movement, "the most American thing in America" according to President Teddy Roosevelt. It brought entertainment and culture for the whole community, with speakers, teachers, musicians, entertainers, preachers, and specialists of the day. Within a dozen years of the first assembly in New York, the **Rocky Mountain Chautauqua Assembly** was one of at least fifty summer camp meetings scattered across the country calling themselves Chautauquas. There were also some traveling



meetings not associated with the New York Assembly. Many of the authentic Chautauquas became famous, including the Rocky Mountain Assembly, the first in Colorado, which held its first assembly in 1887 and ran for almost 20 years. In 2008, "The Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua Assembly" brought back this event to where it began in Colorado - in Palmer Lake.

Join us for a full day of vintage arts, crafts, portrayals, wildlife displays, activities for children, walking tours, and music, music, music. Don't miss the Friends of the Tri-Lakes Library annual ice cream social, held early in the afternoon.



Thursday, September 20, 2018 – “The Harvey Girls Story”

Presenters: Jane Milne and Kathy DeHerrera



The Harvey Girls, legendary "waitresses who civilized the West," were a Fred Harvey experiment, the result of the male waiters at his Santa Fe Railroad restaurants having been a resounding failure. There were Harvey Girls along the Santa Fe from the 1880s into the 1950s. Their starched aprons and model service brought fine dining to an otherwise "Wild West." There were Harvey Restaurants in Colorado.

Jane Milne, an experienced storyteller, is remembered for her gripping "Orphan Train" presentation to the Society in October of 2015. Kathy DeHerrera is a retired teacher and the duo's researcher. Together, they wrote the script and designed the costumes. This program debuted in 2016.

Thursday, October 18, 2018 – "Above and Beyond: A Hero's Story" Presenters: Jim Sawatzki and Bob McLaughlin



William J. "Bill" Crawford was raised in Pueblo by relatives after his mother's death, became a Golden Gloves champion in high school, and then enlisted in World War II. When his platoon was pinned down by intense German machine-gun fire, he single-handedly destroyed the machine gun and killed three of the crew with a hand grenade. Then he was captured. See the film and learn the rest of the story.

Jim Sawatzki has been involved in documenting Front Range Colorado history for over 25 years. A Michigan State University graduate, his programs have aired on regional PBS affiliates and local cable channels. Bob McLaughlin, COL, US Army (Ret), is COO of Mt. Carmel Veterans Service Center.

Thursday, November 15, 2018 – "The WWI Flying Ace from Denver"

Presenter: Charles D. Dusch, Jr., PhD



Colorado had only one WWI flying ace. Jerry Cox Vasconcells, originally from Kansas, attended Denver's East High School, Dartmouth College, and graduated from the University of Denver Law School. He joined the U.S. Army Air Corps and was sent to France in 1917 to fly combat. Then he was shot down, but by war's end was in command of the 185th Aero Squadron. Learn how he became an "ace" and his contributions to Denver.

Dr. Charles D. Dusch, Jr. is Acting Command Historian of the U.S. Air Force Academy where he teaches World, Military, Civil War, and Air Power history. He also teaches Military History at UCCS. He is a retired Air Force Weapon Systems Officer with combat missions over Iraq and Bosnia

Ghost Tank Towns of the Palmer Divide: Breed, Edgerton, East and West Husted, and Pring/Borst *(continued from page 1)*

East and West Husted: Located midway between Colorado Springs and Palmer Lake, both were railroad towns, with East Husted on the Santa Fe, which began operations in 1887, and West Husted on the D&RGW. Named for Calvin Husted, a settler from New Jersey who arrived in 1859, they became a place to pick up passengers and shipments of lumber and agricultural products. The largest of the "tank towns", both were thriving communities. By 1900, they had a hotel, post office, grocery store, church, and saloon; later schools, gas stations, and cafes were built. By the mid-1950s, all remaining buildings were either moved or demolished for the development of the United States Air Force Academy. Today, a number of the buildings which were moved have been remodeled and are private residences. The only building which remains in its original location is the Reynolds Ranch House, located on the property of the Western Museum of Mining & Industry on North Gate Road. It is in the process of being restored. Otherwise, a few remnants of the two towns, mostly rubble, can be located not far from the B-52 and the cemetery at the north entrance to the Air Force Academy. The New Santa Fe Regional Trail passes through what was East Husted; West Husted is three quarters of a mile further west, where the D&RG had built a 50,000 water tank and pump house and later a water column to fill the tenders. The last Santa Fe train to travel on these tracks was in 1973. Thereafter, both the BNSF and Union Pacific have used the "joint line."

Pring/Borst: **Pring** was named for John W. Pring, who raised cattle, had a dairy business, and had one of the "best farms in El Paso County." It was a Santa Fe railroad station where sheep and cattle were loaded onto trains. Located near the Baptist Road round-about, the original wood water tank was built in 1887 and replaced in 1911 by a steel tank. The sculptures in the round-about are a tribute to this site. The Pring Station was moved to Palmer Lake in 1936. **Borst**, located only a short distance from Pring, was on a ranch and was one of the original water tanks on the D&RGW. Built in 1871, the facility was closed in 1882 and a new tank was built two miles south at West Husted.

What has survived and thrived –

Monument: Originally named "Henry's Station" in honor of Henry Limbach, Monument's founder, the railroad facilities here were fairly extensive, transporting local goods, produce, timber, and livestock. Monument became a commercial hub for the area. The town was served by both the D&RGW and Santa Fe railroads; each had separate tracks through town and separate depots and station agents. Water was piped in from Monument Lake, created by a dam on Monument Creek. Both depots were moved after being closed, turned into restaurants, and later burned. The Regional Santa Fe Trail runs through Monument and then north to Palmer Lake. Today, Monument's population is over 5,500.

Palmer Lake: At the northern end of the New Regional Santa Fe Trail, the Town of Palmer Lake has not only survived but thrived. The lake was a major source of water for both railroads, with the Santa Fe tracks on the east side of the lake and the D&RGW on the west side. Neither depot survives. The natural lake is fed by a spring and run-off from the South Platte River and Monument Creek. The town is named for Gen. Wm. Jackson Palmer, owner of the D&RG, while William Finley Thompson, a dentist, is considered the town's founder. Tourism became a major source of income in the area, bolstered by the annual Rocky Mountain Chautauqua Assembly. Today the population of Palmer Lake is about 2,700 - and growing.

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

Mike and Sigi Walker would like to thank Jack Anthony for his "Along the Santa Fe Trail" posts on the PLHS website, which describe a 17-mile "History Trail Run" starting at the Woodmen Trailhead and ending in Palmer Lake. They were one of the sources for this article.

August 11, 2018, from 11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

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



Like us on Facebook

Visit the PLHS website by scanning our QR code with your smart phone.



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