

Volume VIII Number 3

December 2014/January 2015

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Palmer Lake Historical Society

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Program Schedule: January to April 2015

January 15, 2015, 6:30 PM: **Annual PLHS Potluck Dinner and Membership Meeting.**
Honkey-Tonk piano by Joe Bohler

February 19, 2015, 7:00 PM: **"The Battle of New Market"** Pat McCarthy

March 19, 2015, 7:00 PM – **"Kid Curry's Last Ride"** Ann Williams

April 16, 2015, 7:00 PM – **"Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region"**
John Wesley Anderson

Mark your 2015 Calendars

Father's Day Ice Cream Social - June 21

One Nation Pow Wow - July 18

Annual Chautauqua - Aug 1

Additional events will be announced in the next newsletter.

Contributing to this issue:

Rogers Davis
Tom VanWormer

Pat McCarthy
Mike & Sigi Walker

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

James W. Newbrough: Awarded Silver Star in World War II

Our last newsletter highlighted David McShane and his family, who came to the Palmer Divide from Iowa in 1861 during the Colorado gold rush period. McShane established one of the first homesteads here three miles south of Palmer Lake in Monument, where he ran a dairy business, raised horses, and operated a cattle ranch. He was the area's first postmaster, one of the first El Paso County commissioners, assisted in building the first schoolhouse in Monument, and help erect two others. A historical marker near the site of his stone round house with port holes can be found on the southwest corner of CO 105 and Davidson Street in Monument.

David McShane was also a contractor of considerable note. He contracted for eight miles of the Colorado Midland from Cascade to Woodland Park and had contracts on the Union Pacific, Denver & Gulf, and other railroads. He built ten reservoirs in El Paso County. At one time, he was president of the Bison Mining and Milling Company in Cripple Creek, which he had discovered and developed. At his death in 1907, he owned valuable property in Summit County, where he had first mined.

Fast forward three generations. James W. Newbrough was the great grandson of David and Catherine McShane. In World War II, he was serving as a private in the U.S. Army Forces in the South Pacific. An infantryman, he saw action in New Georgia, Solomon Islands. On July 31, 1943, defending against a Japanese frontal assault, he



remained at his machine gun for twenty-six hours, returning fire on the enemy, and saving his battalion. He was awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry in action in 1944.



James Newbrough rose from the rank of private to sargeant before leaving the U.S. Army. He is buried in the Monument cemetery with the following inscription on his marker: James W. Newbrough, Feb 15, 1921 - Jul 12, 1983, SGT US ARMY, World War II

Palmer Lake Town Hall is 100 years old

Built at a cost of about \$1,600 around 1914, the Palmer Lake Town Hall, is celebrating its 100th "birthday" in 2014. The building has been in continuous use since 1914, quite an achievement. It originally also housed a small library wing, a gift of Dr. Frances Buchanan.

Mike Walker photo





President's Message to the Membership

Folks,

The Board of your Society and I offer you our Holiday Greetings and Wishes. Your 2015

Society Calendar is now available at your favorite sponsors and on Wednesday (1-3) and Saturday (10-2) at the Vaile Museum, so come on by and pick one up and renew your acquaintance with your museum. Please thank all of the Calendar Sponsors since this is our most successful year in Calendar Fundraising, note how few PLHS ads appear.

Speaking of success, my term as your head servant will end at the Annual Potluck and business meeting at the Palmer Lake Town Hall on the 15th of January at 6:30 PM. Your Society will provide the main entrée, and we request members and friends to bring the side dishes, desserts, and other treats for this wonderful meal. Entertainment for the evening will be provided by our own Joe Bolher. So, it ought to be a delightful event where you get to vote for the 2015 Officers and Board of our Society. See you there!

This past year has brought your society and its members a group of memorable speakers at our monthly meetings and the four months we heard additional presentations on preparing for wildfires in support of the Town of Palmer Lake's Fire Reduction Campaign. The membership showed their approval by the level of attendance at these efforts.

Our special events were very well attended this year, with large gatherings of members and friends at the Father's Day Ice Cream Social, the Chautauqua, and the Pow Wow that we jointly sponsored with One Nation Walking Together in the air conditioning of the Freedom Financial Services Expo Center in Colorado Springs.

Next year should be even better as the Board is building an even greater schedule of events for 2015. It appears we will be holding more events than we had in 2014. But more on that in later newsletters as the Board continues to increase the position of the Society for the coming years.

Thanks for your support in the past year and my best wishes for your and the society's future.

T. E. VanWormer, PLHS President

Palmer Lake Historical Society

publishes this newsletter at
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Layout and Editing: Sigi Walker

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.com

A Brief History of the Palmer-Divide Area

The Palmer Divide, a geological ridge running from Palmer Lake eastward, creates its own weather patterns and separates the Arkansas River drainage to the south and the Platte River Drainage to the north. Vollmer Hill, the highest point of the divide, is about 7700 feet in elevation and is located in the area known as the Black Forest. Monument Hill, located in the Tri-Lakes area, is at about 7352 feet.

The earliest known area inhabitants were Native American tribes that date to the Folsom period 10,000 years ago. More recently the Mountain Ute, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Sioux, Cheyenne, and others have been present. The earliest recorded activity in the area was the Army's Major Stephen Long Expedition of 1820, during which the Colorado State Flower, the Columbine, was discovered somewhere between Monument and Palmer Lake. As



early as the 1860s, many homesteaded ranches and farms straddled the El Paso/ Douglas County line. David McShane has been credited with being one of the first homesteaders in the Town of Monument in 1865. Henry Limbach and his family were also early arrivals and had much to do with the planning and development of Monument, which prospered as the commercial hub for the area on arrival of the railroad.

General William J. Palmer, a Medal of Honor recipient, came west after the Civil War to found the City of Colorado Springs and start the 3-ft. narrow gauge Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in 1871. He purchased the land known as the Monument Farms and Lake Property which was to become the Town of Palmer Lake. The town was critical to the railroad because Palmer Lake was the only natural water supply available on a year-round basis. After the steam trains chugged up to the Palmer Divide summit, they had to take on water to head down. Passenger trains would stop for 10 minutes in Palmer Lake, or passengers could



get off the train for a day of picnicking, fishing, boating, or wildflower hikes for a fee of \$1.50 roundtrip from Denver.

Prior to the automobile, Palmer Lake enjoyed visits from Denverites and others wishing to beat the summer heat. Dr. William Finley Thompson, a dental surgeon born in Ohio who had practiced in Omaha, Portland, San Francisco, and London, England, came to Colorado in 1882 and soon platted the Town of Palmer Lake, intending it as a health and vacation resort. In 1887, he built the Victorian mansion, Estemere, for his family, but facing bankruptcy in 1890, he left Palmer Lake to raise capital. Estemere, beautifully renovated and refurnished, is about two blocks west of the Vaile Museum.

Founded as a people's vacation university in Chautauqua,

New York, Chautauquas were popular on the East Coast. The Rocky Mountain

Chautauqua in the Palmer Lake area was active from 1887 to 1910, hosting programs in music, art, drama, religion, & nature. The

Rockland, a sixty-one room hotel,

provided all the amenities any visitor could wish for, including a petting zoo.

Past industries in the area included harvesting ice from Monument and Palmer Lakes, which continued until 1941, fox farms, sawmills, Angora rabbit raising, and dry-land potato and grain farming. This method of farming relied on natural rainfall instead of irrigation water from streams or wells. Far more moisture was naturally available at the turn of the 19th century. In 1894 there were over 20,000 acres under cultivation. In 1895, however, some of the potato crops did not mature because of a disease (potato blight), and potato growing slowed and finally stopped. At that time, Monument was famous for holding an annual "Potato Bake," a fall celebration where a free feast would be held just across the tracks from Front and Second Streets.

The area around the two towns of Palmer Lake and Monument remained largely as ranch and farmland until the Air Force Academy was opened in 1958. Woodmoor was originally planned to be an area where the staff of the Air Academy and other military retirees could take up residence. From the Monument and Woodmoor area to the south, the land kept to its ranching heritage until the growth of Colorado Springs spawned



housing developments starting about the mid 1980's. Most growth along this part of the I-25 corridor has occurred since 1990.

Our area has a remarkable history including events associated with the "wild west." There have been Indian raids and saloon shootings. There were several forts in the area where settlers could hole up until the trouble passed. One of these was the "McShane Fort" located just off highway 105, close to the current railroad overpass. Poses have apprehended and strung up murderers on the outskirts of Monument and Palmer Lake. The area was home to five gold mines; however, none hit the mother lode. The Greenland open space area to our North once

shipped more cattle to market than any other location in Colorado. The Goodnight-Loving cattle drive from Texas came through our area ca 1866 and over the Palmer Divide. Indeed, the Greenland area was so named by Helen Hunt Jackson as the grass was so plentiful and green in color. Our historical heritage is rich with the knowledge of our pioneer pathfinders who settled the land and left their mark for all to see and learn about.

In 1964 the Palmer Lake Historical Society started a Museum/Library in the former Santa Fe Railroad Section Foreman's house. Lucretia Vaile, our area Museum's namesake, spent summers here with her family starting in 1884. She was

instrumental in starting the Yule Log Ceremony and was a founding member of the Colorado Mountain Club. Always active in community affairs, she left money to be used for cultural purposes, which aided in the building of the present Museum/Library in 1981. The Palmer Lake Historical Society and the Vaile Museum proudly serve as the main repository for Tri-Lakes history. Tour the museum on Saturdays, 10 AM – 2 PM all year and on Wednesdays from 1 PM – 4 PM during June through August. We are located at 66 Lower Glenway St., in Palmer Lake.

For additional information, visit the Palmer Lake Historical Society website:
www.PalmerDivideHistory.org

Compendium of monthly PLHS Presentations February through April 2015

Social Hour at 6:30 PM, Presentations begin at 7:00 PM

Thursday, February 19, 2015 - "The Battle of New Market - May 15, 1864"

Presenter: Pat McCarthy



Palmer Lake Historical Society's own J. Patrick (Pat) McCarthy returns to the podium to describe the Battle of New Market in which Confederate Forces defeated the Union advance, thus sparing Richmond. Of importance is that 257 first-year VMI cadets played a crucial role in the battle, and their sacrifices are still a part of daily life on the VMI campus. In addition to describing the Battle of New Market and the annual New Market Parade, Pat will also uncover the strange genealogy of a Southern soldier.

Pat has lived in Colorado Springs since 1969 and in Palmer Lake since 1991. He grew up in the DC and Minneapolis-St Paul areas. A 1965 Virginia Military Institute graduate with a EE degree, he served four years in the U.S. Army after college. He is a retired system engineer/test engineer with P.E. certification.

Thursday, March 19, 2015 - "Kid Curry's Last Ride"

Presenter: Ann Williams



Ann Williams is a Pueblo West author and speaker with experience in professional travel writing, teaching, and cruise ship enrichment lectures. This program tells the story of an outlaw and gunman--a cohort of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, and the worst of the Wild Bunch. He ate lawmen for breakfast, but his long spree was ended by a backcountry, Parachute, Colorado rancher who joined the posse to retrieve a stolen horse. That rancher was the great grandfather of the speaker, and she includes the story in her newly published family biography. The history involved in the program is interesting and touches on many issues quite relevant in this time. To give her production pizzazz, the speaker "channels" Curry's soiled dove girlfriend who gives a firsthand account of a part of the outlaw's life.

Thursday, April 16, 2015 - "Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region"

Presenter: John Wesley Anderson



John Wesley Anderson returns to talk about Ute Indian Prayer trees of the Pikes Peak Region. Focusing on the culture and history of the indigenous Ute Peoples between 150 and 450 years ago, he will discuss the sacred living artifacts they left behind. These Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs) can still be found across the Pikes Peak Region. Anderson will describe what to look for and where - in the land around the sacred mountain known to the Utes as "Tava" (Pikes Peak).

John Wesley Anderson has lived in the Pikes Peak Region since 1956 and was the 26th Sheriff of El Paso County from 1995 to 2003. He collected arrowheads as a youth on the family ranch in eastern El Paso County and has always been fascinated with Native American history, culture and artifacts.

Special Announcement: Palmer Lake Historical Society's annual membership meeting potluck will take place on Thursday, January 15th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Members and visitors are asked to bring side dishes and desserts; the Society will provide the main meat dish. Joe Bohler will provide the entertainment.

Palmer Lake Historical Society

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*Wishing all the Merriest Christmas
and the Best of New Years*

From Colorado Springs *The Gazette*,
Sunday, November 30, 2014:

Dateline: November 30 1964

A new star will suddenly appear Tuesday night. It will shine over Palmer Lake and the Divide country, heralding the coming of Christmas and the town's famous Yule Log ceremony. The five-pointed star is 500 feet across and is built of 91 electric light bulbs strung on a cable attached to posts sunk in the face of the mountain. This Star of Bethlehem has been a community project since 1934.

COLORADO SPRINGS PIONEERS MUSEUM



Above photo of the Palmer Lake Star and Palmer Lake Town Hall taken on December 2, 2014, by Mike Walker