

Volume XV Number 1  
April 2021 through July 2021  
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Museum: 719-559-0837



## Palmer Lake Historical Society

### 2021 Board of Directors

President – Su Ketchmark  
Vice President – Wayne Russert  
Secretary – Patricia Atkins  
Treasurer – Maggie Williamson  
Museum Director - Rogers Davis

### 2021 Directors-at-Large

Susan Kuehster  
Barbara Morehead  
Melissa Robohn

### Program & Events Information: June 2021 – July 2021

Sunday, June 20, 2021, 2 – 4 PM  
ANNUAL FATHER'S DAY  
ICE CREAM SOCIAL  
FREE pie and ice cream!  
Music on the Green and  
Special Antique Car Show

Saturday, July 24, 2021  
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

"Walking Tours of the Former Monument  
Tree Farm" – Tour Guide to be announced

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

## 2021: Celebrating the Santa Fe Trail Bicentennial *America's Route of Commerce and Conquest Was Central to Western Expansion*

The Santa Fe Trail served the nation for six decades – from 1821 until 1880. This historic road between Missouri and New Mexico evolved as a route of commerce and trade. It was traversed primarily by freight caravans and military supply wagons, while the Oregon and California trails were more emigrant-oriented.

The Santa Fe Trail was also an international road before the Mexican War (1846-1848). During and after the war, it served as a military road, connecting military posts and western forts. Although not officially a part of the trail, the El Camino Real, extending south from Santa Fe, New Mexico, deep into Mexico, added to the richness of the cultural exchange.

Marc Simmons in *The Old Trail to Santa Fe: Collected Essays* (1996) writes:

It was the profit motive, pure and simple, that gave birth to and nourished the overland trade to Santa Fe.... Yet there was something beyond profit that in time drew travelers to the Santa Fe Trail. It seems an added attraction was to be found in the entire experience itself—the forming up of a caravan on the Missouri border, the unwinding journey across the sunlit plains, the excitement of a buffalo hunt or even an Indian attack that quickened the blood, and at last the arrival at the foot of the trail in a foreign land.

In its final years, the Santa Fe Trail was used by families migrating to the Southwest; complex political, economic, and cultural issues followed. Over the trail's lifetime, it affected three cultures: Anglo-American, Hispanic-American, and Native American.

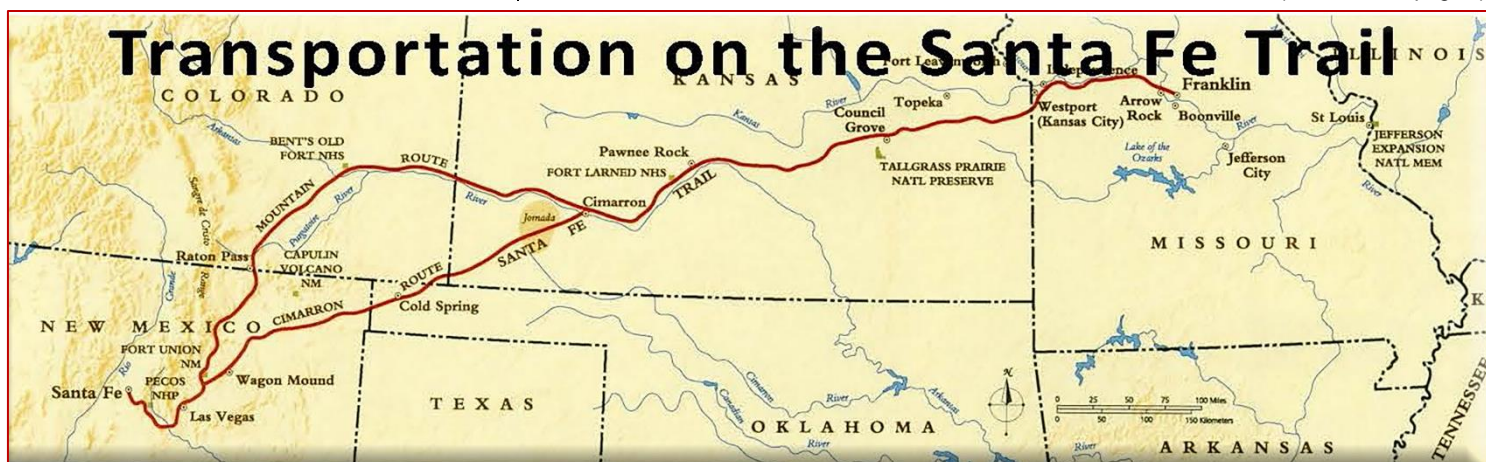
The trail originated along the river ports in northwestern Missouri, slowly making its way through the tall grass prairie until it split at Cimarron, Kansas. The Mountain Route followed the Arkansas River across western Kansas into present-day Colorado and New Mexico while the Cimarron Cutoff, with miles of dangerously arid plains, headed south-southwest into New Mexico. The trails joined at what is now Watrous, near Fort Union, New Mexico.

By 1880, this historic wagon road of commerce and conquest had been superseded as the railroads (AT&SF, D&RG, KP and UP) expanded westward.

The Santa Fe Trail's importance was recognized in 1987 when it was designated a National Historic Trail. The Daughters of the American Revolution have erected most of the 170 plus markers along its route. Historical information on this important 19<sup>th</sup> century overland route is available on the Internet and in publications.

Old Bent's Fort, completed in 1833, was on the Mountain Route along the Arkansas River east of present-day La Junta, Colorado. The volume of trade and activities there was legendary. Destroyed in 1849, Old Bent's Fort has been reconstructed on its original site. The National Park Service provides tours, programs, and interpretive activities at this National Historic Site. See <https://www.nps.gov/beol>.

(continued on page 3)



**President's Message**



Happy Spring! It's been just over a year since everything shut down, but with vaccinations I'm feeling hopeful for this year.

Unfortunately, our museum remains closed until the ramp to the library above it is replaced. The old ramp was not ADA compliant and was removed, which closed off our front door. We hope to be able to reopen later this year.

The board of directors is still working behind the scenes on many projects and exhibits and holding monthly meetings via Zoom. We commissioned a metal caboose, created by Bliss Studio in Monument; it was installed on the bridge to the lake in early March. This was featured in the April issue of the OCN. The proceeds benefit Awake the Lake.

Our new and improved website is now live, and we hope you'll take a look! You can now renew memberships through the website, as well as shop our online store. <https://palmerdividehistory.org>

The Palmer Lake Historical Society will also be participating in the Colorado Historic Newspapers (CHNC) program that is part of the Colorado Virtual Library. The Society is supporting the digitization of the Columbine Herald and other newspapers of the Palmer Divide through the program. Many of the issues in the Lucretia Vaile Museum are the only known copies left and loaning them to be included in the CHNC will increase their availability beyond the life of the newsprint on which they are printed. For more information on the CHNC, check it out at <https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/>

We're planning this year's Father's Day Ice Cream Social - outdoors with masks and socially distanced - on the Palmer Lake Village Green. As always, there will be free pie from Village Inn & ice cream from The Rock House, a strolling troubadour, and a car show. We're excited to bring this tradition back this year!

As for regular programs, that remains to be seen. We'll keep you posted on Facebook and the website when we're able to resume.

I want to welcome back Melissa Robohn as a board member at large. Melissa was our former treasurer but left for a study program in Europe (yes, during the pandemic!). She is back and has rejoined the board. We are so glad! She'll be taking on the task of our webmaster.

I wish everyone a wonderful summer and hope to see you in person soon.

Su Ketchmark, PLHS President

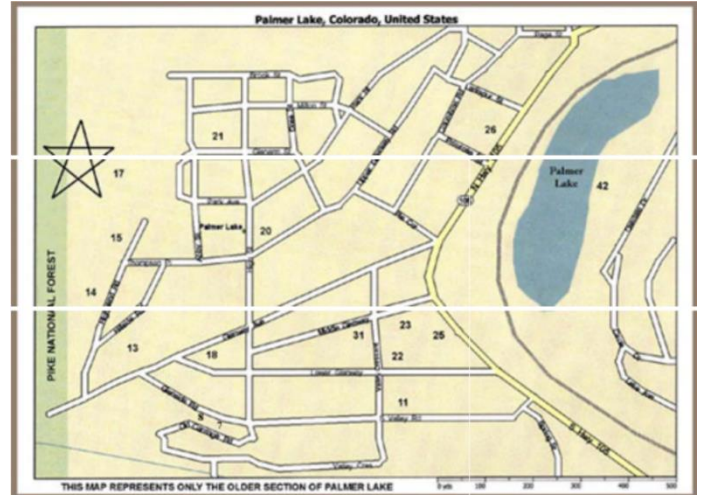
**Hiking and Biking the Palmer Divide**

**It's Spring!** Time to discover some surprising sights in two historic towns.

**Palmer Lake Walking Tour of Historic Sites**

*This map shows only the older section of the Palmer Lake sites listed in the table below.*

*For more information, check out the PLHS publication **Palmer Lake Landmarks**.*



- 7 Pillsbury Store
- 8 McIntyre Cottage/Carriage House
- 11 Electric Company/Powerhouse
- 13 Estemere Estate
- 14 George W. Palmer House
- 15 Vaile Log Cabin
- 17 Palmer Lake Star \*
- 18 Telephone Office/Switchboard
- 20 Little Log Church
- 21 Countess Murat's Cottage
- 22 Lucretia Vaile Library-Museum
- 23 Old Jail
- 25 The White Kitchen Cafe
- 26 D&RG Station Agent's House
- 31 Palmer Lake Fire Station, Town Offices, and Town Hall \*
- 42 Palmer Lake

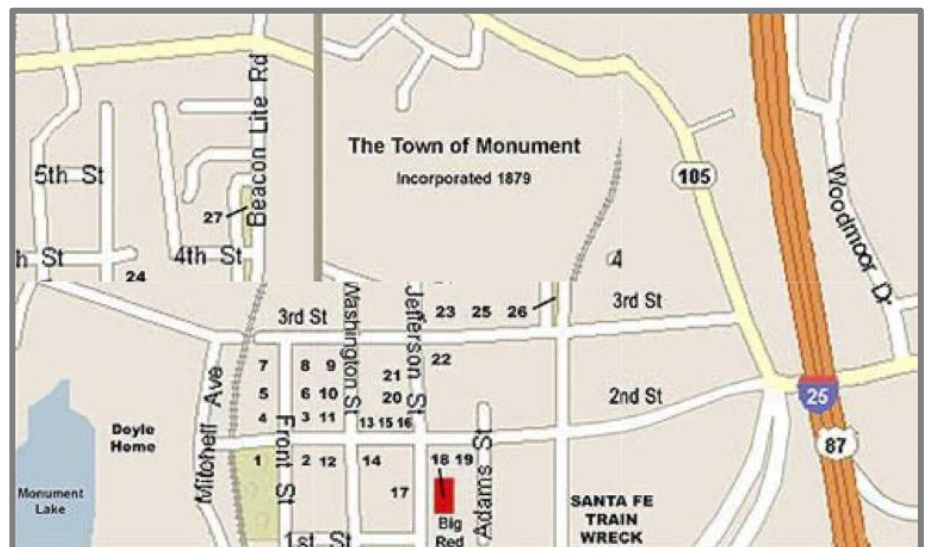
- 1 Limbach Park
- 2 The Monument Hotel
- 3 The Walker Store
- 4 Mrs. Limbach's Millinery Shop
- 5 The Limbach House
- 6 Limbach's Saloon & Barber Shop
- 7 Elliott's Store
- 8 Elliott's Carriage & Wagon
- 9 The Schubarth Home
- 10 Will Lierd's Store & Caskets
- 11 Betz Family Meat Market
- 12 Dr. Rupp's Home & Drug Store
- 13 Higby Mercantile
- 14 First Post Office
- 15 J.W. Higby Garage
- 16 Colonel Ford's Home
- 17 1st Catholic Church
- 18 "Big Red" or the "Lewis School"
- 19 Site of the Monument Creamery
- 20 Site of Father Dyer's Parsonage
- 21 Santa Fe Section Crew Bunkhouse
- 22 Sheldon Jackson Memorial Chapel
- 23 1st Presbyterian Parsonage
- 24 Santa Fe Agents' Home
- 25 Santa Fe Depot
- 26 Lavelett Park
- 27 1st Town Hall
- Santa Fe Train Wreck site

\*On the Colorado Register of Historic Places

**Monument Walking Tour of Historic Sites**

*Map below - see listing at right  
For more information,*

*Check out the Vaile Museum's **Through the Years at Monument**.*



(continued on page 4)

### Old Bent's Fort

Brothers Charles and Col (hon) William Bent erected Bent's Fort in 1833 with the help of their financial partner Ceran St. Vrain. It soon became a thriving trading center, dealing primarily in buffalo robes from the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. Business at Bent's Fort lasted until the Mexican War began in 1846, when the U.S. Army began using the fort as a staging area.

It was a melting pot, with multiple nationalities occupying the place at any one time and many languages spoken. Then, in 1846 Charles Bent became Governor of New Mexico and was murdered within a year. Hostilities with the Native Americans was increasing. In anger in 1849, William Bent set off explosions in the fort, destroying a large portion of it. The original structure, a major freighting, trading, and hospitality center, had existed for only 16 years. Today's Old Bent's Fort is an imposing adobe structure, a painstakingly created reproduction of the original fort operated by the National Park Service

*From a painting of Old Bent's Fort*



### Other Stops on the Santa Fe Trail in Colorado

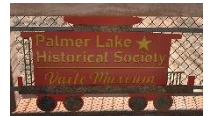
Traveling west from Old Bent's Fort, the trail followed what is now U.S. Highway 50 to the present-day town of La Junta. There, at the junction of U.S. Highway 350, the Mountain Route turns southwest toward what is now Trinidad. Trinidad has several museums, an art gallery, and historical sites to visit before the trail crosses the mountains at Raton into New Mexico and on to Santa Fe. Santa Fe Trail Bicentennial Commemorative Events are being held in La Junta, Trinidad, and Raton (NM) in late September and early October 2021. ❖



**The nearly \$750,000 pedestrian bridge project**, one of the biggest the small town of Palmer Lake has ever seen, is nearly complete. Now people can cross the lake without illegally crossing the railroad tracks on foot or having to drive around it. Awake the Lake was behind this ambitious project.

"After years of working with Union Pacific and BNSF, after weather delays, railroad personnel changes, design changes, material changes and budget changes, it's finally here," commented an Awake the Lake board member. The contractor Sema Construction (builder photo left) even made a donation.

Efforts continue to raise another \$80,000 to \$100,000 above the GOCO grant, the restoration committee's portion of the project. To fund the dirt work and landscaping, the committee is offering a "decorate the bridge" program with multiple sponsorship levels of metalworks shaped like locomotives, cabooses, box and tank cars to be added to the bridge structure. Jodi Bliss of Bliss Studio & Gallery in Monument is fabricating the sponsored works. M. Walker photo



## Upcoming PLHS Programs and Events April 2021 through July 2021

*Note: The following events are tentative due to the COVID-19 Pandemic*

**Sunday, June 20, 2021, 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 support from the Rock House Ice Cream Shop and Speidel Foundation, invites Dads and their families to join us in this annual community event.

- Music by Nick Davey
- Special private antique car show  
Featured car: 1912 Studebaker
- Bring a lawn chair or blanket and relax on the green



**Saturday, July 24, 2021, 9 AM – 2 PM**

**"Walking Tours of the Former Monument Tree Farm"**

**Tour Guide: to be announced**



After an unsuccessful tree nursery attempt on Pikes Peak, the Monument Nursery (located just west of the town of Monument) ended up successfully producing over 72,000,000 tree seedlings between 1906 and 1964. It was one of the first in the forest system and the most important in the Rocky Mountains.

Palmer Lake Historical Society members participated in a program on the Forest Service's Monument Tree Nursery presented by Eric Swab, who has also written on the subject. In May of 2016, Eric led the first PLHS tour of the former tree nursery. The tour is back by popular demand.



## Palmer Divide Bicycle Trails: Then and Now

(continued from page 2)

Even after the arrival of the railroad, bicycles were a popular means of getting from one place to another. The Palmer Divide area was no exception. Today, bicycles in our area are used mainly for recreation, although they are ridden by people in every corner of the world. At the outset, bicycles were “controversial machines” whose inroads into society revolutionized politics, fashion, and social policy and paved the way for the mechanized world of motion to come. *Victorian Cycles, Wheels of Change* (Documentary copyright, Jim Kellett 2004) is a fascinating documentary about the bicycle’s coming of age and its tremendous impact on society. It is filled with images of a by-gone era and the people who embraced its change.

The first bicycle craze swept Colorado and the nation more than a century ago. By the 1880s, thousands of Coloradans, women as well as men, pedaled around the state’s cities and towns and sometimes ventured out onto country roads. Early cyclists established clubs such as the Denver Ramblers, the Colorado Wheel Club, and the Social Wheel Club. These clubs crusaded for building bicycle paths through urban areas and out into rural areas. For example, in 1897, a club headed by Gov. Alva Adams and some prominent businessmen built a 50-mile path between Denver and Palmer Lake.

There is a story about a young woman who tried to ride her bicycle the 50 or so miles from Denver to Palmer Lake - in one day. When darkness fell and she could no longer see the bicycle path, she knocked on the door of a ranch house and was invited to spend the night. She continued on the next day.

The Old Territorial Road Mountain Bike Trail (right) is rated as “easy.” The gravel path connects Palmer Lake to Greenland and follows the route of the Old Territorial Road, paralleling the railroad tracks. The Greenland Trail splits off from Old Territorial Road Mountain Bike Trail approximately four miles north of Palmer Lake.



Above: Riding bicycles around the turn of the century

### Palmer Lake Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Annual membership in the Palmer Lake Historical Society is available in the following categories:

- |                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family     | \$ 30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student    | \$ 8.00  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$ 35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$ 50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curator    | \$ 75.00 |

**YES, I would like to support the PLHS. My payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.    \_\_\_ New    \_\_\_ Renewing**

**Method of payment:**

Cash        \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Name as you wish it to appear on your membership card (please PRINT):**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this completed form with your payment to:**

Palmer Lake Historical Society  
 PO Box 662  
 Palmer Lake CO 80133-0662

**Lucretia Vaile Museum Hours:**

Open Wednesday 1:00 – 4:00

Open Saturday 10:00 – 2:00

Tours: Call 559-0837 and leave message

**The Museum is currently closed due to renovation to install accessible entry.**

**Like us on Facebook**

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



Palmer Lake Historical Society publishes this newsletter at  
 PO Box 662  
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 Palmer Lake CO 80133-0662

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.net

**Contributing to this issue:**

Su Ketchmark    Vaile Museum  
 Jack Anthony    Wayne Russert  
 Mike & Sigi Walker

Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!