

Volume XV Number 2

August 2021 through November 2021

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Museum: 719-559-0837



Palmer Lake Historical Society

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Program & Events Information:

August 2021 – November 2021

There are no PLHS programs or events scheduled in August.

September 16, 2021, 7:00 PM – "Pikes Peak Trolleys" – John Haney

October 21, 2021, 7:00 PM – "200th Celebration of the Long Expedition" – John Stansfield

November 18, 2021, 7:00 PM – "Colorado's 10th Mountain Division" – Col. Tom Duhs

November 27, 2021*, 4:00 PM – Chili Supper and 7:00 PM Star Lighting

**Town of Palmer Lake event.*



A Newsletter of the

Palmer Lake Historical Society

and the

Lucretia Vaile Museum

Pikes Peak's Enigmatic Philanthropist: Winfield Scott Stratton

Stratton's Early Years

Winfield Scott Stratton's life was intertwined with the Victorian Era (1837-1901), a time marked by sweeping progress and ingenuity. It witnessed the world's first Industrial Revolution, Charles Darwin, and Charles Dickens. The first telephone and telegraph were born, railroads worldwide boomed, and rural populations declined as cities expanded rapidly.

Stratton was born in 1848 in Jeffersonville, Indiana. His father Myron Stratton was a shipbuilder who had supplied several troop ships for the Mexican War (1846-1848). His mother died at age 45 after giving birth to twelve children, of whom only five lived to adulthood. Winfield was the only surviving boy.

Jeffersonville was a boat-building port city on the Ohio River across from Louisville, Kentucky, and one of the most prominent Indiana ports. The Stratton house was very likely near the shipyard, as entrepreneurs of the 19th century liked to live near their businesses. Over the years hundreds of steamboats, towboats, barges, and landing craft were built in Jeffersonville. The Howard Steamboat Museum there preserves that history from the 1830s through 1900.



Jeffersonville was served by three railroads from the north and the Ohio River waterway. It was one of the principal gateways to the South during the Civil War and the location of an important Quartermaster supply depot. In June 1864, the Ohio Falls Car & Locomotive Co. (railroad and street cars) was founded there.

During his high school years (in 1862, fewer than 6% of American teens attended high school), Winfield had two very close friends: his neighbor James Parker, and Byron Logan, within a few days of his age and the son of his father's partner in the Logan & Stratton firm. All three dreamed of "going West," spurred by "gold fever" ubiquitous in a town through which countless westward-bound travelers passed. As adults both visited Colorado and toured the Independence Mine.

It was during his high school years that Winfield changed from a mild-mannered young boy to a young adult prone to angry outbursts and frequent fights with his father. Winfield completed school at age 17 at the end of the Civil War. His father helped him get a three-year carpentry apprenticeship. Although he didn't like it, he was "unusually" good at carpentry, mechanics, and drafting. In 1868, at age 20, following a violent fight during which he fired a shot at his father but missed, Stratton left home to work in a drugstore run by his brother-in-law in Eddyville, Iowa. His father gave him \$500 to start him off.

Stratton Travels West

Eddyville, a town in southern Iowa, was on the Oregon Trail. Once there, Stratton became restless and wanted to go further west. Six months later, after saving \$300, Stratton left Eddyville, stopping in Sioux City, Iowa, before going south along the Missouri River. He crossed into Omaha, Nebraska, then stopped in Lincoln. Nebraska had been granted statehood in March 1867, with Lincoln as the capitol. In 1870, with about 2,500 residents, Lincoln was growing rapidly. Stratton worked there as a carpenter for two years, saved his money, and bought two pieces of real estate, which he later sold at a profit.

Stratton's Arrival in Colorado Springs

Unable to resist "gold fever" news from Colorado, Stratton set out for "Pikes Peak or Bust" country. Colorado Springs was just one year old and had only about 300 residents. But there were thousands of tourists pouring into the area. He arrived by train in late August 1872. Ironically, on that day, greeting a group of tourists, was the founder of Colorado Springs and builder of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, Gen. William J. Palmer, fashionably attired in his expensive, shiny riding boots.

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President's Message



Hard to believe that it's already July - happy summer!! We are thrilled that we're able to hold programs in person again. We had a very successful Father's Day Ice Cream Social, with approximately 200 guests, then a walking tour of the Monument Preserve/Tree Farm on July 17. In September we'll resume our monthly history programs. They will be held at the Monument Chamber of Commerce, as the Palmer Lake Town Hall is still awaiting repairs. See the schedule in this newsletter.

We've now sent out two e-mails to our membership through Mail Chimp, which is working very well. Thanks to Patricia Atkins and Melissa Robohn for working diligently on this project! If you'd like to be added to the mailing list, you can sign up through our website: www.PalmerDivideHistory.org. If you haven't checked out the new website, please take a look. You can buy books, videos, mugs, etc. from our online store, sign up for membership, and see what is new with PLHS – all online. We are always adding new content to keep it fresh.

On August 7 we will have a table in the Reynolds Ranch House at the Western Museum of Mining & Industry upcoming Family Day: History. Stop in and say "hi!"

We have been working with Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection (CHNC) to bring free online access to local newspapers of the Palmer Divide. Check out the links below to start exploring our local history:

- [The Columbine Herald](#) (1956-1959) - local paper published in Palmer Lake
- [Palmer Lake-Monument News](#) (1965-1971) - successor paper to the Columbine Herald published in Monument
- [Black Forest News](#) (1960-1979) - explore the Palmer Divide through the Black Forest perspective

Funding for this project was provided by the Palmer Lake Historical Society and a CHNC Support Program Award. These articles were digitized from Lucretia Vaile Museum originals and History Colorado microfilm.

Last, but not least, we are looking for volunteers to serve on our board of directors. Could you help? Please contact plhsresident@gmail.com for details.

Enjoy your summer – and stay safe!

Su Ketchmark, PLHS President

Winfield Scott Stratton partial/abbreviated sources:

A Golden Legacy: Winfield Scott Stratton and The Myron Stratton Home 1848-1998, retrieved 3-27-2020

Midas of the Rockies, Frank Waters, 1937

Pikes Peak Trolleys, M. Cafky and J. A. Haney, 1983

"Stratton, a reluctant millionaire, left his mark on Colorado Springs," L. Carpenter, March 29, 2009

"Stratton's Independence Mine," L. Greeson, 2017

Winfield Scott Stratton, Wikipedia, retrieved 3-9-2020

"Winfield Scott Stratton," www.myronstratton.org

"Winfield Scott Stratton: The \$10 Million Man," DeLyn Martineau, February 28, 2015

(continued from page 1)

On the day Stratton arrived, he found carpentry work with James D. Raymond, a blunt old Nova Scotian carpenter whom he had known in Lincoln. He had \$300 dollars concealed in a pocket, a carpetbag, and a roll of blankets. He slept that night in the carpentry shop, staying for several weeks until moving into Mrs. Stevens' Boarding House. So began his journey from \$3/day carpenter to the Cripple Creek District's first gold mine millionaire. Carpentry work supported him for the next 19 years; for 17 of those years, he worked in winter and prospected for gold and silver in Colorado's mountains in summer.

Stratton's Long Search for Gold

The lessons of frugality and perseverance learned in his youth in Jeffersonville would serve Stratton well over the coming decades. During his first two years in Colorado Springs, he became a partner in several carpentry businesses. In June 1874, after selling his property and dissolving his business, he set off for the San Juan Mountains, having purchased an interest in the Yretaba Silver Mine. It turned out to be worthless. Stratton returned to Colorado Springs on July 23rd, broke; the next day he sold his shop outright for \$1,000.

After six months of inactivity, he could restrain himself no longer. As described in Frank Waters' *Midas of the Rockies*, "In the dead of winter, on January 7, 1875, he and D. K. Lee set out for Chalk Creek on the upper Arkansas River near Granite on a prospecting trip. They hired an old freighter, High Winslow, to haul their supply of flour, sugar, bacon and dried fruits..." At Chalk Creek, at the head of the Arkansas River, they built a log cabin. In late March they left the district, tired of wading in icy streams. Lee returned to Colorado Springs while Stratton headed to the San Juan Mountains to prospect around Baker's Park. In late October 1875, before the heavy snows, Stratton returned to Colorado Springs; his first mining venture having found only worthless country rock. He began closely observing the various booms and busts of Colorado mining.

On July 26, 1876, after a six-month courtship, Stratton married 17-year old Zeulah (Ora) Stewart. Shortly thereafter, they separated, she went back to Illinois, and they never saw each other again. The divorce was final two years later.

Between 1876 and 1891, Stratton worked in the winter and prospected in the summer. He tried his luck at virtually every mining camp in Colorado, following gold and silver rushes and even prospecting for cryolite (a mineral containing aluminum).

- He prospected in Leadville three times – each venture turned out to be a bust. In Leadville he met silver tycoon Horace Tabor.
- He prospected in Roaring Fork and Buena Vista – with no success.
- He traveled from Aspen to Tin Cup, from St. Elmo to the San Juans.
- He went as far south as La Veta, as far west as Ouray, and as far north as Creede.
- Closer to home, he prospected on the south slope of Pikes Peak.

He also took time to study mineralogy, surveying, and assaying at Colorado College (there Professor Lamb taught him how to test the value of gold ore with a blowpipe) as well as to study metallurgy at the Colorado School of Mines.

Stratton's tenacity in continuing his search for mining riches by pitching tents and building log cabins on promising sites over a period of almost two decades is amazing. Frank Waters writes of Stratton having "a bright vision" about a "spot over which he had passed" which "was to be a great mine." It was on the night of July 3rd, and the "spot" was on the south slope of Battle Mountain. The rest is history.

Transportation before Stratton's Purchase of the Streetcar System

The invention and mass production of the "safety" bicycle and the introduction of horse-drawn streetcars changed everything for the working man. Around 1890, bicycles—thousands of them—considerably increased the mobility of both men and women. They became the most popular and convenient way to get to work, to shop, to visit family, or to visit a park.

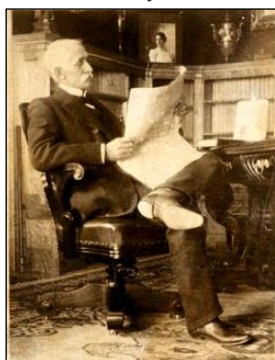
Such was the case in General Palmer's city of Colorado Springs. While he had laid out a city with wide streets, a business district, pleasant residential areas, and parks, most of the residents walked or rode bicycles to their destinations. But when a trolley line was built in their area, grateful city residents were able to travel farther more easily. Inclement weather and muddy streets were less of a challenge. Workers were more rested riding to work, families visited relatives more often, and amusement parks were easier to reach.

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By 1886, it had become abundantly clear that a street railway was necessary to connect Colorado Springs and Colorado City as well as the numerous communities scattered throughout the Monument Creek and Fountain Creek valleys. In 1887, the Colorado Springs and Manitou Street Railway began horse car trolley service between the Colorado Springs business district and Colorado College. The following year the route extended north and west, serviced by a total of ten 16' long horse-drawn cars and a stable of 42 horses. As you can imagine, Colorado Springs residents welcomed each expansion of the system. But those expansions were not inexpensive. The early investors in the system were James J. Hagerman, head of the Colorado Midland Railway, William S. Jackson, receiver of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, and Joel Addison Hayes, Jr., a local banker, along with four other backers. When in Richmond VA on February 2, 1888, Frank J. Sprague successfully demonstrated the use of electrification to power a streetcar system, Hagerman, Jackson, and Hayes bowed out; they had other commitments.

In 1890, a newly chartered Colorado Springs Rapid Transit Railway (CSRT) bought the horse car trolley line. By October, the first electric trolley to Manitou Springs was established. Subsequently, all lines were transitioned from horse-drawn to electric trolleys.



Other investors, including Winfield Scott Stratton, were recruited to the CSRT, allowing the CSRT to purchase the Colorado Springs & Manitou Street Railway. But it was Stratton's interest in the new electric streetcar system that would make all the difference.

Advances in technology, especially between 1888 and 1898, along with increased demand for additional routes, had placed considerable financial strain on the CSRT. The 1893 Depression had hit hard. As Morris Cafky and John Haney note in their 1983 book, *Pikes Peak Trolleys*, an unexpected rescuer (photo left) in the person of "a little, black-suited man with white hair and moustache" stepped in.

On July 4th, 1891, Winfield Scott Stratton had discovered "one of the greatest and most productive mines in the Cripple Creek District" and one of the richest veins of gold in the world! His staking of the Washington and Independence Mines on Battle Mountain would change Stratton's world. He used profits from the mine to invest in Colorado Springs and Denver real estate. Then in 1899, Stratton sold the Independence Mine to the Venture Corporation of London for \$11 million, netting \$10 million.

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Upcoming PLHS Programs and Events September 2021 through November 2021

**Social Hour at 6:30 PM; presentations begin at 7:00 PM at the
Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, 166 Second Street, Monument CO 80132**

Thursday, September 16, 2021

"Pikes Peak Trolleys"

Presenter: John A. Haney



The Colorado Springs area was blessed to have one of the best streetcar systems anywhere. This was largely due to Winfield Scott Stratton, who became the owner of the Colorado Springs Rapid Transit Company. This presentation will include the history of Colorado Springs streetcar service pre- and post-Stratton, the effect on residents' lives, what became of it, and what the current street railway plans are.

John Haney is a Colorado Springs native, a graduate of Colorado College with an MA in Urban Planning from the University of Arizona. He has co-authored three books on streetcar histories and is a co-founder of the Pikes Peak Trolley Museum and Restoration Shop.

Thursday, October 21, 2021

"200th Celebration of the Long Expedition"

Presenter: John Stansfield



Two hundred years ago, on June 6, 1820, Major Stephen H. Long and 19 men set out west from the Missouri River to explore the Platte River and its sources. The expedition included soldiers, artists, naturalists, a zoologist, and a physician, Dr. Edwin James, who discovered the Colorado Blue Columbine. They would be among the first Europeans in the Pikes Peak area.

For more than thirty years, storyteller and author John Stansfield has recounted stories of notable people from Colorado history. He portrayed Dr. Charles Fox Gardiner for PLHS in 2014 and Enos Mills in 2015 and participated in PLHS Chautauquas. John and his wife are residents of Larkspur.

Thursday, November 18, 2021

"Colorado's 10th Mountain Division"

Presenter: Col. Tom Duhs



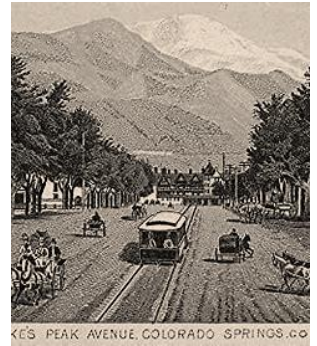
The Colorado 10th Mountain Division, a World War II group of skiers and mountaineers, was trained to fight the Germans in Italy. The Division was established in July 1943 at Camp Hale, located in central Colorado near Leadville, and trained for fighting in harsh terrain. The 10th went to Italy at the end of 1944, fighting in the mountains of Italy in some of the roughest terrain in the war.

Retired from the USMC, Col. Duhs used his own experience training troops and his research into the official regimental history to co-write two books about the 10th Mountain Division. Now he's working with people in Hollywood to try to bring the story to a broader audience.

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“Too Much Money Is Not Good for a Man”

In late November or early December of 1900, Stratton purchased the CSRT for \$350,000; an additional \$2,000,000 was spent for rehabilitation and improvements of the system. In 1901, soon after his purchase of the streetcar system, a fireproof car barn (a complex of four buildings interconnected to form one structure but separated from one another by firewalls), a new power plant, a fully equipped maintenance shop, new lines and extensions of trackage, waiting rooms and stations, and a pleasure park were built. Twenty new 1901 large double-truck Brill cars were ordered; then ten more new double-truck cars were ordered from Laclede, also in 1901. All helped increase both capacity and service, allowing the system to earn good profits. Two of these 1901 streetcars, Brill No. 48 and Laclede No. 59, are under restoration in the Pikes Peak Trolley Museum restoration shop.



Stratton’s success and subsequent philanthropy helped individuals and families while some donations benefited the city of Colorado Springs directly. While not as well-known as General William Jackson



Palmer or Spencer Penrose, it is not difficult to imagine what Colorado Springs might have been like without his many contributions. The streetcar service would have limped into oblivion; numerous important buildings in the downtown area might never have been built; and the 100-acre Myron Stratton Home (right), which still serves the community, would certainly never have been built. Likewise, it is difficult to imagine Cripple Creek and Victor without Stratton’s hand



in the development of the gold mines (above left) and his support of the miners and the townspeople when disaster struck.

But his generosity led people to pester him for money, and he eventually became reclusive and eccentric. He almost never had guests or went out socially, choosing instead to drink and read a great deal. Stratton passed away on September 14, 1902, at the age of 54. He lay in state in his nearly completed Mining Exchange Building (right) and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Colorado Springs.



Did you know?
On June 6, 1901, John Philip Sousa and his band played in front of 4,000 attendees during the dedication of Stratton Park.

Palmer Lake Historical Society 2021 Membership/Renewal Form

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

- Individual \$ 20.00
- Family \$ 30.00
- Student \$ 8.00
- Supporting \$ 35.00
- Benefactor \$ 50.00
- 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 in our membership files (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

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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

The Museum is currently closed pending work to install an accessible entry.

Until work on the Vaile Museum’s entry is complete, printed copies of the PLHS Newsletter will be available at Rock House Ice Cream in Palmer Lake. Electronic copies can be downloaded at: <https://palmerdividehistory.org/about-plhs/#plhs-newsletters>

Contributing to this issue:

Su Ketchmark
Mike & Sigi Walker
Pikes Peak Trolley Museum
Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!