

# The Quill

CHERRY CREEK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.  
Established in 1975

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Volume XLV, No. 2

August 2019

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**NEXT MEETING:  
Saturday, September 7, 2019  
1:00 to 4:00pm**

**17 Mile House Farm Park  
8181 S. Parker Road, Centennial 80016**

**Susan Trumble's  
*The Adventures of Clement Hightower***

Clement Hightower was just a boy of 10 when his mother, Mary, took title to the property we know as the 17 Mile House in 1867. Although he grew up on the western frontier without a father, the influence of his grandfather and uncles helped to shape his remarkable life. Clement Hightower's adventures in New Mexico as a cowboy, newspaper editor, Socorro County commissioner, New Mexico state legislator, U. S. Land Commissioner and the first supervisor of what became the Lincoln National Forest are an amazing story of one man's quest for the "American Dream." Through historic records, newspaper articles, letters and family memories we have learned a great deal of the life of this boy who grew up at the 17 Mile House.

Susan Trumble literally "wrote the book" about the history of 17 Mile House; her history of the property is the finest work on the subject. She earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Colorado State University in park administration. Her career with Colorado State Parks included the positions of Environmental Education Officer and Park Manager of Roxborough State Park. She was employed by Arapahoe County Open Spaces to research the histories of the 17 Mile House and Richmil Ranch. Her interest in the 17 Mile House and the life of Clement Hightower continue to lead to new discoveries. In fact, the more Susie Trumble tries to find out about Mary Hightower, the more she finds about Mary's son Clement.

**REMEMBER: This meeting will be held at the 17 Mile House (NOT Melvin School).**

*On this page and the next we say goodbye to two CCVHS members who contributed much to the betterment of the Cherry Creek Valley. They will be sorely missed.*

## **JACK RACE (1924 - 2019)**

John W. Race, Jr., known to everyone as Jack, died in Denver on August 20, 2019 at the age of 94. He was the eldest of four siblings. With his sister Ruth, he was a regular visitor to the open houses at 17 Mile House where they both had lived previously. At these open houses he delighted in entertaining guests with his piano and vocal renditions of old songs. If he wasn't performing, he was telling guests about his early days at the house. These boyhood memories included his playing cowboy at age 14, when he helped move his father's cattle herd from the old ranch in Greenwood Village to their new home at 17 Mile House. He also told of his frightening the wits out of his mother by running around the top of the silo. As he grew older he contracted polio, which left him without the full use of his left arm and hand (but he didn't let this appreciably affect his piano playing). After watching 17 Mile House transition from an old farmhouse to a refurbished piece of Colorado history, he was able to celebrate his 90th birthday in the old house surrounded by family and friends.

His repertoire ranged from opera to children's songs. Jack's first teaching experience was at the one-room Cherry Creek Elementary School in 1949. He later received a degree in music education from the University of Denver, where he also sang with the Denver Grand Opera Company. After teaching music for a number of years in Kansas, he earned a masters degree from Columbia Teachers College in New York. There he auditioned for the Metropolitan Opera chorus but, since no opening was

available, he taught high school music for a few years. He then began a 21-year appointment at a high school in New York state where he taught choral music, music theory, piano, and voice.

For 20 years Jack was a steady force in the Metropolitan Opera auditions in the Rocky Mountain region; he became a patron of the Met in 1981 and was made Regional Chairman in 1998. After his mother died, he returned to Colorado and taught at Arapahoe Community College. He also became associated with the Morrison Opera Company and performed his own compositions for the Aeolian Music Club. Jack also sang at the dedication of the restored Melvin School in 1982.

His funeral service was held at Denver's First Plymouth Congregational Church, where he had sung for over 20 years and was often a soloist. His funeral announcement says, appropriately, "Song in My Heart."

Our sincere condolences go out to Ruth Race Dolen, Jack's sister who did so much for him in his later years, and to Jack's many family members and friends. Memorial contributions can be made in Jack's name to the 17 Mile House Farm Park; please make checks payable to the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society (CCVHS) with memo to "17 Mile House" and mail to CCVHS, c/o Kevin Sear, 1628 S. Oakland St., Aurora CO 80012.

### **PAT QUICK (1930 - 2019)**

Patricia M. Quick died on March 22, 2019 at the age of 88. She grew up on the family farm nine miles east of Parker. She attended Rattlesnake Hill School and graduated from Parker High School in 1948. In 1949 she married Calvin Quick, who was in the Army at the time and was awaiting orders to Korea. Returning to Colorado, Pat and Cal bought land along Smoky Hill Road in Arapahoe County that had been homesteaded by Cal's maternal grandparents. They ran a dairy for 19 years and then converted it to a beef cattle ranch. They lived there for 49 years, raising three children on that farm. Cal died in 2008.

The Quick family was heavily involved in the Grange and 4-H organizations. Pat was the Colorado State Grange Women's Activities Chairman for several years. While her children were active in 4-H, Pat volunteered at the Arapahoe County Junior Fair in a variety of capacities (including washing cattle).

According to her obituary, Pat was an accomplished seamstress and did outstanding needlework. She won many awards for her embroidery, crocheting, and knitting at the State Grange. She was a needlework judge at many county fairs in the area.

She served for ten years as a trustee on the Arapahoe County Library District Board, and she was proud to help get an Arapahoe County Library at Smoky Hill & Biscay. For 30 years she was on the J.S. Parker Cemetery Board, and for many years she was secretary to the Colorado State Grange Leadership and Scholarship Foundation. Pat had seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

### **NEWS FROM THE 17 MILE HOUSE FARM PARK** by *Karen Sear*

During this summer Arapahoe County Open Spaces completed work on the barn preservation project supported in part by a state preservation grant. Stabilization work included rafter and joist repair, mortise and tenon joint repair, northeast corner brick wall rebuilt, new concrete foundation on part of east wall, rock foundation and footers rebuilt on north wall, rafters reinforced for roof, new roof and skylights installed, exterior walls and fascias repaired or replaced and painted, cistern excavated outside west of barn, and exterior perimeter graded to support drainage of roof runoff. The barn preservation project is vital to ensuring that the building remains an iconic piece of the Cherry Creek landscape for another 100 years. The project was paid for in part by the History Colorado State Historical Fund. Please stop by sometime to see the beautiful "new" barn!

Also, *the Arapahoe County Fall Festival held at 17 Mile House in October will NOT be held in 2019* due to a variety of factors including the upcoming Open Spaces Master Plan update process this fall. Please contact Karen Sear at [ksear@arapahoegov.com](mailto:ksear@arapahoegov.com) or 720-874-6726 with any questions.

### **MARY HIGHTOWER, CLEMENT HIGHTOWER, AND THE 17 MILE HOUSE**

Mary Hightower is remembered as the Colorado pioneer who was the first known resident of 17 Mile House (1866-1870). This house was one of the six roadhouses along Cherry Creek in the 1860s that served travelers on the Smoky Hill/Cherokee Trail. These way stations were named for their distances from Denver (hence "17 Mile" House).

We know that Mary was a widow who resided at 17 Mile House with her son Clement in the late 1860s, but we do not know who built the house or exactly when it was built. A settler named George Schleier owned the land in the early 1860s and was likely the builder of the house, but we cannot prove this. (According to log cores taken in 2003, the original structure was a log cabin

that was constructed in 1860 or later.) Mary Hightower acquired the property by obtaining the warrant that the U.S. government issued to a soldier for his military service in the Mexican War of 1847. The warrant was a Military Bounty Land Certificate that allowed her to purchase the 160 acres of land that included 17 Mile House property. How she obtained the warrant and whether she knew the soldier are not known.

Unfortunately we do not know much about Mary or her time at 17 Mile House. We know that she farmed and also operated 17 Mile House as an inn/tavern/restaurant/hotel; the house was not an official stage stop. Most of what we know about her has been researched and gathered by Susie Trumble in her 2012 *The History of the 17 Mile House Farm Park*, the best and most complete history of the property. Mary was born to William C. and Sarah Dodd (or Doods) sometime between 1832 and 1835 in Arkansas. The 1850 census lists her as an 18-year-old living with her parents and siblings in Washington Township, Arkansas. We don't know her husband's full name, but it appears that Mr. Hightower was from Georgia and married her between 1850 and 1855. Their son Clement was born in Little Rock on November 25, 1858.

Mary's name does not appear in the 1860 census, although that census does show her younger brother William as living in Tarryall in the South Park area. According to Ms. Trumble, the military warrant papers tell us that "The earliest known record of Mary Hightower living in Colorado is August 7, 1866." On September 23, 1867, a witness to the correctness of the warrant papers testified that:

"Mary Hightower was a native born citizen of the United States, over the age of 21 and a widow. She first made settlement on the land August 7, 1866 - a frame house 20 x 25 feet with five windows and five doors, shingle roof - it is a comfortable house to live in. There is also a good stable and a number of out buildings. Nearly the whole of the land is under fence. There is 40 acres of the land under cultivation."

On October 18, 1869, Mary married Civil War veteran Frederick Sanders at the home of the local Justice of the Peace. At the same ceremony her sister Adaline (Adeline) Dodd married Francis E. Hoyt. The 1870 census has Frederick (age 38) and Mary (age 35) living in Arapahoe County; he was a blacksmith and she was a housekeeper. Clement Hightower (age 11) lived with them.

Mary Hightower Sanders used 17 Mile House as collateral to secure a loan. She defaulted on this loan, however, and lost the property in 1870. In his military pension file Frederick says that Mary died in 1882 in Socorro, New Mexico. From his gravestone we know that Clement died in New Mexico in 1931.

CLEMENT HIGHTOWER, PIONEER OF LINCOLN COUNTY,  
DIED IN CATRON COUNTY

Silver City, Aug. 6.—

Clement Hightower, 75, was found dead in bed from heart failure Tuesday morning at his ranch home at Lower Plaza on the San Frisco river, south of Reserve.

The deceased was a member of the State legislature in 1927, and in recent years served as court interpreter in Catron and adjoining counties.

He served as state representative from Lincoln and Socorro counties in the legislature, was a member of the New Mexico Historical Society and his reminiscences have been a valued contribution in compilations of the early history of the southwest.

He was buried at Lower Plaza.

Obituary for Clement Hightower, who died August 4, 1931 in Catron County, New Mexico

(article from *Alamogordo News*, Alamogordo NM, August 6, 1931, p. 11)