



THE QUILL

CHERRY CREEK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Founded in 1975

Volume XLII, No. 4

December, 2016

In This Issue...

- OUR NEXT MEETING
- Capt. Ryland T. Dewey
- Melvin School Student
- Member News
- Anniversaries in 2016
- Melvin School News
- 17 Mile House News
- Learn More About Your Old
Photos by Kirsten Canfield
- Happenings at the
Aurora History Museum

Items of Interest to History Buffs

Back in May Sherrie Wolf reported, "While working in the [Melvin] office I found two beautiful necklaces. Both are made of tiny, tiny beads. One is black and one is pink. The black one has butterfly motifs and is just under two inches wide. The pink one has black insect motifs and is almost two and a half inches wide. They were in a ziplock sandwich baggy without any info or accession numbers." Contact Garry at 303-751-3140 with any information.

If you haven't yet been to the new Parker Library, we highly recommend taking a look. The new building is at 20105 East Mainstreet. This 42,000-square-foot building has much more room for books, multimedia, and meetings than the old library on West Mainstreet and will be the new meeting place for the Parker Area Historical Society. The library is open Monday-Thursday 9:00am-9:00pm, Friday-Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm, and Sunday noon-5:00pm. Douglas County Libraries can be reached at (303) 791-7323.

OUR NEXT MEETING

Time, Place, and Program To Be Determined. You will receive more information about our next meeting in the next Quill or in a separate message. At this meeting we will hold our elections for president, vice-president, and assistant secretary-treasurer of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society. Our current president Garry O'Hara will run for reelection unless someone else wants the job; our current vice-president Peter Faris and assistant secretary-treasurer Will Sear will not be running again. Any dues-paying CCVHS member may run for office. If you wish to run or nominate someone for an office, please contact Garry (303-751-3140).

Our last meeting was a social gathering of CCVHS members at Melvin School on Sunday September 25th. This was a successful Autumn Get-Together that we may schedule as an annual event. Our speaker was our Vice-President Peter Faris, who gave a very interesting and informative presentation on The Little Bighorn from Both Sides. His program told of the 1876 Custer battle as seen through artwork produced by both Native Americans and non-Indians. Peter said that non-Indian art usually attempted to show Custer's heroic troops being defeated by hordes of Indians ("Custer's Last Stand"), whereas Native American art (generally drawn in ledger books) recorded much more accurate depictions of individual skirmishes in the battle. He also pointed out examples of symbolism in the Indian art, such as names of individual Indians and hoof prints representing large numbers of horses. Many thanks, Peter, for an enlightening and entertaining program. We also thank Wynne Shaw for composing and sending the e-card invitations to our members and our assistant secretary-treasurer Will Sear for lending us his expertise with the program's electronics. And we appreciate all of you who made and brought such a great assortment of refreshments. Previous Field Trips

Our last field trip was on August 19th to Tom Watt's collection of historical wagons in Elbert County. About 30 members of CCVHS and the Larkspur Historical Society were there, and many of us agreed that this was one of the best historical exhibits we had ever seen. We also held field trips to "Inscription Rock" on the Perry Park golf course near Larkspur (September 19th) and to the Adams County Museum south of Brighton (October 22nd). Unfortunately these trips were both long drives for our members and were not well attended. In the future we'll try to focus on field trips that are not so far away. One exception to this, we hope, would be a "last trip" next spring to see Tom Watt's wagon museum. (We say "last trip" because Mr. Watt will close his museum and auction off his wagons on June 17th of next year.)

Capt. Ryland T. Dewey - Melvin School Student

As seen in the 1934 class photo below, Ryland Todhunter Dewey (arrow) was about ten years old when he posed with 22 other members of his fifth-grade class of Melvin School; teacher Ruth Ryan is in the center. Ryland's boyhood buddy Edwin Rowland is just to his left in the photo. Edwin, who died in 2003, was a CCVHS member who in 2002 sent us a newspaper clipping (undated, about 1953) that told of Ryland's wartime exploits.



Melvin School Class of 1930

In World War II Capt. Ryland Dewey (Army Air Corps) flew 148 combat missions in Europe as a P-47 fighter pilot, mostly bomber escort and strafing. Several years later in the Korean War, Air Force Capt. Dewey completed 100 missions in the F-86 jet aircraft and shot down one enemy MiG aircraft. The newspaper clipping called this highly decorated airman a "crack pilot."

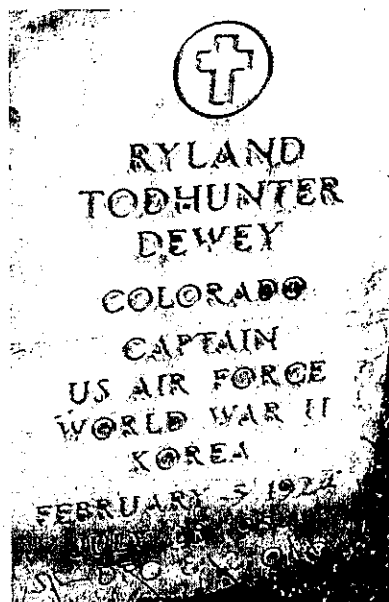
Unfortunately Capt. Dewey died shortly after his service in Korea. He was only 30 years old when he was killed in a flying training accident off the coast of California in 1954. He was buried at Fairmount Cemetery in Denver. His many military awards included the Silver Star and multiple Distinguished Flying Crosses and Air Medals.

Said Edwin, who is buried at Fort Logan National Cemetery, "Surely, all the [Melvin] students contributed much of value to their families and their country."



Capt. Ryland T. Dewey

Ryland Dewey



Ryland Dewey's Gravestone

Melvin School News

Our sincere appreciation goes to Gary Wolf and Herb McKnight who recently did some excellent work at Melvin School. Pictured below are Gary with the dividers and shelving he built for our new map rack and the stand he made for the classroom's dictionary. Also shown below are Herb and Gary next to the Cherry Creek Valley map and frame they painstakingly restored. Great work, Gary and Herb.



Garry Wolf with Map Dividers



Garry Wolf with Dictionary Stand



Gary & Herb with
Cherry Creek Valley Map & Display Case

We also thank Bill Bauer and his crew from Arapahoe County Open Spaces for moving our new display case into Melvin (shown in the photo of Gary and Herb) and for moving the cornerstone of the 1887 Cherry Creek Grange hall from Melvin to the grounds of 17 Mile House.

On October 11-12 we hosted 80 fourth-graders at Melvin Schoolhouse to experience an old-time classroom and history lesson. The students were from four classes at Independence School in Aurora (including member Charles Kastens' class). The academic lessons were conducted by Nita McKnight with the assistance of Shirley Miller; Debbie Wein told the kids how school children were expected to behave in times gone by and she introduced them to the game of dominos; Sherrie Wolf fascinated the kids with a demonstration of old-time toys; and Garry O'Hara told them about the history of Melvin. [Back to Contents](#)

17 Mile House News

This year we hosted more school and adult group visits than ever before! This educational opportunity has been possible due to the passion and dedication of volunteers Bonnie Bowman, Sara Greer and family (thank you Nijah, Hezekiah, and Uriah!), Estee Fraitag, Joan Wills, Kathy Okon, Garry O'Hara, Karen Sear, Charlotte Faris, Nita McKnight, and the Kastens Family (thank you Jackson, Emily, and Paige!). Special thanks go to Nita McKnight for your many hours and amazing creativity designing the new displays in the house this summer! Thanks also to our education partner Casey Davenport with Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners and their volunteers Mary Madsen, Raylene Owen, Mallory Hiss, and Steve Miller. We couldn't do any events at 17 Mile House without the patience and help of Bill Bauer, Derwin Milton, and their staff at Arapahoe County Open Spaces (our sincere thanks!). Visiting groups included our neighbor Red Hawk Ridge Elementary, Ambleside School, Belles & Beaus Academy, American Academy, Innovage, and Prairie Crossing Elementary; and an in-class visit to Dartmouth Elementary.

Several dedicated volunteers represented 17 Mile House at the Arapahoe County Fair in July to share the farm's history with visitors. Sara Greer demonstrated wool spinning and did a hands-on activity for kids of wool dyeing

using Koolaid (!), and Estee Fraitag joined us with her wool spinning and many wool samples for visitors to feel.

A Day of Service was held at the farm on October 8th with the wonderful volunteers from the Piney Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. One project was planting flower bulbs and flowers in the gardens that Derwin Milton and his team prepared. A big "thank you" goes to Derwin and the Piney Creek DAR members Patsy Brehm, Jan Hole, Wynne Shaw, and Martha Wright. The 17 Mile House Farm Park was looking good for its big event of the year, Arapahoe County Open Spaces' 4th annual Fall Festival on October 15th. Over 5000 visitors came to this year's festival. CCVHS members and 17 Mile House Volunteers gave house tours, churned butter, and welcomed guests. Thanks to all of you who contributed to another successful festival including Carol Epps, Vonnie C'deBaca, Katherine Plym, Kathy Okon, Bonnie Bowman, Shirley Miller, Karen and Kevin Sear, Garry O'Hara, the Kastens Family, and honored guests Ruth Dolan and Jack Race.

Please join us for some holiday cheer at the next open house on December 3rd (9:00am to noon). It's a great time to take personal family photos in the house (no professional photography, please). [Back to Contents](#)

Learn More about your Old Photos *by Kirsten Canfield*

Do you have old family photos? Want to learn more about them? At the Arapahoe Libraries, we have resources that can aid you in your detective work!

Photographs of the Past: Process and Preservation by Bertrand Lavédrine A comprehensive introduction to photograph preservation and identification. Covers positives, negatives, and conservation. Each chapter focuses on a single process - daguerreotypes, albumen negatives, black-and-white prints, and so on.

Family Photo Detective: Learn How to Find Genealogy Clues in Old Photos and Solve Family Photo Mysteries by Maureen Alice Taylor offers advice on discovering family information from old photographs, including determining the type of image; dating the image using clothing,

accessories, and hairstyles; and creating context by identifying props in the image.

How to Archive Family Photos: A Step-by-Step Guide to Organize and Share Your Photos Digitally by Denise S. May-Levenick. Offers practical information on how to organize, digitize, preserve, and share treasured family photographs.

Kirsten Canfield, a Multimedia Librarian, is delighted to help with digitizing, identifying, caring for, organizing, and storing old photos and other media. For more information or to book an appointment, email Kirsten at kcanfield@arapahoelibraries.org. The Arapahoe Libraries can be reached at 303-542-7279.

[Back to Contents](#)

Member News

CCVHS welcomes Jennifer Robinson as our newest member. Jennifer lives in Englewood and has expressed an interest in helping with Melvin School and 17 Mile House.

Our condolences go to Ruth Dolan and Jack Race on the death of their sister Jean, who had lived with them at 17 Mile House. Jean died on September 17th in Buena Vista at age 89. Just a week before she had donated many of her girlhood artifacts and toys to the 17 Mile House.

We thank our former treasurer Kevin Sear for re-registering our Society as a non-profit corporation with the Secretary of State of Colorado and for renewing our website with Weebly.

On October 7th Karen Sear, Susan Knapp, and Garry O'Hara attended the autumn meeting of the Eastern Colorado Museums & Historical Societies in Highlands Ranch. These forums are always useful for talking with history-minded people and sharing ideas. We received an excellent tour of Highland Ranch Mansion and a presentation on the State Historical Fund. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday April 9th and will probably be held in Hugo (which was snowed-out last April). All CCVHS members are invited to attend these meetings.

[Back to Contents](#)

Anniversaries in 2016

The City of Aurora celebrated its 125th anniversary this year. Established on April 30, 1891, the city was originally called Fletcher after its founder Donald Fletcher; the name was officially changed to Aurora in 1907. To honor this occasion, 12 special geocaches have been hidden throughout Aurora. You will receive a commemorative coin if you find them all by the end of the year. Go to museum@auroragov.org or auroramuseum.org and follow the steps.

Also 125 years ago Elitch Gardens opened to the public in north Denver. Today, however, only the Elitch Theatre and the merry-go-round enclosure still stand at their original location at 38th & Tennyson. Renovation will continue for several more years, but already limited performances have been held at the theatre. Many well-known performers have appeared in the theatre's summer stock productions. Among them were Douglas Fairbanks, Grace Kelly, and Vincent Price (and even Sarah Bernhardt, considered the greatest actress of her time, appeared here in 1906). According to this August's Denver Post, Christine Crawford (daughter of actress Joan Crawford) "... remembers that there was oxygen backstage for the performers who weren't used to the altitude."

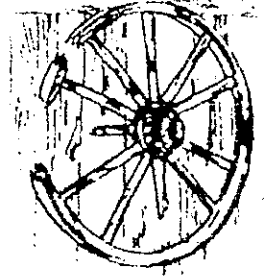
On September 9 of this year the Emily Griffith Opportunity School turned 100 years old. It was originally housed in an old school building at 13th & Welton in Denver. A few years ago it expanded to three Denver campuses and

was renamed the Emily Griffith Technical College. Ms. Griffith was a lifelong educator who said in 1915, "I want the age limit for admission lifted and classes so organized that a boy or girl working in a bakery, store, laundry, or any kind of shop, who has an hour or two to spare, may come to my school and study what he or she wants to learn to make life more useful. The same rule goes for older folks, too. I already have a name for the school. It is 'Opportunity'." Until the end of this year the Denver Public Library (central branch, 5th floor) is displaying photos and artifacts commemorating this centennial

This year the National Park Service is also celebrating its centennial. The nation's first national park was Yellowstone (1872). Today the NPS comprises over 400 scenic and historic properties. Colorado has four national parks: Rocky Mountain National Park (which turned 100 last year), Mesa Verde, the Great Sand Dunes, and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

And, according to Paul Dickson's 1990 book *Timelines*, 2016 marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, Winston Churchill's famous "iron curtain" speech, the first digital computer ENIAC (with 18,000 vacuum tubes!), the bikini swimsuit, and Timex watches (from \$6.95!). In addition, December 7th of this year marks the 75th observance of the attack on Pearl Harbor that led to the U.S. entry into World War II.

[Back to Contents](#)



Address Correction Requested

Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society
16100 East Smoky Hill Road
Aurora, Colorado 80015

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE MELVIN SCHOOL

1922 - The Melvin School was built in the NW1/4 of Section 13, T5S, R67W, Arapahoe County, Colorado on land donated by Hans Dransfeldt. The DeBoer brothers built the school for \$4,450. The original site was at the junction of Belleview Avenue and the old Sullivan Road (now Jordan Road) in Cherry Creek State Park. The school opened in September of 1922.

1949 - Families in the community of Melvin received condemnation papers telling them to move from the area in preparation for the building of the dam. The school was included in this area, and it closed its doors in June of 1949. The building was sold to J. Edwin Stout for \$1,500. He sold it to William Minshall who had it moved to the southwest corner of the intersection of Parker Road and Quincy Avenue (Section 12, T5S, R67W).

1953 - After extensive remodeling, the former schoolhouse opened as the Emerald Isle Tavern on Saint Patrick's Day. Glenn Barrier managed it as Glenn's Emerald Isle Tavern until 1970.

1975 - Five area residents who were interested in local history and in saving the old Melvin School incorporated and became the first Board of Directors of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society, Inc. They persuaded Mr. Silverberg to donate the building to the Society in trade for their moving it elsewhere and leveling the site after the moving of the building. The Society's purpose was to restore the old Melvin School and to use it as a classroom-museum-library for the study and collection of local historical information.

1976 - Cherry Creek School District offered a site on the campus of Smoky Hill High School. It was moved on December 14, 1976.

1977-1981 - With the help of the community, the school district, and the historical society, the Melvin School was restored. The exterior was authentically restored as was one classroom. The second classroom, the one which originally had a stage, was adaptively restored into a museum and a library. A plaque which honors those who helped in the restoration has been engraved with the slogan: "Restored by the Community - For the Community."

1984 - The Melvin School was put on the National Register of Historic Places.

1988 - The City of Aurora honored the Melvin School as Aurora Historic Landmark #1.

The Quill is the quarterly newsletter of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society (CCVHS). The purposes of the Society are to study, record, preserve, and display the history of the Cherry Creek Valley and surrounding areas. Membership is open to anyone interested in this history. Quarterly general meetings are usually held at the Melvin Schoolhouse, 4950 S. Laredo St. (between Smoky Hill High School and Laredo Middle School) in Aurora, Colo. Correspondence concerning *The Quill* should be directed to Garry O'Hara, editor, at (303) 751-3140.

YOU CAN HELP MAKE HISTORY

Collect the past

Preserve the present

Plan for the future