



THE QUILL

CHERRY CREEK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Founded in 1975

Volume XLIII, No. 2

June 2017

NEXT MEETING:

Saturday June 24, 2017

1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Aurora History Museum

15051 E. Alameda Parkway, Aurora 80012

The Study of Tree Rings: A Valuable Historical Tool

by Garry O'Hara

The study of history is under constant revision, and it is this that makes history so interesting and challenging. Every major event that has happened in the past is constantly under scrutiny by both trained historians and untrained hobbyists. For instance, Custer's actions at the Little Bighorn are still hotly debated even though the battle took place 141 years ago! And we may be only one musty old letter away from knowing exactly why Nixon okayed the Watergate break-in. We just have to keep looking hard enough. Good places to look are old log cabins. One of the historian's basic tasks is to find out when some old structures were built and, therefore, when other events occurred. I am not a trained historian, but rather a history buff like you who is fortunate to be involved in this enjoyable but sometimes frustrating avocation. I was "shown the ropes" of the study of tree rings by Loyd Glasier, who was one of our area's most active self-taught dendrochronologists (tree ring specialists). I hope you enjoy this program on one of the tools in the historian's toolbox.

Our Loss of Tom Mee

Longtime member Tom Mee died on April 29, six days before his 92nd birthday. He and his wife Lillian had four sons and two grandchildren. Earlier he had been an active member who served on several CCVHS committees. For many years he and Lillian supplied refreshments for CCVHS meetings. Their son Rick did the original documentation on the Melvin-Lewis Cemetery and got our Society interested in researching this historic place. Contributions in Tom's memory may be made to the elevator fund of the Ave Maria Catholic Parish, 9056 East Parker Road, Parker 80138.

Rescheduling of Field Trips

This month we still hope to have our revisit to the Telecommunications History Museum. And, because of the heat, this year's High Line Canal hike has been moved to September.

Note that *the Louviers field trip has been rescheduled for Friday July 14th* at noon (meet at the Louviers Clubhouse). Since this tour has been snowed out twice, Larkspur Historical Society organizer Jim Weglarz says, "Hopefully, we will avoid a tornado, plague of locusts, or whatever else that can provide a weather difficulty." And, speaking of events that have been snowed out twice, the "spring" meeting of the Eastern Colorado Museums and Historical Societies has been rescheduled for Saturday October 7th in Hugo.

You'll receive separate emails as to details and directions for these tours. Contact me with any questions (gohara46@aol.com, 303-751-3140).

Members News

We welcome new CCVHS members *Sue and Ken Brunk* and *Ellie Seligmann*. The Brunks would like to volunteer at 17 Mile House. And Ellie is interested in digitizing sound files and scanning documentation.

And we heartily congratulate *Lee Whiteley* for earning the National History Award from the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution. This is a most well-deserved honor. Lee's seminal book *The Cherokee Trail* is on sale at any CCVHS function.

17 Mile House News

It has been very busy at 17 Mile House this spring. Thanks to extensive promotion of the Open House in March by Arapahoe County Communications, we had a large turnout of over 500 visitors that morning! That same day we hosted a visit from the Ghost Town Club of Colorado and were able to express our thanks again for their financial donation last year and show them how we used the money to purchase light-blocking window shades in the house. Volunteers gave their time generously for this event and we appreciate all the efforts of the Kastens family, the Sear family, Wynne Shaw, Carol Epps, Jan Weber, Sara Greer and family, Bonnie Bowman, Katherine Plym, Ruth Dolan, Jack Race, and Elaine Plym. Special thanks to Shirley Miller for nominating us for the Ghost Town Club preservation donation and planning the field trip, and to Garry O'Hara for speaking to the group and giving them a special tour of the property.

We had a large increase of school groups visiting 17 Mile House this spring. In cooperation with the Open Spaces staff and the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners and volunteers, we hosted 7 school groups for a total of about 480 students. A very informative article with photos was published in the *Denver Post Your Hub* in early May showing the rising popularity of school groups visiting 17 Mile House. Thank you especially to volunteers Bonnie Bowman, the Greer family, the Kastens family, Karen Sear, Sue Brunk, Mary Madsen, and Kathy Okon for helping inspire history for these elementary students! We all look forward to some rest and relaxation before the summer open houses, and don't forget the Fall Festival on October 14th!

The Volunteers sincerely thank the Arapahoe County Open Space staff for providing lunch and the Sear family for providing dessert for the second annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic at 17 Mile House on June 2nd. Thank you also, Karen, for presenting each Volunteer with a souvenir coffee cup as a way of saying thanks.

Open houses for the rest of the year are scheduled for July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14 (Fall Fest), November 11, and December 2. All are on Saturdays from 9:00am to noon.

Independence Day: July 4th or July 2nd?

One day in the year 1776 the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* stated, "This day the Continental Congress declared the United Colonies Free and Independent States." But "this day" was July 2nd, not July 4th! That same day John Adams wrote to his wife, "The Second of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival... It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games and sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore." So why do we celebrate the Fourth of July instead of the Second of July?

John Adams and others were celebrating July 2nd because that is the day on which the Continental Congress adopted the resolution that delegate Richard Henry Lee had proposed a month earlier for inclusion in the Declaration of Independence: "Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.... That a plan of confederation be prepared and transmitted to the respective colonies for their consideration and approbation." This was a direct call for separation from Britain, but the votes at this point were "test votes."

It is interesting to note that not all of the thirteen colonies were in favor of this resolution at first. Four colonies voted against it when it was brought up for a vote on July 1st. On July 2nd three of these four delegations came around to supporting the resolution, leaving only New York abstaining (awaiting the outcome of a referendum of its citizens). Since the New York citizens were expected to vote in favor of separation from Britain, July 2, 1776 was initially considered to be the date on which the Continental Congress *unofficially adopted* the resolution to declare America's independence.

But on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was *officially approved* by the Continental Congress (with New York still abstaining). The first U.S. Independence Day commemoration was

held a year later on the Fourth of July, 1777 in Philadelphia and has been observed on that day ever since.

Origin of the Name "Cherry Creek"

According to an early CCVHS brochure, "Cherry Creek originates in the Black Forest of northern El Paso County of Colorado. It flows through Douglas and Arapahoe counties and continues through downtown Denver before joining the South Platte River at Confluence Park." Since Cherry Creek was so important to pioneers for water, firewood, forage, and navigation, "the Creek" has been one of the most important waterways in Colorado history and certainly Denver history.

But where did the name "Cherry Creek" come from? The inaugural edition of the *Quill* (which appeared in September 1975) gives the answer. The opening paragraph of this first edition was a quote from the textbook *Colorado, The Land and the People*: "[Before Colorado was settled] the tongue of land formed by the junction of Cherry Creek with the [South] Platte River was a green spot with cottonwoods lining the banks of the Platte. Wild chokecherry bushes, white with blossoms in the spring or black in the fall, bent over the creek's water and suggested the name Cherry Creek."

The chokecherry is sometimes called the "bitter fruit." The berry is astringent to the mouth and has a taste that has been described as both sour and bitter at the same time. It should usually be eaten raw only when it is very ripe (black or dark purple in autumn). Consequently, its main uses are to make jams and syrups (provided you add sugar to balance the tart flavor) and some kinds of wine. To Native Americans this was a primary source of fruit in their diets, and the bark of the chokecherry shrub had some medicinal value.

Chokecherry bushes grow wild above 4000 feet in altitude and are mildly drought tolerate. Because archeologists have found the remains of the chokecherry in the Dakotas more than anywhere else, it has been named the state fruit of North Dakota. The large bush (or small tree, take your pick) immediately southeast of the 17 Mile House is a chokecherry. Chokecherries are shown on the next page.



Modernizing Old Audiovisual Media

by Kirsten Canfield

Multimedia Librarian and technology specialist Kirsten Canfield is now working with patrons at the Smoky Hill Library in addition to the Southglenn Library. She can be reached at Arapahoe Libraries (303-792-8999 ext 13100). As listed below, she will be conducting several upcoming programs that should be of interest to CCVHS members.

Do you have old media lying around collecting dust? Want to learn how to digitize those old photographs, VHS tapes, slides, audio cassette tapes, and vinyl records to share with family or friends? Come learn the hows and whys of digitization, and guard your precious memories against the tides of time! Kirsten will present *Digitize Your Old Media* at the following locations and times:

Southglenn Library, Thursday July 27 at 6:00pm
Smoky Hill Library, Wednesday September 13 at 6:30pm.

Kirsten will present *Get Started with Genealogy* at the Smoky Hill Library, Wednesday August 9 at

6:00pm. Interested in discovering your roots? Learn how to get started with genealogy in this class for beginners! We'll discuss common information sources, starting points, and popular tools for you to use in your family history journey.

Our Visit to the American Museum of Western Art

Ten of us enjoyed the American Museum of Western Art in Denver's Navarre Building on March 20th. We were privileged to experience where "art and history come together," where the paintings (according to the informative Gallery Guide) "tell a tale of how art has evolved in the American West at the same time that the region was dramatically transformed." The Gallery Guide states, "The artwork on display represents a cross section of paintings that survey the art of the American West from the early 19th century through the age of industrialization and up to the present." Displayed on the four floors of this excellent museum are works by George Catlin, Albert Bierstadt, Frederic Remington, John Mix Stanley, Charles Deas, Charles Russell, Ernest Blumenschein, Gutzon Borglum, Georgia O'Keeffe, Thomas Hart Benton, Alfred Jacob Miller, William Dodge, William Tylee Ranney, and many others. We viewed works by the Taos Society of Artists and American expressionists and abstract expressionists. This is truly one of the finest collections of U.S. Western art in the world.

The Navarre Building is a treasure in itself to walk through. Designed by renowned Denver architect Frank Edbrooke in 1880, this Victorian-era historic landmark has served as a girls' school and college, hotel, restaurant, and jazz club. It's located across Tremont Place from the Brown Palace, and legend has it that these two buildings were once joined by a tunnel through which "sporting gentlemen" could pass.

The museum is now open on Fridays (in addition to Mondays and Wednesdays). Self-guided tours are free from 10:00am to 4:30pm on the first Friday of each month this summer. For details call 303-293-2000.

**THE FOLLOWING IS A REASONABLY
COMPLETE LISTING OF HISTORY-
RELATED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
SLATED FOR THIS SUMMER IN &
AROUND THE CHERRY CREEK VALLEY**

Happenings at the Aurora History Museum

Through July 9th the museum is featuring *From Manufacturing to Marketplace*. Aurora's Stanley Aviation (2501 Dallas St.) was a leader in aerospace and manufacturing for over 50 years. Find out what made Stanley successful and learn about the new community-based marketplace that embraces Stanley's history of innovation. Plus on every Sunday during the Stanley exhibit, you are invited to test your problem-solving skills by following a prompt ("Innovation at Stanley Aviation") to create and innovate in the spirit of local aviation pioneer Robert Stanley or experiment with your own idea. Stanley Marketplace Tours will be given Tuesdays through July 11th. Tours start at 4:30pm at the north entrance of the marketplace (2501 Dallas St.). On this walking tour you will hear the unique and eccentric stories of this place that has been designated an Aurora historic landmark.

Showing at the Aurora History Museum through July 23rd is *The Doctor Will See You*. Practicing medicine in Aurora has changed greatly since the early 20th Century, evolving from individual practices in private homes to medical clinics to hospitals in the 1970s. Explore how Aurora doctors went beyond health care to make significant contributions to their community.

Two other exhibits are of special interest: Showing from August 8th through September 20th is *Write Our World: Crawford Elementary School*. This exhibit features stories by Crawford immigrant refugee students telling of their journeys to the U.S. (produced in conjunction with the Write Our World project). From July 11th to September 22nd is *Picture Me Here: Stories of Hope and Resilience by Immigrants and Refugees*, which displays the work of displaced and marginalized communities and features the photography of Aurora resident and former Congo resident Goshen Carmel.

Don't miss the museum's Fourth of July Spectacular on Tuesday July 4th at 6:00-9:00pm. The

lawn in front of the museum will feature live music, delicious food, and a fireworks display that is one of the best in Colorado; bring lawn chairs. (The museum closes one hour before this event ends.) If you want to volunteer, contact Jessica Lira at jlira@auroragov.org or 303-739-6663. And the annual Global Fest will take place on Saturday August 19th at 1:00-9:00pm to celebrate Aurora as one of the most ethnically diverse cities in America. (The museum closes one hour before this event ends.)

Aurora's new historic preservation specialist Drake Brownfield will conduct walking tours of early Aurora from 2:00 to 3:00pm on Sundays June 18, July 16, and August 13. There is no charge for these tours which start at Centennial House (1671 Galena St.). Historic DeLaney Farm (170 S. Chambers Rd.) will be open free-of-charge from 10:00am to 2:00pm on Saturdays June 17; July 1, 15, and 29; and August 12 and 26. Explore Aurora's agricultural roots with a summer full of demonstrations and special programs (but check with Jessica Lira or visit the website for details, special fees, and group information). And Aurora's 1890 Centennial House (1671 Galena St.) will be open free-of-charge from 11:00am to 2:00pm on Sundays June 18; July 2, 16, and 30; and August 13 and 27.

The museum's popular Brown Bag Lecture takes place on the third Wednesday of the month from noon to 1:00pm. Cost is \$4 (\$3 for Aurora residents) or free for members of the Aurora Historical Society, which sponsors this lecture series. Bring your own lunch. The Brown Bag Lectures this summer are:
June 21 - Southwest (Santero) Art with Dr. James Cordova of the Univ. of Colorado
July 19 - Front Range Anthropology and Archeology with Dr. Jonathan Kent of Metro State U.
August 16 - Digital Anthropology Collections with Dr. Esteban Gomez of the Univ. of Denver

The Aurora History Museum is located at 15051 E. Alameda Parkway (one mile east of I-225) in Aurora 80012. Hours are Tuesday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm, Saturday-Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm, closed Monday. For more information contact the museum at 303-739-6660 or visit auroramuseum.org. General admission to the museum is always free.

Presentation on the 10th Mountain Division

Everyone is invited to attend the next quarterly program of the Larkspur Historical Society. This will be a presentation by Dennis Hagen titled *10th Mountain Division: Climb to Glory* at 1:00pm on Saturday July 22nd. This free presentation will be held at the Philip S. Miller Library, 100 S. Wilcox, in Castle Rock (see poster).

The 10th was created in World War II to conduct mountain and winter warfare. The division trained at Camp Hale near Leadville before deploying to the mountains of Italy. Although it entered combat late in the war, it sustained some of the most casualties of any unit of comparable size and duration in the war and played a significant role in breaking through the Nazi defenses in northern Italy. Almost every ski resort in the U.S. today can trace its roots to a member of the 10th Mountain Division.

For several years Dennis Hagen was the official archivist for the extensive 10th Mountain Division documents at the Denver Public Library. From this he gained an extensive knowledge of the history of the unit and wrote *It All Began at Camp Hale* in 2012.

Programs at the Four Mile Historic Park

The Four Mile Historic Park will host an Independence Celebration from 5:00 to 10:00pm on Saturday July 1st. There will be live music, old-fashioned games, historic demonstrations, and horse-drawn wagon rides. Food trucks and a beer garden will be on site. As they say, "You only turn 241 once." Bring a blanket and stick around for the Glendale fireworks. Admission is free but there is a charge for food and some activities. Sorry, not allowed are pets, outside food/beverages, smoking/cannabis, fireworks, sparklers, or other flammables. (Last entry to the park is at 9:00pm.)

The second Friday of every month is a free day (no admission fee from noon to 4:00pm). House tours are at 12:30, 1:30, and 2:30pm.

The Four Mile Historic Park is located at 715 S. Forest St., Denver (720-865-0800, FourMilePark.org or info@fourmilepark.org).

Exhibitions at Other Museums

The History Colorado Center and the Denver Art Museum have collaborated to present a unique exhibit titled *Backstory: Western American Art in Context*. The exhibit pairs over 50 famous paintings of western American art (all loaned from the Denver Art Museum) with historical artifacts that help link the paintings to the artists, themes, and time frames. According to John Wenzel in the March 18 *Denver Post*, "It's all about reference points - anything, really, that puts this art in context.... The exhibit ... tells the history of human impact on the idealized landscapes, but it's also laid out like an art gallery - with plenty of open space between pieces that lets them command individual, considered attention." This exhibit is held at the Colorado History Center and runs through next February. Call 303-447-8679 for more information or visit historycoloradocenter.org.

Another multimedia exhibit is showing separately at the Denver Art Museum through September 30th. This is *The Western: An Epic in Art and Film*, which depicts the history of western movies and the artwork and backgrounds that made them memorable. Call 720-865-5000 or visit denverartmuseum.org.

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science is featuring *Vikings: Beyond the Legend* through August 13th. According to the museum's spring issue of *Catalyst*, "Fresh insights revealed through new archeological discoveries and more than 500 treasures show why the Vikings will always capture our imagination." Call 303-370-6000 for reservations or visit dmns.org/vikings.

Neither CCVHS nor 17 Mile House will be officially represented at this year's Arapahoe County Fair, but you all are invited to this family-oriented event July 27-30. Volunteers are still needed for many official functions at the fair; if you're interested, contact Nira Duvan at 303-738-7938 or nduvan@arapahoegov.com



Larkspur Historical Society *presents* Dennis Hagen...

10th Mountain Division

Climb to Glory



Dennis Hagen

July 22, 2017 1:00PM

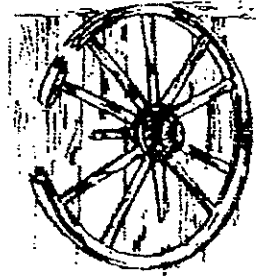
**FREE to the
General Public**

**Philip S. Miller Library
100 South Wilcox
Castle Rock, Colorado**

Larkspur Historical Society
www.larkspurhistoricalsociety.org

...the voice of history for southern Douglas County and Divide Country





Address Correction Requested

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

On May 27th the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society made its final visit to the outstanding wagon museum at the Tom Watt ranch. Shown in this photo, Tom has been a gracious host for the past two summers and is a superb tour guide. Unfortunately, his entire inventory will be auctioned off on June 17th. We are privileged to have seen this collection and heard Tom's expert commentary.



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