

Volume XIII Number 2

August 2019 through November 2019

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Palmer Lake Historical Society

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Mark your 2019 Calendar!

Coming on August 3rd

CHAUTAUQUA CELEBRATES RAILROAD DAYS IN PALMER LAKE

Free admission

Layouts, Exhibits, Presentations, Music

Special Library Ice Cream Social

Program and Event Schedule: August 2019 – November 2019

August 3, 2019, 10AM – 3PM – Special Event – Chautauqua celebrates "Railroad Days in Palmer Lake"

September 19, 2019, 7:00 PM – "Outlaws in Colorado" – Bethany Bonser

October 17, 2019, 7:00 PM – "Pioneers and Long Ago Communities of the USAFA" – Jack Anthony

November 21, 2019, 7:00 PM – "On a Wildflower Excursion: Colorado Midland's Finest" – Mel McFarland

Making history more than a memory!

Contributing to this issue:

Roger Davis Michele Lawrie-Munro
Mike & Sigi Walker

Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!

A Newsletter of the

Palmer Lake Historical Society

and the

Lucretia Vaile Museum

The Story of the Transcontinental Railroad: But Did You Know There Is a Colorado Connection?

The day is May 10, 1869. You can cut the excitement with a knife. The large crowd includes railroad dignitaries, political figures, track workers, and curious onlookers. Union Pacific's Engine No. 119 and Central Pacific's *Jupiter* have pulled up, stopping only inches apart. With all the ceremony of a wedding, the Reverend John Todd officiates as three spikes are driven: one gold, one silver, and one a mix of gold, silver, and iron. As the last rail is laid and the Golden Spike is driven, the band strikes up, and champagne flows.

Right: "Lost" Spike, missing until 2005, California State RR Museum.

Mike Walker photo



In May of 2019, 150 years since the ceremony that culminated years of planning, surveying, and construction, we again celebrate this achievement. Below is the famous May 10, 1869, A. J. Russell photograph of the Golden Spike Ceremony at Promontory Summit, Utah, taken after the ceremony concluded. It does not include the Chinese workers because they were being honored by the Central Pacific management, dining in Chief Engineer J. H. Strobridge's railroad car.



Celebrating completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad. At center left, Samuel S. Montague of the CP shakes hands with Grenville M. Dodge of the UP (center right).

In the end, the effect was dramatic: The railroad reduced travel time across the continent from around 4 months to less than 4 days!

The Players

Union Pacific Railroad (UP)

Sidney Dillon, President
Thomas C. Durant, Vice-President
Oaks Ames, Financier
Oliver Ames, Financier
Grenville M. Dodge, Chief Engineer
John S. Casement, Const. Supervisor
Samuel B. Reed, Const. Superintendent

Central Pacific Railroad (CP)

Leland Stanford, President
Collis P. Huntington, Vice-President
Mark Hopkins, Treasurer
Charles Crocker, Construction
Theodore B. Juda, Surveyor/Engineer
Samuel S. Montague, Chief Engineer
James H. Strobridge, Chief Engineer

(continued on page 4)

President's Message



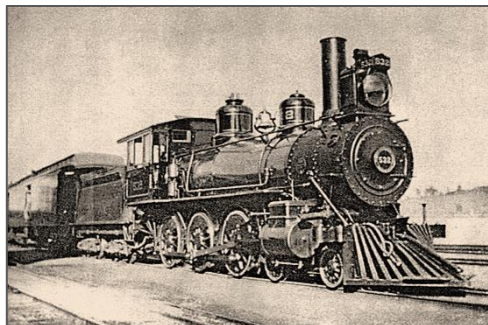
Greetings! I'm excited to report that the PLHS Board completed strategic planning and agreed its number one priority is to focus on growing membership and engaging volunteers for sustainability.

So, don't be surprised if you receive a call or email to follow-up on your generous offers to contribute to the organization's success! And, if you have yet to engage, please let us know how we can best use your skills.

Additionally, we're happy to report that, for the second year, *The Independent* newspaper has chosen PLHS as one of 100 Pikes Peak area non-profits to participate in their Give! Campaign. It will run November 1 - December 31 and help raise funds to sustain our recent enhancements, including a new online face for the organization this fall. You will be able to purchase gifts and publications electronically (we hope to have the popular *Sabin's Palmer Lake: A Historical Narrative* available again in time for holiday gift giving) and to join or renew memberships easily and securely. And, the museum will get a facelift, too! A new TV has been installed to play historic films and access the internet. Finally, volunteers are hard at work refreshing merchandising, purging storage, and upgrading drainage.

We hope you will join us for one of our popular Third Thursday history programs - please pick up a schedule of events. In the meantime, if you have feedback or ideas, please email me at PLHSPresident@gmail.com.

Michele Lawrie-Munro



Denver & Rio Grande No. 532 at Palmer Lake in 1899. The 4-6-0 wheel arrangement made it highly useful for fast inter-city passenger service.

THEN AND NOW: Tri-Lakes Photos from the Past and Present

The completion in August of 1870 of the transcontinental route through Denver brought increased interest in the Palmer Divide area. The D&RG arrived in Palmer Lake in 1871. Residents could now connect to transcontinental passenger trains on the D&RG RR, and, after 1888, the Rock Island RR. And, tourists could connect via these passenger trains to the "Divide." The Santa Fe RR built through in the summer of 1887.

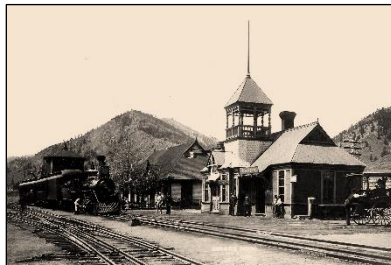
To give readers an idea of what this area looked like at this time, below are Lucretia Vaile Museum photos of the Palmer Divide area ca 1880s and 1890s.



First Glen House Hotel 1884 - the original structure noted for its charm



Built by W. F. Thompson in 1884; served as D&RG station agent's home and post office; purchased by McIntyre family in 1898



D&RG Depot (moved to Palmer Lake in 1882) and Judd Eating House ca 1894



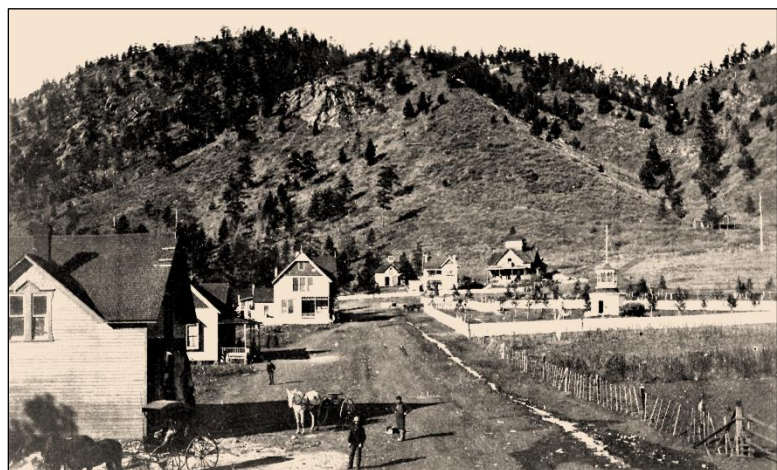
First Schoolhouse donated in 1888 to Palmer Lake by W. F. Thompson



The Rockland Hotel, circa 1893, built by W.F. Thompson's Hotel and Sanitarium Co. and burned to the ground in 1920 gas explosion



Santa Fe Depot located on east side of lake with Harvey's Lunchroom ca 1889



"Main Street" Palmer Lake ca 1887. Photo shows, left to right, the Pillsbury Store, the McIntyre cottage, the Glen House, Deer Park, and the first Estemere House before the mansion was built

Upcoming PLHS Programs and Events August 2019 through November 2019

Social Hour at 6:30 PM, Presentations begin at 7:00 PM in the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent Street

Saturday, August 3, 2019, 10 AM - 3PM

SPECIAL EVENT



CHAUTAUQUA CELEBRATES RAILROAD DAYS IN PALMER LAKE

Celebrating the 150th Anniversary Year of the Transcontinental Railroad.

During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the legislation authorizing the building of the transcontinental railroad. On May 10, 1869, a large crowd of dignitaries, political figures, track workers, and curious onlookers watched as Union Pacific's Engine No. 119 and Central Pacific's *Jupiter* stopped, facing each other, only inches apart. After the last rail was laid and the Golden Spike was driven, the band struck up and champagne flowed.

Fast forward to January 1872 when General Palmer's Denver & Rio Grande railroad began serving Palmer Lake. The Santa Fe railroad would follow, arriving in 1887. Palmer Lake became a busy place, with the depot agent maintaining train registers and issuing dispatcher's orders to steady streams of the two railroads' north- and south-bound passenger and freight trains. Today, Palmer Lake continues to draw railfans and casual observers as long trains of loaded and empty coal cars rumble through the town on their way up to or down from the Palmer Divide, on what is today called the "Joint Line."



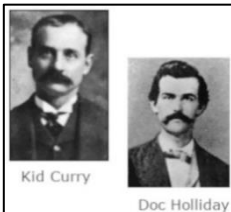
Join us for model railroad layouts, railroad history presentations, pioneer arts and crafts displays, wildlife display, gold panning, activities for children, walking tours, and music. And, don't miss the Friends of the Tri-Lakes Library annual ice cream social from 1:00 to 2:30 PM.

Note: All activities are free and open to the public.



Thursday, September 19, 2019 – "Outlaws in Colorado"

Presenter: Bethany Bonser

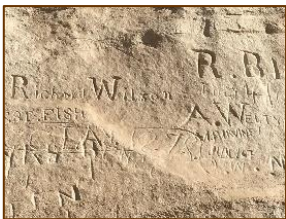


Two of the most famous Wild West outlaws found their final resting place in Glenwood Springs, Colorado. Doc Holliday, the consumptive dentist from Georgia, was with the Earp brothers at the Gunfight at the OK Corral; while Harvey "Kid Curry" Logan, who rode with Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, was known by some as the "wildest of the Wild Bunch."

Bethany Bonser lives in Palmer Lake and is a 10th grade student at Discovery Canyon Campus, an avid history student, and a frequent volunteer at PLHS events. She will share little known facts about these two outlaws, their lawless associates, and other Colorado outlaws.

Thursday, October 17, 2019 – "Pioneers and Long Ago Communities of the USAFA"

Presenter: Jack Anthony



Learn about the communities which once thrived on what is today the U.S. Air Force Academy: Edgerton, "The Husteds," and small "whistle stops." Some of these long-ago pioneers carved their names in stone on Cathedral Rock, but who were they? Jack will also give a short review of the history of the Palmer Lake Star, celebrating its 84th year of shining from Sundance Mountain.

Jack Anthony, a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, has served in various military, intelligence, and NASA roles as an engineer, educator, leader, and operator. Jack successfully spear-headed the effort to list the Palmer Lake Star on the State Register of Historic Properties.

Thursday, November 21, 2019 – "On a Wildflower Excursion: Colorado Midland's Finest"

Presenter: Mel McFarland



Take a ride with Mel McFarland from Colorado Springs to South Park on the Colorado Midland Railway's famous "Wildflower Excursion." He will tell the history of the train – it wasn't originally run to see wildflowers! Mel will include period photographs, some of which he recently discovered. And learn why there are today so few wildflowers left in the wild along the Midland's former route.

Mel McFarland is a historian, railroader, retired teacher, and author of numerous railroad books and publications. His historical columns appear in Westside Pioneer, Fountain Valley News, Ute Pass Courier, and other newspapers.

The Story of the Transcontinental Railroad (continued from page 1)

Portions excerpted from Wikipedia:

Promontory Summit in the 1870s.

Promontory was the site of Promontory City during and shortly after the construction of the transcontinental railroad. However, by December 1869, the shops, tents, and store fronts were being dismantled as the traders and merchants moved to other towns. In January 1870, the train crews from the CP and UP had been relocated to Ogden, Utah, where Union Station had effectively become the meeting point of the two railroads. Promontory Station had a CP station agent and telegraph operator, a Chinese section gang, and gravel train crew. By June 1870, the population at Promontory Summit had been reduced to about 40 people. Most were employees of the CP railroad. The only exceptions were a hotel/eatery owner, his family, and a miner.

The CP carried out extensive redevelopment of the rail infrastructure on Promontory Summit. The track was realigned, a roundhouse and turntable were built, and a freight depot and locomotive yard were added. It also gained extensive support facilities for workers, including a railroad eating stop, engine helper station, and quarters for the Chinese section crew.

In the final decades of the 19th century, Promontory Station was used by large ranching firms, such as those of Charles

Crocker, John W. Kerr, and John L. Edwards, to ship their cattle to the stockyards in San Francisco and Chicago. At the turn of the 20th century, wheat farmers had begun to change the landscape around Promontory with farms and families. Promontory had a one-room school, as well as a commercial store/post office; it had become the main crossroads stop for small farms. However, during the droughts of the 1930s, individual farmers moved away from Promontory, leading to the consolidation of the land holdings.

Decline of Promontory Summit

After 35 years of continuous use, longer and heavier trains needed a more direct route – across the Great Salt Lake! In 1885, the Southern Pacific, having acquired the Central Pacific, built a wooden railroad trestle across the lake. The old steel rails were removed at Promontory and used for the war effort. An “unspiking” ceremony was held on September 8, 1942.

In the 1950s, a parallel concrete-stone causeway replaced the wood trestle, now used as a backup. More than 38,000 fir trees and 2 million board feet of redwood had gone into the trestle. By the 1980s, it had seriously deteriorated. The wood is being removed, salvaged, and repurposed by Trestlewood Division of Cannon Structures.



Railway & Locomotive Historical Society members re-enactment with replicas of the CP's *Jupiter* and UP's *No. 119*
Sigi Walker photo

But what about the Colorado connection?

Promontory Summit marks the site where the First Transcontinental Railroad was officially completed. However, a direct coast-to-coast rail journey on this route was not achieved until 1873. By September 1869, the Mossdale Bridge connecting Sacramento, California, to the network had been completed. But, until the Union Pacific Missouri River Bridge was built in 1873, passengers had to cross the Missouri River by boat between Council Bluffs, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska.

Meanwhile - - - the first, uninterrupted, coast-to-coast railroad was completed on August 15, 1870 at Strasburg, Colorado, with the completion of the Denver extension of the Kansas Pacific Railway.

Lucretia Vaile Museum Hours:
 Saturday 10 AM–2 PM all year
 Wednesday 1–3 PM September–May
 Wednesday 1–4 PM June–August
 1st Thursday of month: 10 AM–noon
 Tours: Call 559-0837 and leave message

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
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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

