

## President's Message to the Membership...

As another year draws to a close, I'd like to thank the members of the Board of Directors, the Museum Director and Docents, and the volunteers for their contributions in helping the Historical Society fulfill its goal of making history more than a memory for the residents of the Palmer Divide.

The Board of Directors and the Museum Director continue steps to move the Historical Society forward.



AL WALTER

These include streamlining administration of the organization, scheduling unique and informative programs and "special" events, scheduling activities with the Pikes Peak Coalition of Museums, adding and updating exhibits in the Museum, involving history classes in local schools in our activities, and creating a new look for our

newsletter.

We appreciate your support of our museum and the programs and events sponsored by the Historical Society. However, these activities do not just happen - they are planned and executed by volunteers from the Historical Society who want to share the unique history of this area with our local residents.

For us to continue our programs, activities, and events we urgently need your help. Although your membership dues and donations help fund our activities, we need volunteers to help setup and coordinate the various programs and activities we sponsor and administer the operations of the Historical Society.

It won't take much of your time, but what time you can offer will ensure we can continue providing family-oriented, informative, history-related activities. If you can volunteer, even if it's for just a few hours, please call 719-559-0525 and leave your name and telephone number.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your President. Please "heed the call" and volunteer to serve on the Board for 2013, help with refreshments or setup at the monthly programs, or help organize some of our activities. Our annual membership meeting and potluck is scheduled for January 17th. Please come and show your support for the Historical Society. Until then, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish each of you Happy Holidays and a Joyous New Year!

—Al Walter

**Annual PLHS Potluck  
January 17, at 6:30 p.m.  
Palmer Lake Town Hall  
Come one. Come all!**

## Harry Krueger, Keeper of the Star

In preparing the Palmer Lake Star nomination for the Colorado Registry of Historic Places, I interviewed Harry Krueger. I'd like to share some of the highlights of my chat with a Palmer Lake hero. I wish to dedicate this article to Margot, Harry's bride of 56 years who passed away on November 11, 2012.

Harry's dad, Jesse, was one of the original Palmer Lake citizens who built the star in 1935. Since 1973, Harry has guarded and cared for the Palmer Lake Star from his Highland Road home at the base of Sundance Mountain. He was a key leader in the Palmer Lake Bicentennial project that gave the star new life as they replaced the wooden posts with galvanized steel posts and updated the electrical system.

Harry's role as a caretaker and keeper of the star goes way back to his childhood. In the 1940's and early 1950's, Harry and his brothers, Orville and Kenny, would be dispatched to the mountain to replace light bulbs and keep the star shining each December.



Jack Anthony

On one occasion, Orville discovered a neighborhood boy who was a remarkable marksman using the light bulbs as his targets.

They approached the youngster and informed him that in lieu of them turning him over to the sheriff, he was now on the Krueger light bulb team. The marksman was at first reluctant, but after some persuasion, the team grew by one!

Harry would leave Palmer Lake in 1953 and serve 20-years in the Army. He returned in 1973 and resumed caring for the star.

Harry described how fortunate the community



(L-R) Harry Krueger, Jack Anthony, and Travis Coleman, standing in front of the Palmer Lake star.

was to have Colonel Carl Duffner leading the 1976 project and seeking support from the El Pomar Foundation to help fund the effort. Harry recalls many Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department members who kept the star shining.

He also shares  
—Next column, lower end

## Lucretia Vaile Museum, Note From the Director

The museum honors all veterans by mounting a permanent exhibit devoted to the service and sacrifice of those who have served out country so ably and well. This exhibit includes a slide show spanning all major wars and conflicts, from the Revolutionary War through Iraq and Afghanistan.



Roger Davis

The photographs cover the unimaginable devastation, the heroic deeds and the mundane day to day existence of the Soldier, Sailor, Airman, and Marine.

Artifacts on display include a diorama of U.S. and German tanks in battle, a warning leaflet, dropped by the thousands over Japanese cities, encouraging evacuation prior to U.S. B-29 bombers dropping incendiary bombs, and an artillery shell time-fuse.

Other items on view are a pair of "Bunny Boots" of the type worn by Colorado's 10th Mountain Division, specializing in winter warfare. There is also a "Mae West" airman's inflatable life vest. A bayonet war-souvenir from an AK-47 assault rifle may be seen as well as a compass orienting guide from WWII that was given troops to introduce the skill needed to get from one place to another using maps and compass.

We will soon be adding a faithful, non-firing, replica of the famous Colt model 1911, .45 caliber pistol which has seen service with our military from WWI to the present.

Come; see these items and many other displays every Saturday from 10 AM until 2 PM at the Vaile Museum located in Palmer Lake.

by Roger Davis, Director

## Harry Krueger, cont'd...

a story that just might be true. Seems in 1935, Jesse and his friends got to thinking Palmer Lake could not be outdone by Castle Rock's big star. Thus the Palmer Lake Star project began and today we benefit from this competitive bunch.

Harry says the story is true... maybe so, he sure has me convinced. How 'bout you?

Photo and story by Jack Anthony

**Museum Hours  
10-2 p.m. Saturday**

**June through August  
1-4 p.m. Wednesday**

**Palmer Lake Historical Society**

**Board of Directors 2012**

- President - Al Walter**
- President Emeritus - Phyllis Bonser**
- Vice President - John Snyder**
- Secretary - Maggie Williamson**
- Treasurer - Barbara Arbuthnot**
- Museum Director - Roger Davis**

**Directors-at-Large 2012**

- Georgia Follansbee**
- Pat McCarthy**
- Jack Anthony**
- Gary Coleman**

**Tours of local historic sites...**

On occasion, we have the opportunity to tour local historic sites or attend special exhibits and demonstrations involving restored buildings and equipment. Most of these tours are free - you only need to arrange your transportation to the site.

For example, we have the opportunity to have a special private tour by Douglas County Restoration Specialists of Prairie Canyon Ranch, an historic working cattle ranch, and a demonstration of a working blacksmith forge similar to those used over a hundred years ago.

As we identify these opportunities, we would like to share them with you. These tours might be scheduled during the week or on Saturday or Sunday.

We are assembling a list of individuals to contact about these events. If you would like to be included on the notification list, please send your name, email address, and/or telephone number to Al Walter, wldrdr@hotmail.com.

**Palmer Lake Historical Society**

**Contributing Writers**

- Jack Anthony
- Dan Edwards
- Roger Davis
- Dee Kirby
- Bernard Minetti
- Al Walter

(Your name could be here, too!)

**Palmer Lake Historical Society**

publishes this newsletter at  
 P.O. Box 662  
 66 Lower Glenway  
 Palmer lake, CO 80133-0662

Layout and Editing: Bernard L. Minetti

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 are made. Digital word submissions in .doc or .docx., photos in .jpg please. Submit pieces and photos to Editor at blm1931@gmail.com.

**Clara Brown,  
 slave to noble  
 lady...**

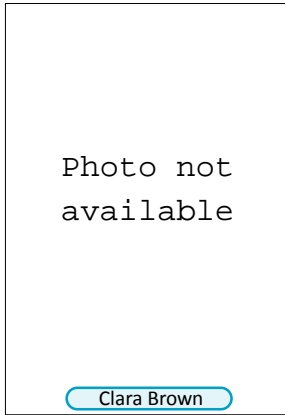


Photo not available

Clara Brown

The Society of Colorado Pioneers buried Clara Brown (1800-1885) with honors. Her eulogy stated that she "was the kind of old friend whose heart always responded to the cry of distress and who, rising from the humble position of slave to the angelic

type of noblewoman, won our sympathy and commanded our respect."

Clara Brown, born in 1800 into slavery, bore four children with husband, Richard. When their Kentucky owner died, at a slave auction, all the family members were sold to separate owners. Clara was sold to George Brown and took his last name.

For twenty years, assisted by her owner, she searched in vain for the whereabouts of her family. When her owner died in 1875, his daughters gave Brown her freedom. Employed by a family



Dee Kirby

in the laundry business, she migrated with them to Kansas.

When the gold strike of 1889 struck Colorado, Brown signed on as a cook with a group of gold prospectors headed to Denver.

Eventually, she settled in Central City and opened a laundry business to provide a service to the miners. Her home became a haven for the destitute, a hospital for the ill and a church to fulfill spiritual solace for those in need. Her generosity and compassion earned her the affectionate title, "Aunt Clara."

Over the years, through investments, Brown earned over \$10,000, which she re-invested. She resumed her search for her family. Two daughters and her husband had died. Her son vanished without a trace. She continued to search for Eliza Jane, her daughter. In the process, she found thirty-four of her relatives. She helped free sixteen slaves, who began life anew in Central City. At age 80, she traveled to Kansas to assist slaves to build a new community and farm land.

At age 82, through a "community letter writing campaign," she discovered that her daughter lived in Council Bluffs, Iowa. After 50 years, the two met in a tearful reunion, which was widely reported in Mid-western newspapers.

While living in Denver, Brown helped two ministers begin a Sunday school. In her honor, a plaque describes her home as the birthplace of the first Methodist church in the area. Believed to be the first black in Central City, a seat in the city's Opera House bears her name. In Clara Brown's memory, a stained glass window graces the rotunda of the Colorado State Capitol.

--Article and photos by Dee Kirby

**PLHS 2013**

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

- JAN 19, 6:30 p.m. "Annual Potluck Dinner & Membership Meeting"
- FEB 21, 7:00 p.m. "Chief Manitou and His Contributions to the Pikes Peak Region"
- MAR 21, 7:00 p.m. "Women Who Fought as Men in the Civil War"
- APR 18, 7:00 p.m. "Mining for the Real Baby Doe"
- MAY 16, 7:00 p.m. "Colorado Ice Houses"
- JUN 16, 2 to 4:00 p.m. "Fathers' Day Ice Cream Social"
- JUL 18, 7:00 p.m. "Western Museum of Mining & Industry"
- AUG 15, 7:00 p.m. "Pikes Peak as Seen in Early Postcards"
- SEP 19, 7:00 p.m. "Forgotten Tales of Colorado"
- OCT 17, 7:00 p.m. "Ghosts of Douglas and Surrounding Counties"
- NOV 21, 7:00 p.m. "Who Killed Officer Burchfield"

**DEC 2013**

No Meeting. Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

**CHRISTMAS TRAINS**

**7th Annual Fundraiser and model train expo at The Depot Restaurant building in Palmer Lake. Available to view on the same days and hours that The Depot Restaurant is open during the month of December. Bring the kids to see Gary Coleman's Polar Express and more!**



Gary Coleman



Author, local historian, videographer, and Society member, Jim Sawatzki, discusses one of his his latest DVD creations, "Palmer Divide Trilogy," with Priscilla Morrill. He displayed his works at the October 6th, Palmer Lake Art Group's 39th Annual Christmas Arts and Crafts Fair. The proceeds of this event go to scholarship grants for District 38 Art Students.

*Compendium of monthly presentations for 2012* by Bernard Minetti

*Based on articles written by Bernard Minetti for Our Community News*

May 17, 2012 - “Early Life in the Palmer Divide”



Don Ellis

Local historian and speaker, Don Ellis, provided a well-rounded and detailed account of the history of the Palmer Divide and the general area surrounding it. He started by telling the attendees, that by 1830, trappers and traders had come to the

Divide area. He also noted that his grandparents came to the Divide as youngsters in 1874.

He told the gathering that Monument was originally built as one of three forts. The two other forts were built at Franktown and at Spring Valley on West Cherry Creek.

Since there were no lumberyards or architects, he continued, the settlers often had to cut timber in the hills and hew the lumber into the beams, joists, doors and windowsills. He noted that each plank had to be hand sawed and stone had to be quarried for each home by each homeowner.

The Denver & Rio Grande built a station in Palmer Lake and at Greenland to the north.

At Greenland, a stationhouse was built from a converted boxcar. In describing rail development in the divide area, Ellis said that ten years later, in 1881 and 1882, the Denver and New Orleans Railroad built a standard gauge line from Denver to Pueblo along a different route to the east.

Ellis continued his presentation covering the settling of the divide area. He noted that his grandfather sold their divide area ranch and moved to Peyton. At the time, education was hard to come by but Peyton had a high school so that was the place to be.

July 19, 2012 - “Eating Houses on the Midland Railroad”



Tom Van Wormer

Local historian, Tom VanWormer, presented what, prior to hearing it, could be classified as a dry subject. VanWormer brought life into the subject as he narrated and detailed the history and operation of the eating-houses on the

Colorado Midland Railroad.

VanWormer was originally a Major at Fort

Carson Army post and a tanker and stayed there for three years. Following his Army career he worked at Boeing as a Senior Technical Specialist and eventually worked for Northrop Grumman as a senior engineer. He noted that the presentation that he gave this evening was one of 8 talks that he gives on the subject of the Colorado Midland RR.

He narrated that in that time, eating houses on the eastern railway systems were noted for poor food quality, while western railways were noted for their excellent cuisine. Part of the reasons, VanWormer stated, was that in

the West, the company had passengers under their care for sometimes as long as 4 days.

Some of these eating sites were designed with elegance because the railroad wanted the clients to feel comfortable and to surmise that someone cared about them.

VanWormer observed that in 1907 the Colorado Midland Railway stopped operating eating-houses because the railroads had begun to integrate dining cars as rolling stock.

The encompassing highlight of the entire presentation was the amount of detail that VanWormer described the various sites.

August 16, 2012 - “Restoration Projects in Douglas County”



Johnny Mulligan & Jerry Wlodarek

Prairie Canyon Ranch is located just south of Castlewood Canyon State Park in Douglas County. Douglas County purchased the property while it was still a working cattle ranch.

The speakers this evening are almost an integral part of the ranch itself. Both are Historic Restoration Specialists and are associated directly with the Douglas County Open Spaces project. Mulligan is a Native American of the Lakota tribe.

Wlodarek, besides being a restoration specialist, is known for his expertise in the making of custom flintlock and cap lock rifles. He has been doing that for forty years.

Mulligan and Wlodarek both have been

qualified building inspectors for Douglas County and have worked on the original homestead for many years.

Each of the speakers are well noted for their restoration techniques. They utilize only materials that were in vogue at the time period of the item they are restoring.

While much of their talk, this evening, concerned the technical jargon associated with a forge, their enthusiasm and knowledge of the process was intriguing and educational.

They are, indeed, experts in this field.

September 20, 2012 - “Ponderosa Giants - How Old Is That Tree?”



Terry Stokka

Terry Stokka, naturalist, historian and pine tree lover from Black Forest, provided an overview of the lodge pole and the giant ponderosa pine trees indigenous to that area. He noted that in order for a pine tree to grow, it required sunlight, water, soil, and time to evolve to its greatness in size and beauty.

In determining the age of a tree, he noted

that in the cross section of the trunk are rings which each represent a year of life. Some are larger than others and indicate the amount of water and food that the tree was able to derive from the earth to sustain itself. Larger rings indicate good years and the thinner rings indicate sparser growth years where food supplies were wanting.

Stokka noted that there were many enemies to trees. Some are lightning, drought, man, sparse soil and worst of all are the ever-present beetles.

The beetles are harmful to the trees be-

cause they carry an enemy of the tree called “blue fungus.” This fungus eventually blocks the nutrient conducting parts of the tree, starving them of their nutrients and eventually causing the tree to die of starvation.

He provided some historical background by relating that in the late 1800’s the Black Forest section of the Palmer Divide had been denuded of all pine growth because of the building in Denver at that time. All the trees, he stated, presently standing in the Black Forest, are “new growth.” They are, indeed, a beautiful sight to behold.

# Palmer Lake Historical Society

P.O. Box 662  
66 Lower Glenway  
Palmer lake, CO 80133-0662

## Compendium of monthly presentations for 2012 by Bernard Minetti

Oct 18, 2012 - “Railroads of the Pikes Peak Region”

*Based on articles written by Bernard Minetti for Our Community News*



Mel McFarland

Speaking to an audience of approximately 100 railroad history buffs and society members, Mel McFarland, engineer and chief conductor for the Pikes Peak Cog Railway, enthralled those listening with the history of the various railroads that occupied the local area. Noting that the early railroads were responsible for the growth of a number of our towns and com-

mercial industries, specifically on the Palmer Divide, he stated that most were gone now.

During the building of the railroad, the town now known as Palmer Lake, was called Divide. The town now known as Divide took that name when Palmer Lake became Palmer Lake. McFarland also noted that General Palmer surveyed and laid out the town of Colorado Springs.

Originally, the Rio Grande and the Santa Fe railroads had their own tracks through the area. The federal government at that time wanted

to enhance efficiency and directed that the tracks be consolidated so that the trains could move faster. To illustrate, he related that at that time there were two sets of tracks going through Palmer Lake. The one on the west side was for southbound trains and on the one on the east side was for northbound trains.

McFarland continued discussing the various historical events in the local area that dealt with railroad systems and their evolution into the systems of today.

November 15, 2012 - “Early Weapons in the Colorado Territory”



Bernard L. Minetti

Speaking to an audience of approximately 70 gun aficionados and society members, Jerry Wlodarek, Johnny Mulligan, Kenneth James and Dave Heide, all are weapons specialists, dis-

played and discussed the various weapons that they brought with them.

Wlodarek discussed the differences between caplock and flintlock ignition systems on early weapon systems in this territory. Most weapons were flintlocks in those days.

Both Wlodarek and Mulligan work to restore these weapons from disrepair and neglect into fine functioning weapons. It should be noted that both these men are “Restoration Specialists” for Douglas County.

They work to restore buildings, forges, and

early items that have been neglected and require updating and restoration. Additionally, Wlodarek is a gunsmith in his own right and is completely at home among these early weapons and restores them to this day.

The discussion covered the gamut of early American and early Colorado weaponry. Kenneth James generally explained the technical aspect of the weaponry while Wlodarek talked history and empirical data. Mulligan carried the items through the audience and did some brief explanations.