

Park County Local History Archives

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NEWSLETTER

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Website: www.parkcoarchives.org

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Archives News:

There are a number of resources available at the Archives to anyone who wants to do research on families, towns, individuals, events or just general information about Park County.

One resource that is invaluable when property ownership is the question is found in the basement at the Park County Clerk and Recorder's office. Huge ledgers dating back as far as the late 1800s, called Grant-ee—Grantor books are stored there. In them are references, in chronological order, to recorded deeds, mortgages and other property conveyance documents. County Clerk Deb Greene is in the process of having these books digitized so the information can be more easily accessed.

A working knowledge of the mapping system of Range, Township and Section numbers is helpful when you do this kind of research.

Send comments, requests and suggestions for the newsletter to parkcoarchives@yahoo.com

Archives Doings

The last quarter of 2013 saw the Archives involved in some interesting research, including the Quiggle stage line that ran through Hartsel and the surrounding areas. We assisted with genealogy research on several families including Stump/Radar, Witcher and Willmarth, and we located obituaries on several former county residents. Jane Gilsinger continues to catalog the many notices in our obituary file.

One of our board members gave a presentation at the Fairplay High School for a sophomore class that is learning about local history.

We received several queries on photos including the Bailey Post Office.

In the donations department, the Archives was very fortunate to receive an unexpected donation from the Gilpin Historical Society who had a number of original mining documents, deeds and other letters from a miner named John Gregory. This is not the Gregory of the famous Gregory Diggings in Central City; however, the Park County John Gregory did own some important mines primarily on Mt. Lincoln. One particularly interesting item is a receipt from James Moynahan's store in Alma, still in the original envelope, for "provisions" – including 4 ½ lbs. of bacon for \$6.

The Board voted to pursue publishing a book on Park County history with Arcadia Publishing, a well-known national publisher located in South Carolina. This will allow us to showcase our many historic photos in a "photo history" format. Arcadia has already published a number of books on Colorado history and Park County will fit nicely into their repertoire. The website is www.arcadiapublishing.com and a search can be done by state to view all the Colorado listings.

South Park's Legion Hut

from the Fairplay Flume November 22, 1935

"The story of the building of the hut is the history of South Park Post No. 172 of the American Legion. Early in 1934, almost at the time of the organization meeting, the fifteen charter members began thinking and talking and planning in terms of a Legion hall. Throughout a period of two Legion years, during which the membership has grown to thirty-eight, a building has remained the principal and most immediate objective of the post.

Records show that from the first, Commander Neal Brown kept appointing building committees to investigate and report on tentative locations, materials, labor and costs. C.S. Bullock, Dr. R.M. Burlingame, J.V. Derr, O.R. Gately, H.L. Humphrey, H.A. King, A.L. King, Thomas Sullivan and L.A. West—all charter members who are still in the post—served at one time or another on these early committees which sought solutions for the various problems, the most difficult being that of finance.

Within a short time the plan of public entertainment was adopted as a means of creating an ever-increasing building fund. Accordingly, the rapidly growing post launched forth a sequence of dances, turkey shoots, carnivals and shows that has lasted to the present time, has called every active member into committee work, and has given the communities such wholesome entertainment and in such quality and quantity that there is a feeling of mutual respect and gratitude between the community and the post and a spirit of harmony and co-operation seldom encountered in 1935.

This program resulted ultimately in the accumulation of enough money to start work on the hut. In the spring of 1935 Commander Thomas Sullivan appointed C.A. Carlson, Joe V. Derr and E.R. Paul as the building committee, which at last was actually to supervise the building of the hut.

From the time the work started in June until the opening for the Armistice day program, Committee Chairman C.A. Carlson was the embodiment—sometimes the sole representative—of the collective will to have a hut, and without his unceasing efforts and unfailing encouragement it is more than casually doubtful that the building would have ever been finished as was planned.

However, when it is remembered that every Legionnaire followed a regular occupation and could work only on week-ends, holidays and evenings, the time of building the hut does not seem unduly long. Practically every member of the post contributed either time or money. Special mention should be made of L.A. West, Albert King, A.A. Oliver, Neal Brown and O.R. Gately, who gave of their time or money or both far in excess of the original apportionment of per capita responsibility.

The hut, now finished except for a few minor details, is located near the northeast limits of Fairplay, near the highway towards Denver. It is rectangular in plan and 30 by 50 feet in size. Outside walls are of pine logs sawed on three sides and set snugly with rustic sides exposed. The inside of the one large room has a polished hardwood floor and is sealed with laminated ply board, stripped in brown and stained and varnished in silver-grey and green. A large ornate fireplace of native stone in the middle of one side wall, a flue for a heatrola straight across, the baseboard, window trimming and doors stained in brown, and the lighting fixtures overhead and on the walls complete the interior picture of a hut which is the pride of South Park Post, a credit to the town, and ample proof that 'it can be done.'"

Located at the corner of 6th and Clark Streets, the Legion Hut remains active and is rented out to community groups who need a place to meet. The kitchen is available and the bar maintains a current license. Veterans are still honored here.

Mercury Ski Course

Folks who live in Alma know where the remains of the electric ski tow line is. Just prior to the U.S. entry into World War II, a ski club was formed and a ski course built in their neighborhood.

Several locals from Fairplay and Alma had watched Aspen build its course and concluded that the sport would be a good investment opportunity. They formed the Mercury Ski Club and this article appeared in the February 13, 1941, edition of the Park County Republican and Fairplay Flume:

“Local skii fans, who are members of the Mercury Ski Club, enjoyed skiing Friday, Saturday and Sunday of last week end on the Mercury course just above Alma.

“The electric tow is in operation from the top of which a skier can take a choice of three courses upon which to skii down to the bottom of the tow. There is a wide lot with a gentle slope which is splendid for amateurs or beginners. It is adjacent to the tow, where they may practice and enjoy all forms of skiing, except jumping, before they tackle the rather difficult skii runs from the top of the hill. There is a long slow skii run for amateurs or skiers who prefer the milder run, which has been enjoyed by several.

“Skii club members are encouraged to take an active interest in the sport from now on and others are also invited to pay membership fees and to enjoy the use of the course.

“The course belongs to the Mercury Skii Club and it is not a public course. Therefore, no one will be permitted to use the skii course facilities without first paying for the privilege, by paying 50 cents per day or by paying a season membership fee of \$5.00 for men, \$3.00 for women, \$7.00 for married couples and \$2.50 for children attending school.

“There is a good deal of room for parking and it would be appreciated if skiers would park their cars away from the foot of the skii runs and it would be appreciated if

spectators also take it upon themselves to keep clear of the skii runs and the tow to avoid accident. Otherwise spectators are invited to drive up, particularly on week ends, to enjoy watching the various skiers go through their acts.”

Members of the Ski Club met in November of 1941 to plan the upcoming ski season. On December 4 the Flume reported:

“...improvements [at the ski course] were made as follows: A longer ski tow, which called for the installation of a second sheave placed behind the tow house. Improvements and repairs are being made on the tow house. The power lines have been reconditioned.

“This next week end, members of the club will complete the repairs and improvements on the ski course so that skiing may be enjoyed immediately with the advantage of an electric ski tow, which will be about 900 ft in length.

“A shelter house is planned and, if possible, this house, which will measure about 20’x30’ will be erected near the tow house, which will overlook the ski runs so that fans may enjoy watching others ski while they are also making use of the club house.

“Members of the club plan on a membership drive in the next two weeks and it is hoped that all persons interested in skiing or in the promotion of it will participate freely and become members. Tentative plans have been discussed wherein it may be possible to secure an instructor to teach skiing to those who are desirous of learning the sport. Skiing can be made an attractive winter sport in Park county and, therefore, deserves the backing of all business men and private parties living in this area...Park county ought not to overlook its own possibilities in this field.”

On December 7, the entire nation was shocked by the attack on Pearl Harbor. The U.S. was immediately at war with the Axis powers and skiing was put on the back burner. For Alma, the sport was never to return.

Kaufman Ridge

Colorado mountain ranges form borders for high plateaus in three general areas known as North Park, Middle Park and South Park. The general boundary of South Park begins on the north at Kenosha Pass. The outline extends to the south through Boreas Pass, Hoosier Pass, Mosquito Pass, Weston Pass and Trout Creek Pass. The line then heads easterly along Kaufman Ridge, over Big Black Mountain and Thirty-nine Mile Mountain, then northerly through the Puma Hills over Wilkerson Pass, through the Tarryall and Kenosha Mountain ranges back to Kenosha Pass.

At the southern end of South Park, Kaufman Ridge forms a border between Park and Chaffee Counties.

The names given to mountains and terrain features usually point to a person or some other obvious identifier. A search into the name for Kaufman Ridge revealed few clues as to its origin.

A short reference in the March 22, 1883, issue of the Flume says, “*E.J. Shea and Charles J. Kaufman of Boreas had a dispute the other day in which Shea drew a pistol and fired at Kaufman missing him. Shea has been arrested on the charge of attempt to kill.*”

In October of 1903 it was reported that Moses F. Kaufman of the large Colorado Springs department store, Kaufman & Co., died of consumption while he was visiting Kansas City.

In 1909 a boxing match was announced that would feature Jack Johnson, heavy-weight champion of the world and Al Kaufman of San Francisco. The winner of that match is not known, but a similar one was held in Oakland, California, in 1912 between George Kirkwood of San Francisco and Benny Kaufman of Philadelphia. After ten rounds and no knockouts, Kirkwood was declared the winner.

Also in 1912 it was noted that Guy Kaufman, a wealthy ranchman of Montrose,

suffered a fractured jawbone when he was kicked by a mule.

In 1910 two editorials appeared in the Denver Post by Herbert Kaufman. In one, the writer assured his readers that “Broad minded people play their cards in the game of life as they play them in the game of whist—fairly—squarely—cleanly.”

Herbert Kaufman used a number of sports references in a subsequent article, but ended with the statement, “Styles may change in politics and religion and morals, but THERE WAS NEVER A TIME WHEN A WHINER COULD WIN.”

The Buena Vista Democrat printed an article in its September 29, 1887, issue under the heading “The Border Shooting.”

“Paris, Sept 26.—The following details have been received concerning the shooting incident on the Franco-German frontier near Raon-Sur-Plaine: On Saturday morning a party of five sportsmen and four beaters were following the path on French territory, seven yards from the frontier, when a person standing near behind a clump of trees on the German side, eighty yards from the frontier, fired three shots at them. The first bullet did not hit anyone but the second killed one of the beaters named Brignon, and the third severely wounded a gentleman named Wagner.

“The German officials declare that a German soldier named Kaufman, who was detailed to assist the forest guards in preventing poaching, fired the shots. Kaufman affirms that he shouted three times for the party to halt before firing at them. He believed they were on Germany territory. The sportsmen declare that they heard nothing. Officials on both sides of the frontier are making inquiries in the shooting.”

None of these references seem to indicate why the ridge at the southern end of South Park was named after “Kaufman.”

If you know of anyone or any reason Kaufman became a moniker of one of our ridges, please share it with us.