

Park County Local History Archives

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NEWSLETTER

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Summer Brewery prior to the 1873 fire.



Summer Brewery and Saloon - 1890s

Archives News:

On June 21-22, 2013, at the RE-2 School Midway Auditorium, two days worth of sessions all about local history are scheduled at the South Park Symposium. Local historians are ready to share with you some of the events from the past that have made your neighborhood what it is. You will be enthralled with stories of outlaws, trains, and people in towns like Como, Jefferson and Fairplay and raising bison in South Park. A field trip to the Buckskin Cemetery is planned.

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

Archives Update by Christie Wright

Fall in the high country is a special time for those lucky enough to live up here and the Archives enjoyed some beautiful autumn days in Bailey. We had a number of interesting queries this season, including research on contour terraces near Teller County, the origin of the Buckskin Joe mining camp name and a request for a copy of the Como coal fields map was made by a descendant whose ancestor ran the boarding house at the mine in the late 1800s. A descendant of the well-known ranching families, the Spinney's and Harrington's, asked for information on their historic South Park ranches and also made a generous donation. In addition, a law student requested information and research sources on the Alma Mining District and the other nearby districts for a research project.

In the photos department, a large order was received and filled for photos of the Alma, Fairplay and Como areas. Several Archives photos will be published in a University of Colorado Press book about the South Park area, to be released early summer of 2013.

Obituaries were a focus this fall, with an emphasis on Guffey and Como burials. Many historic obits provide extensive genealogy information that can be quite valuable. Three obit copies were mailed to a genealogist researching her family in the Lake George area and the Horn cemetery was researched by a local author, who has also been making good use of our family files in anticipation of her book next spring. The archives received a large donation of Park County Cemetery Board records primarily from the 1900s which is currently being processed. All updates will be posted on our website as soon as they are completed. The

Archives staff continues to work on retrieving and cataloging county obits from the 1950s on.

Historic homesteads have kept us interested this season; National Archives papers were received on the Clark homestead and we recently indexed all our homestead papers, totaling approximately 55 ranches.

Oral histories continue to be typed by two professional transcribers from grant monies received from the Colorado Historic Records Advisory Board. These are being posted on our website upon completion and it is exciting to see our list of fascinating oral histories grow!

Please stop by on Fridays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. or call ahead first at 719-836-4153 for an appointment if you have an extensive research request.

Joseph Barnett Returns by Jerry Davis

"Aged Pioneer Travels From Missouri to Spend Birthday in the Colorado of His Youth. - Eighty-six Year-Old Joseph Barnett, Bailey's First School Teacher, Can't Stay Away, and is Welcomed by Entire Township"

Adapted from The Denver Post, August 1, 1920

Joseph Barnett bade farewell to his mountain cronies last October to make his home in Tipton, Mo., has come back... "I'll soon be 86," said Joseph, "and I haven't spent a birthday away from Bailey in nigh over fifty years."

The birthday of the veteran school teacher of Platte Canon who taught the three R's to the children of the first settlers in a little school house that he himself built long before the coming of the railroad has become an institution in Park county annals

So Monday there was a great gathering of mountain folk to welcome him back and to celebrate the birthday in the home of Joseph Emerson Smith, where the reception was held.

In automobiles, farm wagons and on horseback, the guests came from Deer Creek, Elk Creek, Shawnee and other places and among those were several "children" he had taught. The oldest woman present at 92

was Mrs. E.L. Entriiken. She made the journey across the plains in an ox-team drawn wagon in 1859 with her brother-in-law and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. William Bailey. She still resides in the house of massive hewn logs that on a knoll overlooks what was the famous Bailey ranch the terminus of the South Park railroad in 1879, before the late Gov. John Evans and associates formed the construction company to push the road, a narrow gauge on to the rich mining camp of Leadville. The ranch is now partly occupied by the village of Bailey and on the site of the historic old Bailey road house where many of the notables of the early days visiting the South Park gold fields and Leadville were accommodated before the coming of the railroad, the ranch being on the Denver-Leadville stage road.

Reminiscences of the early days were exchanged by the old timers, incidents of Chief Colorow and his braves who made many trips thru Bailey, the passage up and down the canon of Tabor and the other mining kings, the visit of Bayard Taylor and English peers and artists who were taking back to the east glimpses of the wild Rocky mountain country on their canvasses, ...the robbing of the stagecoaches, and the burying by the bandits of the treasure from the strongboxes, were again recounted in detail.

As in the past, the birthday party became a reunion of old friends who had shared dangers of pioneering and who have seen the territory develop into a great state.

"They were all mighty nice in Missouri," explained Mr. Barnett, "but as my birthday came around I got to thinking more and more of the birthdays I'd spent out here in God's country and the friends that came around to wish me another year of health and happiness and I just couldn't stay away. I wanted to see you all and shake your hands."

Editor's note: An attempt to find more information about Joseph Barnett on the internet resulted in numerous references to "Jack the Ripper." We are fairly certain that this was not the same person as our Joseph Barnett from Bailey.

"Rent and Torn"

This was the headline in the August 19, 1880, issue of the Fairplay Flume. The Red Hill railroad station, about four and a half miles north of Fairplay, had made recent news due to the "treasure box" stage robbery that had occurred there in July. The robbers had been caught and the news of the trial was a topic of local conversation.

On this particular Friday evening in August, Frank Colyer and Charlie Hilton had gone over to Tom Conway's saloon to play some cards and came back to the station around ten o'clock in the evening.

"A burning sensation caused Frank E. Colyer, agent of the South Park road, to awake with a start about twelve o'clock last Friday night, and perceiving that the room was full of smoke, while coals of fire were dropping from the ceiling of the little room at Red Hill station that serves as a ticket office by day and sleeping room at night, he instantly awakened his assistant, Charlie Hilton, and hastily pulled on some of his clothes. Hilton was lying down with his clothes on as he had to get up for the night train in another hour or so, and greatly alarmed he jumped against the light panel door and crushed it through. The two rushed out and found that the depot was in flames."

The two woke Conway, who was asleep in the boarding house part of his saloon. The activity also woke J. H. Singleton and Charley Glynn, who were in the employ of James Moynahan and asleep in his warehouse, which was also nearby.

Two of the men were trying to get barrels of whiskey out the back door of the saloon. They had determined that there was nothing that could be done to save the depot.

Suddenly, an explosion rocked the ground. It was heard as far away as Fairplay and even Alma. "As if by magic every vestige of Red Hill station disappeared."

Singleton was the first to recover; he had been on the other side of a large pile of ore

sacks and was somewhat protected. Conway had lost his senses for a few moments, but joined Singleton to search for the others.

Charley Glynn was found about sixty feet away having suffered injuries to his back and leg. Colyer, the station agent, was found fully twenty rods away with bruises on his head and left arm.

The last one to be found was Hilton. He was not only bruised and mangled, but every bit of clothing had been stripped from his person except his necktie and socks. He expired a few moments later.

The injured men were transported to the Bergh House, a hotel in Fairplay.

The next day numerous people made a point to visit the site to see the results of the noise they had heard. "It was desolate in the extreme. For a thousand feet around were strewn the splintered boards and planks that formed the station and freight depots, Conway's saloon and Moynahan's warehouse, and among them the battered and ruined furniture and freight."

The fire apparently had originated from the stovepipe in the ceiling of the office, from a fire that had been built earlier in the evening. When the fire spread to the depot, it was only a matter of time before the thousand pounds of "giant powder" that had been shipped in but not yet picked up, grew hot enough to explode.

A funeral service was held at the Presbyterian Church in Fairplay the following Tuesday for Charles Hilton. The twenty-two year old man had come west from his home in Salsbury, Missouri, to work for the railroad. He had his latest check for forty dollars in the pocket of his vest, a fragment of which was found on the scene of the explosion.

Only a few weeks later, local freighter J. T. Richards made an agreement with the railroad to build a warehouse at Red Hill, in connection with his freighting business. Part of the warehouse would be temporarily used as a ticket office and waiting room.

The Summer Brewery

Leonhard Summer was born in Austria in 1838 and came to the U.S. in 1866. He is thought to have learned the brewery business in Iowa prior to coming to Colorado. His first brewery in South Park City, later re-named Fairplay, was a log building. It had only been in operation a short time before the 1873 fire wiped out nearly the whole business section of the town, including Summer's brewery.

Summer went away for a time to Denver to engage in the barley business, where he soon made enough money to return to Fairplay and rebuild. In 1879 he built another brewery on the same site as the old one. This one, however, was a two-story stone building "eighty feet front and sixty-eight feet deep, including a well-arranged stone ice house."

The same year, he built the Summer Saloon next door to the brewery on Front Street. Meanwhile Leonhard's brother, Joseph, had built his own saloon directly across the road called Summer's Saloon.

Leonhard was quite successful during the next few years. He threw a party at the beer hall to celebrate the christening of his young son, George, in January of 1883.

Later that year, a tragedy occurred, when Joseph, for some reason, went to work in Como at a saloon there. He was seen alive and well at 2 o'clock in the morning, but was found three hours later in a pool of his own blood with several wounds on his forehead. Several stories went around, one that he had been bludgeoned with a revolver and another that he had tried to commit suicide by butting his head against a railroad tie. No investigation, however, was held and the case was dropped.

Leonhard continued successfully to operate his brewery until 1892, when he leased it to two gentlemen, Eckert and Gebhardt. The lessees had just spent two days brewing a large batch of beer one day in August. A fire evidently started from the furnace chimney and was discovered shortly after midnight.

The volunteer firefighters were able to confine the blaze to the brewery and used their two lines of hose to keep it from spreading to the nearby other buildings.

Leonhard, having already suffered the loss of his brewery once, had purchased insurance, which helped him recover more quickly. He began rebuilding almost immediately, this time with the same red sandstone that was used to build the court house.

The brewery might have again become the thriving business it once was, but Leonhard suffered crippling financial losses during the 1893 panic. He was forced to turn the saloon into a meat market in 1897. He attempted to rent the Windsor Hotel early in 1900 and was getting ready to re-open it. He had apparently taken title to his brother's saloon and was in the process of trying to renovate it as well.

In August of 1900 Leonhard ran an ad in the Flume offering to sell or lease his saloon, meat market and hotel.

Early on the evening of September 10, he was found behind the bar in the saloon by a friend who had come to ask him to dinner. Leonhard was lying in a pool of blood with a 44-Bulldog revolver in his right hand and a razor clutched tightly in his left. He did not regain consciousness and died the next day.

The brewery fell into disrepair, as did most of Leonhard's other investment properties. When his daughter tried to hold a public sale in 1907 for all the real estate, including some mining property, the bidding was so poor that the sale had to be held again.

The brewery was home to the Flume's printing press for a while, but it wasn't until 1957 that Leon Snyder formed a group that would create the South Park City Museum, with the brewery as the focal point.

One thing that has not been found to date is a copy of the label used on South Park Lager Beer. If you know where one is, please contact the Park County Local History Archives.