

# Park County Local History Archives

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### Archives News

Recently the Park County Local History Archives has furnished early copies of the Park County Bulletin of Alma to the coloradohistoricnewspapers.org website. In addition to other Colorado newspapers, historic issues of the Fairplay Flume can be accessed from 1879, when the Park County Republican and Fairplay Flume first went into print, through 1923, when copyright laws take effect.

Now articles from the Alma newspaper are also available. See the article on page 3 about “Coal in South Park.”

Anyone with a computer can access the historic newspaper site and once you get on the home page, you can either search for material by a name or subject or browse in specific newspapers by a specific date. You can establish a date range to limit the number of articles accessed. Sometimes that helps when the name is common enough to have thousands of hits.

### Archives Doings

A few months ago three of us from the Archives board went on our annual field trip. Jane Gilsinger, Christie Wright and Linda Bjorklund have found interesting places to visit each year, including museums, cemeteries and historic spots.

This year the chosen location was a small cemetery located on a remote but glitzy dude ranch in the northwest corner of the state. Craig, Colorado, is only a stone’s throw to the Wyoming town of Baggs, through which you must drive to get to the elusive cemetery. The Fleming Cemetery is the final resting place of family members who lived for a number of years in Deer Creek and Bailey.

It’s not clear why the Fleming family relocated—it could have been due to the availability of farm land or the mining boom there around 1900. At any rate, Fleming family members settled in the region along the South Fork of the Three Forks of the Snake River.

Unfortunately, your intrepid explorers were unable to access the dude ranch or the cemetery. We did, however, explore a quaint rural museum in the town of Savery, Wyoming (pop. 25).

The museum staff was in the process of having a board meeting to plan the year’s events, but they were quite gracious about letting us explore their buildings, set up somewhat like the South Park City Museum in Fairplay. As we prepared to leave, we were detained by a cattle round-up, and watched as cowboys on their horses herded their mooing charges, with the aid of an ambitious cattle dog, across the road in front of us and into a pasture to graze.

We never know what will turn up on our annual forays into the historic unknown, but it never fails to be interesting!

## **Electrical Eccentricities**

*Milwaukee Sentinel – December 2, 1875*

*Colorado Lightning—What Made the Mountaineer's Hair Literally Stand on End submitted by Jerry Davis*

*A correspondent of the Pittsburgh Gazette says that in the winter of 1863 Wilbur F. Stone, now of Pueblo, accompanied by a tall athletic mountaineer, ascended to the summit of Mount Lincoln for the purpose of ascertaining its altitude barometrically. The day was clear and pleasant, and the wind moderate. After accomplishing their object Mr. Stone observed a heavy cloud approaching rapidly from the northwest, sweeping furiously through a congeries of rugged peaks, roaring louder and louder and louder as it approached the loftier summit on which they stood. When the cloud reached the side of the mountain, driven by a fierce wind, it rose rapidly toward the summit. While gazing at it Mr. Stone stretched his arm toward it, when instantly his fingers began to give out a sound like the buzzing of a very large bug or beetle. Very soon this buzzing and snapping sound seemed to be all around them, and more particularly in their hair. The other man, whose bushy locks were so long that they hung down to his shoulders, supposing that a bug had really got into his hat, took it off, when, behold, his hair rose and stood on end, giving him an appearance at once ludicrous and hideous. Mr. Stone, whose hair was shorter and lighter, then took off his hat, and found his hair affected in the same way. He then extended his hand towards his companions, when a chain of electric sparks flew out of the ends of his fingers, although covered with a thick glove, until an equilibrium was established. Meantime the buzzing kept up all around. A bank of drifted snow lay upon the northeast side of the summit. Two dogs which were with them got upon the snow and engaged in frolic-some gambols, as if in a high state of enjoyment; but they were partially sheltered from the wind*

*which then swept like a hurricane across the summit. Mr. Stone threw a stick a little way above them, which one of the dogs ran to pick up, but just as he reached it the wind struck him and with it an electric shock, which caused him to utter a loud cry and take to his heels down the mountain side, with his hair like the tail of an angry or scared cat. The next sensation was an almost unendurable pricking, as if their entire bodies were covered with stinging insects, or as if a fine needle had been applied to every pore, while sparks were flying from one man to the other, and from one object to another continually, with still more vigorous buzzing and snapping sounds. Uttering a strong exclamation of terror, the bold mountaineer sprang from the summit and descended the side of the mountain about fifty feet, and Mr. Stone followed him. There they stopped for a few minutes, the confused noises and pricking sensation still continuing. Then a broad sheet of lightning, with an intensely bright spark or stream in the center, surrounded or rather enveloped them. Instantly the buzzing and pricking ceased, and they were perfectly at ease. The electricity with which they were a moment before so heavily charged was withdrawn. Still there was not the slightest detonation.*

**Horseless Carriage Age** submitted by Steve Plutt

*Fairplay Flume – February 2, 1900*

*An exchange remarks that next year we may expect to read something like the following in the daily papers: "At 10 o'clock this morning a horseless wagon loaded with cowless milk collided with a brainless rider on a chainless wheel. The luckless wheelman was badly injured, and, being homeless and friendless, he was taken in a horseless cab to the home for the friendless, where his death was painless in an hour or less."*

The author is making fun of the Horseless Carriage Age and of a wagon colliding with a bicycle on the street.

### **Hope is Eternal** by Gary Minke

This story was published in the Fairplay Flume of June 11, 1897, using the word COAL in large letters. Park County businessman, Samuel Cohen, had purchased the old Lillenthal Ranch and had held it for a number of years hoping for property values to increase so he could resell the place. Peter Marinelli, an out-of-work coal miner, who was still living at King where mines were closing, was prospecting on the Lillenthal property and located a prospective coal seam. The report was: "Last week Peter Marinelli uncovered a vein of excellent coal. It is about eight feet wide, five feet of which is first-class coal (located) only a few feet from the (ground) surface." The article mentioned that once Sam Cohen was informed of the find he was thankful for the property's persistence in staying with him. Very quickly Joe and Sam Cohen were off to Denver to try to locate backing for a new coal venture as the article stated: "No doubt a company will be organized to push the coal into state markets. The quality of the coal and its convenience to the (Denver Leadville and Gunnison RR) will give it commanding position at once." The hope was: "The coal mine at King has been closed down nearly a year and the new strike will be hailed with joy by the people in that section as it is not far from that practically deserted town."

Peter Marinelli had been the storekeeper at King and when the #5 Mine was closed in October, 1896, he was hired to oversee the dismantling of the Union Pacific Coal Company town there. The rails for the spur line from King to Como were pulled up in 1899. Many of the frame company houses were moved to Como and other locations. According to Allison Chandler, who interviewed many people for his article "The Story of Como and King Park, Colorado" published in 1963, Peter Marinelli had purchased the two small black mules used to pull loaded coal cars up the steep slope in

the #5 Mine at King. The mules were smaller than normal but well trained so when coal operations moved to Baldwin, Colorado, Mr. Marinelli sold those mules to that venture.

The Baldwin coal mine is in Gunnison County three miles south of Carbon Peak or 1.1 miles southeast of the town of Baldwin on the Ohio Creek Road.

Apparently the big hopes dissolved and the new coal vein found on the Cohen property was never developed into a significant commercial venture.



King: circa 1890s Source: Bob Schoppe collection

### **Coal in South Park**

*Park County Bulletin Jan 6, 1905*

*Samuel Cohen, of Fairplay owns 1,320 acres of coal land in the South Park coal belt, on which the coal measures have been more or less developed from the surface. He is trying to enlist capital to develop the property to a commercial output, which could be easily accomplished.*

*A few years ago the South Park Coal Company were mining thousands of tons of what was rated the best steam coal in the world. They followed the veins down more than 2000 feet but their vertical position made mining the coal at further depth unprofitable at that time and the work was abandoned.*

*It does not follow that all veins of the field are vertical and there is every reason to believe that the coal mining industry could be made one of big profit in South Park, where commercial coal is hauled in by the railroad from distances ranging all the way from 150 to 200 miles. The proposition is one which capital should at least look into.*

## **Fairplay Hospital**

The Park County Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution on December 7, 1889, that read as follows: "It was resolved by said board that a County Hospital be established for the purpose of taking care of the paupers of Park County.

"On motion the following proposition of J. W. Gibson was accepted. The said J. W. Gibson agrees to board and care for Park county charges from December 10th 1889, until May 1st, 1890 at a cost of \$6 per week for each charge now upon the county, and he further agrees to care for any paupers who may come upon Park County from December 10th, 1889, until May 1st, 1890, free of charge to said Park County."

The legal description of the property was given, the address at 550 Castello Street in Fairplay.

In 1892 the commissioners complained about the drug bills for the hospital, aghast at the \$113 they had to spend for one quarter. They decreed that the excessive charges for whiskey would thereafter be approved only upon order. They didn't specify, however, whose order.

In 1893 a small article appeared in the Flume. "Warden McClure of the county hospital will go to Denver with the imbecile woman, Sarah Bottomy, and will see to her safe departure for Pennsylvania from that place. She has been a charge upon the county for nearly a year, and was not the kind of person who should be kept in such a place. Her relatives will probably secure her in a home in some asylum."

Then in 1894 there was another article. "E. A. Crosby, the man who escaped from the county hospital while partially demented some ten days ago, was accidentally discovered last Sunday afternoon by John T. Richards, who was out gunning in the timber about a mile and a half above town and a little north of the railroad track. When found Crosby was lying under a large tree, in a sort of bed he had burrowed for himself in the

ground, and had evidently lain there several days—probably from the time of his escape—with no protection from the weather save the scanty clothing he wore. He was still in a dazed condition when discovered and made no particular demonstration. A wagon was secured to take him back to the hospital, where he was put in bed, seemingly none the worse for his exposure beyond being rather weak. Precautions will be taken to prevent a second escape, now that his weakness in that direction has become known."

The hospital continued its operation until 1917, when the BOCC saw fit to approve another resolution: "Whereas it has become necessary to make some changes for the better regarding the Park County Hospital, and whereas Wm H. Hunter and Hannah B. Hunter have offered to sell to Park County the building known as the Fairplay Hotel, situated on Front Street, Fairplay, Colorado, together with the furniture and fixtures therein for the sum of \$1200."

This was the same hotel from which the infamous shooting by Hoover earned him a noose around his neck from the 2nd floor of the court house.

Patients were cared for in the Front Street facility, also known as the County Poor Farm, until 1929, when Dr. Duffy informed the BOCC that he would no longer provide his services without a substantial increase in his allowance. The Board opted to decline Dr. Duffy's request. Dr. Frank Dunkle was appointed Coroner and Health Officer.

The Castello Street property had never left county ownership, and the hospital was moved back to its original location, after much renovation. On January 9, 1931, the Flume simply reported: "The new hospital is practically completed and the patients and equipment were transferred this week."

The hospital is no longer there, but the Castello Street building is now home to several tenants. The hotel on Front Street, vacant for many years, was torn down in 1942.