

Park County Local History Archives

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NEWSLETTER

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Grant in early 1900s Source: South Park Historical Society

Archives News

The photo collection of the Park County Local History Archives was featured in the new book, "Park County." A part of the "Images of America" program of Arcadia Publishing, this book was compiled by board members of the Archives. President Christie Wright initiated the project and saw it through to its completion in July.

The many facets of the county are depicted in photos of the subject areas of Mining, Ranching, Transportation, Timbering, Towns and Settlements, Schools and Churches, Water, and Recreation and Tourism.

These were only some of the more than 3,500 photos available at the Archives. Photos have been contributed by donors who signed a 'Deed of Donation' giving their permission for their historic photos to be used. The book is available at the Archives or from the Archives website.

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

Archives Doings

The Archives invited the public to visit on July 25-26, which incidentally was the weekend of Burro Days in Fairplay.

The new book "Park County" was offered for sale among a number of others that were displayed at the Archives in the old court house. Board members who contributed to the writing of the book were on hand to sign copies of the book.

Other books available included oral histories taken from local personages and several books written by local authors.

Visitors could also travel up the circular staircase and see the work in progress of redoing the court room as it was seen in the early days.

One of the attractions seemed to be the heavy iron vault door. There are actually four of them in the building—two in the basement, one in the old records office on the main floor and a fourth in the Archives room. Each of the vault doors has a different painting on its face, colorful with scenery.

The vault in the Archives will be the physical repository of old newspapers, as well as a storage area.

Guests were offered handout materials about the history of the court house and maps of the local area.

The primary theme of the open house was to acquaint visitors with the Archives and the research materials available to anyone who has questions about the history of their families, their town, early mining claims and other information particular to Park County.

Judging by the increase in visitors that have come to ask questions, the event was a success.

The Archives is open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you didn't make it in for the open house, make it a point to visit on a Tuesday.

Incident at Alma

Fairplay Flume, November 18, 1880

“Alma, Nov. 17.— ...Last Saturday a man, whose name we suppress, shot a hole in the floor of the Southern hotel and went outside and drew his revolver on a friend. Marshal Link then led him off to the cooler. In there he continued to yell and swear that he would set the building on fire. After a while some one noticed that the inside of the calaboose was in flames. A large crowd collected as soon as the alarm was given. The man inside was by this time well frightened and begged and pleaded for the door to be opened. As the fire was threatening to engulf him the bars of the window were smashed in and out he came with singed hair and burning coat tails. As the building was still in danger P.O. Gaynor ordered a bucket line formed. This was at once done and the fire was soon extinguished. The building was considerably demoralized. The perpetrator of this crime was re-arrested on Monday morning, plead guilty, and was fined for drunkenness, disorderly conduct and consequent damages to the town, and was fined \$111.50. He was released and advised to leave town, which he immediately did.”

In the same issue and on the same page, next column, the following report appeared:

“A Warm Berth.

They came near having the liveliest kind of a sensation in Alma on Saturday night. An intoxicated man was lodged in the log jail at the south end of town that night, and as it was quite cold a fire was built in the stove. Some hours later the building was discovered to be on fire. A few citizens who were still about rushed down and undertook to break down the door, but failing in this, they forced a hasty entrance at the window. They found the inebriated man had pushed over the stove and lay in a stupor. One hand was badly burned and no doubt in five minutes more he would have been burned to a crisp. As it was his rescuers got their clothing and

hair scorched in extinguishing the flames. We reserve the man’s name hoping that his narrow escape will prove sufficient warning. The newly arrived fire engine was unavailable as an extinguisher at that time on account of the hose not being at hand. Our Alma correspondent furnishes a slightly different account of the above affair.”

What a shame cell phone videos were unavailable back then.

Fairplay Flume, June 3, 1880

“A man at Como last Sunday night while laboring under the influence of “bug juice,” declared war against his wife and was about to disfigure her, when neighbors interfered and a general battle ensued, from which the wife came out uninjured while the pugnacious husband was carried off the field with a dislocated shoulder. In reply to a telegram from the seat of war, Dr. De Beque went to the front and succeeded in reducing the dislocation, and everything is again quiet at Como.”

Articles submitted by Jerry Davis



This postcard photo was found in the files at the Archives, but there is no other information, like names, date, and is this really at the Paris Mine in Park County.

Do you recognize anybody in the photo? If so, please contact the Archives at our email address and help us to identify it properly.

Grant, Colorado by Mrs. Alice Wonder, a frequent correspondent from Bailey.

The Flume, Aug 24, 1950

“As history was being made in Platte Canon there were many who stayed in one place long enough to have the immediate locality given their name. Such was the case in Parmlee gulch down Turkey Creek, Shaffer’s Crossing, where the road has always had to cross Elk Creek and the Shaffer family owned the land and built the home that still stands.

Then came Bailey and the story has been told many times of how this little town received its name from Charlie Bailey who, like Daniel Boone, ‘came west to have quiet and more elbow room.’

So on up the canon we had Slaghts, Cassells, and then, at the confluence of Geneva Gulch and the north fork of the South Platte river, we find the little town of Grant.

In the early ‘70s General U. S. Grant made a trip to the West spending some time in Colorado where he visited the several noted camps—Central City, Georgetown, etc. Of course this trip must be made via stage or with team and carriage. There was no train through here as yet; the stage was a crude way for so noted a person to travel, consequently several carriage loads of notables from Denver, with U. S. Grant an honor guest, made the trip in style with spanking teams, coachmen and fine carriages.

One amusing incident is told by old timers (now few in numbers) about the reception this group received in Bailey.

All the women of the community including Mrs. Morrow, Mrs. Entrican, Mrs. Bailey, and many others, decided to have a really outstanding dinner for the General. They met in Bailey, spent days planning the feast, and finally had a dinner that was really ‘out of this world’ to use a more modern expression.

The day came for the guests to arrive. Everything was in readiness—chicken, mashed potatoes, hot biscuit, jellies, jams, pickles, and what have you! The hour was at hand and the cooks left their kitchen and prized foods to greet the travelers at the door. Some delay was experienced by the men coming for the celebration and all anxiously waited in front of the house hoping the biscuits would not be too brown, etc., before they were served.

Silently over the hill came old Chief Colorow and several of his braves on their way to the valley for fall hunting. Quietly they slipped into the kitchen, found all that wonderful banquet and what could be more fitting than such a feast for a Chief and his braves! They ate rapidly so they might not be disturbed and, as the last morsel of biscuit and chicken disappeared, the ladies came to investigate a strange sound.

Can you picture the dire consternation that reigned when they entered that kitchen? It was certainly heart-breaking!

Not to Chief Colorow, however; he smiled, looked the group of troubled ladies over, said, ‘Umph, much good!’ and slipped away up the trail in true Indian fashion.

Naturally General Grant and his group did not eat chicken that day, by the time the travelers arrived there was a delicious feed of ham, more hot biscuits and everything that even a general could wish for to satisfy their appetites before going on up the canon.

Passing on through the hills they did not stop at other stage stops, but hurried on to what was to be the end of the railroad that fall. A settlement of quite some size had sprung up where the two creeks came together—for the South Platte is a tiny river before Geneva Creek flows into it. Here, too, all was in readiness for a celebration and there was to be a lively time for this camp was truly of the early western type—‘wide open and roaring.’ After spending the night with these mountaineers Grant and his party returned to Denver. However, during the stay it had been decided that the name of

the camp would be GRANT and there would be a post office bearing that name recorded in Washington.

Many have come and gone from Grant in the years that have passed. There was the 'marrying justice,' good old Jim McDonald, that lived at the Searles place where Andy and Harriet Anderson now live; there was for many years that genial pioneer so many of us remember—Jim Lamping who, with his good wife, reared a large family of sturdy boys and pretty girls in the old town of Grant.

Then, not too long ago, came the new highway 285 with many changes. Buildings were torn down to be replaced by others on a new site, and some not to be replaced.

Then the present town of GRANT developed and bids fair to grow into a busy burg with new industries and progressive people at the helm. 'TWIN SPRUCE CAFÉ' as one comes down the canon extends a hospitable greeting to travelers; 'PLATTE RIVER INN' extends its invitation to 'stop and rest.' The post office of Grant is under the capable management of Mary Cassell Pharness that everyone knows, for she is a native of the canon. Mr. and Mrs. Candlin have the store, and that pioneer, Jack Kimberly is there to tell you of early days and present signs of the times.

Now it is plain to all that GRANT is an ever growing place in the canon and bids fair to become outstandingly popular as a stopping place on highway 285 as the days go by."

Today Grant remains an unincorporated town along Highway 285 where Geneva Creek and the North Fork of the South Platte River come together. A turn onto Highway 62 takes a traveler to Guanella Pass and then on to Georgetown.

But travelers sometimes stop their cars in Grant around dusk and bring out the cameras. This is when the Rocky Mountain sheep tend to come down out of the rocks to get a drink out of the river.

Early Trains at Grant

The Denver South Park and Pacific narrow gauge train had been built as far as Morrison in 1874, then the line was developed as income permitted. In 1878 it arrived at Grant and had reached Buena Vista by 1880. From there it served Leadville on "rented" Rio Grande tracks before building its own Leadville branch from Como via Boreas and Fremont Passes.

These incidents were reported in the Fair-play Flume:

November 20, 1879

"The night train on the S.P. met with two slight accidents on the up trip Monday night. First it suffered a slight collision with a freight train near Grant, by which means several cars were detached and started back to Denver, but were soon arrested by the brakes. Again on Kenosha hill a part of the train ran for a distance of one hundred and fifty feet on the ties. No serious damage was done."

December 30, 1880

"Fire at Grant

The round house of the Denver & South Park road at Grant burned to the ground about eleven o'clock on Christmas night. A machinist was working upon engine No. 24 in the house when he discovered the flames, the origin of which is not fully known. This engine, as well as the building, was nearly a total loss. Passenger train No. 3 arrived during the progress of the fire and stopped to assist in fighting the flames and releasing the engine, but was unsuccessful in either, and went on after an hour's delay. The house will probably be rebuilt as it is almost a necessity at this point on the line."



Depot and train at Grant in 1930s