



Parked in the Past

1916 to 1919: not the 'Good Ole Days'

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Billy Joel sings, “and the good ole days weren’t always good” in his 1983 song, “Keeping the Faith.” The words could have been written for the years 1916-1919, when the “good ole days” seemed pretty bad.

World War I started and in Park County and throughout the nation men as young as 18 were drafted and sent to European battlefields in 1917 and 1918.

The lives of some were claimed by warfare; but about half of the fatalities were attributed to Spanish influenza that raced through the trenches of Europe. Some soldiers died in U.S. training bases where influenza spread through the barracks.

The flu of 1918 was called the “most devastating epidemic in recorded world history” in a story on the Stanford University website; it claimed more lives worldwide than the war.

It also hit Park County.

And before the U.S. entered World War I and the influenza pandemic [worldwide epidemic] officially started, Colorado became one of the first states to ratify Prohibition, making it illegal to use,

possess, manufacture, import and advertise any beverage “containing any percentage of alcohol, no matter what it is called or what other ingredients may be in them,” the Prohibition measure read.

It was thought the measure would put an end to crime, poverty and violence. Instead, they increased, and the added costs to enforce the laws were high.

Prohibition

A new year typically brings new laws, and in January 2014 two states – Colorado and Washington – were the first to legalize recreational marijuana. In Colorado the majority vote on Nov. 6, 2012, was 55.3 percent.

That’s a complete reversal from Election Day, Nov. 3, 1914, when in a 52.3 percent majority, Colorado joined Washington and Oregon in outlawing alcohol. The amendment was effective Jan. 1, 1916. Other states had become dry in preceding years and by 1920, Prohibition was a nationwide law.

The Flume fought hard against the Prohibition amendment before the 1914 election. Beginning in September 1914 and continuing through Oct. 30, 1914, the

paper actively campaigned against Prohibition. It used the likenesses of former presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln and anti-Prohibition quotes from clergymen from across the U.S. in an effort to sway voters against the amendment.

A bishop from Vermont gave a prophetic opinion in the Oct. 30, 1914, *Flume* when he said, "Prohibition drives underground the mischief which it seeks to cure, making it more difficult to deal with the evil and impossible to regulate the trade."

But the amendment did pass. The Senate and Board of Trade saloons – both in Fairplay – advertised for the last time in *The Flume* of Dec. 31, 1915. It was the final day one could legally drink alcohol in Colorado for nearly 18 years (with the exception of use for medicinal and sacramental purposes.)

In the years from 1917-1920, an amendment to the Prohibition measure allowed Colorado residents to import for personal use up to two quarts of whisky, six quarts of wine or 24 quarts of beer per month, but even that went away with national Prohibition.

On Sept. 26, 1933, Prohibition ended in Colorado, and on Dec. 5, 1933, Prohibition was repealed nationwide.

Ironically, after the law was in force in Colorado, *The Flume* had no local coverage of its effect in the county, with the exception of one sentence in the Jan. 7, 1916 edition.

"Alma is without a marshal now since the saloons are closed," it said, apparently indicating that no laws would be broken without alcohol to fuel the crimes.

One might conclude that alcohol was no longer a part of Park County life.

Or one could read the oral histories that old timers recorded for the Park County Local History Archives for another slant on the Prohibition years.

Park County prohibition

"Well, there were several bootleggers," said Andy Anderson in a 2005 interview about growing up in Como. He was born in 1920 and repeated stories from his father and grandfather and from his own memories. He said that the richest man in town was the bootlegger.

The term bootlegger describes one who is an illegal trafficker in liquor in violation of legislative restrictions on its manufacture, sale or transportation. Moonshine is an illegally made alcoholic beverage.

Anderson talked about George and Sadie Duffey, who lived in the area of today's Camp Como. They made and sold moonshine and "the feds were always coming out of Denver . . . and they were always after George." But they rarely caught him. A worker on the train would send a message to the Como station saying the "feds were on the train." So the Duffeys usually had fair warning and hid the moonshine.

Jim Gardner (1950-2006), the late Park County commissioner whose family has lived in the area since 1919, was interviewed in 2002. "There were bootleggers out the Elkhorn, too," he said, in reference to Elkhorn Road, also known as County Road 15.

And Gardner talked about Como bootleggers.

"Como was a dying railroad town, even by the early '20s – still had gaslights, still had sidewalks, still had four or five saloons before prohibition shut them

down . . . but then they had a lot of bootleggers,” he said.

In 2002, Merrill Wright from Jefferson, Colo., was also interviewed. He was born in 1923 and remembers what happened when his dad would “get with all the guys and they’d get a few drinks and start trying to sing” during Prohibition days.

“They’d get lit, and I tell you, it was something else. They thought they could really sing and the more they’d drink, why the louder they sang,” he said.

Shortly after the Colorado Prohibition law was passed, the U.S. went to war.

World War I

World War I began in 1914 but it didn’t affect the nation and Park County significantly until April 6, 1917, when the U.S. joined the allied nations of France, Britain, Russia and Italy in declaration of war on the Central Powers of Germany, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire [Turkey], and Bulgaria.

Six weeks later, on May 18, 1917, an act of Congress gave the president the power to draft men into military service. It was called the Selective Service Act (still used today with modifications); it required men between the ages of 21-30 to register. [By Sept. 12, 1918, men from 18-45 were being drafted.]

Park County residents heeded the call.

“The county seat was very busy Wednesday, there being a number of people from the various towns bringing in returns of the registration for the selective draft,” reported the June 8, 1917, Flume.

In that same issue, a chart showed that of the 278 men of “fighting age” living in the county, the greatest number were from Fairplay, with 80 men, followed by Guffey and Jefferson, both with 28 men. Other

towns represented included Bailey, with 13 men; Como, with 14; Grant, 5; Lake George, 15; Hartsel, 12; and Alma, 18.

Among the first to be drafted from Park County, on Sept. 19, 1917, was Fred H. Hammond of Guffey. Along with other draftees from Park County, he was sent to Camp Funston in northeastern Kansas, a U.S. Army training center within the Fort Riley military reservation.

His mother received two letters from Hammond when he was at the camp. He told her in the first letter he was hospitalized and convalescing from an attack of measles. In the next letter he said he wasn’t doing so well, according to the Dec. 14, 1917, Flume.

He never made it to Europe and the war.

In mid-December 1917, Hammond’s parents received word that he died of pneumonia, a complication of the measles, on Dec. 9, 1917.

Hammond’s remains were sent to Cañon City, Colo., where he was “the first soldier dying in the Great War to be brought [there].” (See the Dec. 21, 1917, Flume.)

On the day of his military-honors funeral at Cañon City’s Greenwood Cemetery, flags were flown at half-mast throughout town. He lay in state for two hours at the YMCA building where “hundreds of people marched past his coffin, which was draped with the American Flag and almost obscured by masses of beautiful flowers.”

Hammond’s draft card describes him as a tall 22-year-old single farmer of medium build with gray eyes and brown hair.

He was the son of Henry and Fannie Hammond and he lived and worked on the Bender Ranch north of Guffey, Colo. He was born on the ranch, and it was his

lifelong home, said the Dec. 21, 1917, Flume.

Henry Hammond's sister was Annie Hammond Bender. The ranch was named for Annie and her husband John Bender, according to Doug Stiverson, a descendant of the Hammond and Bender families.

Now called Aspen Creek Ranch, it was designated a Park County historic landmark in 2007 and is privately owned. (See the related story, Guffey's Currant Creek Pioneer Cemetery, in the Dec. 27 Flume.)

Had Hammond been sent to Camp Funston six months later, in March 1918, he would have found the camp in the midst of one of the first Spanish influenza outbreaks in the 1918-1919 pandemic.

Spanish influenza

There is speculation that the 1918 pandemic began at Camp Funston, where all draftees first reported and from where they were deployed to fight the war, according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>. But scientists do not know for certain where it started.

Unofficial death estimates, as reported in the Oct. 11, 1918, Flume, was one death in every 27 cases. More recent information on www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/ estimates the number of deaths in the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic at 30-50 million worldwide including 675,000 in the U.S. Population areas complied with Governor Julius Gunter's direction and took steps to limit the spread of the disease. In Fairplay, the board of trustees ordered that all schools, theaters, churches and other places where people assembled be closed until further notice. Parents were urged to avoid the

gathering of children in homes, and citizens were asked to stay home if feeling ill, even from a cold, until "the nature of their illness [is] determined," said the Oct. 11, 1918, Flume.

But still there were from one to three influenza or pneumonia deaths reported in The Flume each week in the fall of 1918.

Most were young healthy adult men, including Leroy Merrill Wright, 28, a soldier from Jefferson, Colo.; Alfred Turner, a soldier, age unknown of Garo, Colo.; and Cecil Dewey Stephens, 20, a Fairplay resident.

Women were affected, too. Albertina Almgren, 44, died in Boulder in October 1918. She had recently moved there from Fairplay, her home for 15 years, and is buried at the Fairplay Cemetery.

By the summer of 1919, the flu pandemic came to an end, according to www.history.com, "as those that were infected either died or developed immunity."

It was almost 90 years later, in 2008, that researchers announced why the 1918 flu was so deadly, "a group of three genes enabled the virus to weaken a victim's bronchial tubes and lungs and clear the way for bacterial pneumonia."

The influenza virus circulating in the winter of 2013-2014 is H1N1, or swine flu, the same strain that caused the 1918 pandemic. And, just like in 1918, this season's virus is typically affecting healthy adults ages 18-64.

The latest reports as of Jan. 18 show the virus widespread in 41 states, including Colorado. Infection numbers are not disclosed, but it is above the epidemic threshold, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in

Atlanta, or CDC. It says the best way to protect against influenza is by obtaining an annual flu vaccination and recommends it for anyone over the age of six months, with rare exceptions.

See images on next page.



Jefferson school

Students pose outside the Jefferson School in Jefferson, Colo., in 1919. During the Spanish influenza pandemic in 1918, schools such as this one as well as churches, theaters and other public gathering places statewide were ordered closed by proclamation of Governor Julius Gunter. (Photo courtesy of Park County Local History Archives, Baker Family Collection)



Fred H. Hammond

Fred Hammond, 22, was engaged to be married when he was drafted into the U.S. Army on Sept. 19, 1917, to fight in World War I. He died Dec. 9, 1917, after a bout with measles and pneumonia at Camp Funston in Kansas. (Photo courtesy of Doug Stiverson)



Henry & Fannie Hammond

The parents of Fred Hammond, Henry and Fannie Hammond, were Park County pioneers associated with the Bender Ranch near Guffey, Colo. The ranch was occupied by family members as early as 1874. This photo was taken on their wedding day, circa 1890. (Photo courtesy of Doug Stiverson)



STATE-WIDE PROHIBITION AN INJURY TO TEMPERANCE

Anti-prohibition

Ads such as this one featuring former President Abraham Lincoln ran frequently in *The Flume* in the months before the Prohibition vote on Nov. 3, 1914. This one was in the Oct. 16, 1914, edition. (Photo courtesy of ColoradoHistoricNewspapers.org)