

January 20, 2012

Rideout program in Shawnee recalls 1860s

Fifty attendees enjoy Historical Society event

Douglas Stephens, Correspondent

Note: Douglas Stephens is the secretary of the Park County Historical Society



Banjo music

Rex Rideout plays a historic banjo on Jan. 14 for Park County Historical Society members. (Photo by Arthur Hall, Park County Historical Society President)

concert/program setting. He will be appearing with Mark Gardner at the 23rd annual Colorado Cowboy Poetry Gathering Saturday, Jan. 21 (www.ColoradoCowboyGathering.com for information).

At the gathering in Shawnee, Rideout sang several cowboy songs. "Old Delores," "Border Affair," "Colorado Trail" and "Frijole Beans" spoke to the cowboy's life, loves and that staple of cattle drives and modern day camping trips - beans.

Two songs of 1862 highlighted the Civil War - Steven Foster's "Better Times are Coming" and "Vacant Chair."

"Vacant Chair" was written as a tribute to a fallen warrior but came to be known as a song about Abraham Lincoln," said Rideout.

He also read a Robert Burns poem: "To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough." The poem told the story of a mouse's home torn asunder by the plow. The poem is also the source of the often-quoted line, the best laid plans of mice and men: "The best laid schemes of mice and men Go often askew, And leave us nothing but grief and pain, For promised joy!"

A dinner featuring sloppy joes, salads and desserts was prepared by Park County Historical Society members. Once again, Leona Nelson served as greeter and cashier.

Dee Brown and Karen Christenson coordinate the dinner series.

After the show, Rideout spent quite a bit of time speaking to the guests and signing copies of his CDs.

"I am pleased to support the Park County Historical Society and Park County in historic preservation efforts," he said.

The event was a way to start the 2012 Park County Historical Society's series of fundraising dinners.

The next dinner will be on Saturday, Feb. 11, at the Platte Canyon Community Center at Shawnee. Details will be forthcoming in The Flume's Community Corner and at www.parkcountyhistory.com.

The calendar said Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012, but the program inside the Platte Canyon Community Center at Shawnee took the nearly 50 Park County Historical Society members and guests into the 1860s with famed musician and cowboy poet Rex Rideout.

Rideout played a parlor guitar and two period banjos, one a reproduction. He has performed music of the 1800s American West at numerous historic sites and museums. He plays the mandolin, fiddle, banjo and tin whistle along with re-enacting living history.

He has been featured on TV, radio and in history magazines and performed with Harrison Ford and Daniel Craig as a fiddler in the movie "Cowboys and Aliens."

One example of his music, "A Voyage of Such Nature," along with fellow musicians, was featured at the 200th anniversary of the Pike Expedition in Pueblo at its living history museum.

The New Mexico Centennial Project 2012 has hired Rideout to perform cowboy ballads in a