



Park County Historical Society

Quarterly Newsletter - July 2014

From PCHS President

Welcome everyone!

The McGraw Memorial Park historic buildings and caboose are now open for summer.

We had a wonderful crew working several days to make this happen. Many thanks to Janet and Jerry Burk, Jim Sapp and Jane Gilsinger for all the mowing, trimming, edging and weeding. Also to Jim and Sue Glenn and Marilyn Boccuzzi, who bought and planted all the beautiful flowers surrounding the historic buildings. And to Jim Glenn who built mini patios each side of the Glen Isle Wait Station, which now are adorned with flowering whiskey barrels. Jim Glenn also raked and spread grass seeds on all the barren spots around the park.

Craig Christenson and Pat Mauro were able to remove the front bumper of the caboose and are now working on removing the bolts so all can be restored. Craig Christenson also installed a water pipe in the ground that runs from the water outlet on the side of the annex building to the side of the school house. This allows the hose to reach all those areas that need watering.

Linda Wood and Keriba Blattell cleaned all the historic buildings and caboose. An ongoing once a week job. Linda Wood also collects all the trash once a week from the park.

Jeffrey and Rhonda Guernsey spent several days chipping slash on the lower Morrow Mountain trail and laying those chippings on the trail. Not only does this reduce fire danger on the mountain but also makes that trail less muddy during spring run off. They will be finishing this job shortly, then Jeffrey will be helping Craig Christenson in restoring the caboose.

Larry Blattell with his truck and chains moved several of the heavy wooden ties back to their original position on the Rustic Square side parking lot. This has restored that area back to the park instead of being part of the parking lot. Also Larry and Keriba Blattell loaded and hauled away the entire pile of dumped logs from the Water Board side parking lot. This enhances the beauty around Crow Creek, along with a new bench, wooden log tables, and a new wooden walkway across the creek built by Craig Christenson and Jim Glenn.

Bailey Day at the park:

Early Friday morning we had another crew: Larry and Keriba Blattell, Craig and Karen Christenson, and Torrey Shutes arrived early to set up several tents, tables and chairs at the park for our part of Bailey Day. This year, as last year, Bailey Day's theme was the wild west. We had a six shooter western interpreter and sometimes mountain man, Tom Cordus displaying tomahawks from the French and Indian War, relics from the fur trade era along with Civil War swords, rifles, and shaving items. Don Brehm, dressed as a French voyageur, displayed fur trade era items, maps and a large beaver pleu.

Also during Bailey Day, we had a special gold panning event held by Chad Watkins along Crow Creek. Chad has a TV show called "Ice Cold Gold" on Animal Planet.

Ellen Campa, wearing a pretty yellow pioneer dress, demonstrated weaving. Linda Wood, dressed in a lovely green and white pioneer dress, acted as our historical presenter.

Karen Christenson and Keriba Blattell sold items in the Shawnee School House. Craig Christenson ran several showings of "The Last Cattle Drive in Platte Canyon of the Jesse Fitzsimmons Herd".

Many of the above volunteers will be working at the park this summer sanding and painting trim on the Entriken Cabin and the caboose. I am currently working on a grant for the repair of the Glen-Isle Wait Station roof.

Karen Christenson, Linda Wood and myself are at the park on weekends. We welcome everyone to join our core of volunteers.

Dee Brown, President and Curator
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Visit the PCHS website at www.parkcountyhistory.com
the Shawnee Branch at
www.historicshawnee.com or 303-816-0000

Newsletter in Review

From PCHS President
PCHS Membership Form

The Last Cattle Drive of the Jess Fitzsimmons Herd
2013 – 2014 PCHS Board



**The Last Cattle Drive
in Platte Canyon
of the
Jess Fitzsimmons Herd**

by Pat Mauro and
Roger Christenson

The Fitzsimmons Ranch was originally included in a few land parcels including the original Slagt's ranch, and part of the Debernardi ranch. The eastern end of the ranch was originally the Maddox Ice Co., which produced ice from the frozen lakes (across from Platte Canon High School.) Jess Fitzsimmons purchased the property that became the Fitzsimmons/X Brand Ranch.

Jess's family had pioneered in the Bailey area, building the Mt Vernon Hotel. In 1919 Charles Fitzsimmons bought land that had been homesteaded by Charles Nichols in 1881, on the east side of Crow Hill, in the present day Burland Ranchettes. Jess's brother Perry built his house and out buildings there, where it still stands.

The Last Cattle Drive was filmed by KWGN Channel 2 in 1965, to show with additional material and audio on one of their programs. They presented the silent film by

itself to the Park County Historical Society. The silent film shows ranchers of Shawnee, Colorado driving their cattle up Platte Canyon on Highway 285 in 1965, and on up to Geneva Park on the road to Guanella Pass, for the last time. The cattle were annually put to pasture there in the summers.



Jess Fitzsimmons



In a project ongoing for many years, Fitzsimmons' late step-son Steve Hickel (left) narrated the silent film, recorded by Vincent Tolpo; John Rankin of the historical society had the silent film transferred to DVD; and, coordinated by Pat Mauro, Roger Christenson sent the DVD to Steve's son Hal Hickel who found and added the sound recording and sent it back, and Roger authored the final DVD with the sound version, adding subtitles and extras.

Narrator Steve Hickel's father was from the Fairplay area. His Mother Martha remarried in 1952 when she wed Jess Fitzsimmons. He was one of 2 graduates of the first class to graduate from Platte Canon High School in 1958. He married Betsy Corbett and they had two sons, Schell and Hal. Hickel spent many years at the ranch, which he took over in 1975, and taught at Platte Canyon High School for several years.

Hal Hickel, now an Academy Award-winning Animation Supervisor for Industrial Light and Magic, had inquired about the film in 2003, and told PCHS President Pat Mauro he would try to find the sound track of his father's narration. In 2011 Roger Christenson, who'd known Hal since an animation class in grade school, sent him the DVD Rankin had transferred, and after some back-and-forth working out technical issues, Hal sent back a copy with the soundtrack synchronized in 2014.

Seen in the 1965 film are several ranchers including Jess Fitzsimmons, school teacher Richard Cochran, who taught at Platte Canyon for many years, and other local participants, as well as cattle branding, wrangling, and vaccinations. Anyone familiar with the area and it's history will want to see, and now hear about, the ranchers and teachers they once knew.

We thank Hal and his mother Betsy for their assistance in this project!



Richard Cochran



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Park County Historical Society Membership Form

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- Education & Research
- McGraw Memorial Park
 - ___ Host
 - ___ Maintain
 - ___ Help with collections
- Local History Archives
- Membership
- Historic Preservation
- Publicity & Public Relations
- Staff Support

Please join or renew your membership today!

Send check and completed form to: Park County Historical Society, P.O. Box 43, Bailey, CO 80421
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