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December 2018 through March 2019

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Palmer Lake Historical Society

Board of Directors 2018

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Arlene Fisher Olson

Rodger Voelker

Mark your 2019 Calendars

Event and Program Schedule for January through April 2019

Thursday, January 17, 2019, 6:30 PM
Annual Potluck Dinner and Membership
Meeting: A "truly tasty experience"

Thursday, February 21, 2019, 7:00 PM
"Poker Alice Tubbs: The Straight Story"
- Liz Duckworth

Thursday, March 21, 2019, 7:00 PM
"Oh, The Rock Island Line" - Mike and
Sigi Walker

Thursday, April 18, 2019, 7:00 PM
Hidden Hero at the Printing Press:
Emma F. Langdon and Miners' Rights -
Katherine Scott Sturdevant

*Palmer Lake Historical
Society - making history
more than a memory!*

Contributing to this issue:

Tom Baker Roger Davis
Rodger Voelker Mike & Sigi Walker
Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!

A Newsletter of the Palmer Lake Historical Society and the *Lucretia Vaile Museum*

Where Did Palmer Lake's Yule Log Celebration Come From? Centuries-old tradition began in Palmer Lake in 1934

The November monthly history series program concludes the Palmer Lake Historical Society's activities for 2018. But you can look forward to local holiday events later in November at the Chili Supper and Star Lighting and, in December, the Yule Log Celebration.

Yule log traditions, (not to be confused with the French log-shaped chocolate-coated cake roll, called a *bûche de Noël*), predate Christianity and still exist today. The ancient custom of burning a Yule log during the Christmas season is still widespread in Great Britain, France, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and the Baltics. Families trek into the forest to cut a Yule log, then carry it to a waiting hearth, and set it ablaze to celebrate the winter solstice and to protect the family through the coming year.

The Yule log is also a custom present in the United States. Robert Meyer, Jr. records in 1947 that a "Yule-Log Ceremony" in Palmer Lake, Colorado had occurred since 1934. He describes the custom: "It starts with the Yule log hunt and is climaxed by drinking of wassail around the fire."

The Yule Log Ceremony

The **Yule log** is a specially selected log burnt on a hearth as a Christmas tradition in a number of countries in Europe. The origin of the folk custom is unclear. Numerous scholars have observed that, like other traditions associated with Yule, the custom may ultimately derive from Germanic paganism.

An illustration of people collecting a Yule log from Chambers Book of Days (1832)



The Palmer Lake Yule Log Celebration

(excerpted from *Colorado Springs Style* November-December 2017, "Savoring the Flavor of Holiday Traditions" by Maria Faulconer, and edited for accuracy)

Deep in the snowy woods near Palmer Lake, peals of laughter ring out as hundreds of children and adults in red and green capes scamper up and down pine-scented slopes in search of a hidden Yule log.

Thought to be of northern European origin, this ancient tradition celebrated the winter solstice and the return of the sun. Since 1934, on the second Sunday in December, Palmer Lake has carried on the tradition, keeping a piece of its Yule log to burn during the next year's event.

After a spirited hunt, the winner drags the ten-foot notched log into the Town Hall while children take turns sitting atop it. The winner is the first to drink the traditional wassail, served steaming in the original silver cup. Then everyone joins in, toasting to each other's good health.

The wassail recipe is the same one they've used since 1934.

Rodger Voelker, wassail maker (and current Palmer Lake Historical Society board member), begins heating 100 gallons of apple cider at 9 a.m. and adds a bouquet of spices once the program starts at 1 p.m.

"It makes the Town Hall smell like Christmas," he says.

(continued on page 4)

President's Message



The **Give!** campaign is an excellent way to learn about and support some of the non-profits doing good work in the Pikes Peak area. This is the 10th annual "Live Here, Give Here" effort to encourage local philanthropy and the first time Palmer Lake Historical Society has participated. As you plan end-of-year giving, I hope you will include a visit to <https://IndyGive.com> and support the Historical Society and other worthwhile organizations. The campaign opened November 1 and continues through the end of the year.

The November program, "The WWI Flying Ace from Denver," concludes Historical Society programming for 2018. It's been another great year. Attendance at the Chautauqua in August was the highest in years, and recent presentations on the Harvey Girls and on Palmer Lake's Medal of Honor recipient William Crawford were very popular. November marks the centennial of the Armistice ending World War I, and a new exhibit on the Great War at the Vaile Museum will continue into 2019. Please stop by to see the exhibit and take in the many interesting displays at the museum. You can also look forward to the 2019 Tri-Lakes Historical Calendar, which will be available soon at the Vaile Museum and at local merchants.

Thanks to everyone supporting the Historical Society's mission this year – our members, our volunteers and museum docents, our Tri-Lakes Calendar advertisers, and our Give! donors. Best wishes for the holidays, and we hope you can join Palmer Lake's annual holiday traditions at the Chili Supper and Star Lighting on November 24th and the Yule Log hunt December 16th.

The Society operates exclusively through volunteers. Please consider joining us and donating some of your time and talent.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact us by email at plhs@palmerdividehistory.org or call 719-559-0837.

Tom Baker



WWI trivia: October 1918 marked 100 years since the U.S. Railway Administration turned the parallel railroad (now UP and BNSF) lines between Denver and Pueblo into a joint line operation - known as "Colorado's Joint Line."

THEN AND NOW: Tri-Lakes Photos from the Past and Present

Vintage photos from Lucretia Vaile Museum photo collection



Photo caption reads "Yule Log 1934" photographer unknown

"The Winner-Finder of the log rides it back to the Town Hall along with other children. The Hider and the Finder then saw the log in half. Half will be burned in the Town Hall fireplace during the Wassail Ceremony, and the other half will be used for next year's kindling." Rodger Voelker



Bottom corner of photo reads "Crowd at Yule Log Ceremony, Palmer Lake, Colo." Photo credit: YuleLogCrowd1930sGreatTownphoto

**Palmer Lake Yule Log
Hunt and Ceremony**

**Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018
1:00 p.m.**

Palmer Lake Town Hall



Upcoming PLHS Programs and Events January 2019 through April 2019

Social Hour at 6:30 PM, Presentations begin at 7:00 PM in the Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent Street

Thursday, January 17, 2019, 6:30 PM

SPECIAL EVENT

Annual Potluck and Membership Meeting



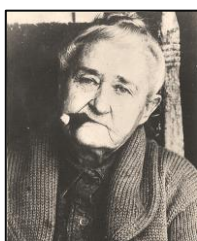
Don't miss this event! Bring a vegetable, salad, or dessert to share - the PLHS will provide the baked ham, coffee, and tea. We begin the evening's activities with an overview of the Society's activities followed by a short business meeting and election of 2019 officers. Attendees will be encouraged to renew their 2019 PLHS memberships - or to join if they're not PLHS members.

Entertainment will be provided during the evening. The annual PLHS "history" calendar, supported by the 2019 calendar advertisers, will be available. Renowned local artist Joe Bohler has again donated his artwork for the calendar's cover. The PLHS is most appreciative of these contributions.

Be sure to visit the Vaile Museum's commemorative World War I Exhibit which will be open before or after the meeting.

Thursday, February 21, 2019 – "Poker Alice Tubbs: The Straight Story"

Presenter: Liz Duckworth



Poker Alice Tubbs made her living as a professional gambler—a woman in a man's world. Alice often dressed in a fancy suit with stylish jewelry and button shoes as she worked in the roughest mining towns of the 1880s and 1890s. Renowned for smoking big, black cigars, she determined she would never cheat, but would win on her own terms. A self-proclaimed religious woman, she never played cards on a Sunday!

Liz Duckworth lives in Colorado Springs and is a freelance copywriter and editor as well as the author of several books. She has performed multiple times as Poker Alice Tubbs and is a regular actress in Red Herring Productions murder mysteries. Her website offers a behind-the-scenes look at the world of Poker Alice: PokerAliceHistory.com.

Thursday, March 21, 2019 – "Oh, The Rock Island Line!"

Presenters: Mike and Sigi Walker



Roswell, Colorado, the area of Colorado Springs just south of Fillmore between the "Joint Line" tracks and Nevada was the westernmost terminus of the storied Rock Island Railroad, memorialized in song (*Oh, The Rock Island Line*). Learn about the unique "AB6" locomotive, the Rock Island's ups and downs, and its presence in the Pikes Peak area, 1888 - 1980.

Mike and Sigi Walker are PLHS volunteers. For this program, they combine their interest in railroads and history to bring you the story of the Rock Island Railroad in the Pikes Peak area. The Roswell Roundhouse is now home to the Pikes Peak Trolley Museum.

Thursday, April 18, 2019 – "Hidden Hero at the Printing Press: Emma F. Langdon and Miners' Rights"

Presenter:

Katherine Scott Sturdevant



Emma Langdon and her husband Charles were publishers of the *Victor Daily Record* newspaper during the 1904 miners' union strike. As anti-union sentiment rose, the National Guard imprisoned the paper's male staff. Emma rose to the occasion, printed the news, and personally distributed the papers. National attention fell on her as she became the strike's historian. Her life reveals much about women as workers and seemingly unlikely heroes.

Katherine Scott Sturdevant, Professor of History at Pikes Peak Community College, has worked with the Pikes Peak Library District and the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum as a speaker, consultant, writer, and editor, has authored and edited numerous books, winning local, state, and national teaching awards.



SPECIAL WWI EXHIBIT IN VAILE MUSEUM

**COMMEMORATING THE 100TH
ANNIVERSARY OF ARMISTICE DAY
NOW THROUGH JANUARY 2019**

Museum Hours: Saturday 10 AM–2 PM; Wednesday 1–3 PM; 1st Thursday 10 AM–noon



Generations of townspeople and visitors, numbering up to 500, gather in the Town Hall to celebrate this ancient tradition.

Voelker's son, Kurt, is president of the Yule Log Committee. "I have wonderful memories helping my dad stir the wassail," he says. "My kids carried the silver wassail cup and ladle up to the stage when they were little. Now a younger generation is doing the same."

"For me," he says, "the Yule Log Ceremony is bigger than Christmas."



Edward C. Hubbard (1901-1982), most likely the first wassail maker, continued until his death. Rodger Voelker learned to make wassail from him and began assisting Ed in 1967. Ed and his wife, Freda, owned The White Kitchen restaurant, which is now the Rock House ice cream parlor.

How the Yule Log Celebration was brought to Palmer Lake



Lucretia Vaile, the Palmer Lake Historical Society Museum's namesake, spent summers here with her family starting in 1881. She was instrumental in starting the Yule Log Ceremony. An old English custom, **the Yule Log Celebration** was brought to Palmer Lake by Lucretia Vaile and Miss Evalena Macy in 1934. They sent for a splinter of the Lake Placid, NY, Yule log and the first event was held in a local home. Fifty persons went on the hunt for the hidden log resplendent in red or green capes. The first Yule log was discovered by C. R. Hays. He was rewarded with a ride astride the log, pulled by the other searchers. They were greeted by 200 cheering residents and visitors. Half of the log was burned with the other half being saved for the next year. A spicy cider drink called Wassail was drunk in great quantities while watching the ceremonies by candle light. Hundreds of Yule log splinters have been sent all over the world to those wishing to start their own holiday tradition.

Yule Log Celebrations elsewhere in Colorado

Since the early 1980s, **Steamboat Springs** has hosted an annual Yule log scavenger hunt, testing citizens' knowledge of local history with a prize of \$150 from the Steamboat Chamber going to whoever finds the log. They get 10 poems released each weekday beginning the second week in December, chase all over town, basically following the clues in the poems, hoping to find where the town's Yule three foot long, 25 pound log is hiding.

The clues start from the hiding place the previous year and get easier each day. When they find the log, they grab it, and bring it back to the Tread of Pioneers Museum. Occasionally, people find the log by chance – they just see it. The 2018 Yule Log Hunt will be the city's 39th annual holiday event.

In 2018, more than 150 people will gather in **Beulah**, a small town southwest of Pueblo, for the 66th Annual Yule Log Festival. The more traditional event includes a short hunt in Pueblo Mountain Park for Beulah's legendary 8 foot long fire log. Participants are greeted at Mountain Park Pavilion by a costumed Father Christmas. The event also involves caroling, cookies, sipping on wassail, and parading of a ceremonial boar's head, a symbol for abundance and feasting and prosperity.

Lucretia Vaile Museum Hours:

Saturday 10 AM–2 PM all year
 Wednesday 1–3 PM September–May
 Wednesday 1–4 PM June–August
 1st Thursday of month: 10 AM–noon
 Tours: Call 559-0837 and leave message

When a shout of "Halueb" (Beulah spelled backwards) rings out, it signals that the log has been found. The "finder" gets a bumpy ride on the log back to the pavilion, particularly if there hasn't been a lot of snow. The Yule log will be split in two, with half being thrown into this year's fire and the remaining half to be used at the next year's festivities.

The Beulah event is a descendant of the Palmer Lake Yule log tradition. In 1952, the Miller family of Beulah attended a Yule log celebration in Palmer Lake and returned with a splinter with which to kindle Beulah's own Yule fire.

Mike and Sigi Walker



Like us on Facebook

Visit the PLHS website by scanning our QR code with your smart phone.



Palmer Lake Historical Society
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Note: All submissions may be edited for content, grammar, and space allocations, and become the property of the Palmer Lake Historical Society unless other arrangements have been made. Digital word submissions in .doc or .docx, photos in .jpg format, please. Submit pieces and photos to Editor at mikensigi@comcast.net

Sources:

Palmer Lake Historical Society website, "Yule Log Festivities"; *Colorado Springs Style* Nov-Dec 2017, Maria Faulconer; *Denver Post*, Dec. 14, 2000, Jim Hughes; and *Pueblo Chieftain*, Dec. 10, 2017, Zach Hillstrom

*Happy
 Holidays
 from the
 Palmer Lake Historical
 Society
 and the
 Lucretia Vaile Museum*

