

Volume IX Number 2

August 2015 through November 2015

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Museum: 719-559-0837



Palmer Lake Historical Society

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Program Schedule:

August through November 2015

August 20, 2015, 7:00 PM – "Monument Tree Nursery" Eric Swab

September 17, 2015, 7:00 PM – "Rocky Mountain National Park" John Stansfield

October 15, 2015, 7:00 PM – "George Washington" Dave Wallace

November 19, 2015, 7:00 PM – "Orphan Train" Jane Milne

Mark your 2015 Calendars

July 18: Annual COS Powwow

Aug 1: Annual Chautauqua

Aug 10: Mystery of the Trees film

Sep 12: Estemere Tour

Contributing to this issue:

Dan Edwards Al Walter
Mike & Sigi Walker

Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!

For more information, visit our website:

www.palmerdividehistory.org

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

A Brief Look into the Life of Palmer Lake's Founder: Dr. William Finley Thompson

William F. Thompson, also known as W. Finley Thompson, was born in Randolph, Ohio, on September 13, 1840. His father died when he was 8 or 9 years old, leaving his mother to raise him along with his sister "Nettie," who was five years younger; 1850 records show the family living with Charles H. Thompson, a dentist, probably his uncle.

What follows is a recounting of the life of a restless but ambitious young man. In 1857, at 17 years of age, young William won an award for a dental exhibit at a New York fair. Three years later, in 1860, he won a prize for a mechanical dentistry exhibit at a fair in Cincinnati. He worked as a dentist in Cincinnati's second ward and shared a house with another dentist.

According to Daniel W. Edwards' biography of William F. Thompson (from which these data are distilled), he probably learned dentistry as an apprentice to an older dentist and sought to further his education and obtain professional credentials. In spring of 1863, he and a partner opened a dental office in Logansport, Indiana, but the partnership was dissolved a year later. Shortly thereafter he opened a dental office in Leavenworth, Kansas. Two years later, his sister Nettie married William C. Berry, Jr., owner of a Leavenworth wholesale boot and shoe business. Thompson left Kansas in early 1868, but he did not open another dental office until February 1869, this time in Omaha, Nebraska.

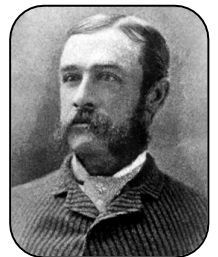
Omaha is just across the river from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where Ada Mary Kimberly was living with her mother and step-father. She was not quite twenty years old and eleven years his junior when they married. A year later, in 1872, the first of his three daughters was born. That same year Dr. Thompson practiced dentistry in Chicago. The following year (1873) he published his first paper in Cincinnati's *Dental Register* and was living in Portland, Oregon, where he helped organize the Oregon State Dental Society, became its second president, and in 1874 was a partner in a dental office there. His second daughter was born in Portland during this time.

Edwards' biography states that "In the short period of four months—from November 1876 to March 1877—Thompson managed to receive three degrees: an M.D. from MCP (Medical College of the Pacific in San Francisco), a D.D.S. (doctor of dental surgery) from the New York College of Dentistry, and another degree from Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York." That same year (1876) he was a partner in a dental office in San Francisco, the city where his third daughter was born.

Dr. Thompson applied for and was issued a U.S. passport in June 1878; in Fall of 1878 he was a dentist at a boys prep school near London, England, and a registered dentist in London by year's end. He presented a series of lectures at the National Dental College, treated patients at the National Dental Hospital, and addressed the International Medical Congress in London. Four years later, he and his partner sold their dental practice, left England, and in November 1882 bought 320 acres for \$6000 in what is now Palmer Lake.

Thompson bought more land in the area in 1883 and worked with the Rio Grande Railroad to develop Palmer Lake as a resort. He built a large Victorian mansion, Estemere, that was completed in 1888. Estemere remains today the "crown jewel" of the town. Thompson traveled to England in the fall of 1888 to raise money for a sanitarium and a hotel (the Rockland Hotel) that opened the next year. He became the town's first mayor in April 1889. For years Thompson had borrowed large sums of money, and by August 1890 he was deeply in debt. Thompson and his family left Palmer Lake for New York, where records show a Harlem address in summer 1892. Then, at the age of 52, William Finley Thompson died of typhoid fever in Durango, Mexico; he was buried there the next day. His death was reported in the *Rocky Mountain News* on 11-24-1892; *The Sun* and *The New York Times* published obituaries on 11-28-1892.

Ada Mary Thompson and her three daughters moved to California in 1894. Thompson's sister Nettie and mother Clarissa remained in the Tri-Lakes area until their deaths and are buried in Monument Cemetery.



President's Message



Where to begin. We are halfway through the year and have several major special events coming up. Our monthly history series presentations on local and regional history has been a great success, averaging over 70 people.

This year our Annual Father's Day Ice Cream Social attracted over 200 folks. The weather was warm and sunny, there was plenty of free ice cream and pie, and the local musical group "Fox Run" entertained on the Village Green long after the event was scheduled to end. Our thanks to the Rock House for donating the ice cream and to Village Inn for donating and discounting the pies. It's a wonderful feeling when local businesses support community events.

As of this writing, we are knee-deep in planning for the Annual Colorado Springs Native American Powwow on July 18. The PLHS began the powwow in 2009 beside the lake, and attendance eventually grew to about 400-500 people. Holding the powwow outdoors by the lake became unsustainable – the temperatures were in the 90s and the lake dried up. In 2013, we partnered with One Nation Walking Together, a Colorado Springs Native charity, and moved the powwow indoors to the Mortgage Solutions Financial EXPO Center in Colorado Springs. Last year the event was attended by over 3,000 Natives and non-Natives. This year we expect the event to be even larger.

Our annual August event, the Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua, will be held August 1st at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. This free event is featured on page 4 of this newsletter.

On August 10, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Palmer Ridge High School Auditorium, the PLHS will sponsor the film "Mystery of the Trees" by Robert Wells, a researcher from Georgia who has collaborated with local researcher John Anderson. The purpose of this event is twofold: to increase awareness of the significance of the "odd-shaped" trees sprinkled throughout the local area and thereby lead to their preservation, and to raise funds for TAVA Gathering, which brings Native youth together to learn about their history, traditions and culture, traditionally passed from generation to generation through the spoken word. Wells and Anderson will introduce the film, which is narrated by Native American actor Wes Studi (*Dances with Wolves*, *Last of the Mohicans*).

Finally, on September 12 we will sponsor an open house at Estemere, the historic Victorian Mansion built in the late 1800s by the founder of Palmer Lake, Dr. William Findlay Thompson. The Wards purchased Estemere in the 1990s when it was in great

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

Below left: Berry Cottage, built in 1888, as it appeared ca 1950

Below right: 389 Glenside Drive, as it appeared in April 2015



Clarissa A. Janet "Nettie" Berry, sister of Dr. William Finley Thompson, and her mother, Clarissa Weaver Thompson, both with little means of support, moved to Palmer Lake in 1883. Clarissa died in Monument in 1900 at the age of 88; Nettie lived in Palmer Lake for 45 years and was elected Town Treasurer, the first woman to hold public office Palmer Lake. She died in 1930 in Colorado Springs at the age of 85.

At right: Glen House Hotel, prior to being incorporated into the Rockland Hotel

The Glen House was the original structure on the site and was noted for its charm. Deer Park across the street from the hotel was constructed with a petting zoo, bandstand, and gardens as entertainment for guests. It would later become part of the Rockland Hotel.

1889 saw the construction of the Rockland Hotel, 260 feet long and costing \$26,000. The Glen House was incorporated into the new structure, which boasted sixty-one rooms when complete.

At right: Rockland Hotel, built in 1889, shown prior to 1920

The Rockland considered itself one of the finest hostelries in the Rocky

Mountains. A gas explosion in 1920 resulted in the hotel burning down to the ground. It was felt to be the greatest calamity to befall Palmer Lake in its history.

Below left: McIntyre Cottage, built in 1884, with one-time Post Office on left of building

Below right: McIntyre Cottage as it appeared in April 2015



Originally the single room "clubhouse" for the Glen House Hotel, it became the home of D&RG station agent Campbell. Henry McIntyre purchased the home in 1898 after summering there for several years. The home is now the residence of his great-grandson, Rogers Davis, director of the Lucretia Vaile Museum.

"Then" photos courtesy of Lucretia Vaile Museum; "Now" photos by Mike Walker

disrepair. Over the years they have painstakingly restored the building to its original condition, with many of the rooms and furnishings looking exactly as they did in the 1800s. We plan a community event featuring a tour of Estemere, exhibits by the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts and the Palmer Lake Art Group, a bake sale by the Monument Homemakers, history-related lectures, and music. To raise funds for the fire department, the PLVFD will "fire" up the grill to sell hot dogs and drinks.

Needless to say, planning and conducting these events requires people power. The PLHS is an all-volunteer organization: dedicated folks who donate their time year after year to bring these events to the community. We would welcome new faces, fresh ideas, and more help! No special skills needed - just a few hours a month of your time. Please call me at 719-559-0525 or email me at wldrdr@hotmail.com to volunteer!

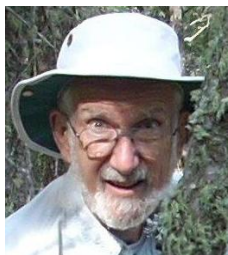
Al Walter, Palmer Lake Historical Society President

Compendium of Monthly PLHS Presentations August through November 2015

Social Hour at 6:30 PM, Presentations begin at 7:00 PM

Thursday, August 20, 2015 – “Monument Tree Nursery”

Presenter: Eric Swab



The Monument Tree Nursery, a Forest Service endeavor, actually had its unsuccessful beginning on Pikes Peak, but ended up successfully producing over 72,000,000 tree seedlings between 1906 and 1964. The Monument Nursery was one of the first in the forest system and the most important in the Rocky Mountains. It was located just west of the town of Monument, in what is now called Monument Preserve, which is now the home of the Monument Helitack wild land firefighters and Pike Hotshots.

Eric Swab is retired from "five" careers, at which time he grew his interest in the history of the Pikes Peak region. His passion is discovering the human story behind the many cabin ruins, mine shafts, abandoned utility lines, water diversion projects, and abandoned trails, roads, and homesteads.

Thursday, September 17, 2015 – “Rocky Mountain National Park”

Presenter: John Stansfield

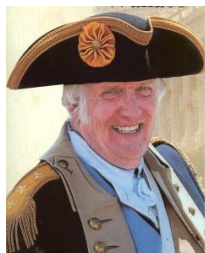


As a boy and as a man, Enos Mills (1870-1922) lived a remarkable mountain life. From childhood on, his bond with mountains and wilderness, especially the Estes Park area, inspired him to overcome serious illness and the lack of formal education, money, or influential family. He became a successful speaker, writer, naturalist, businessman, and the driving force behind the creation of Rocky Mountain National Park. See key moments of his life reenacted by the author of *Enos Mills: Rocky Mountain Naturalist*.

For more than thirty years, storyteller and author John Stansfield has recounted stories of notable people from Colorado history. He has portrayed Dr. Charles Fox Gardiner, a leader in early tuberculosis treatment, for the PLHS. John and his wife are residents of Larkspur. He is an adjunct faculty member of UCCS.

Thursday, October 15, 2015 – "George Washington"

Presenter: Dave Wallace



Most Americans think of him as the stoic, humorless image on the dollar bill. This presentation takes a look at Washington, the person: a man with a very good sense of humor, love of dancing and ice cream, devoted to family, desirous of being left to being a farmer, spending time with grandchildren, animals and, of course, Martha. Key events in his career will demonstrate why he was truly, in the creation of America, "the indispensable man."

Dave Wallace has been interested in history since childhood, is a retired high school history teacher, and continues to entertain and educate audiences with his portrayals of General George Washington, Zebulon Pike, a Civil War Union soldier, a Mountain Man, and five other historical figures.

Thursday, November 19, 2015 – "Orphan Train"

Presenter: Jane Milne



Do you know what the Orphan Train represented? Between 1854 and 1929, 200,000 orphaned, abandoned or poor children were sent west - a broad but little-known social experiment. Today, it is a time in U.S. history far removed from the American experience. It is a tale of hardship, heartbreak, and the triumph of young children, told from the perspective of Pueblo resident Stan Cornell, who traveled this road with his younger brother, Victor. You simply must hear this story's happy ending!

Jane Milne, an accomplished musician and performer, combines autoharp music with true, historical stories of life in Colorado and makes these stories come alive for her audience. Her engaging stories are based on research of the era, and all her characters are real people she has personally interviewed.

Notice of Upcoming Events:

Don't forget the **Annual Colorado Springs Native American Powwow** on **July 18th** at the Mortgage Solutions Financial Expo Center from **10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Our **Annual Chautauqua** is **August 1, 2015, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.** at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. Enjoy ice cream, music, and the Legendary Ladies' portrayals of historic Colorado women.

The film "**Mystery of the Trees**" will be shown on **August 10, 2015, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Palmer Ridge HS auditorium. Fundraiser for Native American TAVA Gathering.

Don't miss the special tour of **Estemere**, Palmer Lake's historic estate, scheduled for **September 12, 2015, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** (last ticket sold at 3:30 p.m.).

Lucretia Vaile Museum Hours:

Saturday 10 AM - 2 PM all year
Wednesday June - August 1- 4 PM
Wednesday Sept - May 1-3 PM
1st Thursday of month: 10 AM-noon
 For information or tour requests,
 call 559-0838 and leave a message.

Palmer Lake Historical Society

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Tom Dickinson 2014 photo

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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

Chautauqua Revival by Palmer Lake Historical Society

Prior to the automobile, Palmer Lake was a popular destination for Denverites and others wishing to beat the heat of city summer temperatures. The Rocky Mountain Chautauqua - a people's vacation university - was a popular annual event between 1887 and 1910, hosting programs in music, art, drama, religion, and nature. The 61-room Rockland Hotel provided all the amenities any visitor could wish for, including a petting zoo. It, unfortunately, burned down in 1920.

The Palmer Lake Rocky Mountain Chautauqua Assembly was, in fact, one of the first Chautauqua Assemblies in the Rocky Mountain West. It took place in Glen Park and centered around an auditorium built on what we now know as Chautauqua Avenue. Many homes in "The Glen" neighborhood began as rustic tent cottages, where Chautauqua-goers stayed for the six-week long assembly. Many Chautauqua cottages eventually evolved into permanent homes where some descendants still live today. The PLHS has been proud to sponsor the Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua to our community for the last few years, including this year's event.

Plans for 2015 include an opening ceremony at 1:00 p.m., complete with a reading of the Chautauqua Proclamation by President Teddy Roosevelt (portrayed by Don Moon). The Friends of the Tri-Lakes Library and the PLHS will sponsor an ice cream social following the opening ceremony until 3:00 p.m.. In the Town Hall, the Legendary Ladies will portray famous women who played a part in Colorado history. There will be music periodically.

The event is free and open to the public. Come dressed in period clothing and enjoy "a people's vacation" for a day in the 21st century.