

Volume IX Number 3

December 2015 through March 2016

Email: [plhs@palmerdividehistory.org](mailto:plhs@palmerdividehistory.org)

Museum: 719-559-0837



## Palmer Lake Historical Society

### Board of Directors 2015

President - Al Walter  
Vice President - Phyllis Bonser  
Secretary - R. Michael Walker  
Treasurer - Barbara Arbuthnot  
Museum Director - Rogers Davis

### Directors-at-Large

Su Ketchmark  
J. Patrick McCarthy  
Melissa Robohn  
Rodger Voelker  
Sigi Walker, *ex officio* (newsletter)

### Program Schedule:

#### December 2015 — March 2016

December, 2015 - no program

January 21, 2016, 6:30 PM – Annual Member Meeting and Potluck

February 18, 2016, 7:00 PM – "Young Boys that Fought in the Civil War" Benny Nasser

March 17, 2016, 7:00 PM – Early Automobiles in the Pikes Peak Region" Dwight Haverkorn

### Mark your 2016 Calendars

January 21, 2016: Annual Member Meeting and Potluck

Just bring a vegetable, salad, or dessert - the PLHS will provide the ham!

### Contributing to this issue:

Roger Davis Dan Edwards  
Mike & Sigi Walker Al Walter

Thanks to all who reviewed and commented!

For more information, visit our website:

[www.palmerdividehistory.org](http://www.palmerdividehistory.org)

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

## The Divide: Agriculture, Dairying and the Lumber Interest

From the *Monument Mentor*. [Published in the *Denver Tribune*, January 8, 1880]

The northern portion of El Paso county comprises the most valuable part of the rich agricultural and dairying region of what is known as "The Divide." In climate and productions this section of the county differs remarkably from the central and southern sections. The extreme altitude of the Divide is perhaps about 9,500 feet [*sic*], and the average elevation of the Divide proper is in the neighborhood of 7,000 feet. This fact, together with the abundance of timber found everywhere, accounts for a rainfall sufficient to produce good crops without any irrigation. Hay is produced also to great abundance not only along the creek bottoms as in other sections of the State, but in ordinary seasons on the high prairies. In common with other portions of the State the Divide has been unusually prosperous during the past year [1879], good crops and good prices having filled the pockets of the farmers and prosperity attended all classes.

The staple crops of the Divide are hay, oats, rye, wheat and potatoes. Some corn is raised, but the yield is not such as to commend it as a money making crop, although many farmers raise what they need for their own use. We estimate the total production of small grain at 150,000 bushels this year, this estimate including wheat, oats and rye. Some barley is raised, but not much. The average yield of wheat this season has been about twenty-five bushels to the acre. Winter wheat has succeeded admirably wherever tried, and it is thought by many that in a few years it will be a staple crop. Rye, when sown in the fall, makes good winter feed and is a sure crop on the highest and driest land. Oats are of excellent quality and weigh usually forty pounds to the bushel. Until late years the Divide

was thought to be fit for nothing in an agricultural point of view except the raising of potatoes. This hardy vegetable nearly always yielded a large crop, and Divide potatoes were noted for their fine quality. For several years past, however, our potato crop has been rather light, and the price being low our ranchmen have not bestowed as much attention on this crop as formerly. Last spring an usually small acreage was put in, and as the season progressed it was thought that the dry weather would come near ruining what was planted. But late rains helped out

the late planting, and when digging time came on the yield surprised everyone. A light crop in other portions of the State, and the enormous increase of population consequent on the Leadville excitement "bulled" the market to such an extent that buyers from Denver and Pueblo flocked to the Divide, and in six weeks from the time that digging commenced the bulk of the crop was marketed at prices ranging from \$1 to \$1.50 per 100 pounds. At Monument Station nearly one million pounds were shipped, at Greenland about three hundred thousand pounds and considerable quantities at several smaller stations. It is estimated that more potatoes, however, were sent directly to the Leadville, Denver and Colorado Springs markets by wagon than were shipped so that it is probably not an over-estimate to say that three million pounds of potatoes were raised on the Divide this year, including in this estimate, of course, the large quantity held over for seed and for high prices in the spring. Our estimate of the hay crop of the Divide is about two thousand tons.

The cheese business which started out so auspiciously last year has not made much progress this season. The extremely low prices prevailing last year forced our cheese manufacturers to the conclusion that the high price which they had been paying for milk could no longer be maintained and the effort was made last spring to contract milk for this season at eighty cents per hundred pound instead of one dollar as had been paid heretofore. In anticipation of a good demand for butter our dairyman were unwilling to furnish milk at these figures and the result was that the Monument and the Castle Rock factories both remained idle during the past summer, the Gwillimville factory being the only one of any size in operation. At this place a compromise was effected between the proprietor, G.R. Gwillim, and the patrons, nine cents being paid for milk.

The cheesemen have since regretted that they did not run their factories even at the old price of milk, as cheese has advanced from the unprecedented low price of 9 and 10 cents

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Potato Bake Festival, Monument 1892

## President's Message



As 2015 draws to a close, I look back at all the events, programs, and activities the Historical Society sponsored during the past year and wonder how we were able to pull it off with just a handful of dedicated volunteers and support from the members of the Board of Directors. The monthly programs on topics of local, state and national history, provided free to the community as part of our History Series, averaged over 70 attendees per program. In June, over 250 adults and children enjoyed a beautiful Palmer Lake day on the Village Green while eating pie and ice cream and listening to bluegrass music as we celebrated Father's Day. Our Annual Colorado Springs Native American Powwow in July was attended by almost 2,500 Native Americans and non-Natives and was a day of Native American dances, food, drums, and understanding of the diverse cultures that make up our community. The Return of the Rocky Mountain Chautauqua in August brought over 200 people to our Town Hall to enjoy ice cream provided by the Tri-Lakes Friends of the Library, bluegrass music, the opening of the Chautauqua Assembly by President Teddy Roosevelt, portrayed by Don Moon, and portrayals by the Legendary Ladies of famous women that contributed to the history of Colorado and the West. In September, the Historical Society was given the opportunity to sponsor tours of Estemere Mansion, the "Pearl of Palmer Lake." More than 750 people toured the Mansion, attended programs on local history, sampled Native American food, purchased goodies at the Monument Homemaker's Bake Sale, learned about the local art community from representatives of the Palmer Lake Art Group and the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts, and enjoyed music provided by local musicians. We are grateful to Roger and Kim Ward for opening their home to the community and to the volunteers who made this event a success, especially the members of the D-38 Key Club. The highlight of 2015 was the unanimous decision by the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce to recognize the Palmer Lake Historical Society as Non-Profit of the Year for its many contributions to the community.

This is my last President's Message. After serving as a Director, four years as Vice-President, and three years as your President, I am stepping down. During my tenure, we have greatly expanded the influence of the Palmer Lake Historical Society. The Society not only serves the Tri-Lakes area by preserving, promoting, and protecting the history of the Palmer Divide area and operating the Lucretia Vaile Museum

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

In 1879, the staple crops of the Palmer Divide were hay, oats, rye, wheat, and potatoes. In later years potatoes would no longer be raised because of potato blight. Cheese and butter were produced, bringing good prices, and cattle ranching did well.



Above left: Haying on the Geiger Ranch, Spring Valley, ca 1890s



Above right: Early ranching in the Palmer Divide, ca 1910

Below left: Grain Harvest in Monument, ca 1885

Below right: Panoramic view of the Joe Pettigrew ranch, ca 1885



The arrival of the railroad brought many benefits to the residents of the Palmer Divide; it connected farmers, merchants, and citizens to the wider world. It provided cheaper and more reliable shipment of farm products to more distant markets, brought in a variety of goods for local residents, transported tourists and summer residents wanting to enjoy cooler temperatures, and created railroad jobs which bolstered the economy.



Above left: Denver & Rio Grande RR Depot, located on the west side of Palmer Lake, built in 1882

Above right: Santa Fe RR Depot, located on the east side of Palmer Lake, built in 1889

Below left: Denver & Rio Grande RR Depot at West Husted, ca 1900

Below right: D&RG Depot in Monument, ca 1900



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

Sadly, there are no "NOW" photos for the structures pictured above - all have been torn down by the railroads. In Spring Valley, only the schoolhouse (right) still stands and is well preserved and maintained. The Geiger ranch continues to be operated by the family while other large ranches have been reduced in size or no longer exist.





## Compendium of Monthly PLHS Presentations January through March 2016

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

### Thursday, January 21, 2016 – Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck Dinner



Don't miss this event! Bring a vegetable, salad, or dessert to share - the PLHS will provide the main dish. We begin the evening with a short business meeting and election of 2016 officers. Members are encouraged to renew their 2016 PLHS memberships. You can also join if you're not a PLHS member. Joe Bohler caps off the evening with his honky tonk piano, interspersed by a short visit from a historical figure.

Joe Bohler, renowned artist and piano player, will provide the entertainment for the evening. Joe donates the cover painting for the annual PLHS calendar, for which we are most appreciative. In addition, he plays a rousing honky tonk piano and has recorded several CDs, which include his own compositions.

### Thursday, February 18, 2016 – “Young Boys that Fought in the Civil War”

Presenter: Benny Nasser



It is relatively unknown that more than 100,000 young boys less than 16 years old were part of the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. Many of these young boys joined because they wanted to fight alongside their fathers, brothers or were runaways or orphans. Tonight's program will highlight the experiences of a number of these boys.

Benny Nasser is a graduate of the University of Colorado with as BS in Chemistry and an MBA from OSU. He was a research scientist and manager at Phillips Petroleum Company and his work resulted in nine US patents. Thirteen of his relatives fought in the Civil War on the Union side.

### Thursday, March 17, 2016 – "Early Automobiles in the Pikes Peak Region"

Presenter: Dwight Haverkorn



Learn about the first gasoline powered vehicle at Palmer Lake and the early autos in the Pikes Peak Region, including early Colorado Springs traffic ordinances, traffic controls, and licensing of drivers and vehicles. Also included in this program is information about a 1903 auto race from coast-to-coast which passed through Colorado Springs and Palmer Lake.

Dwight Haverkorn, president of the El Paso County Pioneers' Association, historian for the Colorado Springs Police Department, and volunteer researcher for the Pikes Peak Library District Special Collections, has presented more than 50 talks on local homicides and other historical subjects.

### The Divide (continued from page 1)

per pound in August to 18 and 20 in November. The Monument cheese factory has been leased by Messrs. Elliott & Mudge of New York and will run next summer as a cheese factory and creamery combined, at least such is the present intention we understand. A movement is also on foot to start a creamery in Spring Valley during the coming season and doubtless will succeed. It is impossible to procure any recent statistics as to the amount of butter manufactured on the Divide, but it is very large, as almost every ranchman keeps dairy cows, and it is not uncommon for from twenty-five to fifty cows to be kept by one farmer for dairying.

Stock has done remarkably well during the past season. Cattle of all kinds enter the winter, most of them fat enough for beef. Less hay has been cut this season than last, but a larger amount of small grain having been raised than ever before, the hay necessary to tide stock over the few severe storms to which we are liable can be supplemented by straw, which in this dry climate makes excellent feed.

In the early settlement of the country the Divide was only considered valuable on account of the heavy growth of fine saw timber that crowned its summit and dotted its sides. The first saw mill in the Territory was built on Cherry creek, and for years nearly every foot of lumber used in Denver was hauled from the Divide. Gradually has the timber supply from the Divide melted away before the saw mills until nearly every tract has been denuded of its large trees. There are still, however, a few places of timber land yet untouched, and it is found that where saw mills ten or fifteen years ago cut out everything available, the new growth is now large enough to furnish lumber almost as good as the original supply. It may be seen, therefore, that the Divide can still be depended on for the lumber supply of this section of the State for years to come. The production of lumber last year on the Divide was 8,479,536 feet; of lath, 1,250,000; shingles, 3,500,000. This year the aggregate of lumber is about 7,500,000 feet; of lath 3,000,000, and of shingles, 2,250,000. A good many railroad ties have been cut on the Divide also during the past year, aggregating perhaps 100,000.

The villages on the Divide have all been prosperous this year and have grown in population as well as business. It is estimated that Monument has done at least fifty per cent more business this year than last, and Gwillimville, Bijou Basin, Husted, Greenland and other places have all shared in the general prosperity. Improvement is the order of the day everywhere, as is attested by the new houses and barns, the fencing and improvements of every description that are seen on every hand. In many townships not a single vacant quarter section of land can be found open for entry, and careful estimates show that our population has increased at least twenty-five percent within the last twelve months.

This article was transcribed from microfilm for the PLHS newsletter by Dan Edwards, for which we thank him very much.

**President's Message** (continued from page 2)

but is well-known along the Front Range as a small organization that has had a major impact on educating the community about its rich history, including the history and culture of the area's first inhabitants. The Historical Society is a trusted organization in the local Native American community through its sponsorship of the Annual Colorado Springs Native American Powwow, its membership on the El Pomar Native American Council, its involvement with the annual TAVA Gathering at La Foret Conference Center that seeks to educate the community on local Ute "Prayer Trees" in the hope of preserving these living artifacts, and its association with a Colorado Springs Native charity assisting the "poorest of the poor" on local Reservations.

I leave the Board with mixed emotions. However, I also leave the Historical Society on solid financial ground and with management and financial policies and procedures in place that establish a solid foundation for its continued success. During my eight years as an Officer and member of the Board of Directors, I have seen our volunteer numbers drastically decline. Volunteers who carried the load have stepped down because of physical problems or have left the area. **The Historical Society consists entirely of volunteers!** Unless members of the community step up and volunteer to serve as an Officer, a member of the Board of Directors, Museum Docent, or to help as needed, this great local resource will not be able to continue to provide family-friendly, history-related programs, events, and activities. The Historical Society urgently needs the support of the community. Please volunteer – any effort you contribute is important. Call 719-559-0837 or email [plhs@palmerdividhistory.org](mailto:plhs@palmerdividhistory.org) and help preserve our local history.

**Al Walter, Palmer Lake Historical Society President**

## Supporting your Society

The Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) and the Lucretia Vaile Museum have served the Tri-Lakes area since 1956. In 2016 we will celebrate our 60th anniversary! Join us as we begin another decade of "making history more than a memory."

Volunteers are the backbone of organizations such as the PLHS. They provide the "manpower" for

- coordination of the popular monthly programs - which incidentally are free,
- arranging for the refreshments served at the monthly programs,
- coordination of all special events and tours, such as the recent Estemere tour,
- the publication of brochures, books, handouts, newsletter, and other printed material,
- designing and arranging the publication of monthly program posters,
- production and publication of the annual PLHS calendar - a fundraiser,
- volunteering as a docent to conduct tours of the museum,
- coordination of the gift shop, and
- serving as a board member or serving on a special committee.

***Won't You Join Us as a Volunteer? Pick up a Volunteer Program today!***

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

**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 559-0837 and leave a message.**

**Palmer Lake Historical Society  
publishes this newsletter at  
PO Box 662  
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**Layout and Editing: Sigi Walker**

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](mailto:mikensigi@comcast.net)

