Historically Jeffco

Education and Diversity
Message from the Chair:
2021–Recognizing Jeffco’s Diverse History

History is made up of the stories we tell about our communities and our past. Sometimes, the stories of some members of a society are preserved and retold while others are not, putting them in danger of being forgotten.

The Jefferson County Historical Commission’s 2021 programs and events, including this issue of Historically Jeffco Magazine, focus on discovering and sharing some of the lesser-known histories of some of the people who settled, made their homes in, and built Jefferson County; from Norwegian and German immigrants to the black Exodusters who migrated from the South to the story of a Bosnian refugee turned U.S. citizen, Jeffco is home to a diverse history and array of individuals. We also look at the history of education in Jefferson County and celebrate the diversity we find there as well, including the creation of hopeful spaces for marginalized students, schools that provided second chances for “troubled youth,” a culture of linguistic diversity, and a rich Montessori learning movement.

We hope you will find our articles informative and that you will enjoy reading these histories. Please join us in celebrating the history of our county’s education system and the history of the people who make Jefferson County a diverse and interesting community.

Lee Katherine Goldstein–JCHC Chair

Editor’s Note: Bridges and Plagues

In January of 2020, on the way home from a lengthy road trip, I was listening to a podcast on the Strasbourg Dancing Plague of 1518. On a hot July day in the Alsace Region of what is today France, a woman named Frau Traffea began dancing. She had no dance partner, there was no music, and she danced for days on end until she collapsed from exhaustion. Over the next few months, more than four hundred residents of Strasbourg were consumed by dancing. The city authorities built them a stage and hired musicians in an event to let the afflicted “dance it out.” When that did not work, they banned music altogether, tied down the sufferers, and laid hands on them and prayed in an attempt to quell “St. Vitus’s Dance.” It was not until September that the dancing finally stopped, by which time many Strasbourgians had died. Experts of the day blamed illness, possession, and food poisoning. Today’s historians mostly agree that the likely cause was mass hysteria brought about by waves of bubonic and other plagues, extreme poverty, and class and gender oppression...

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A Glimpse into Jeffco Education: Past and Present

Kelly Cvanciger, Jefferson County Historical Commission

Local schools, often reflections of diverse socioeconomic populations, are woven into the fabric of every neighborhood surrounding them. Rich cultural connections of the immediate community are showcased within the brick-and-mortar structures: hallways lined with art, the sound of music, and children’s voices. Although schools existed in Jefferson County as early as 1860 in Golden and Arvada, the population boom at the turn of the twentieth century led to efforts that consolidated the thirty-nine smaller school districts that had formed within the borders of the county. Schools faced blossoming communities and stresses on school building infrastructures. Schools considered new ways to deal with increased student populations, from the one-room schoolhouses in Golden, to the multi-storied facilities like Bear Creek Consolidated School. By 1950, under the guidance of Fletcher Miller, a reorganized and consolidated entity known as Jefferson County Public Schools R-1 emerged. Miller, Jeffco’s first school superintendent, offered a unique public-school option to children countywide. However, around the R-1 district, rich histories persisted that harkened back to a bygone era, as other types of schools formed to offer outlets for a diverse student population, including schools designated for vocational training, alternative education, and specialized services for children with developmental disabilities, intensive needs, and for English language learners.

Bear Creek High School: A Comprehensive School for All Children

In 1894, the Montana School opened its doors as a one-room schoolhouse in what is now Lakewood. This was the beginning of what would become Bear Creek High School, the home of the proud Bears, which would become the school’s mascot. Nestled in the foothills of Jefferson County, the Montana School originally educated students in grades one through eight. By 1920, it was clear that Bear Valley needed a secondary school. In 1923, Bear Creek Consolidated School opened its doors to students as a K-12 school. The Montana School, converted into the residence of the building custodian, stood until 1957 when it was torn down. With the Colorado’s legislature passing of the Education Act of 1949, known as House Bill 900, counties placed measures on their local ballots to gauge consolidation interests. In May of 1950, all thirty-nine smaller districts within Jefferson County reorganized and emerged as Jefferson County Public Schools R-1.

Bear Creek Consolidated School was renamed Bear Creek High School, graduating its first senior class in 1952. Offering a diverse array of classes such as bookkeeping, spelling, typing, industrial arts, and general education, now called social studies, Bear Creek High School was the heart of its small farming community. Church services and 4-H events were held in the gym every Sunday, while the PTA spon-

Quick Fact
Jefferson County is the fourth largest county in Colorado.

Newspaper clipping about Cornerstone laid for Bear Creek Consolidation School, 1920.
Photo courtesy of Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection.

The Montana School with students after conversion to Custodian House.
Photo courtesy of Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park.
sored a carnival annually, bringing together the entire population of Bear Creek. Bingo games and silent auctions were highlights of the carnival as pigs, farm tools, and sacks of chicken feed were raffled off to the highest bidder. By 1951, the school was so large that the bus barn and custodial house were converted into three additional classrooms.

The Bear Creek area reaped the benefit of reorganization, including an increase in funding that offered the chance to build a new school building in 1956. *Issue 2-bond* added $7.75 million dollars for three new high schools in Jefferson County, but before the construction of a new school began, tragedy struck in 1959 and Bear Creek High School caught fire. Classrooms were destroyed, which forced students to learn in the gymnasium until the new school was constructed. The second iteration of Bear Creek High School was officially completed in 1962.

From 1962 through 2009, Bear Creek High School broadened its educational reach by adding vocational training in culinary arts, auto mechanics, and welding, alongside athletic achievements such as championships in gymnastics, basketball, track, and cheerleading. In the face of overcrowding, and in order to successfully teach all of Jeffco’s children, in 1976 Bear Creek High School implemented the *Concept 6* year-round school calendar. Students attended four out of six terms on a rotational basis, for a total of 172 days of school, eight less than the state-mandated 180. In 1975, Jeffco articulation areas were partially redrawn, and Bear Creek added Friendly Hills into their school borders, extending the reach of the school to Sheridan Boulevard. Building additions in 1968, 1980, 1987, and remodels in 1993 and 1996 allowed for expanded classroom capacity to Bear Creek High School, updating technological infrastructure to the now aging building. By 1982, Bear Creek ended its six-year flirtation with year-round schooling in favor of a traditional school calendar, averaging over 1,500 students in four secondary grades.

Reflecting the population boom at the turn of the twenty-first century, the student body expanded substantially, putting pressure on Bear Creek High School. A series of fires in 2005, 2006, and 2008 wreaked havoc on staff and students, bringing an end to the second iteration of Bear Creek High School.

In 2004, Jefferson County Public Schools R-1 passed a bond that granted $36 million dollars for the new building construction of a modern, state-of-the-art Bear Creek High School. Constructed on the site of the original Montana School, this third reincarnation is now approaching its 100th anniversary in 2023, and leading Jeffco Schools in the implementation of unique academic programs including *Project Lead the Way*, *National History Day*, *Senior Field Studies*, and *Biomedical Science*. Bear Creek High School still stands as a home for all its proud Bears—past, present, and future.

Sources


Disclaimer: When researching issues in education, oftentimes historians encounter terms used in the context of an earlier time period that might be considered offensive today. This article reflects the use of historically accurate terms; however, the author does not agree with how the terms were used to represent marginalized people.

In the early 1900s, many physicians strongly recommended that parents institutionalize their children once a disability was diagnosed. Parents were advised not to foster a relationship with a child that might be institutionalized later as an adult. Jefferson County was home to the Colorado State Home and Training School for Mental Defectives. Due to the school’s geographic location, locals and families referred to it as the “Ridge.” Students who were categorized as dependents with profound mental retardation spent their lives in residence at the institution. With over 300 residents and a growing waiting list due to the post-World War II population boom, the “Ridge” faced staffing shortages and funding dilemmas while conditions deteriorated. By 1940, the outlook toward developmental, behavioral, and physical disabilities shifted; parents started to reflect on raising their child in a home care environment. Community support increased for special education services at neighborhood schools. Before R-1 consolidation, children with disabilities were placed in government-sponsored facilities like the “Ridge” or resided in residential homes run by religious entities. In 1951, Jeffco R-1 officially integrated the Special Education School, known previously as the School for Handicapped Children, into its jurisdiction run by the society of Crippled Children and Adults. By 1960, 337 students with disabilities attended segregated special education classes.

As the nation faced a reckoning during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, institutionalized facilities declined in favor of more inclusive learning environments. The first adaptation of a school to serve handicapped children began with the remodel of George Eiber Elementary School in 1956. As the need for inclusivity arose in community schools, mandates by the Colorado Legislature in 1961 required funding for special education. Classes for students in special education were held at numerous schools including George Eiber Elementary, Vivian Elementary, Lakewood Middle School, Jefferson High School, and Alameda High School. Considered the best special education in the state of Colorado in the 1960s, children who were classified as educable with a disability attended neighborhood schools that had the staff and curriculum resources. By 1963, a choice school formed the foundation for special education district-wide. Fletcher Miller School, named after Jeffco’s first superintendent, afforded students with multiple mental, physical, and behavioral challenges a place to go to a school that was focused solely on their needs. Modified with wheelchairs and walkers, twenty buses drove children from across the district to the welcoming arms of a staff specifically chosen to meet the needs of students with Individualized Education Programs.

In 1969, Colorado granted ten thousand dollars to integrate students with deafness into their halls and
Fletcher Miller School expanded its special education program. With a vision to provide an individualized approach to meet the needs of the whole child, instruction at Fletcher Miller School turned its focus on developing communication, academic, physical, and social-emotional skills among its expanding student population. President Gerald Ford’s signing of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975 provided a new direction for special education nationally through federal mandates to force state compliance. Focusing on inclusion, Fletcher Miller School served students with complex abilities, from physical handicaps to mild developmental delays. Yet, as more able-bodied students with a cognitive impact enrolled by 1980, neighborhood schools throughout Jeffco gained confidence in their ability to successfully instruct students in a least restrictive environment, assuming increased responsibilities for their student population with developmental disabilities.

Many schools struggled to meet the financial demands of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Millions of dollars had to be spent to upgrade infrastructure to provide ramps, elevator access, and guide rails. Jeffco saw a resurgence in special education numbers. Nonetheless, Fletcher Miller School offered support, serving an increasingly larger population in special education. By 1989 Fletcher Miller was so popular, the school needed a new wing.

The 1990s marked a significant period in transforming special education across the state of Colorado. Fletcher Miller’s school population dropped below one hundred students as districts around the Denver-Metro area closed schools exclusively serving a special education population. With this, parents, staff, and community members rallied behind the school as conversation turned to a potential closure.

As a choice option for the entirety of Jeffco by the turn of the twenty-first century, Fletcher Miller School blossomed as efficacy grew to meet the increased demands of diverse students. Increased levels of support with targeted instructional interventions enabled the staff at Fletcher Miller School to focus intentional instruction on students with medical and motor disabilities while using research-based strategies, such as the Lighthouse Program, to reach children with more severe needs. Traditions at Fletcher Miller School now bring the neighborhood together, supporting trips to Disneyland and Tim Tebow’s Night to Shine. The school’s annual bike day offers a refreshing use of adaptive bicycles for the students, allowing them to explore the track at Jeffco Stadium on their own terms. With a vision to provide a unique and rewarding educational experience for all marginalized children, Fletcher Miller School stands as a beacon of hope, emerging from the darkness of Jefferson County’s past.

Sources
Linguistic Diversity and Equity in the Jeffco Schools

With the influx of thousands of immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia following the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, the Jefferson County Public Schools, as well as other districts in Colorado and across the United States, were faced with many new challenges. Among these were identifying and serving the emotional, economic, and educational needs of children and adults from several different countries and language backgrounds. Some families had been airlifted during the final days of Saigon; others, known as “Boat People,” escaped the perils of over twenty years of war by fleeing into the ocean on boats, hoping to find freedom in another land. Still others were children, often half-American, who left Vietnam and were adopted.

Operation Babylift, which took place during the Spring of 1975, brought over 3,000 babies and children to the United States and other countries for adoption. Many of these “orphans” came to Colorado, as two of the main international adoption organizations were located in Denver and Boulder. A number of children were placed with families in Colorado, including quite a few in Jefferson County. Two school-aged children were adopted by the author and her husband, who were residents of Jefferson County at that time. By mid-May, the young boy was enrolled in a Jeffco school in Arvada. He did not speak a word of English, but he quickly learned. He loved going to school and trying to communicate with the other children and his teacher. His little sister waited until fall to begin school.

Changing Demographics

Population demographics within the Jefferson County Public Schools have changed significantly over the years. The following chart shows the ethnic demographics of the K-12 population over the past twenty years.

During this time period, the enrollment of students has declined by around nine percent. Much of this decline, however, was seen in 2020 and may be related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. At the same time, the percentage of Hispanic/Latinx students has more than doubled, from twelve percent to over twenty-four, while the population of students identifying as white has decreased over sixteen percent during this time period. A new category, “multiple races,” has been added; this change was welcomed by families and districts alike who had been faced with choosing one background for a student with more than one racial or ethnic identity.

As population demographics changed, the need to provide appropriate instruction for an increasingly diverse population of learners became apparent. When Southeast Asian students and their families began settling in Jefferson County, little was known about the various cultures or the languages these people spoke. It rapidly became apparent that much support was needed.

Addressing the Needs of Linguistically Diverse Students

In the mid-1970s, the Colorado Department of Education hired a consultant from Southeast Asia to provide support to school districts across the state that were enrolling significant numbers of refugee and immigrant students. Federal funding was provided through the Indochinese Refugee Assistance Programs legisla-
tion in 1975. In 1981, the Colorado legislature enacted the English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA), which provided funding for paraprofessional English as a Second Language tutors to work with students in pull-out programs in their home schools.

Programs for linguistically diverse students, including those utilizing paraprofessional tutors, have existed in a variety of forms since the mid-1970s in Jeffco. In 1982, Dr. Lorenzo Trujillo was hired as the Executive Director of Humanities for Jeffco Schools. In that capacity, he oversaw both the Foreign Language Department and the ESL Program and expanded both programs significantly. Dr. Patsy Jaynes, who began as a tutor in 1982, oversaw the ESL program from 1990 until 1996. Both of these educators had significant impacts on creating a welcoming and equitable environment for students from around the world.

The Jeffco Schools transitioned to certified and endorsed teachers in the early 2000s to provide equitable instruction to these students. Bilingual instruction in Spanish was offered in schools with high enrollments of native Spanish speakers. Dual language programs, which promoted biliteracy in Spanish and English, became the preferred method of instruction for Spanish speakers.

**Serving Students from Many Linguistic Backgrounds**

Denver, Aurora, and Jefferson County Public Schools have enrolled students from more than one-hundred different language backgrounds since the 1980s. Some of these students have had refugee status, others have come on various visas, while others may have been undocumented.

In 2005 at Lakewood High School, two certified and endorsed ESL teachers and one tutor provided services to students from a variety of language backgrounds. In addition to several levels of ESL classes, a “pilot” ESL Study Skills class was provided to limited English proficient students from a variety of backgrounds. Students developed critical thinking skills, learned to read with comprehension, and to write analytically. One of the author’s students, a young lady from Bosnia, was particularly eager to demonstrate her newly developed skills by writing and sharing her family’s journey from war-torn Bosnia to Lakewood, CO.

Minela happily agreed to share her story in following article.

Dr. Catherine Baldwin, who began her career in Jeffco in 1995 as an ESL tutor, assumed leadership of the ESL/Dual Language program in Jeffco in 2007. Currently, around 4,000 English language learners are served in these programs; the five most common language backgrounds are Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese. Lisa Conway, who has served in different capacities in the program for nearly thirty years, is part of Jeffco Schools’ Translation and Interpretation Services, which provides oral interpretation and written translation for the district’s multilingual families, schools, and departments. Conway asserts,

> Providing linguistic support as a bridge between schools, staff, and faculty members ensures two-way communication and equal access. Our staff provides support in Spanish and Russian and contracts with agencies for assistance with all other languages.

The Jeffco Public Schools has also provided Adult ESL instruction for thirty years, enabling parents and other Jeffco residents the opportunity to participate more fully in life in America, and providing an equitable and inclusive environment for students and families.

Dr. Baldwin summarized the goals of Jeffco’s ESL/Dual Language Program stating,

> Meeting the linguistic and instructional needs of our multilingual students and families is a goal for Jeffco Schools. We strive to provide excellent educational opportunities, so students graduate with options and a Seal of Literacy. This honors the cultural and linguistic diversity of our Jeffco community.

**Sources**

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Trujillo, Lorenzo. Interview with the author.
Minela’s Story: From Bosnia to Jeffco

Minela Ibisevic Selimovic

I was born in the small town Vlasenica, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Eastern Europe, in January of 1989. My parents, Mina and Junuz Ibisevic, provided a happy life in our home for myself and my brother Melis, who was a year and half younger. However, in the Spring of 1992, a genocide on Bosnian Muslims began. Bosnia and Herzegovina were part of the former Social-Communist Yugoslavia. They sought to split from communism and become a democratic country. That is when the genocide erupted. My family was forced to leave our home and move to a nearby town named Srebrenica where we survived the biggest massacre in modern European history.

On July 11, 1995, over 8,000 Bosnian men and boys were killed by Serbian forces. Amongst those victims were my father, grandfather, uncles, and aunt—the majority of my family. With the help of the United Nations, my mother moved with my brother and me from Srebrenica to Tuzla, which was a safe zone. That is where the rest of our lives started! We were homeless for years, living in unoccupied buildings with very limited supplies of food and water. Hygiene was nearly non-existent. At the age of twenty-seven, my mother was able to apply for a refugee visa to the USA. We waited for years to get approved. I remember that we had to go through very detailed health screenings.

Finally, on July 11, 2002, we landed on American soil. We had no idea where we were going or what to expect. Our refugee sponsors helped us find an apartment in Lakewood, Colorado, and that is where we started our American Dream. We all had to learn English and how to pronounce “r’s” and “w’s,” which were not a part of our native language; and, of course, we also learned English slang.

American culture was completely different from what we knew. I could not believe so many different races, religions, and traditions all lived in peace and harmony in America. I attended Lakewood High School and graduated in 2007. My English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were very helpful to me as I learned the English language, the American culture, and the school curriculum. I had friends from Mexico, Vietnam, Korea, Chile, El Salvador, and other countries. I decided to continue my education by attending Red Rocks Community College.

My mother had always taught us to be extremely grateful to the community that accepted us with open arms and to continue to give back. We as a family would volunteer at as many events as possible to show our love and appreciation. This is part of our Muslim tradition, particularly during the season of Ramadan, our most holy time of the year. My brother wanted to give more to the community, so he decided to attend a local police academy. He has been serving the community for the last five years. I work in finances for a local hospital and try to do my best to provide the upmost care for our patients with love, respect, and dignity. We became citizens of the United States of America on April 21, 2014. That was a very proud day for our family!

In 2017, my mother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and fought the battle. The amazing medical team worked hard to save her life, but unfortunately, she lost her battle to cancer in May of 2020. I am beyond grateful to her for making the decision to bring my brother and me to this wonderful country that has given us opportunity, a sense of community, and a reason to move forward. Colorado has been a home to us for the last nineteen years and has provided us with an education, jobs, and a happy life. My brother and I are the only surviving members of our family, and we are now in our early 30s. I recently married a man who came from my hometown in Bosnia. My brother is engaged to a Palestinian woman; they plan to marry this summer. I want to take a moment to thank all of our ESL teachers who have taught us English and helped shape us into the citizens we are today.
Medlen Gets Its Name
In the late 1800s, the stretch along South Turkey Creek became popular for homesteaders as the Denver to South Park Stage Route was established in 1867. As the population increased, the residents were eager for a regular mail route in their area. A meeting was held where it was determined to name the post office “Medlen.” There are at least two theories of the origin of the name: 1) there was a woman in the area who had the habit of “meddlin’” in everybody’s affairs, or 2), due to its central location between Conifer and Morrison on South Turkey Creek Road, locals referred to it as the “mid land” or “Medlen.”

Medlen Gets a School House
As families grew, many farmers and ranchers settled in the area and soon felt the need for a schoolhouse. Medlen School was built in 1886 and was originally a hand-hewn log building located across South Turkey Creek, the “Old Ute Trail,” east of the present location.

In 1900, the county and the school board moved the schoolhouse a few hundred feet to the west, where it has remained, due to a risk of flooding. Once moved, it was covered with white clapboard siding. A small anteroom was added to the front at the same time.

Medlen School House in 1886 when it was a hewn-log building.
Photo Archives, Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society.

As with many rural schools, any child between the ages of six and twenty-one was welcome at the Medlen School. The number of students varied over the years depending on how many school-age children lived in the area. In 1896 there were thirty-four students, twelve of whom were at least sixteen years of age. A young married couple were also students. Jefferson County paid its female teachers $46 and its male teachers $87 annually. The county increased the annual salary by $1 the next year.

In 1912, the Jennings family homesteaded in the area and had six children by 1915. They lived about one-and-a-half miles from the school. The children walked or occasionally rode a horse to Medlen School. There were about fifteen to twenty students at that time. In cold weather the Jennings children wrapped their feet in burrlap for the long walk. By the time they reached school, sometimes their lunches were frozen, and their pants would only bend at the knees.

With unpredictable weather, particularly in the winter months, the school district built a teacherage, circa 1900, to house a teacher nearby. It is unknown how long the teacherage was used for this original purpose. Some students recalled that instead of sleeping in the cold teacherage, the teacher would sleep in an easy chair in the schoolhouse. Later, the teacherage building served as the library.

During its years as a schoolhouse, Medlen School also served as a community meeting place where there were church services, funerals, and fraternal organization meetings held. There were also many community celebrations and festivities, such as community Halloween parties.

Medlen School was electrified in the early 1940s along with the rest of the area. This was made possible by the Rural Electrification Administration, established in 1935 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation. The first application prepared by local citizens was denied, so they reorganized and traveled at their own expense to Washington D.C. to present their case that was then approved.

A New Chapter for Medlen School
Due to statewide school consolidation, Medlen School closed in 1954 and the children were transferred to the new West Jefferson School,
5.8 miles north of Medlen. Without busing established in the school district, families transported the children to school as they were able, and some of the children walked or rode horses to the new school.

At that time, the school district sold the school to the South Turkey Creek Community Center for $1. For the next thirty-eight years, it continued to be used as a community center. The Community Center later sold the property to the South Turkey Creek Improvement Association, which owned it until March 3, 1992, when it was deeded to the Jefferson County Historical Society (JCHS). On March 8, 1995, the Medlen School was listed in Colorado’s State Register of Historic Properties. JCHS was awarded a $20,000 grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund in 1996 to restore the schoolhouse.

Many volunteer hours were spent in the restoration. As work was done on the blackboard, it was discovered that the original board had been covered with a modern green board. The “blackboard” was, in fact, a black rubberized cloth of the type used as ground cloths during the Civil War. In order to make the original visible, it was decided to leave one of the two blackboards uncovered and to paint the green board with blackboard paint to make it usable.

In 2000, JCHS received a $5000 grant to move and restore the privies. This grant was substantially increased to $10,000 so that archaeologists could monitor ground excavation for any archaeological findings at the 1935-1943 privy sites. They discovered evidence of Ute occupation when they found a mano near one of the privies. On April 4, 2015, the school was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Students in front of school, circa 1920s.
Photo Archives. Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society.

Medlen School Today

Since 1998 the current owner, the Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society, formerly the Jefferson County Historical Society, has offered Medlen School Days for elementary-school age children. For three weeks in the summer, children experience firsthand what it would be like to be a student in a 1920s rural mountain, one-room school. Every effort is made to make the experience authentic. Children drink out of enamel cups and their water comes from a jug. Every child has a slate, chalk, crayons, a pencil, and a Big Chief tablet. They use McGuffey Readers, Ray’s Arithmetic books, and McGuffey’s Eclectic Spellers. Fresh lemonade and hand churned ice cream are made, and the students present plays. Outdoors they jump rope, play marbles, and ante-ante-over, as well as other games of the period. The children also use the hand-operated pump to obtain water to wash their hands.

The children love pumping water with the old pump.
Photo by JoAnn Dunn.

Over sixty children have participated in this program in past years. A two-week program planned for the summer of 2021 has enrolled forty-four children.

Our goal is that the children gain an appreciation and respect for American history.

Sources
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Weare, Bud. Conversation with the author. 2014.
The Mitchell Legacy of Jefferson County

Richard J. Gardner, Jefferson County Historical Commission

Over the past 161 years, the schools of Jefferson County have had many names and honored many people and places; among them is Mitchell Elementary School in Golden, named for Roger Quincy Mitchell. Mitchell was instrumental in the reorganization of the various districts within the county into a single school district in the early 1950s. Mitchell’s wife Erdeena, also an educator, made significant contributions to the history of Jefferson County as well.

Roger Quincy Mitchell

Roger Quincy Mitchell, born in Missouri in 1891, graduated from the William Jewell Academy and College in Liberty, Missouri. He first earned a teaching degree at Central State Teacher’s College at Warrensburg, Missouri. Mitchell became a principal in Oklahoma, then in La Junta. He later taught in Leadville and at Logan County High School in Sterling. He was an instructor in education and psychology and registrar at Colorado Women’s College. He met Erdeena F. Walker while attending Colorado State Teachers’ College in Greeley and they were married in 1920.

The Mitchells came to Golden in 1926. Roger was named principal of Golden High School, located at that time in a building that is now a National Historic Register landmark located at 10th and Washington, now the American Mountaineering Center. He became Superintendent of Golden School District No. 1 in 1928. During his time serving as the longest and last leader of this historic district, Mitchell sought Works Progress Administration and Public Works Administration funding to create the new Central School at Golden, built in 1936. In 1950, he spearheaded building Pleasant View Elementary School, which continued as one of Jeffco’s longest operating elementary schools for over half a century until closing in 2017.

In 1950, Mitchell presided over the merger of the Rockland and Fairmount school districts, the first step of a grander county-wide reorganization envisioned by Mitchell and others. Other school districts had also combined in the years leading up to this, and soon Mitchell was helping spearhead reorganizing all the Jefferson County school districts into the new Reorganized District 1, Jefferson County School District R-1. Following its creation,
Mitchell served as its business manager and as special assistant to the superintendent. Mitchell was also very active in the community, serving in leadership roles with the Jefferson County Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Golden Masonic Lodge. In 1956, Mitchell received the Honor Award by the Colorado Association of School Administrators and the College of Education at the University of Colorado for his long and outstanding service to education in Colorado.

**Erdeena Florence Walker Mitchell**

Erdeena F. Mitchell, born in 1891 in Iowa, moved to Colorado in 1905. She began teaching in 1913 near Sterling, CO. She married, earned her degree in teaching, and moved to Golden, CO in 1926. She taught in Denver Public Schools for three decades, retiring in 1956. Mitchell was a member of the Golden Business and Professional Women’s Club and was named Woman of the Year by the club in 1962. She also was prominent in Masonic circles, becoming Worthy Matron of Mt. Zion Chapter No. 133, Order of the Eastern Star in 1940.

**Mitchell Elementary School**

Roger and Erdeena Mitchell retired in 1956; each had served over forty years in the field of education. The newly reorganized Jefferson County School Board voted to rename Central School to Mitchell Elementary School in Roger’s honor. In 1997, its successor building at 201 Rubey Drive in Golden was also named Mitchell Elementary School, an unprecedented move by the Jefferson County School District that, for the first time, honored a worthy individual with two school buildings bearing his name.

Roger passed away in 1975, and Erdeena died the following year. Both are buried at Crown Hill Cemetery in Wheat Ridge.

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In the late nineteenth century, many Colorado communities were still rough frontier mining towns, with an urban culture only slowly developing in older communities such as Denver and Golden. Thus, Colorado residents saw a need to deal with the issue of child criminals and vagrants. In 1881, the legislature appropriated funds for a State Industrial School to be established on the former School of Mines property near Golden. Children between the ages of seven and sixteen who had been convicted of criminal acts, or who were considered homeless and abandoned, could be sent by local courts to the school. Girls could also be admitted at first, until the school population grew larger. These students were sometimes referred to as “wayward children.” The operation was directed by a three-member Board of Control appointed by the Governor. The old School of Mines building was enlarged and renovated, and the State Industrial School triumphantly opened on July 16, 1881.

As early as 1884, accusations of brutal punishments suffered by the students instigated an investigation. In 1889, there was a widespread scandal when newspapers reported that students at the State Industrial School were being viciously whipped and beaten for minor infractions. A committee appointed by the state legislature confirmed the accuracy of the reports and recommended that Superintendent William C. Sampson be removed from office. Similar accusations reappeared in 1902, when it was reported that students were subjected to whippings of up to two hundred lashes with a leather strap and confined in irons with only bread and water for up to three weeks.

Judge Ben Lindsey was elected a Denver County Judge in 1901. Concerned about the plight of children sliding into a life of crime, he created a Juvenile Court system in Denver in 1907, only the second such court in the country. Children convicted of petty crimes would no longer be housed in the Denver city jail along with tough, hardened criminals. Instead, when he considered it appropriate, they would be sent to the State Industrial School in Golden for rehabilitation. To show his trust for the children, he directed them to report to the school without a police escort. By 1910, when Judge Lindsey wrote his book *The Beast*, he stated that in eight years he sent 504 Colorado State Industrial School students in the military cadet program, early 1900s.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

Colorado State Industrial School students and faculty, 1891-92.
Photo courtesy of Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society.

From the beginning, newspapers referred to the State Industrial School as the “reformatory” or “reform school.” Strict discipline was enforced. Students were usually confined to the school but could be allowed outside visits if they showed good behavior. Students were taught useful vocational trades such as broom making, shoemaking, tailoring, cooking, and carpentry. Eventually the property was expanded to include a thirty-seven-acre farm where students cultivated an orchard, vineyard, vegetable market garden, and hog farm. A unique aspect of the school was a military cadet unit organized into a four-company battalion.

Judge Ben Lindsey in his juvenile court chambers with youthful offenders.
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

John Steinle, Jefferson County Historical Commission
boys to the State Industrial School and only eight failed to report.

By the early 1920s, the boys at the school were presenting band and vocal concerts at the school and in Golden. This was the result of a vast expansion in classes, including, as it was reported in The Mirror, … shoe and harness making, carpentering… blacksmithing, tailoring, darning, laundering, painting, firing boilers, making cement blocks, plumbing, gardening, farming, animal husbandry, printing, cooking, chicken and rabbit raising, bee culture, and vocal and instrumental music.

Advancements in education were made possible by additional campus facilities. By 1938, there were twenty-two buildings, including a hospital, gymnasium, library, dining hall, cow barn, vocational education building, five dormitories, a large swimming pool, and superintendent’s house. Classes on auto mechanics were added.

Throughout the 1940s, news of the State Industrial School was dominated by negative articles about overcrowding, mismanagement, unsanitary conditions, and cruelty. In 1940, an investigation by the state legislature resulted in the elimination of the Board of Control and firing of Superintendent Raymond W. Combs. In 1946, a guard was charged with manslaughter and assault and battery in the death of one of the students, leading to recommendations that the school be closed and moved to a remote part of Colorado. But newspapers also covered the athletic programs at the school, including boxing matches with other state institutions, sharing the swimming pool with the School of Mines swim team, and having field days with School of Mines athletes. Despite the negative stories, the school budget was increased dramatically by the state legislature in 1945 to upgrade school facilities.

A new chapel, funded by public contributions, was dedicated at the State Industrial School in 1958. News stories about Catholic students receiving their first communion at the school emphasized the youth of many students.

The 1960s brought a name change to the State Industrial School. It was dubbed the Lookout Mountain School for Boys in 1961. The atmosphere at the school was changing from discipline to rehabilitation. In 1972, the Golden Transcript stated that within the past year, the school had undergone more change than in the previous ninety-one years, and “the jail atmosphere so firmly entrenched at Lookout Mountain School for Boys is disappearing and a new philosophy of treatment is slowly emerging.” Liberal arts instruction was offered through Pell Grants to students, allowing them to attend classes offered by Red Rocks Community College and Metropolitan State College of Denver to earn college credits. By the 1980s, the school was renamed Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center to reflect this changing philosophy.

I taught history classes at Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center in the early 1990s. At that time, gang violence was increasing. There was a potentially volatile mix of African American, white, and Latinx students in the classes, but there was little open animosity among them, at least in class. Latinx students were hungry for any information on Mexican history. Surprisingly, one of the most enjoyable classes was on art history, possibly because it was so visually oriented. Some students even painted abstract art pieces and gave them to me.

The site was surrounded by a sixteen-foot fence and students were escorted from building to building. There was no doubt, given the security measures, that this was a secure youth center as well as an educational institution.

On September 1, 2015, a non-profit educational organization, Teens, Inc., took over administration of the high school program. After several escapes and disturbances in which staff
and students were injured, a massive reorganization was instituted in 2020. The school was split into three separate youth centers, Aspire Youth Services Center, Golden Peak Youth Services Center, and Summit Youth Services Center, while the whole site was renamed the Campus at Lookout Mountain. A smaller number of students, divided into different groups, allows for closer relationships with staff and closer supervision.

Over the past ten years, the number of juvenile offenders being sentenced to Lookout Mountain has dropped considerably due to judges choosing participation in various community programs instead of commitment to a youth center. Currently, there are about sixty-five students at the campus, and each one is assigned a therapist. There are twenty-eight faculty members, and a wide range of classes are offered, including culinary arts, graphic computer design, science, math, barbering and hair styling, hands-on construction techniques with OSHA certification, and workplace readiness skills. There is a growing relationship with state colleges, especially CSU Pueblo and Pike’s Peak Community College. Students are ethnically and racially diverse, with roughly thirty-five percent Anglo American, thirty-nine percent Latinx, twenty-three percent African American, and 1.5 percent Asian American.

The future of the educational program offered at the Campus at Lookout Mountain was outlined by Erin Osterhaus, the Director of Education, Colorado Division of Youth Services Center. Available from goldenhistory.pastperfectonline.com.


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Students in the State Industrial School printing shop, 1935-1936.


The future of the educational program offered at the Campus at Lookout Mountain was outlined by Erin Osterhaus, the Director of Education. She is hoping to continue with the trend of smaller youth centers, with more career opportunities being offered and better partnerships with colleges and universities. Above all, the school should be more responsive to the students’ needs. As she puts it, the school offers “help, not just punishment.” Surely Judge Ben Lindsey would agree, for more than a century ago he wrote, “I learned that instead of fear we must use sympathy, but without cant, without hypocrisy, and without sentimentalism.”
Montessori Comes to Jeffco

“There is a great sense of community within the Montessori classroom, where children of differing ages work together in an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competitiveness. There is respect for the environment and for the individuals within it, which comes through experience of freedom within the community.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

A Brief and Inspiring History

Maria Montessori (1870–1952) scientist, educator, and founder of the Montessori Method of Education, was one of the first women in Italy to earn the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Her aspirations after medical school took her to the slums of Rome where she worked directly with under-served children. Through her work and scientific observations of children, she developed a methodology that promoted the natural growth of learning and would educate students in all aspects of life. This revolutionary method for teaching inspired self-directed learning, self-regulation, and critical thinking. In 1907, she opened a full day childcare center, Casa dei Bambini, in a low-income district of Rome. The children who attended, ages three to seven years, exceeded all expectations of educational proficiency, and word of this new method spread rapidly worldwide. According to American Montessori Society:

In the United States, the Montessori Movement caught on quickly. The first Montessori school opened in 1911, in the home of a prominent banker in Scarborough, New York. Others followed in rapid succession. Unlike Maria Montessori’s first Casa dei Bambini, which was for children from poor, disadvantaged families, these catered to children from wealthy, cultured families striving to give their children the best education possible. Prominent figures, including Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, gave their support.

Political, economic, and social turmoil led to the Montessori Method falling from favor in America during the 1920s. Although an occasional Montessori School or practitioner would still be found over the next three decades, the Montessori Method did not begin a resurgence until the mid-1950s. However, evidence of this resurgence did not occur in Colorado until 1964 when Jarrow Montessori School opened in Boulder. Today, Jarrow has the esteemed recognition of being the oldest Montessori School in Colorado.

The 1970s saw steady growth of the Montessori Method throughout Colorado, with schools opening in Colorado Springs, Littleton, Arvada, and Denver. In a recent conversation with Betsy Hoke, longtime Head of School for the Montessori School of Evergreen, which opened in 1977, she stated, “Montessori Schools began popping up all over Jefferson County in the 1980s because, 1) people had become increasingly interested in alternative educational opportunities; 2) there was an increased need for quality full day childcare; and 3) as communities were growing throughout Jeffco, Montessori filled a niche.” Hoke recalls that the Montessori School of Evergreen began in several old buildings belonging to the Episcopal Diocese. When the school lost its lease, the only...
facility she could find was a large house where she and her family could live and have space for two classrooms serving young children. In the late 1980s, parents convinced her to open a Montessori elementary program and eventually a middle school. She says, “The families loved Montessori and the sense of community it provided. Each year at the end of the school year, they would ask me to add an additional grade, so they would be able to continue.” Today the school serves nearly two hundred students.

By the Way—What is Montessori Education?

Currently there are over four thousand Montessori schools in the United States, with a variety of programs and schedules available for children ages six weeks old through high school. In Jefferson County the opportunity for quality Montessori Education is available to all residents. Accessible programs include in-home care, private, charter, and public preschool, kindergarten, elementary, middle school, and one of the very few accredited Montessori high schools in the country.

An Approach for Diverse Learners

Montessori Education provides hands-on, experiential learning within a respectful, organized, and developmentally appropriate classroom. The classroom environment is designed to honor the diverse ways in which children learn. Teachers, in addition to their college degrees, receive rigorous Montessori training which includes an educational component followed by an internship phase.

A Community

Through multi-age classrooms, peer learning occurs, which provides the opportunity for younger children to gain confidence without competition, and for older children to experience authentic leadership roles. A true sense of community is developed through management of the classroom where respect for self, the environment, and others is emphasized. Curriculum and educational materials are specifically designed to meet the broad spectrum of learning styles.

An Intentional Learning Environment

Concentration, sense of order, and independence are goals within each Montessori classroom, providing all students with opportunities for self-regulation and self-directed learning. A principle of Montessori Education is the understanding that children have amazing capacities to learn from their environment.

And… What Montessori Education Is Not

Religious

There has been some misinterpretation that Montessori Education is based in religious education. Although there are church-affiliated Montessori schools, true Montessori curriculum focuses on cultural learning where all religions and cultures are introduced and explored.

For the Wealthy

Although, Montessori Education began in this country within a few wealthy, tuition-based private schools, Jeffco has supported the growth of public and charter schools as educational options in our county. Now, the accessibility to all residents makes Montessori Education a viable choice for all income levels.

Unstructured Learning

Self-directed learning, as found in Montessori classrooms, encourages students to reach and surpass developmental benchmarks set for their age. Through a student’s developing sense of independence, collaboration, and self-motivation, personal responsibility and a love of lifelong learning exceeds standard learning goals.
The Best is Yet to Come

Clearly Montessori Education is deeply rooted in Jeffco. Tia Matsumoto, past president of Leadership Golden and owner of Cornerstone Montessori School, believes that “the support of Montessori Education comes from a growing community that values empowerment of its citizens.” Matsumoto has a unique and long relationship with Montessori Education, first as a kindergarten student herself, then as a parent who choose Montessori for her two children, and currently as an administrator and owner of a Montessori School. She acknowledges that she is “excited by the possibility of increased accessibility for families who may have employer supported benefits for childcare, yet she also faces the greatest challenge of balancing the needs of families with the unbridled growth of the area.”

With everchanging societal needs and growth, Montessori Education continues to allow us to expand as educators, parents, and citizens. Montessori classrooms represent the diverse learning needs of students today, providing bilingual and immersive-language programs, often creating cross-cultural relationships with Montessori schools in other countries. Community-based service learning is an integral part of Montessori curriculum and provides a continued emphasis on community, both within the classroom, and for the wider global community as well.

Sources


Quick Fact

Jefferson County is one of the few counties in the U.S. that borders ten other counties.
The Exodusters—A Dream Deferred

Kayla Gabehart, Historically Jeffco Editor

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

-Langston Hughes

In the late 1870s, in the midst of Reconstruction following the Civil War, the first mass migration of newly freed black Americans brought as many as 40,000 individuals to the West. With the encouragement and assistance of prominent black figures such as Benjamin Singleton and Ida B. Wells, these Exodusters, as they were called, fled the South in the face of hostile conditions toward black Americans. Even before the end of Reconstruction, black Americans in the South were forced to reckon with ongoing racism, including the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and Black Codes, the precursor to Jim Crow Laws, as well as dire economic situations.

The Exodusters, a name derived from the biblical “Exodus,” sought their own millenarian promised land, one in which they could stake their claim to an economic livelihood of their own. The history of black labor had, up to that point, largely been a story of enslavement. But the West offered opportunities in mining, railroading, farming, and other frontier professions.

Many of the Exodusters came to the West by way of Kansas. Some walked, while others rode steamships from the Mississippi to the Missouri River. Some made their way to one of Kansas’s many black settlements via Quindaro, where an Underground Railroad Station had brought black Americans to the West—and to freedom—long before Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. While Kansas proved to be a haven for the establishment of black settlements, Colorado eventually served as home to as many as twenty-five black settlements, including Dearfield, in Weld County. Terri Gentry, docent at the Black American West Museum, describes the migration of the Exodusters West as an opportunity for black Americans to reclaim and assert their humanity, as “this was an opportunity to try to prove that they were human, that they could succeed at different endeavors, that they could raise their families, and give them a better life and better options.”

These black westerners chose all kinds of professions; some estimates hold that as many as one in four cowboys in Colorado were black. Many Exodusters in Colorado became miners. Black miners could be found across the state, in Denver, Central City, Blackhawk, and Gilpin County. Black miners were instrumental in the labor uprising and subsequent massacre at Ludlow in 1914, where the National Guard opened fire on miners striking for small improvements to the abysmal conditions in which they worked; twenty-one individuals were murdered.

Jefferson County’s own Golden also served as home to many black miners. Golden operated multiple clay and coal mines during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, owing a large portion of their labor force to the Exodusters and their descendants. Unfortunately, as with many black Americans and immigrants working as laborers, the stories of miners in Golden have been lost to time. These stories were also likely the casualties of the hir-
Historically Jeffco 2021

DIVERSITY

Ining practices of wealthy, white mine owners, who would hire as diverse a population of immigrants as possible to ensure that they spoke different languages, could not communicate, and thus could not organize. This likely also had the effect of limiting the sharing of stories amongst miners, stories of the downtrodden and oppressed that may have lived on through oral histories otherwise.

Even so, the West was a chance for many Exodusters at a new life. The Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma, home to many Exodusters and their families, would become one of the wealthiest places in the United States, dubbed “Black Wall Street.” That is, until the 1921 Tulsa Massacre, in which white residents, deputized by government officials, burned and bombed Greenwood to the ground.

While the West provided freedom for the Exodusters, for many, the “promised land” remains a “dream deferred.” Even in the West, the Ku Klux Klan maintained a stranglehold on the government of Colorado in the 1920s, and as late as 1973, the Supreme Court had to order mandated bussing to desegregate schools in Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver. Over the past decade, Denver and the metro area has had to reckon with police brutality, exemplified most recently and tragically with the death of Elijah McClain in 2019. The summer and fall of 2020 saw racial justice protests across Colorado and a burgeoning Black Lives Matter Movement. While local governments and the State Legislature have taken some action, much work remains to be done. The Exodusters’ dream deferred has proven that it will not shrivel like a raisin in the sun, but rather has exploded—into a movement that demands recognition and the fulfillment promises that drew the Exodusters to the West.

Sources
John Tolliver: Jeffco’s Ultimate Self-Made Citizen

John Tolliver was an extraordinary gentleman in more ways than one. He began his days in Jefferson County as a barber on Washington Avenue. He was not the first or the most famous, but the opening of his own shop was historic, as John Tolliver had gone from slave to main street business owner in seven years.

John Tolliver was born in Missouri, later living in Virginia, and then returning to Missouri. In 1861, at the outbreak of the Civil War, he ran away to a new life in the frontier west. Tolliver first came to Denver, where he began work as a barber. He likely first worked in the shops of other black barbers, many of whom likely advocated for what ultimately became the Territorial Suffrage Act. This Act passed Congress on January 31, 1867, granting black men the right to vote in the Colorado Territory. Tolliver may even have been part of this effort.

On September 23, 1868, Tolliver opened his own barbershop inside the Cheney Block in downtown Golden. He instantly became a favorite of Colorado Transcript editor George West, who spoke highly of Tolliver and promoted his business, calling him his “dark-skinned friend” and his “brother.” Tolliver gladly took in customers of all races and charged folks twenty-five cents for his artistic haircuts and shaves. In 1869, he added a new attraction that immediately gained the attention of the townspeople, the first public bathrooms in Golden. The Transcript wrote,

One of the best things established in our town is the bathrooms of John Tolliver, in connection with his barber shop. He has them arranged with hot and cold water, and all you have to do is drop in your little six bits and ‘wash and be clean.’ If ‘cleanliness is next to godliness,’ John has made a big jump towards promoting Christianity.

In 1870, Tolliver upgraded his location, moving from his original fifteen-by-thirty-foot frame shop to the newly built infill fifteen-by-forty-foot brick storefront next to the Transcript office a few doors down. West noticed, saying, “We desire to direct the attention of our readers to the new advertisement of John Tolliver, who is nicely settled in his new and neat shop, 21½ Washington Avenue, where he will be pleased to give you a clean shave or an artistic hair-cut for a reasonable quid pro quo.”

It was a big year for Tolliver; on May 29th he married Annie Lackey of Denver. It was an interracial marriage; he was described as “colored” and she plain. They came to live in Golden.

The Cheney Block in 1866, where brick company storefront would become the first home of John Tolliver's barber shop in two years. Photo courtesy of Gardner Family Collection.

The first advertisement for John Tolliver’s barber shop, from the Colorado Transcript, September 23, 1868. Photo courtesy of Golden Transcript/Colorado Community Media.
After years of a successful career in downtown Golden, in 1893 John Tolliver moved to Ralston Creek, in the area below the present-day location of the Arvada Dam, to become a tenant farmer on the spread of Thomas Tucker, a family friend. There, on his three-acre spread, he attended to the Tuckers’ culinary department and assisted with the dairy cows, raised chickens, and built his own home in 1895, designed by Bert Johnson. On May 29, 1894, he endured the same major flood that threatened to take the Coors Mansion in Golden and had to rebuild after considerable losses of his own. By 1895, he had bounced back, going back into the barbershop business with partner Robert B. Broad, brother of State Senator and Jefferson County Commissioner Richard Broad Jr. Their shop was at Ralston Crossing. Their motto was “Good shingling and shaving or no pay.” Now in his 70s, Tolliver was one of the oldest in his trade in Jefferson County.

In 1898, Annie passed away. The couple had no children. *The Golden Globe* lamented that she “in the ages of society had gone beyond the line that marks the boundary,” but noted she “…was possessed of many noble traits. Her kindness to the poor and suffering, her genuine tears of grief over sufferings of humanity, her steadfast devotion to those who were in the circle of her love, and her later years of life during which she was possessed of a determination to retrieve as far as possible the errors of the headstrong and passionate past.” John and Annie had both been thought of as pleasant neighbors at Ralston.

Tolliver spent his later years in Denver, and ultimately went into public charge as he aged more and more. On October 13, 1922, he passed away at the county hospital in Fort Collins, of extreme old age at 107-years-old. At over twice the life expectancy of one born a slave, he was Golden’s, Denver’s, and Jefferson County’s oldest citizen, a record that still stands in Golden to this day. In the weeks before his death, several people had come to visit him, including a great-grandson of the man who had once owned Tolliver as a slave. Tolliver passed away peaceful and happy, sitting outside in his wheelchair in the hospital yard, watching the leaves fall. He rests today at Lakeview Cemetery in Broomfield, which records his age at ninety, though census records give another. The *Courier* correspondent, who was personally acquainted with Tolliver, believed his age of 107 years to be authentic.

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Meta Park: Tourist Destination in the Early 1900s

Bonnie Scudder, Jefferson County Historical Commission

A little-known tourist destination named Meta Park once existed in or near Pine Grove in South Platte Canyon in southwestern Jefferson County. It was along the Colorado and Southern Railroad route, located about thirty-one miles southwest of Denver’s Union Station. Excursion and “Fish” trains brought tourists and residents from Union Station, southwest along the South Platte River through Waterton Canyon, stopping several times before reaching Pine Grove, then continuing to Bailey and Como in Park County. (For more information on Fish and excursion trains, see “Early Tourism in Jefferson County,” Historically Jeffco, Issue 40, 2019.)

The Colorado Statesman/Denver Star newspaper, founded in 1888 and published in Denver, served the African American community in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah, and New Mexico. A series of articles and ads, published in this newspaper between 1910-1915, mentioned Meta Park describing it as “one of the shadiest and best fishing grounds in the Rocky Mountains,” and promising the excursion to be “one of the most enjoyable outings of the season.”

The Meta Park Resort was a popular destination for African Americans and other groups that were not welcome in other mountain area resorts. For about $1.25 each round-trip, one could board the train at Union Station at 8:30 am and enjoy the ride through canyons following the South Platte River to their destination in the beautiful South Platte Canyon. This area was also described as “one of the finest pleasure grounds on the whole Colorado Southern system,” and “the most grand, elaborate and profoundly beautiful of all the paradisical scenic grandeurs which fleck this wonderland of Colorado,” in early newspaper articles.

A Destination for African Americans

The Denver Citizens group was an organization of African Americans who enjoyed recreating at Meta Park. A committee of nine, named on the advertisement shown above, made arrangements and planned for activities including boating, fishing, and dancing. Young boys and girls could play baseball, and local bands provided entertainment for the adults. A picnic and barbeque were also part of this annual experience.

Another African American group that planned annual events was the Pythias Lodge No. 11, Knights of Pythias. The original Knights of Pythias was a fraternal organization and secret society founded in Washington, D.C. in 1864. Membership was open to “males in good health who believed in a Supreme Being.” Members, who had to be at least eighteen years of age, had to declare they were not a professional gambler, a communist or a fascist, and that they did not participate in illegal sales of alcohol or narcotics. After a black lodge was denied a charter by the Knights of Pythias Supreme Lodge in 1869, a number of black Americans formed their own Pythian group and called themselves the Knights of Pythias of North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Lodge No. 11, Knights of Pythias was a black lodge in Denver.
Other Organizations also Enjoyed Meta Park

Other groups, including the Irish American Progressive Society and various unions, also organized picnics at Meta Park. The Irish Society charged $1.00 for adults and $0.50 for children for the train ride from Union Station. They offered grand prizes for “hammer throwing, foot races, egg races, high jump, broad jump and other field sports.” Dancing took place in Meta Park’s new pavilion, and prizes were also given to couples who were the best dancers, and for the largest trout caught.

Established in February 1994 by Helen Kearney Thobhani, the Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild included five African American women whose intent was to perpetuate the heritage of quilting and promote fellowship among those interested in the craft itself. Now, twenty-seven years in the making with more than thirty members, the Guild is committed to community education and support, offering classes, exhibits, lectures, and documentation through its annual programs. The name Wa Shonaji, derived from the Swahili language, translates to “people who sew.” While the Guild’s members are predominantly of African American ancestry, the group celebrates ethnic diversity in both its affiliates and in the kaleidoscope of color and patterns displayed in their quilts.

The objective of the Guild is to “embody a viable, professional organization representing an interest in quilt making and other fiber arts primarily from an African American perspective. We both educate ourselves and share our knowledge in the art of quilt making and other arts by promoting the theme, “Each One Teach One.” We seek to promote the work and accomplishments of our members and to preserve the tradition, culture, and history of quilting. We enjoy, rather than judge each other’s work.” While the Guild’s members are predominantly of African American ancestry, the group celebrates ethnic diversity in both its affiliates and in the kaleidoscope of color and patterns displayed in their quilts.

Far more information is available on a fly-fishing vacation resort for African Americans known as Lincoln Hills, created in 1922, which is located in Gilpin County. The Black American West History and Heritage Museum and the Blair-Caldwell Library are the best sources for researching Black American history.

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The Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild
Cynthia Shaw, Jefferson County Historical Commission

“Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”
Note from the Author

I first learned about this group from Elorise Hawkins, whom I had the pleasure of meeting back in 2017 while planning the Boettcher Mansion’s 100th Birthday Celebration. Hired as the resident housekeeper by Charles Boettcher’s granddaughter, Charline, in the early 1960s, Elorise and her four children lived with the Breeden family of five at the sprawling estate atop Lookout Mountain. Originally called Lorraine Lodge, the property was bequeathed to Jefferson County upon Charline’s death in 1972 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The seven kids became fast friends and enjoyed many wonderful adventures and experiences together.

Below are some excerpts from current members of the Guild about what the Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild means to them and how it has enriched their lives.

“Learning the art of quilting has led to a wonderful relationship with a great group of talented women... a friendship of sister stitchers who create beautiful quilts. I know that the quilts I make are going to live on for generations within my family.”
-Elorise Hawkins

“There are no words to describe how being a member of the Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild has enriched my life. It is my hope that I have repaid my indebtedness to Wa Shonaji by contributing back in a positive and enriching manner that has always been for the good of the Guild. My mantra is that Wa Shonaji is AWESOME. Wa Shonaji celebrates diversity within its membership and in the many quilt styles made and created by our diverse membership.”
-Joanne Walton

“Several years ago, it was slowly dawning on me that I lived in a very white world—not by design and without conscious thought—with little diversity in my life. Wa Shonaji struck me as a great way to include the diversity I was seeking while joining a vibrant guild. The amazing women of Wa Shonaji have taught me so much about quilting and opened my eyes to some of their experiences as African Americans at this time in the United States.”
-Julie Marsh

“For me, Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild means learning new quilting skills and interacting with others of like minds. I love the art of quilting and I’m always inspired by the ideas, techniques, and creations of my fellow quilters. The Guild has enriched my life tremendously through people who mostly started out as acquaintances, to fellow guild members to friendships that are worth their weight in gold. We’ve shared resources that have moved our stashes to another level. God bless Rocky Mountain Wa Shonaji Quilt Guild!”
-Camilla Edwards
Mein Neues Land: The Impact of German-Speaking Immigrants in Jefferson County

John Steinle, Jefferson County Historical Commission

German-speaking people were among the largest groups of the twelve million immigrants flooding into the United States between 1850 and 1900. Central Europe was thrown into turmoil in 1848 due to the democratic revolutions against traditional ruling regimes. When those revolutions failed, a diaspora of their supporters followed. Blight, war, and ethnic tensions brought further waves of immigrants. All these factors led more than five million Germans to make new homes in the United States during the 1800s. They created the “German Triangle” of immigration bounded by Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Tens of thousands of Germans served in the Union Army during the Civil War, staking their claim to respect as American citizens.

Germans Stake Their Claim in Jeffco

By the 1870s, the first phase of the Colorado Gold Rush had concluded. The Civil War was over, gold and silver mining were flourishing, railroad expansion progressing, and the population expanding. Golden was no longer the territorial capital, but it was a center for education, rail transport, brick and ceramics production, agriculture, and papermaking. German businesses were prominent in Golden, with the Schmidt and Reinhold liquor, wine, and cigar store, and establishment of a brewery by immigrants Adolph Coors and Jacob Schueler. For his work force, Coors would often choose his fellow German immigrants, adding to the burgeoning German population. By 1893, Golden’s Mayor was Nicholas Koenig, a German-speaking Swiss. Other prominent Germans or German-speaking Swiss included Henry Koch, who held property and a resort on North Table Mountain; engraver Fritz Kohler; and Id Goetze, who owned the Astor House Hotel. Joachim Binder, whose farm west of Golden enclosed much of the former site of the gold rush town of Apex, became a County Commissioner from 1882 to 1884.

Jefferson County was also a gathering place for convivial German groups such as the Denver Turnverein. The Turnverein was established in 1813 in Prussia to stimulate resistance against the French occupiers under Napoleon. Later, it became more of an athletic, recreation, marksman, and educational organization. In 1877 the Turnverein brought more than 1,000 members to its annual picnic in a “beautiful grove” near Golden.

In northeast Golden near the railroad facilities, a German neighborhood known as Goosetown developed. As early as 1873, the Colorado Transcript ran an advertisement for a “Beer and Lunch Room” for Germania Hall in Goosetown. The community developed a unique identity. Goosetown residents fielded baseball and basketball teams in the early 1930s, known as the “Goosetown Knockouts” and “Goosetown Cagers.” Goosetown was seen as a rowdy neighborhood. A whole series of hilarious stories appeared in the Jefferson County Republican in 1927, recounting the mythical, bibulous antics of the imaginary mayor and village council of Goosetown. Much of old Goosetown disappeared as rail facilities were phased out and the nearby Coors Brewery and associated offices expanded. The last holdout was the Goosetown Tavern, last known as Sam’s Land, originally opened by Julius Schultz in the late 1800s. When the bar finally closed
and was demolished in 1998, John Hickenlooper, future Mayor of Denver, Governor of Colorado, and U.S. Senator, salvaged the wooden booths and bar and installed them in his new incarnation of the Goosetown Tavern in Denver on Colfax Avenue.

To the southwest of Golden, German immigrants were creating prosperous ranches near the Bradford Toll Road corridor, now Rt. 285. Rudolph Pollitz began ranching there about 1870. He built a spacious fourteen-room home known as the Clifton House. Rudolph's stepson, Charles Long and his wife Tilithy later used the house as a stagecoach stop; it housed the local telephone exchange. Their children established Conifer's longest-surviving business, Long Brothers' Garage. Along nearby Pleasant Park Road, the large Kuehster and Huebner families not only spread out to establish thriving ranches and sawmills but were leaders in building the Pleasant Park and Lamb schools and organizing Pleasant Park Grange.

Another German immigrant, Frank Hildebrand, established his ranch in 1866 south of Denver along Deer Creek. Frank and his wife Elizabeth Hildebrand expanded their ranch property to more than 2,000 acres, built irrigation ditches, grew wheat and vegetables, raised cattle, and produced dairy products. In the 1970s, much of the Hildebrand Ranch was condemned and seized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build Chatfield Reservoir and the Hildebrands were forced to leave. Today the original Hildebrand property is included within Chatfield Reservoir, the Denver Botanic Gardens Chatfield Arboretum, and Jefferson County Open Space's Hildebrand Ranch Park.

Germans were especially influential in laying the groundwork for the development of present-day Arvada. In the 1880s the Schneider family from Germany and the Schoech family from Bavaria and Austria both established large, flourishing farms operated with the help of their many children.

Albert Barth from Germany also moved to Arvada in the 1880s, operating a grocery and hardware store in the still-standing Barth Building along Grandview Avenue in Olde Town Arvada. Barth was one of the leaders in establishing facilities providing city water and electricity. He was one of the organizers of the First National Bank of Arvada and served as Mayor in 1906. Two German immigrants, Louis Klumker and William Groebels, began a growing tannery business in Arvada, eventually adding a glue factory to utilize the by-products of tanning hides.

Charles Boettcher (1852-1948) was one German immigrant who had a huge impact on local, state, national, and even international commerce and finance. Born in Thuringia in central Germany, Boettcher came to the United States to join his brother Herman in 1869. Boettcher started thriving hardware and grocery businesses in Boulder and Leadville in the 1870s. In the early 1900s, he helped found the Great Western Sugar Company and the Ideal Cement Company. Boettcher was also President of the National Bank of Commerce and the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad. He was a Director of the Western Packing Company and the Colorado Packing and Provision Company, both involved in expanding the Denver Stockyards.

In 1917, Boettcher built a hunting lodge and summer getaway from the city atop Lookout Mountain. Denver architects Fisher and Fisher designed what Boettcher called Lorraine Lodge, in the popular Arts and Crafts style. After his divorce in 1920, Boettcher spent much of his time at Lorraine Lodge. His granddaughter, Charline Humphreys Breeden, inherited the lodge upon German immigrant, Joseph Huebner, and his family were instrumental in building the Pleasant Park School in 1894 and founding the Pleasant Park Grange in 1907. Mrs. Clara Huebner was the first Master of the Grange, and the group owns and meets in the old schoolhouse as they have for more than a century. Photo courtesy of Conifer Historical Society and Museum.
Historically Jefco 2021

Global Conflict and Anti-German Sentiment

When the United States entered World War I against Germany and Austria in 1917, German Americans were targets of hatred and discrimination. Portrayed as bestial “Huns” in government propaganda, German immigrants and their families were viewed with suspicion. Governor Julius Gunter organized the America First Society to “Americanize” all people of German or Austrian birth. A citizens’ group called the Nathan Hale League was formed to spy on German and Austrian families. In Jefferson County in 1917, two young men wielding clubs waded into a group of fifty Germans picnicking near Evergreen when they heard the group singing traditional German songs. Luckily, the sheriff arrived to restore order. Conversely, the Colorado Transcript defended Jefferson County’s German citizens, proclaiming that they were “… among the best citizens of the country…” renowned for their “cleanliness” as opposed to the “… unkempt Greek or the lower class Italian.”

Germans and Austrians dominated the brewing industry, and lingering animosity toward them after World War I was one factor leading to the adoption of national Prohibition in 1920. The poisonous influence of the powerful Ku Klux Klan also affected German and Austrian families in Jefferson County during the 1920s. Fortunately, Klan influence gradually faded away, and Prohibition was repealed in 1933.

German-speaking immigrants moving to Jefferson County included outstanding architect and builder, Justus “Gus” Roehling. Roehling emigrated to the United States in 1919. He was hired by Charles Kittredge to build homes in the summer cabin community developed by Kittredge. Roehling built his own home there, now a Jefferson County Landmark. In Grant, Colorado, Roehling designed an impressive home in 1925 for the Coors family, featuring stone fireplaces in each of its eleven bedrooms. Between 1940 and 1941, Roehling built what he considered his masterpiece, the Crest House atop Mount Evans. Roehling dreamed of building a “Castle in the Sky,” and that dream became reality in 1940 when he was hired to build a stone structure with a viewing platform, restrooms, emergency oxygen, a gift shop, and a restaurant. Tragically, Crest House burned down in 1979 due to an error by a propane company employee. Roehling always dreamed of rebuilding Crest House, but the reconstruction was deemed too costly. “Gus” Roehling died in 1984 after writing a long epic poem about his life.
Food: The Remnants of German Heritage in Jeffco

German heritage in Jefferson County is now kept alive mainly through German food. Arvada is especially blessed with German and Central European cuisine, including the Rheinländer, Royal, and Das Meyer bakeries, Gaby’s German Kitchen, the Golden Europe Restaurant, and the Pierogi Factory. Morrison also boasts the Café Prague Restaurant, while the nearby Edelweiss Club celebrates German culture, music, and dancing.

Today, nearly twenty-four percent of Jefferson County’s residents claim German ancestry. None of the communities in Jefferson County display a distinctive German flavor. Only on special occasions do citizens of German heritage don traditional clothing, sing the old songs, and dance polkas and schottisches. Germans and German-speaking families from Austria and Switzerland have not tried to recreate the “old country,” but have been some of the historic leaders in Jefferson County agriculture, business, brewing, and even the built environment. The next time you enjoy the Gemütlichkeit of a German restaurant, remember their efforts, and honor them by hoisting a stein of beer with a hearty, “Prost!”

Sources


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“Mayor of Goosetown.” Jefferson County Republican. September 1, 1927.


“Personal Items.” Colorado Transcript. February 2, 1933.


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Designed by Edwin A. Francis and built by German immigrant Justus Roehling, the Crest House atop Mount Evans was the fulfillment of Roehling’s dream, a “Castle in the Clouds.” The construction was financed by Thayer Tutt of the Broadmoor Hotel and future Denver Mayor Quigg Newton. Roehling was devastated when the building burned in 1979. It has never been rebuilt.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.
The Sons of Norway (SON) Trollheim Lodge 6-110 was formed in February 1974, as the second lodge in Colorado. Trollheim means “Troll Home” in Norwegian. And yes, we have Trolls in residence! Five trolls carved from wood “keep our lodge safe from trouble.” Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, they have not had much human company, so they are getting a bit rambunctious right now!

Sons of Norway was founded in America in 1895 as the Independent Order of the Sons of Norway, a fraternal organization to benefit those of Norwegian ancestry with meetings, events, and insurance. Its mission statement still reads today, “The mission of the Sons of Norway is to promote and to preserve the heritage and culture of Norway, to celebrate our relationship with other Nordic countries, and to provide quality insurance and financial products to its members.”

**Coming to Jeffco**

During World War II, two groups of Norwegian Americans helped lay the groundwork for the Sons of Norway Trollheim Lodge, and were some of the first members. One group was the Norsemen of the Rockies, which still exists today. The second group was part of the 99th Battalion of the U.S. Army housed at Camp Hale, located in the Eagle River Valley in Colorado. During the war, the 99th Battalion trained in skiing and winter combat for the purpose of being used in battle in Norway, though this never happened. Several soldiers remembered their time in the Colorado and later returned.

Trollheim Lodge is a vibrant community of members unified in the preservation of Norwegian Heritage. For the first years, meetings were held at a variety of places, including churches and homes throughout the Denver Metro area. Early activities included parades in smaller suburbs of Denver; Folklife Festivals; Kretstevnes or fall outdoor meetings with other lodges; picnics; and Scandinavian Balls with Danish, Swedish, and Finnish groups. Dinners, always a part of the Norwegian culture in the U.S., a smorgasbord for Syttende Mai, a celebration of the 17th-of-May Norwegian Independence Day. Later, more fundraising dinners were added, including lutefisk, meatballs, and walleye. To also help raise funds in the early years, one member carried gift items in a suitcase to be sold at meetings.

Fundraising efforts became more important as the sizeable Trollheim membership desired a place to call home. By 1990, Trollheim Lodge bought property on 14th Ave near Pierce St. in Lakewood, and after renovations were complete, Trollheim Lodge moved into their new home. A large hall was added to the back of the existing building as a venue for events and serves as a meeting room and dining room for more than two hundred people.

**We’re an Active Bunch**

Members started organizing trips, including one to Epcot Center when the Norway Pavilion opened, and Crown Prince Harold, now King of Norway, visited. Trips on the Ski Train took members up to Winter Park for skiing. Tours of Norway have been offered to the membership and public. Trollheim also became involved with Barnelopet, a free activity for children to meet near Winter Park for a day of learning to cross-country ski, participate in a race, and enjoy a warm lunch at no cost.

Classes have been offered for many “Nordic cultural skills,” such as language, handwork of all kinds, wood working, genealogy, and stamp-collecting. Members have found entertainment in music/choir, book reading, and history club meetings, as well as delightful presentations at many of the monthly general
meetings. From a small assortment of books, a library grew to hold several books about all things Scandinavian, both in English and in Norwegian, as well as videos and DVDs. Large dinners are also frequent.

Over the years, groups from Norway have entertained members of the lodge, ranging from regular touring groups to single entertainers. Most recently in 2017 and 2019, the Christian rock band Tidløs from Norway visited. Our most famous visitor was the Norwegian Princess Martha Louise, who, in 2006, toured the U.S. promoting her book, *Why Kings and Queens Don’t Wear Crowns*. Trollheim hosted a book-signing event for the public to meet and greet the princess.

A small gift shop, the Norske Butikken, found a home in a corner of the lodge. The Norske Butikken grew as demand grew. People were pleased to have a place to find Norwegian and Scandinavian food, t-shirts, and other Scandinavian products for the home. Starting in early November, we host the Trollheim Fair, a time to shop for unique Christmas items from the store or from vendors with their Scandinavian-themed, homemade products.

Members in *bunads*, the national dress.  
*Photo courtesy of Elaine Homan.*

Members participate in several charitable endeavors for our neighborhood and beyond; food banks, Adopt-a-Street, and scholarships are some examples. We have three rooms that can be rented for events or seminars, and most revenue from the rentals are earmarked for charitable gifts. Our *Dameklubben*, or women’s club, hosts a Spring Tea every year that is often sold out before it becomes publicized!

The Sons of Norway Trollheim Lodge 6-110 is located at 6610 W 14th Avenue in Lakewood, CO. Membership is open to all who are interested in the Scandinavian culture and history.

Quick Fact

The Jefferson County Library system houses over 1.2 million items.  
*Image from Adobe Stock.*
For those of you unfamiliar with Tesoro Cultural Center, a non-profit 501(c)3, we are located amidst the red rocks in Morrison, Colorado. Our home is the Fort, a building that is a full-scale adobe replica of Bent's Old Fort (1833-1849) in what is now La Junta, Colorado. The building, built in 1962, is on the National Register of Historic Places. In February of 1963, due to financial necessity, the main level was converted into a restaurant for dinner service only, but in the daytime, it served as a living history museum, giving visitors tours, and presenting Bent's Old Fort’s history. The Arnold family researched the diaries of those that traded, lived, or visited Bent's Old Fort, and based the evening dinner menu on the foods that they ate, including buffalo, elk, and quail. Today, Tesoro Cultural Center, founded in 1999, continues the tradition of educating the public about the many cultures that traded at Bent’s Old Fort. All Tesoro events and programs are inspired by Colorado’s rich history and shared experiences with Southwest, Spanish, Mexican, Native American, African American, and early European cultures. From art to cuisine, to historical re-enactments and music, Tesoro Cultural Center’s mission is to create community-based events and educational outreach programs designed to enrich and celebrate our shared cultural heritage.

Upon entering the gates of the Fort, students—both adults and children—step into the past and learn about the cultural diversity that prevailed at Bent’s Fort. Due to the strategic location on the Arkansas River, Bent’s Fort facilitated business interactions with Plains Indians, Mexicans, trappers of varying European and Anglo descent, and traders of varying backgrounds hailing from Missouri. Educational programs engage students of all ages in economics, trade values, intermarriage to ameliorate trade, the relationships formed between various groups, the goods most desired, and the changes in lifestyle these goods brought to what is now Southeastern Colorado. Once inside the walls, guests are introduced to the “Mud Castle of the Plains,” a name used to describe Bent’s Fort, as it was an adobe structure. From adobe bricks created onsite from the local soil and clay, to the hand-hewn beams, the build-
ing’s design, and the central plaza, guests get a taste of what life was like in the period between 1833 and 1849.

Educational opportunities are not always formal programs, but they occur at all Tesoro events. The annual Indian Market and Ceremonial Dance in June introduce guests to some of the finest artisans in the Southwest through a juried art show that includes artists using various mediums to create authentic American Indian art. Also, ceremonial dance exhibitions, songs, and cultural lessons are provided to further educate the public about the culture and traditions of the people who originally inhabited Colorado prior to its statehood. The honoring of an American Indian veteran takes place, and the solemnity and celebration of the occasion is an experience in itself.

September brings the Rendezvous and Spanish Colonial Art Market. Experiencing mountain man encampments, seeing shooting contests using black powder guns, participating in trading with Natives using Native sign language, viewing a tipi and the way it is “built,” and learning to pack a horse are all possibilities when attending Tesoro’s Rendezvous. Visiting the Spanish Colonial artists and seeing their traditional methods, materials, styles, and demonstrations introduces an entirely different facet of learning. Retablos and bultos, using natural substances to create the paints and lacquers, offer insight into the art and techniques of the past. The weavings of churro sheep’s wool and the way it is processed and loomed show an art form many have not seen. The carvings and construction of furniture offer a glimpse into the past as well. All the activities, displays, re-enactments, demonstrations, and art present a multitude of opportunities to learn about the people and lifestyles of an earlier time.

Another festive and traditional event occurs on Christmas Eve, when a true Las Posadas takes place. For those of you who have never experienced Las Posadas, it is a tradition that originated in Spain and continues to be a part of celebrations in Mexico and America’s Southwest. Las Posadas commemorates the search for shelter that Joseph and Mary encountered before the birth of Jesus. With live animals, a manger, a traditional procession, songs in both Spanish and English, and the breaking of the pinata, guests can experience a tradition that may be new to them.

One of the most valuable learning opportunities occurs eight or nine weekends a year when Tesoro hosts an Historic Lecture Series featuring internationally recognized historians, academics, and experts in the field of Western history. The lecture topics cover a broad range that pertain to the people, events, locations, and themes related to the nineteenth century, espe-
cially the period during which Bent’s Old Fort operated (1833-1849). Some of Tesoro’s recent speakers have included:

- Dr. Megan Kate Nelson—who provided an amazing wealth of information about aspects of the Civil War that few are aware of, hence the title of her recent book: *The Three-Cornered War: The Union, the Confederacy, and Native Peoples in the Fight for the West*.
- Dr. Ron Tyler—who, as the retired Director of the Amon-Carter Museum and author of numerous books including most recently, *Western Art, Western History: Collected Essays*, illustrates the ways in which art presents us with primary sources that inform the viewer about the events, clothing, people, and places of our distant past.
- John Steinle—a local historian who has published several books and spoke most recently about *The Great American Desert: Major Stephen Long’s Colorado Expedition of 1820*. John has also been one of our long time Rendezvous participants and uses his interpretive skills as half of the Bent and St. Vrain duo.

To better serve the public far and wide, the lectures are live streamed and live on Tesoro’s Facebook page. These lectures can also be accessed by going to http://Facebook.com/TesoroCulturalCenter.

People of all ages, ethnicities, races, religions, genders, and abilities are warmly welcomed to Tesoro events, and travel from great distances to participate in these highly educational and inspiring events and programs. For further information on any of Tesoro’s programs or events, or if you would like to volunteer or become a member, visit http://www.tesoroculturalcenter.org, email info@tesoroculturalcenter.org, or call 303-839-1671.

Please consider joining our email list to alert you to the fun events and “Doin’s” at the Fort.
Residential Restrictions Based on Race

During the Great Depression, the United States experienced a housing shortage as well as unprecedented rates of foreclosures, thus creating an unstable housing market. In 1933, the Homeowners Loan Corporation was created to protect home ownership by offering a low down-payment combined with a long-term, fixed-rate mortgage. The home appraisal process was established to control risk factors that might impact property values. The process developed proved to be “blatantly discriminatory against Black people, immigrants from certain countries, and some religious groups,” according to H. Berne Jackson, National Association of Real Estate Brokers. The process divided neighborhoods into four categories that were shown on color-coded Residential Security maps. Neighborhoods that were coded red were classified as “hazardous.”

Housing programs begun under the New Deal through the Federal Housing Authority were designed to provide housing to white, middle-class, and lower-middle-class families, according to Terry Gross, an American journalist with NPR who has hosted Fresh Air since 1975. She wrote, “African-Americans and other people of color were left out of the new suburban communities—and instead pushed into urban housing projects.” This served to further segregation efforts by refusing mortgages in or near African American neighborhoods.

As early as the 1860s, some maps in Jefferson County included restrictive covenants containing language that denied ownership of properties to persons of certain races. The practice of redlining continued until around 1950, shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court had struck down race-based restrictions in covenants in Shelley v. Kraemer.

Beverly Heights Subdivision plat map. The highlighted yellow portion is an example of racist language in community documents and reads, “Stipulate that no lot at any time shall be occupied or owned by any person or persons of Mongolian or Negroe races, and if such occupancy shall continue for an aggregate period of 30 days, then the title thereto shall revert to us, our successors or assigns. However, this provision shall not prohibit the employment of such races by the occupants.”

Photo courtesy of Jefferson County Archives.
Christopher J.J. Thiry, Colorado School of Mines, and Ronda Frazier, Jeffco Archivist, have participated in an on-going project that has examined over 1,000 plat maps of Jeffco subdivisions and neighborhoods from 1860 to 1950. Approximately twenty percent of the plats contained language indicating that properties could be owned or occupied only by members of the Caucasian race. These documents were signed by government officials who “represented the will of the people of the County at that time.” Thiry stated, “This project can help inform our community so that we no longer remain naïve nor willfully ignorant of how our county came to be in its present form. My fondest hope is that the knowledge generated from this project can be used to make this a more perfect union with liberty and justice for all.”

The Ku Klux Klan

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), formed during Reconstruction in the South following the Civil War, became active in Colorado in 1921. By 1923, the KKK had established themselves in every Colorado county. Members were American-born, Protestant, and white. They practiced mysterious rituals and wore white robes with hoods to conceal their identities. Marketed as a social club, they were known for burning crosses and intimidating Catholics, Jewish people, immigrants, and blacks.

Castle Rock in Golden, Colorado, became the regional meeting place of the KKK during the 1920s. Long lines of cars, many from Denver, traveled each week down West Colfax on the old cement road to Lava Lane, now Quaker Street, which led to Castle Rock. White hooded Klan members in open touring cars honked their horns to harass certain local residents. Guards would check membership cards to keep “undesirables” from attending their secret meetings. The organization claimed to be restoring Protestant Christian values, which they believed were threatened by African Americans and groups of recent immigrants. The Klan promised to “fix” the depression-impacted economy and labor unrest. New members were recruited on college campuses, including those in Jeffco. Prominent leaders, including the governor, were members of the KKK, as were an estimated ten percent of the male population of the state.

Many Golden residents did not approve of the Klan’s weekly activities, including the burning of crosses that could be seen for miles. In 1927, an abandoned dance hall atop South
Table Mountain was set on fire. Local legends indicate that the volunteer firefighters watched this building burn rather than trying to save it. Local residents celebrated the event, and the dance hall was never rebuilt. The Klan began to lose power in 1926, due to corruption of KKK officials. The governor ended up in prison and another official was convicted of tax evasion.

Rectifying Past Injustices through Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Even though the KKK declined in power in the 1920s and redlining was “outlawed” in the 1950s, various groups have continued to be subjected to discriminatory practices. Segregation was a reality in many inner-city school districts across the country for decades. Integration plans were implemented starting in the 1970s in the Denver Public Schools, after a United States Supreme Court case, Keyes vs. School District No. 1, Denver, ruling that found that de facto segregation existed in the district. While this was not a major issue in suburban districts, including Jeffco, as few minority students were in attendance in these districts at that time, discriminatory practices were reported.

As the population of the state increased, various racial and ethnic groups began moving in larger numbers to the suburbs. In the 1990s, school districts including Jeffco began creating positions for “diversity” coordinators. Schools would identify a teacher “liaison” who would participate in diversity training, then serve as a resource in their building. Local governments and various businesses began examining recruitment and hiring practices and diversity training was seen in many places.

Diversity is defined as “all of the ways in which people differ, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, language, education, marital status, education, sexual orientation, and physical appearance.” It can also include diversity of thought, including ideas, perspectives, values, and even political views.

Equity is fair treatment, opportunity, access, and advancement for all people, and eliminating barriers that have prevented full participation by certain groups. Understanding the root causes of the disparity within the society is necessary in order to address equity issues.

Inclusion involves creating environments where all are welcome, feel supported and respected, and are comfortable with fully participating.

According to Arianne Rivera, Equity and Diversity Specialist with Jeffco’s Student Engagement Office, the Jeffco Public Schools have had an office of diversity or specific staff focused on educational equity since the 1990s. The office and staff have shifted titles, structures, and placement in the organization, but they have always been dedicated to improving outcomes and experiences for students. This work has existed in many forms. For example, there have been community advisory councils, student advocacy and leadership groups, employee affinity groups, individual supports for staff and students, policy and curriculum enhancements, and professional learning on equity, diversity, and inclusion topics for staff. Rivera stated:

The current work of the Jeffco Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team is to cultivate a culture of equity, inclusion, and belonging across the district and create equitable educational access and opportunity across race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and language. We work collaboratively with schools, departments, and community partners across Jeffco to embed an equity lens into all the instruction and services we provide. We continue to implement all of the actions listed above and strive to meet the dynamic needs of our brilliant and diverse students.

Chris O’Keefe, AICP, serves as the Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Director for Jefferson County. He asserted:

Jefferson County Planning and Zoning recognizes that land use planning and equity have a long-standing and complex relationship. Our department also understands that it is
our responsibility as planners to find better ways to serve all members of the public in an equitable way through our regulations, policies, and procedures. Recently, Planning and Zoning partnered with the University of Colorado Denver’s Masters of Urban and Regional Planning capstone program. In November 2020, staff proposed three capstone projects focused on equity and inclusion land use issues. Two projects were accepted to explore potential instances of bias in the Comprehensive Master Plan and the Zoning Resolution’s Rezoning review criteria. These projects were crucial to help us understand how two of our essential planning documents might have unintended consequences on equity goals when reviewing new development applications. Planning and Zoning’s research into these topics continue. Furthermore, Planning and Zoning is partnering with the newly created Jefferson County Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission to explore potential regulation changes that may be needed to promote equitable development in Jefferson County. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission will act as a third-party expert resource to help us evaluate current practices and to identify ways we must improve to better serve all community members.

Moving Forward

While redlining and segregation in schools have been legally outlawed and the Ku Klux Klan no longer has a political stranglehold on Colorado as it did in the 1920s, the structural ramifications of slavery, Jim Crow, and centuries of deeply-held, racist beliefs about immigrants and people of color persist in Jeffco and the wider United States. Many events of the past few years have brought these inequities into full view: the #OscarsSoWhite incident in 2015, in which all twenty acting nominations were given to white actors; the disproportionate death toll that COVID-19 wreaked on the black population; the continued reality of police brutality against the black community; and the recent uproar over the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s initial refusal to grant Nikole Hannah Jones, author of the 1619 Project, tenure, an unprecedented move. These events are just a few of many, but exemplify the work left to be done to achieve meaningful equity, diversity, and inclusion that is not performative. Even so, in Jeffco, we can be proud of the steps we are taking towards rectifying historical wrongs and incorporating new perspectives with initiatives in Jefferson County Government and the Jefferson County School District. Progress is only made by constantly reflecting and evaluating, a willingness to acknowledge and right historical wrongs, and a desire to move forward and be better.

Sources

O’Keefe, Chris. Jeffco’s Planning and Zoning Director. Phone interview. (June 2021)
Rivera, Arianne. Jeffco Public Schools Equity and Diversity Specialist. Phone interview. (July 2021)

Quick Fact

More than ten percent of Jeffco residents speak a language other than English at home.
Discovering Jesse E. Ray: Jeffco Commissioner, Homesteader, and Sawyer

Bonnie Scudder, Jefferson County Historical Commission, and Deborah Darnell

Staunton State Park, located in southwestern Jefferson County and northeastern Park County, is an immensely popular destination, drawing around 300,000 visitors in 2020. While many are familiar with various sawmill ruins in the park, not much was known about this early history. Sawmill ruins located at the junction of Old Mill, Mason Creek, and Border Line trails are particularly intriguing, as they are near a two-story bunkhouse, which is still standing. The sawmill operated until 1942, closing during World War II.

Dr. Archibald Staunton acquired the sawmill in 1930. The only other information known is that logging occurred in this area for many decades prior to Staunton’s arrival. Local stories reflected that Norwegian and/or Swedish loggers had come to the area to work, perhaps as early as the 1860s. Homestead records indicated that a Jesse E. Ray had proven his homestead of eighty acres at this site in 1904.

Ray’s name surfaced again in 1919. He acquired a nearby 160-acre homestead from Moses Mason in 1908. Thus, Jesse E. Ray owned two tracts of land totaling 240 acres in what is now Staunton State Park during the early 1900s. His eighty acres on Black Mountain Creek transferred ownership several times before its acquisition in 1930 by Staunton. Ray held the 160-acre Mason homestead until 1919 when it passed to Dr. Staunton. This was all that was known about Jesse E. Ray, until early last year.

An Old Photo Album

An album of photographs, well over one hundred years old, traveled from California to Denver several years ago. It had been purchased for four dollars at a garage sale in Southern California years earlier. The “caretaker” of the album felt that it might be of interest to people in this area. She contacted a local historical organization which then reached out to one of the authors.

The photo album had been compiled by Charles Shaffer (1882-1973), fifth son of Samuel and Sarah Shaffer of Shaffer’s Crossing. About a half-dozen photographs of high-quality featured Jesse Ray’s sawmill on Black Mountain Creek! The rich history of this sawmill suddenly came into clearer focus.
Researchers Jesse Ray

With additional research, it was discovered that Jesse Ray was quite an interesting and important man in Jefferson County history. Born in 1842 in North Carolina, he traveled west in 1874 and settled in the Pleasant Park area known as Hutchinson, in Conifer. He married and had seven children, all born in Conifer. Ray homesteaded and purchased several parcels of land in the area and operated several sawmills between 1890-1919. He also became involved in politics.

Jesse Ray's Sawmills

Ray operated sawmills, at least one portable and one permanent, on both properties that were later owned by Dr. Archibald Staunton. On his homesteaded property on Black Mountain Creek were two main structures, the Cook's House, located where the bunkhouse now stands, and the mill. Logging was a major industry in the region during this time. Lumber was needed for railroads, homes, schools, and other buildings. Local residents often were hired as loggers, and these properties were in close proximity to Shaffer's Crossing. The Shaffers had arrived in the area in 1902, and some of their sons worked in this industry, including Charlie Shaffer, creator of the photo album.

Ray, the Politician

Prior to Jesse Ray's ownership of two properties and sawmills near Black Mountain, he had been active in politics. Ray was elected as a Jefferson County Commissioner from District #3 and served from 1891-1894. He was living on his ranch in Pleasant Park at the time. The Colorado Transcript, October 18, 1893, reported:

Our candidate for county commissioner, the present incumbent of this very important office, is Mr. Jesse E. Ray, who represents the mountain district as few residents of that section do, even if they were to give their whole time to their duties. Mr. Ray knows the needs of his constituents in every particular point, and he should be returned to the place for another term by all means, and we believe the voters of the county will feel as we do about it.

Ray was considered one of Jefferson County's foremost citizens. A member of the Democratic Party, he later ran for sheriff in 1906. He also attended the Democratic National Convention in Denver in 1908. He was described as one of the "stalwart Democratic war horses of the mountains."

Jesse Ray's Connection to Charlie Shaffer

Ray had several sawmills in Conifer, and at least two in Pine. Samuel Shaffer also had a sawmill at Shaffer's Crossing. Many photos in the old album were of various sawmills in Evergreen,
in addition to the ones on Black Mountain in Pine. Charlie (below) is pictured felling a tree with Pharo, a fellow sawyer. He likely worked in this business between 1902 and 1907, when Charlie and his younger brother, Bert, moved to a family ranch in Wyoming, following an unfortunate incident at Shaffer’s Crossing. Neighbor, Grant McQueary, accused the Shaffer brothers of stealing his lumber. McQueary was killed after threatening the young men. The Shaffer brothers were acquitted, but their parents felt that Charlie and Bert should leave the area.

By far, the most valuable photo in Charlie Shaffer’s album, as it relates to the history of Staunton State Park, is the one labeled, “Jess Ray’s Sawmill on Black Mountain.” This picture is the only known photo of this sawmill in operation and the earliest photo of the mill itself. Pictured are four men who are working at the sawmill near Black Mountain Creek. In the foreground is a “log carriage” system used to transport timber via rails. Most likely, one of the men pictured is Jesse E. Ray, who would have been over sixty years old at that time.

Two grandsons of Charlie Shaffer have been informed of the long-missing album. Ray Shaffer of Thermopolis, Wyoming, is anxious to see it, as is Ray’s cousin, Dean Shaffer of Centennial, CO. A few years ago, their grandfather, Charlie, was recognized as an outstanding historic citizen and inducted into the local Hall of Fame in Wyoming. The family was not able to find many photos of Charlie! Soon, they will have this album returned to the family.

(For more information about the Shaffer family, see Historically Jeffco, Issue 37, 2016, pages 27-34.)

Note: The Jefferson County Archives has attempted to locate photos for all Jeffco commissioners. Ray is one of twenty commissioners without a photo.

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Updates on Previous Articles

Golden Mill Redivivus
See Historically Jeffco, Issue 39, 2018 p. 34-37

On April 9, 2021, after a hiatus of two years, the historic Golden Mill revved back to life along the banks of Clear Creek. Profiled in the 2018 edition of Historically Jeffco, the Golden Mill was one of the oldest institutions in Colorado, and first began operations as the Denver Mill, which was built by David Barnes, on April 18, 1864. By February 28, 1865, Barnes moved the mill to Golden for its superior waterpower, and through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it became the Golden Mill, milling flour from the wheat raised by many Jefferson County farmers.

Transitioning to its original side business of animal feed when its elevator was dismantled in 1952, the Golden Mill continued supplying area farmers and ranchers until it closed its doors on April 30, 2018. At that time, a group of friends led by Susan Ganter, unwilling to see the Old Reliable leveled, put together an ownership group to transition it once more to feeding people, this time as a food hall. They transformed its barn and the plaza where the elevator once stood, the base of which may still lie beneath, into indoor, outdoor, and rooftop eating spaces with a glass connector where the mill races once ran. The Golden Mill had an elevator once again, this time for people. Not being experienced in the business, the group partnered with the team behind Denver’s Stanley Marketplace and Broadway Market as co-owners, including star chef Jesusio Silva from Monterrey, Mexico. Coming back online after the third longest hiatus in its history, the Golden Mill now features a self-pour beer wall and a collection of food counters. The food counters run by Chef Silva include Tacos al Chile serving Mexican food, Sushi Sora, the fried chicken of Nashville, and the Japanese and Korean food of Republik of Chiken. Independent operators feature Rolling Smoke BBQ and Happy Cones making New Zealand style ice cream. The historic Golden Mill building was built in 1923, and along with its equally venerable sign, were given a dual historic designation by the City of Golden on October 11, 2018. Today, the Golden Mill continues as a popular eatery and as the Pride of the West.

Schoolhouse Treasure Discovery

A unique treasure inside the landmark Astor House hotel has recently been confirmed to be authentic. The grand staircase of the hotel, originally built in 1867, is one of the oldest staircases in Jefferson County. The body of the staircase is the original and was enhanced in 1965 when it received the ornate bannister and railing from the historic South School of Golden, per the Transcript and Golden Globe when this landmark rose in 1873, it was designed by James B. Baker and constructed by Robert Milliken, who carved this woodwork. Five years later, Milliken became a Jefferson County Commissioner. When the South School was torn down, the bannister was given to the Astor House while it was still operating as a boarding house in the city. Today, this bannister is the oldest preserved piece of any high school building in Colorado, as the South School was the first home of Golden High School.
Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park is a forty-five-year-old museum specializing in immersive in-person experiences such as tours of historic buildings, luncheon lecture programs, hands-on activities for school groups, and large concerts and events. Over the past year, the COVID-19 Pandemic meant that Heritage Lakewood had to adjust its educational programs.

Creativity Amidst New Challenges

Restrictions on group sizes meant that programming had to pivot to new approaches. Heritage Lakewood staff discovered that new methods created new opportunities and interactions. Interestingly, we connected with previous visitors in different ways and became more accessible to new audiences. Here’s how we did it:

Social Media: We amped up our social media footprint. Daily postings to Facebook and Instagram became the norm. We shared posts from other organizations, made videos of how our historic windmills and washing machines worked, and shared newspaper articles from one hundred years ago in Lakewood. We were able to use the additional interest this garnered as a jumping off point for online and in-person programming later in the year, as well as a project where we collected photographs people took during the shutdown.

Takeaway #1: Social media provides access to a broad audience that may be unable to make an in-person visit.

Online programming: With a Zoom account and some carefully purchased items, such as a projector and a cellphone gimbal, we were able to offer programs such as history lectures about restaurants and travel, as well as kids’ crafts.

Takeaway #2: Online learning allows attendees to easily choose their preferred level of engagement. Participants have control over whether they want to be seen and heard or if they prefer to watch. Some of the most fun activities during our Zoom classes have been to use interactive “polls” focusing on content-related trivia and the “breakout room” option to divide larger groups into ones with just a few people to discuss a prearranged question, which leads to lots of interesting conversations!

Camp Programs & Outdoor Programming: Although our original 2020 camp season was canceled, children were itching to get out by the end of the summer. With a large outdoor space and a nearby barn with plenty of airflow and restrooms, we could have eight camp-
Historically Jeffco 2021

ers convene for some fun and activities in our Red Barn. Classes such as soapmaking moved outside. Apple pressing activities were offered by reservation. This was ideal for families who would normally have waited in long lines for their turn at an apple press.

Takeaway #3: Hands-on history camps and family activities are always popular. “Old-timey” but useful “urban homesteading” activities held outside provided individual attention and family fun.

Summer concerts: With health orders and social distancing requirements in place, concertgoers purchased tickets for a specific four-feet-by-four-feet square that was six feet from anyone else on all sides. The series sold out; participants had their family “bubble” with plenty of elbow room for all. This reserved-seating approach brought in a number of individuals who had not attended previous concerts.

Takeaway #4: The type of music certainly influences the age of attendees. Trying out a young local band attracted a younger demographic. A variety of seating options and a dedicated area for attendees with wheelchairs was appreciated.

Last year was busy as we rethought the ways things have always been done. We stretched in new ways and found new friends along the way.

Using Our Pandemic Pivot to Plan for the Future

As we wrap up preservation work on Heritage Lakewood’s Caretaker’s Cottage, the oldest building original to our site, we will revisit these takeaways and apply the lessons learned to programming in the cottage. The newly restored structure will be used for in-person and virtual classes, camps, rentals, and events—and it lends itself to social media experiences as well—perfect for Instagram!

The story of this special structure began circa 1910 with a kit ordered from a catalog. The east and west wing additions were added in the 1950s, and the extension off the back of the home was built circa 1960. It, along with several other farm-related buildings at Heritage Lakewood, was likely used by the ranching company that owned the land in the early 1900s. May Bonfils Stanton, the daughter of the co-founder of the Denver Post newspaper, purchased the land in the 1930s and built a mansion north of the current Heritage Lakewood site. She eventually expanded her holdings to 750 acres. The mansion was torn down in 1971, but the estate gates, Kountze Lake, and several original outbuildings, including the Caretaker’s Cottage, still remain. Results of the preservation process challenge the visitor to want to know more. Why is the color of the floor different on each side of the room? When was the original kit house expanded? Who lived here over the years? Why was the building saved?

The stories told in the Caretaker’s Cottage establish a shared community history highlighting those factors that directly affected how and why the community of Lakewood developed during the twentieth century. As a society that moved from an agrarian base to an industrial economy, new people and new ideas shaped change. We use Heritage Lakewood’s historic structures, exhibitions, oral histories, and programming to provide accurate information about a diverse community history, and to support an enhanced sense of place for metro area residents and visitors. The understanding and appreciation gained from the knowledge of the area’s history provides Lakewood with a foundation for a strong sense of community.

Heritage Lakewood preserves, conserves, and protects our buildings, farm equipment, ob-
jects, landscapes, and more so that visitors can share their understanding of the past with future generations, including celebrating places, as well as questioning and recognizing difficult historical moments. Unique and authentic places can connect people to their past and each other, help them explore diverse experiences that might be missing from mainstream storylines, and build stronger communities. Historic preservation can promote civic pride and community sustainability. Both preservation and progress can be integral to promoting prosperity, fostering equity, and encouraging sustainability by utilizing unique cultural heritage and historic structures to revitalize and drive investment. Because museum visitors choose their preferred mode of learning, there are opportunities to reach broad and diverse audiences. Heritage Lakewood offers large print and Spanish language exhibition booklets, films with closed captioning and scholarships for reduced-price attendance that are designed to appeal to various segments of our local population. In addition, Heritage Lakewood continues to uncover stories that represent our diverse population so that museum visitors are able to feel a personal connection that inspires them to want to find out more about their community’s past. The past year has only shown us that we can be creative and flexible in catering experiences to our guests, and that will only benefit Heritage Lakewood in the future.

Quick Fact

The average life expectancy of Jefferson County residents is just over eighty years old.
Remembering Jefferson County’s First Ultimate Sacrifice

Richard Gardner, Jefferson County Historical Commission

On June 25, 2020, the Colorado Soldiers Monument, which has stood in front of the Colorado State Capitol since 1909, was vandalized and its statue toppled during protests that took place throughout the summer of 2020. While most of Jefferson County’s own fallen veterans are honored by name on the Colorado Freedom Memorial in Aurora, the Colorado Soldiers Monument is the only one honoring those from Jefferson County who made the ultimate sacrifice in the Civil War. Today, their names are hidden from the public behind a protective plywood shield.

With the monument’s fate presently uncertain, this article aims to share the stories of the brave Jefferson County men it remembers, who gave their lives to defend their home and their country in a war that began 160 years ago.

1st Lt. James A. Dawson

Among the first to join the Colorado Volunteers upon the urgent call of Gov. William Gilpin, James A. Dawson, an officer of Company E of the 1st Colorado Infantry, fought to defend Colorado Territory from Confederate invasion at the Battles of Apache Cañon and Glorieta Pass in the mountains of New Mexico Territory. This was accomplished after a grueling forced march through rough terrain and freezing weather, marching four hundred miles in thirteen days. At Johnson’s Ranch during the Battle of Glorieta Pass, Lt. Dawson helped lead the charge where he and his men climbed down the cliffs to destroy the Confederate supply train, a critical attack that broke the Confederates’ ability to invade. Lt. Dawson subsequently fought at the Battle of Peralta. This ended the Confederate advance and forced their decisive retreat, liberating Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and occupied New Mexico Territory, and thwarting any potential invasion of Colorado Territory.

Lt. Dawson and the Coloradans, with other Union troops, succeeded despite being outmanned and outgunned by superior forces.

Lt. Dawson died on November 11, 1862, when he was inadvertently shot in the night by a sentinel, a private of his own company, at Cimarron Crossing in Kansas, near old Fort McKay. His resting place is presently unknown.
Commonly called Jim, Dawson came to Golden City during the Gold Rush of 1859. He worked as a professional builder, among the first in Colorado, and he constructed the Overland Hotel, which was then the largest building of Golden. A pioneer organizer of the Masons in Colorado, Dawson was particularly active in the summer and fall of 1859 in working to help secure a dispensation for the formation of a new lodge in Golden and became the founding Junior Warden of the Golden City Masonic Lodge on January 16, 1860, the first lodge in Colorado. At the time of his death, he was Grand Marshal of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Colorado. Dawson was also a Christian who helped collect offerings of gold dust at Golden’s first church services. As remembered by friend and fellow soldier George West, Dawson in character was “a bluff outspoken fellow,” who “had a good deal of western ‘get-up-and-get’ about him.”

A tale well remembered of his character comes from 1859 when Dawson punched out future Jefferson County Sheriff Walter Pollard for calling him a liar to his face. Pollard, himself a blunt outspoken fellow, then strenuously objected to this hard-boiled western treatment, in reply to which Dawson could only offer his genuine apologies; after, the two became best friends. On October 11, 1860, Dawson served as a second in the famed Bloodless Duel of George West, where drunken challenger Dock Turpin chose Dawson as his second, backup duelist. Dawson and opposing second George A. Jackson spent time purposely drawing out the negotiations of the duel to sober Turpin up and persuade him as to the foolishness of meeting his good friend West in deadly combat. The result of the negotiations was for each combatant to be armed with bowie knives, and at the word, to fight it out across the gulch! The now sobered up Turpin took it all as a joke and at once insisted on reconciling with West. Ironically, each duelist and each second would ultimately turn against each other when the war broke out, with Dawson and West joining the Union Army and Turpin and Jackson joining the Confederate Army. West and Jackson would ultimately meet in deadly combat almost face to face at the Battle of Westport.

Dawson trained at Camp Weld in Denver, was appointed 2nd Lieutenant by Governor William Gilpin on October 1, 1861, and promoted to 1st Lieutenant by Brig. Gen. E.R.S. Canby on the day of the Battle of Peralta on April 14, 1862. Lt. Dawson became acting commander of Company E on September 22, 1862.

Upon his death, soldiers at Ft. Lyon passed a public resolution stating:

*That, having been associated with the deceased in vicissitudes of a soldier’s life, we have learned to envy his patience and endurance upon the toilsome march and in the wintry bivouac, to respect the many good qualities as a soldier and a gentleman, which he has shown amid the comforts and the gaieties of the garrison, and to admire his unflinching bravery as displayed on many well fought fields. By his death, the service has lost a brave and accomplished officer, and his fellow officers an agreeable and honorable companion.*

1st Lt. James A. Dawson is honored on the south tablet of the Colorado Soldiers Monument, Column 1, Line 19.

**Pvt. Daniel Muffitt**

Daniel Muffitt, a Private with Company F of the 2nd Colorado Cavalry, was killed in action on October 28, 1864, at the 2nd Battle of Newtonia in Newton County, Missouri. Serving under the command of fellow Golden pioneer Capt. George West in what was originally Company H of the 2nd Colorado Infantry, Pvt.
Muffitt and his fellow soldiers saw their first combat action fighting alongside and in support of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry at the Battles of Cabin Creek and Honey Springs in Indian Territory, present day Oklahoma, in July 1863. These were the first battles where black and white troops fought side by side in combat. In these battles, he also fought both alongside and against American Indians who had joined both sides in the war. He fought alongside the Indian Home Guard made up of Unionist tribal members compelled to leave Indian Territory in a harrowing fight north known as the Trail of Blood on Ice, who were now fighting to return home. According to fellow Goldenite and Capt. Edward L. Berthoud, at Elk Creek at Honey Springs, “The battalion captured 70 prisoners, 150 stand of arms, and one rebel flag, besides aiding in the capture of 250 sacks of flour, 50 of sugar, 25 of salt, and 30,000 hams, beef etc., etc., and capturing two cannon one a rifled three pounder, and a six pounder, smooth bore.”

stream and eagerly quaff the cool beverage, to relieve their parched throats and palates, cool their heated blood and wash off the dust that had settled thickly upon them.

The first part of their last march was intensely warm, and the second part intensely cold. When they marched into Benton Barracks at St. Louis, the last of an overall 2,000 miles his company had marched, it was twenty-one degrees below zero, the most severe cold experienced there in many years.

Proceeding to Bates, Cass, and Jackson Counties in central Missouri, Pvt. Muffitt and the Coloradans fought almost constantly in various ways and methods to keep in check the Confederate guerilla forces. Muffitt’s wife Elizabeth, who had accompanied him to the front, courageously acted as a spy to successfully misinform the enemy and facilitate the safe passage of Lt. Hiram Bennett, escorting three to four ambulances of sick and wounded men from Pleasant Hill. Gen. Sterling Price commenced the Price Raid that aimed to claim St. Louis and counter General Sherman’s capture of Atlanta. The Confederate Army there was a force seven times larger than that the Coloradans encountered in New Mexico. Pvt. Muffitt fought at Camden Point where his company captured the Confederate battle flag, as well as in battles and engagements at Lexington; Independence, where the city fell and the Coloradans retook it the next day; Little Blue River; and Big Blue River, also known as Byram’s Ford.

Pvt. Muffitt came face to face in battle against fellow Goldenites, including Col. George A. Jackson, at the Battle of Westport, defending Kansas City from Confederate invasion, one of the largest Civil War battles west of the Mississippi. The hard-fought victory by Pvt. Muffitt
and his fellow troops broke the Confederate invasion and drove their forces south. He fought further against fellow Goldenites in the Battles of Marais des Cygnes, Mine Creek, and Little Osage River, as the Union forces pursued the Confederates out of Missouri. Col. Jackson remembered it well, later telling Capt. West, “I can tell you, George, you made us tired. We traveled and skirmished with your advance all night, part of the night through the prairie, and it on fire. I was in the rear throughout the night and have good reasons to remember those white-horse squadrons of your regiment.” Pvt. Muffitt was killed in action at Newtonia, most likely perishing in a daring charge upon his own white horse, where West’s “Howling F” company took heavy casualties, with nearly all the white horses killed with their riders alongside them. Pvt. Muffitt’s sacrifice and those of the others further wore down a weary and battered Confederate force, which had lost over two-thirds of its men, and finally compelled its retreat into Texas. Pvt. Muffitt’s resting place is presently unknown but is most likely in an unmarked mass grave in Missouri.

Commonly known as Dan, Muffitt was born in Mirfield, Yorkshire, England in May 1833, and christened on May 26th. He is a likely Scottish clan relation to David Moffat for whom the Moffat Tunnel is named. Muffitt was described as being five foot nine-and-a-half inches tall, with blue eyes, light hair, and light complexion. As of 1851 he was working as a waterman at Mirfield. He came to the gold rush region of America as early as 1860, working as a mason at the brickyard at California Gulch in today’s Leadville area. He came to Golden City in the early 1860s, likely meeting and marrying Elizabeth, who West described as “a Golden girl”, and both joined up with the Colorado Volunteers when the war broke out, he as a soldier and she as regimental support. Muffitt enlisted on November 6, 1862, at Central City, recruited by Capt. West, and was among the troops raised and trained at Camp Leavenworth in Golden City, capital of the union-allied Colorado Territory.

On November 11, 1905, in a ceremony attended by many Union and Confederate veterans of the Civil War, Capt. George West returned to their former enemies the battle flag captured by his and Pvt. Muffitt’s company at Camden Point forty-one years before. An occasion long talked about beforehand, it was met with raucous applause by the many aged veterans of both sides in a moving spirit of reconciliation. The battle flag is preserved today at History Colorado.

Pvt. Daniel Muffitt is honored on the east tablet of the Colorado Soldiers Monument, Column 2, Line 31.

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The Magic Mountain Community Archaeology Project: Connecting People, Place, and the Past

Michele L. Koons, Denver Museum of Nature & Science & Mark D. Mitchell, Paleocultural Research Group

The Magic Mountain archaeological site—located adjacent to the Apex Gulch Trailhead in Golden—has long been recognized as amongst the most important archaeological localities in northeastern Colorado. For decades following the 1966 publication of Cynthia Irwin-Williams and Henry Irwin’s landmark monograph, the site’s well-preserved cultural layers provided a crucial framework for the study of the ancient past in the South Platte basin.

However, significant questions remain about the age of the Magic Mountain’s earliest cultural deposits, as well as about the site’s extensive Early Ceramic period (1850-800 years before present [B.P.]) occupation and its place in the wider cultural landscape. To answer those and other questions, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (DMNS), Paleocultural Research Group (PCRG), and the Kansas Geological Survey’s Odyssey Archaeological Research Fund began a multi-year field investigation at the site in 2016. Researchers from the University of Denver and the University of Arkansas also participated in the project.

The Magic Mountain Community Archaeology Project’s (MMCAP) goals were twofold: 1) to conduct world-class research at one of the most important archaeological sites on Colorado’s Front Range, and 2) to make this research and experience accessible to the public. Magic Mountain has served as a crossroads of culture for millennia—from the nomadic hunter-gatherers who lived here thousands of years ago, to the gold-seekers of the 1860s, to those who bike and hike in the area today. MMCAP’s goal was to tap into that shared sense of place and explore the stories of the people who lived there long ago, while making these tales relevant and tangible to people today.

To accomplish the first goal, work began at the site in 2016 with non-destructive magnetometry and ground-penetrating radar surveys. Guided by the results, in 2017 and 2018 the research team opened sixty-one excavation squares and investigated fourteen cultural features, including earth ovens, basin hearths, and small rock-filled pits. Radiocarbon dates indicate that
the ages of those features span the Early Ceramic, from about 1960 to 1030 B.P. The contents of these pits, including the remains of plants and animals consumed by the site’s inhabitants, point to a broad diet that included plants such as prickly pear, sunflowers, and goosefoot; and animals such as bison, deer, prairie dogs, and rabbits. Analysis of the raw materials the inhabitants used to make stone tools indicate that they were mostly obtained from quarries located in the hogback zone that runs through eastern Jefferson County. This finding suggests that the Early Ceramic peoples who occupied Magic Mountain were locals who only rarely traveled outside the immediate region. Both the stone tool raw material data and the dietary data suggest that the local resource base was sufficiently abundant and sufficiently reliable to support year-round habitation of the Denver basin and adjacent foothills and plains.

The 2017 field investigation also revealed the presence of surprisingly deep cultural deposits in several parts of the site. To better understand the extent of those deposits, the team collected three-inch sediment cores from eight different locations. Several cores exceeded two meters in length and buried soils occurred near the bases of at least two. In 2018, two squares were excavated to bedrock, revealing a complex depositional history and exposing a buried soil dated to about 8,500 years ago, several millennia older than previous estimates for the site’s earliest occupation. It is possible that even earlier deposits exist on the site, but the deeply buried nature will make them difficult to locate. Overall, what we are learning from the ongoing analysis of the site and artifacts will greatly contribute to the narrative of Colorado history, and contribute to the way we understand what life was like years ago.

The second goal was to make the project accessible and relevant to the public. We accomplished this through public tours, youth programming, extensive volunteer opportunities for excavating and leading tours, paid teen internships through the DMNS’s Teen Science Scholar program that supports students from underserved communities, paid Native American teen internships, community group partnerships, targeted marketing, and an intertribal meeting day, among many other activities. Because of our varied approaches, we were able to reach over 3,000 people with diverse backgrounds and interests and connect with them in ways that were most meaningful to them, all while encouraging reflection on those who came before.

Through these efforts, our goals have been to continue to raise awareness of the rich history in our backyard, to empower a community of archaeological stewards who aim to protect and appreciate cultural heritage, and to listen to and incorporate the various voices into the new narratives we produce for the site. As a testament to our efforts, we received the Award for Excellence in Public Education from the Society for American Archaeology in 2019 and the 2020 Colorado State Archaeologist’s Award.
The Prehistoric Residents of the Jefferson Country Hogback Area

As I walk the trails of Jeffco’s Ken-Caryl Ranch area, my mind often turns to the lives of the ancient people who lived in this area continuously for over 9,000 years. The trained eye can still detect some of their camp sites among the beautiful red sandstone Fountain Formation outcroppings. The wildlife the ancients hunted for food is still quite abundant. The streams flowing with life sustaining water still flow. There are not many areas in Colorado, or in all the Americas, where one has as much research available into the prehistoric people who lived in an area before the beginning of written history.

Much of our educational processes today are dependent on modern language and the written word in some form. Prehistory is the time before written documents were available. While Spanish explorers first entered what is now Colorado in 1541 A.D., the earliest written historical record for the whole Denver Basin area is in 1799, of a chance meeting between French fur trappers and a party of Spanish Dragoons on the South Platte River. We rely on archaeology to study the time before written history. Archaeologists uncover and study the physical things people leave behind, often by digging in the ground. They then analyze the data and produce detailed written reports. There has been a great deal of knowledge gained and documented by archaeologists in Jeffco, and particularly, on the Ken-Caryl Ranch land.

Archaeological Evidence Illuminates the Lives of Ancient Coloradans

In the early 1900s, Ken-Caryl Ranch was a working cattle ranch. In fact, one of the earliest homesteads in Jeffco was the Bradford property. The Bradford House, farm, and orchard were built starting in 1860, located at the start of a toll road to mountain gold mining districts. The Bradford House has been historically preserved and is listed on the Colorado State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. Today, Ken-Caryl Ranch is a residential, commercial, office, and park area that spans part of both sides of the Dakota Hogback between Deer Creek and Dutch Creek.

Prior to development, the landowners had the Denver Chapter of the Colorado Archaeological Society (CAS) perform an archaeological survey of the land to be developed. This work uncovered evidence of prehistoric indigenous occupation of this area. As a result, from 1973 to 1998 CAS excavated, often with the cooperation of nearby universities, seven significant and many small archaeological dig sites. In addition, the construction of the C-470 highway in the 1980s led to the excavation of two more ancient indigenous sites by the Colorado Department of Transportation. The thousands of ancient indigenous artifacts uncovered have helped us understand a considerable amount of information about the people who lived in this area continuously for at least the past 9,000 years. Archaeological research is still being done.

Since development, the original Ken-Caryl Ranch land is divided into three main parcels: the Ken-Caryl Ranch residential and commercial planned unit development, the Lockheed Martin office complex, and the Jefferson County South Valley Open Space Park. Two of the northern Ken-Caryl Ranch Valley sites, Bradford House II & Bradford House III, and much
of the South Valley are registered in the Colorado and National Registers of Historic Places. The Jeffco Open Space South Valley Park contains much of the listed Ken-Caryl South Valley Archaeological District.

The Early Archaic era is the term archaeologists use to refer to the oldest occupation era found repeatedly in the Ken-Caryl Ranch dig sites. This is generally the period from the oldest artifacts found and carbon-fourteen dated at about between 9,000 years ago to 5,000 years ago. Four of the Ken-Caryl Ranch sites yielded Early Archaic artifacts.

Studies have shown that climate change is not a recent phenomenon. During the Early Archaic period, the eastern plains suffered strong winds and drought. The ancient Coloradans, and the game they depended on for food, sought refuge in higher elevations closer to reliable water. These people were hunters and were focused hunting big game including bison herds on the eastern plains and mule deer in the hogback and foothill area. For thousands of years, they hunted on foot using a spear and spear thrower, called an “atlatl,” as well as hand-thrust spears. They had no draft animals other than dogs to ride or assist them. Horses would not be available until the Spanish brought them to Colorado in the 1500s A.D.. The bow and arrow would not come until the last 2,000 years at the earliest. It is likely that they hunted in groups of a few hunters and used ambush-hunting techniques.

The archaeologists found characteristic Early Archaic spear point styles like these:

Many other types of stone and bone tools have been found during the digs including scrapers, drills, awls, grinding stones, hammer stones, hearths, etc.

One of the attractions of the Ken-Caryl Valley is the availability of south and southwest facing red rock formations. The ancient people built their winter sleeping areas to benefit from the winter solar heating and radiation properties of these formations. They used areas with natural cave-like rockshelters as well as nearly straight-walled formations.

The Middle Archaic era is the term archaeologists use to refer to the next time period of Jeffco occupation, between 5,000 to 3,000 years ago. The Late Archaic era follows and is defined as between 3,000-1,850 years ago. The artifacts found and climate data indicate that the human lifestyle was very similar throughout both time periods. Eight of the nine major Ken-Caryl Ranch dig sites yielded artifacts in these eras. The climate was wetter in summer and winters were stormy.

The people continued to hunt bison and mule deer, but now they also hunted smaller animals, particularly rabbit. In addition, there is now evidence that they gathered more wild plants and

Early Archaic spear points (5,000+ years old) found on Ken-Caryl Ranch.
Photo courtesy of Jack C. Warner.

Various types of prehistoric stone tools found on Ken-Caryl sites.
Photo courtesy of Jack C. Warner.
nuts and used stone grinding platforms, called metates, and handheld grinding stones, called monos. The archaeologists found characteristic Middle to Late Archaic spear point styles like these. Note how the shape, particularly the hafting notches and size, differ from the Early Archaic points.

The Ceramic or Woodland era is defined by archaeologists as 1,850 to 300 years ago. The most evidence of ancient occupation of the Ken-Caryl Ranch area is in this Ceramic or Woodland era. The climate during this period was fairly stable and generally cooler and moister than today, with occasional drought periods. As the era name implies, these early Coloradans learned to make and use pottery. Pottery is relatively heavy and breaks fairly easily. Usually, groups that use pottery are less likely to move their base camps often and can process plant food much better than their ancestors. The pottery found is generally of a distinctive unpainted, cord marked style shown here, and is always broken into shards:

Ceramic era arrow points are generally smaller, accommodating the recently developed bow and arrow to partially replace the spear and thrower, and the hunting of smaller game.

Ancient Peoples: Why Jefferson County?

This report is focused on the use of a unique type of study to learn of the people who lived in Jeffco before the existence of the written word. This field, archaeology, is based on the survey, location, and uncovering, often by digging, for items left by ancient people. Important archaeological sites have been excavated and reported on all along the Dakota Hogback, from the area near Golden in the north, the Magic Mountain site in particular, to Roxborough State Park just over the Jeffco border in Douglas County to the south. In addition, just east of Jeffco and south of Chatfield State Park, in Douglas County, is the Lamb Spring Archaeological Preserve that has yielded human activity dates in the range of 10,000 to 16,000 years ago, and the butchered bones of many now extinct mammals including Columbian Mammoth, camel, sloth, and ancient bison.

Summarizing the knowledge gained as a result of the archaeological findings from the extensive prehistoric sites excavated in Jeffco and nearby counties, it appears that ancient Coloradans wanted to live in this area for at least the last 9,000 years. Why? Our best archaeological analysis suggests:

- Reliable water was available here.
- Wildlife that could be hunted or fished for good food lived near.
- Wild plants that yielded seasonal berry and nut harvests were close.
- Plants that were a source of fiber for cordage and sewing hides grew nearby.
- Good tool stone sources were close.
- Wood for fuel and cooking was close.
- Sources of clay used in making pottery were close.
- The rock formations provided better protection from cold in the winter.
- Climate studies have shown that the hogback valley has a milder climate than the surrounding areas.
Much has changed in human culture over the past 9,000 years, but one thing has remained the same: people have found it pleasant to live in the Ken-Caryl Ranch area and in Jefferson County.

Sources


Quick Fact
Jefferson County gets an average of 255 days of sunshine annually.

Image from Adobe Stock.
Gathering of the Guilds: Honoring Age-Old Guild Trades and Traditions

The original Arts and Crafts Movement began in Europe after 1850. The onset of the Industrial Revolution during this time sparked widespread fear that new machinery would replace age-old trades and traditions forged by guilds that had formed between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries. It was not long before British reformists including the architect Augustus Pugin, writer John Ruskin, and designer William Morris, fueled a groundswell effort to ensure that hand-wrought workmanship would continue for the sake of its practitioners, and that those who appreciated such crafts could afford the end products. This wave of protest made landfall in America around 1880, spreading to the West Coast. The Movement enjoyed a particularly prolific period in architecture and art at the turn of the century through the onset of World War I. Around 1980, after a long hiatus during which a return to classicism and an introduction to modernism distracted the design world, the Craftsman, or “Mission” style, reemerged in full force to enjoy a revival that continues to this day, bolstered by Barbra Streisand’s record $363k purchase in 1988 of an original sideboard designed by Gustav Stickley, a trailblazer in the field.

Half a millennium after the original Arts and Crafts Movement, the clamor for hand-wrought vs. machine-made items continues, as evidenced by the many individuals, groups, periodicals, and seminars devoted to extolling the virtues of arts and crafts aestheticism, a unique style of self-expression inspired by nature’s organic forms, most commonly articulated in clay, fiber, glass, metal, paper, or wood. One particularly enthusiastic local entity emerged in 1997 as the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society (CACS) (www.coloarts-crafts.org), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization run by a passionate board of directors and a variety of volunteers intent on studying and supporting the aesthetics and tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement, particularly within our Centennial State. Recognizing the dearth of resources in the Rocky Mountain region, CACS set out to bring kindred spirits together with the mission of educating the public through lectures, special events, and field trips.

In 1998, having rounded up a convivial cadre of aficionados, CACS launched its first major program, an annual forum entitled “The Bungalow Workshops,” inspired by the appealing and affordable housing style that epitomizes the character of our earliest suburban neighborhoods throughout America. This inaugural event reigned the “bungalow fever” that began in the early 1900’s when prospective homeowners could view detailed elevations and floor plans first published in Craftsman magazine in 1901. Complete kits of building parts could be ordered from catalogs like Sears Roebuck to be transported and delivered to any town serviced by train!

Initially co-sponsored by the Davis & Shaw Furniture Company, a longtime Larimer Square landmark that closed in 2005, and also support-
ed by Stickley Audi & Company and Modern Bungalow, this popular symposium, show, and sale highlighted architects and interior designers offering renovation and restoration services, along with antiques dealers and modern-day artisans exhibiting and selling appropriate decor.

Making its debut at the splendid 1906 El Jebel Shrine in downtown Denver, the event was later renamed “Gathering of the Guilds,” harkening back to medieval times when skilled workers were respected—if not revered—for their time-honored travail. For many years it was hosted by the historic Boettcher Mansion atop Lookout Mountain in Golden. Built in 1917 as a secluded summer home on seasonal hunting grounds for Colorado entrepreneur Charles Boettcher, the former “Lorraine Lodge” was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Nestled in a 110+ acre forested preserve owned and maintained by Jefferson County, the estate’s Arts & Crafts and Tudor Revival characteristics have been painstakingly retained for its adapted re-use as a special events venue and meeting place. Over time, CACS’s longtime collaboration with this local landmark helped its ability to secure grant funding for ongoing renovation and restoration.

A few years ago, the popular show and sale moved to a more central location, the American Mountaineering Center in Golden, the city’s first high school from 1924-56. Although the COVID-19 pandemic precluded any in-person activity or public engagement in 2020-2021, the gathering is back on the calendar for 2022. The symposium will feature a diverse mix of independent artisans along with such organizations as the Colorado Calligraphers’ Guild, Colorado Watercolor Society, Colorado Woodworkers’ Guild, Guild of Book Workers, Handweavers’ Guild of Boulder, Rocky Mountain Marquetry Guild, Rocky Mountain Metalsmiths, Rocky Mountain Society of Botanical Artists and Rocky Mountain Spin Silk Painters. Many of the vendors will speak and/or offer live demonstrations of their specialty throughout the day.

Nearly twenty-five years since its beginning, the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society continues to adhere to its original goal of celebrating its abundant wellspring of local talent by supporting and sharing each maker’s unique methodology and skill set. Whether you are interested in simply browsing the goods or actively observing some time-honored “tricks of the trade,” the Gathering of the Guilds is a hands-on learning experience not to be missed. For more information, contact cshaw8623@gmail.com.

For more on the Colorado Arts & Crafts Society (CACS), check out Shaw’s previous article in Issue 38 (2017) and Issue 40 (2019).
Center Stage in Evergreen

Richard Scudder, Chair, JCHC Landmark and Preservation Committee

Just above the sparkling waters of Bear Creek in Evergreen sits Center Stage. As a part of the Historic Evergreen Conference Center, Center Stage has had this view of Bear Creek Canyon since 1924. Center Stage is part of a registered National Historic District located within a three-block area at the edge of town. The Evergreen Conference Complex, part of this district, includes twenty-three structures. The entire district is surrounded by meadows, rocks, and heavily wooded mountains, much as it was when it served as a music camp, around 1900.

The historic boundaries that comprise the music camp itself, the old mission, and the properties of the Sisters of St. Mary, all made up the Music Conference Complex. The Meeting House, now known as Center Stage, was built in 1924 by local carpenter and stone mason John Spence. Its construction and architectural features reflect the construction and appearance of Evergreen more than a century ago.

The Meeting House was a part of the summer camps built by the Episcopal Church; it featured music and church services. The land was donated by Mary Neosho Williams and her son-in-law, Canon Winfred Douglas. Canon Douglas became an internationally-known expert on the plain-song mass, and the emphasis on music became a key feature of the Conference Center. The summer camps became very popular in the early twentieth century and included a six-week summer school on liturgical music.

Generations have acted and sung together on Center Stage. Tom Scripps and his family are a great example of that. He joined the Evergreen Chorale when it began in 1971 and met his wife in a musical production at Center Stage.

He also remembers when he, his wife, and their three children all sang together at Center Stage in a musical. “It sure saved on baby-sitting expenses; but, more importantly, it was a wonderful family experience,” Scripps stated.

Ovation West Performing Arts, which grew out of Evergreen Chorale, owns Center Stage. As the Chorale added other activities, the name was changed to reflect a new larger mission.

Amy Bergevin talked about how Ovation West and Center Stage are sewn into the community fabric. Over the decades, Center Stage has collected the costumes created by the members of the community for the many plays and musicals presented. Those costumes crowd the storage area of the old building, but they are...
a treasure for not just Center Stage, but the Denver theater community as well. They are loaned out for free to other organizations frantically searching for period costumes for their school or community theater productions. Whether it is exactly the right wedding dress, a top hat, a flapper costume, or more recently, an antique wheelchair exactly like FDR used, Center Stage and Ovation West have been there to help the community.

Christine Emery, Managing Director of Ovation West, talked about how Ovation West is committed to maintaining Center Stage for the benefit of the community. In addition to Ovation West, the Evergreen Players, Evergreen Children’s Chorale, Mountain Youth Musicals, and many guest organizations call Center Stage home. The lobby, including the Rotary Club Art Gallery, is a satellite gallery for the artists of the Center for the Arts Evergreen. A parent-child music education class and Spanish language class for adults meet weekly in the lobby. Since 1990, Ovation West has invested over $1.3 million in the property, transforming a rustic summer pavilion into a comfortable theater. In 2018, a new sound system was installed that benefits all users and patrons. In the summer of 2019, the lobby was renovated with funds raised through a community effort. This year, Ovation West will celebrate its fiftieth year of operation with a series of performances of Fiddler on the Roof at Center Stage.

Over the years, the Meeting House, now Center Stage, has become a beloved fixture in Evergreen. Each year children practice performing in summer camp musicals and then move on to become actors and singers, entertaining their community from the same stage. Three generations of the Dunn Family, for example, continue to participate in concerts and musicals, with granddaughter Katrina Glaser having a lead role in this year’s production of Fiddler on the Roof. Her grandmother, JoAnn Dunn, a guest author of the Medlen School article in this publication, continues to sing in the Chorale, as does her daughter, Laurie Atkinson.

The Meeting House has continued to focus on music and community as envisioned by its early founders. The Jefferson County Historical Commission is proud to award Center Stage Historic Landmark Status.

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100th Anniversary of the Satanic Mine Disaster
Richard J. Gardner, Jefferson County Historical Commission

On Tuesday, December 13, 1921, six men met their fate in what may be the most appropriately-named horrific event in Jefferson County history. A fire in the Satanic Coal Mine, which had gone unchecked for days, took the lives of Superintendent Garry E. Dunn and five miners, all from Morrison, when deadly gas quickly overcame them. One victim met death when he went into the mine to try to rescue his son. It was the last of four lethal mine disasters in Jefferson County history.

The Satanic, a coal mine in the Rooney Valley, first opened in 1872 on the Green Mountain side at what today is immediately southeast of Alameda at McIntyre. In 1918, Colorado Collieries began opening the mine on a large scale; the Colorado & Southern Railroad was built out to reach the mine. By 1920, it consisted of a two-hundred-foot-deep main shaft with levels at the one-hundred and two-hundred-foot levels, with exits and escapeways to the surface, all tapping the sixteen-foot coal seam. It had northern and southern workings with an abandoned shaft used as an air shaft. On the morning of December 3rd, workers saw smoke coming up through openings to the upper level. Men were put to work at once to seal it off. A week later, smoke was discovered coming from the abandoned southern shaft and the fire was discovered in Room 14, south entry, lower level. Workers completed a bulkhead sealing this off. Supt. Dunn then sent two miners over to the south shaft to cover it, leaving only a small hole.

On the morning of December 13th, Supt. Dunn entered the mine at an opening known as the forty-five-degree slope to the upper level and moved to a concrete bulkhead that was built to isolate the entire southern workings from the north. At that time, all was well in the mine. Immediately after lunch, Dunn, accompanied by several miners, went into build the stopping. While they were working, a change in wind came down into the mine and caused the deadly carbon monoxide gas generated by the fire to quickly overcome the workmen.

About two hours after the men had departed to begin work, a distress call came from inside the mine. An alarm was sounded, and the Denver police were immediately notified. More miners ran into the mine and carried one man to the surface but were deeply affected by the gas. In the end, six men were lost in the disaster and nineteen workers escaped.

The coroner’s jury found that had the Colorado Collieries Company kept a proper mechanical ventilation system, as required by state law, the air current would not have reversed, and the miners would not have been asphyxiated. They found that the company had never maintained fans to force ventilation through the mine workings. Instead an incline shaft to provide air existed, but any change in atmospheric conditions...
was likely to reverse air currents, such as suctioning air out of the mine and suctioning in deadly gas from elsewhere in the mine. It was theorized that a huge cave-in of the old workings of the mine where the fire was caused the deadly gas to reach the area where the workers were.

Prior inspections of the Satanic Mine had found the mine to have poor air quality; the company was notified to install fans in accordance with Colorado law. Reports stated,

*The mine depends entirely upon nature for ventilation, that is the atmospheric pressure has to be greater at one opening than it is at the other to create a volume of air. This pressure is subject to reversal by a change in outside temperature and very liable to happen especially during the middle of the day in warm weather. A reversal may also occur through a change in the direction of the wind on the outside.*

It was noted that “the company being in financial straits to the extent that the employees took over the operation on a basis of eighty cents on the dollar, in an effort to get their back pay and have work, the fan was not installed.”

However, it was also believed that the fan would not have prevented the disaster because the walls already sealing the south workings made it impossible to ventilate the southern portion of the mine through the stricken entry. The conclusion was that the attempt to seal the bulkhead during the day under the weather conditions existing at the time was a mistake. Ultimately, the failure to notify the State Inspection Department of the fire at the time it was discovered, as required by law, cost lives. Failing to do this, however, was common practice as coal mine managers had frequent fires. Carbon monoxide poisoning was identified as the cause of death.

The Satanic mine was reopened by the end of the month and continued production. Alex Rooney, grandson of the pioneers who founded the Rooney Ranch, was injured at the mine in 1922. In 1930, Blue Bird Mines Inc. leased the mine, and it was rebranded the Bluebird, employing twelve men with improved equipment financed by eastern capital. It continued in operation until it was shut down due to the Great Depression in 1932. The mine met a spectacular demise on February 3, 1933, when gas built up from a fire raging below caused a powerful explosion, hurling the massive sixty-foot-high tipple twenty feet in the air and obliterating its concrete shaft, caving it in forty feet around. At sixty years, the mine was the longest operating single coal mine in Jefferson County history, producing a total of 64,911 tons in its production lifetime. Today, the site of the Satanic Coal Mine is owned by the City of Lakewood, and one can find evidence of it from the broad subsidence trenches and coal tailings piles on the surface.

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The Norm and Ethel Meyer Award is given each year by the Jefferson County Historical Commission to an individual or organization fostering and supporting historic preservation in Jefferson County. This year’s themes for the magazine, chosen by the Commission, are education and diversity. Thus, this award is being given to an organization that educates about cultural diversity as well as about the history of the Southwest. Tesoro Cultural Center is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization supported by grants from SCFD, other area foundations, donations, fundraising events, etc.

The Tesoro Foundation, now doing business as the Tesoro Cultural Center™, was founded in 1999 by the late historian, Samuel Paul Arnold; current Executive Director, Holly Arnold Kinney; and the late Dr. Mary Fox Arnold, patroness of the arts and educational organizations. The primary mission of the Center is to educate the public about nineteenth-century Southwestern history, with a focus on the many cultures that make up the Southwest’s rich cultural art and history.

Tesoro Cultural Center is the only Jefferson County educational organization whose mission is specifically to emphasize diversity and varied cultural legacies. Their activities include:

- Lecture Series with nationally known academic experts and regional history authors, presenting historical programs at area recreation centers, History Colorado, and The Fort. Past presenters include Dr. Tom Noel, Dr. Elliott West, Dr. Steven Lee, Dr. Paul Hutton, Dr. Jay Gitlin, tribal elders of the Southern Cheyenne, and many others.

- Annual events including the Indian Market and Spanish Market, featuring juried shows of artists who concentrate on preserving their cultural heritage. These events also include traditional music, dance, and living history programs and demonstrations. Living history participants teach visitors how to make fire with flint and steel, shoot flintlock rifles, brain tan leather hides, throw tomahawks, weave and spin, and other period crafts.

- Farolito Lighting and Las Posadas events at Holiday time, enshrining the Latinx traditions of the American Southwest.

- Interactive tours of The Fort and education programs for K-12 students, enriching their knowledge of the diverse cultures in Colorado during the fur trade era.

- Classroom curriculum and activities guide for teachers, *The Kiowa People: In Their Own Words*, developed in cooperation with Kiowa elders.

- Three educational videos, *The Kiowa People*, *The Utes: An Historical Overview*, and *Early Spanish Settlers of Colorado and Northern New Mexico*.

- Adult and senior tours and interactive programs at The Fort.

Tesoro Cultural Center is in close contact with important artists and tribal leaders of the Southern Cheyenne and Arapahoe, and they participate in events at the Fort.

The Jefferson County Historical Commission is proud to recognize the Tesoro Cultural Center for their work in educating the community and visitors about the rich and diverse history of the American Southwest.
Mary Josepha Williams was born at Fortress Monroe, Virginia in 1860, the daughter of Captain, later General, Thomas Williams and Mary Neosho Bailey Williams. General Williams was killed during the Civil War at the Battle of Baton Rouge in 1862.

Josepha’s mother Mary inherited a great deal of real estate in Detroit, which later became the basis for the family’s wealth as the auto industry developed there.

In the early 1880s Mary and Josepha moved from Newburgh, NY to Colorado to be near Mary’s brother Dr. Tom Williams, who had a medical practice in the Evergreen area. They were devout Episcopalians and helped found the first African American Episcopal church in Denver.

Josepha graduated from Gross Medical College in 1889, becoming one of the first women to earn a medical degree in Colorado. She and fellow Gross graduate, Dr. Madeline Marquette, opened the Marquette-Williams Sanitarium on Pearl Street in Denver in 1891. This was one of the first nurses’ training schools in Colorado, if not the first. Josepha became known as “Dr. Jo.”

In 1893 Mary and Josepha purchased land in Evergreen and created their mountain retreat, “Camp Neosho.” It eventually encompassed eight to ten buildings plus a tent colony, emulating the “Great Camps” of the Adirondacks. The following year Josepha married a young Episcopalian clergyman from New York, Charles Winfred Douglas. Together they helped found the Episcopal congregation in Evergreen known as the Mission, later Church, of the Transfiguration.

Later they were also instrumental in organizing and funding the Evergreen Conference, a summer gathering that included musical education, religious retreats, and concerts. A whole complex of structures was eventually built to house the Conference and it became a huge part of summer activities in the Evergreen area. Internationally known musicians often taught classes during the Conference and hundreds of people from around the country attended.

The Douglasses also funded the building of Evergreen’s first library building and the first librarian was Father Douglas’ half-sister, Julia Douglas.

Eric Douglas, son of Father Douglas and “Dr. Jo,” became an internationally honored expert on Native American Pacific Islander art. He was Curator of Native Arts at the Denver Arts Museum for many years, creating the Museum’s magnificent collection of indigenous artworks and crafts.

“Dr. Jo” died in 1938. Her mountain home, “Camp Neosho,” is now part of Jefferson County Open Space, known as “Hiwan Heritage Park and Museum” and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The complex built for the Evergreen Conference and the Church of the Transfiguration complex, are also on the National Register as the Evergreen Historic District.

“Dr. Jo” and the Douglas family created some of the Evergreen area’s most important religious and educational institutions. The Evergreen Conference fostered musical and religious education for more than a century. She was also a pioneering figure in practicing medicine and bringing women into the medical profession as nurses. Not the least of “Dr. Jo’s” accomplishments: sponsoring Evergreen’s premier builder, John “Jock” Spence, in building unique log structures at “Camp Neosho,” at the Evergreen Conference site, and for the Mission of the Transfiguration. “Dr. Jo” truly deserves inclusion in the Jefferson County Hall of Fame.
Lorenzo Trujillo served as Executive Director of Humanities overseeing both the Foreign Language and English as a Second Language (ESL) and other programs in Jeffco’s Public Schools from 1982 to 1990, after which he was formally recognized for his “distinguished service and significant contribution to quality education.” His contributions include many published works, including books, manuals, and monographs in both English and Spanish; longstanding participation in various professional organizations; and ongoing support of a range of local programs and events, most notably the Jeffco Language Camp.

Born in Denver and raised in a performing arts family, Trujillo is a talented violinist, guitarist, and vocalist affiliated with the Southwest Musicians and Dancers, sharing their rich Hispanic heritage through song and dance around the state. A member of the Tesoro Board of Directors at The Fort in Morrison since 2007, he is regarded as “one of Colorado’s prime culture bearers and artistic assets,” and was awarded the Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts (1996) for his spirited efforts in keeping ethnic dance alive and accessible. As he has noted: “Folk dance is one of the purest forms of cultural preservation. Within every folk dance is contained the history, psychology, and culture of a race of people.”

Lorenzo received his B.A and M.A from the University of Colorado, then attended the University of San Francisco, where he completed his Ed.D. in Education. After directing the Humanities Program in the Jeffco Schools, he returned to the University of Colorado to receive his Juris Doctor degree in Law. In 2007, Trujillo received the Latino Lawyer of the Year award from the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Trujillo has also been involved with many charitable or public service organizations, representing the Denver Mayor’s Commission on the Arts, the Colorado Chicano Arts and Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lakewood Arts Council, and many other non-profits, including Tesoro. A longtime attorney, he has served as Assistant Dean and Professor of Law at the University of Colorado Law School. His policy work in education led him to a task force of the U.S. Senate where he addressed Education of Latino Youth, including early childhood education, K-12, access to higher education, and the Dream Act. He has addressed issues of language equity for non-English speaking students, resulting in two favorable decisions by the Colorado Supreme Court. His focus on truancy, suspension, and expulsion procedures in the public schools resulted in statewide adoption of intervention policies and statutory provisions to keep K-12 youth in schools across the state.

Lorenzo and his family lived on Green Mountain in Lakewood for over 30 years. Two of his three children graduated from Green Mountain High School. The Jefferson County Historical Commission is proud to honor Lorenzo Trujillo as this year’s living recipient of our prestigious Hall of Fame Award for his many accomplishments as an author of books, manuals, monographs, and other educational works in English and Spanish, his outstanding service as a Jeffco administrator, and his significant role in the cultural preservation of the rich Hispanic heritage through song and dance. It is highly significant that he is receiving this award at The Fort, where he has shared his talents for many years.
Kayla Gabehart, Guest Author
*Discovering Jesse E. Ray: Jeffco Commissioner, Homesteader, and Sawyer*

Kayla Gabehart is a sixth-generation Colorado Native who grew up on the Eastern Plains of Colorado. She graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Colorado Denver with bachelor’s degrees in history and psychology. She also holds a master’s degree in environmental and economic history and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in public affairs at CU Denver.

Kayla is the associate director of National History Day in Colorado, a social studies and literacy program for middle and high school students based at CU Denver College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and of Colorado Student Leaders Institute, a state-legislated, residential summer program for Colorado’s best and brightest high school students.

JoAnn Dunn, Guest Author
*Medlen School—A One Room Schoolhouse*

Jo Ann has been a resident of Evergreen with her husband, Pem, for thirty-seven years. She has been a volunteer tour guide and teacher in the fourth grade Colorado history program at the Hiwan Museum for many years. She was president of the Jefferson County Historical Society, now Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society, when they acquired the Medlen School. She was the project manager for the restoration of the school and has been teaching an historic program for children since 1998. Jo Ann also sings with the Evergreen Chorale and was a volunteer ski instructor for twenty-one years with the National Sports Center for the Disabled.

Phyllis Reynolds Hebb, Guest Author
*Montessori Comes to Jeffco*

Phyllis Reynolds Hebb is a retired school administrator and business owner. She resides in Wheat Ridge.
Elaine Homan, Guest Author
Sons of Norway, Trollheim Lodge 6-110

Elaine Homan joined the Sons of Norway Trollheim Lodge 6-110 in March of 1994, shortly after the lodge opened doors at its new home. She served as its representative to the Colorado Folk Arts Council the same year and became President of that organization from 1995 and served until 1999. From 2002 to 2006, she was editor of the *Trollheim News*; she took over this role again in 2013. She was elected as President in 2017 and is serving her fifth year in that position.

Minela Ibisevic-Selimovic, Guest Author
Minela’s Story: From Bosnia to Jeffco

Born in Bosnia in 1989, Minela and her family were resettled as refugees in Lakewood, CO in 2002. She attended Lakewood High School, graduating in 2007. Minela shared the story about her family’s escape from war-torn Bosnia in an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at Lakewood High School; Bonnie Scudder was her teacher. After high school, she attended Red Rocks Community College, obtaining an associate’s degree. She works in the financial department of a local hospital.

Dr. Michele Koons, Guest Author
The Magic Mountain Community Archaeology Project: Connecting People, Place, and the Past

Dr. Michele Koons studies ancient complex societies and is especially interested in ancient political dynamics, social networks, and how people of the past interacted with their environment. In her research, Michele uses different geophysical methods and traditional archaeological techniques, such as excavation and pedestrian survey. She also specializes in ceramic analysis and radiocarbon dating. Michele has a passion for archaeology that involves local communities and has conducted research throughout the United States, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, and China.

Jack C. Warner, Guest Author
The Prehistoric Residents of the Jefferson Country Hogback Area

Jack C. Warner is experienced in prehistoric archaeological fieldwork, including survey, digs, lab artifact curation, analysis, talks, and publication involving prehistoric human occupation in the areas of the Colorado Front Range and Southwestern Colorado. Contact: Jackeagle@aol.com
Guest Authors, Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park: Pandemic Pivot

Betsy Bowers

Betsy Bowers has overseen Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park since 2017. As the administrator of this twentieth-century history park, museum, and festival experience that celebrates our community, she strives to provide opportunities that positively connect residents with the past and one another. Prior to joining the city of Lakewood, she created educational experiences for a variety of museum audiences in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area.

Katy Lewis

Katy Lewis has worked as the Museum Curator at Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park for the past eight years. Her favorite exhibitions have included snowboards, fashion, and local malls and restaurants. She holds a master’s degree in Anthropology and Museum Studies from the University of Denver. Her previous positions have included exhibits, collections, and educational endeavors at various institutions in the Denver metro area, Leadville, Frisco, and Grand Junction. Katy is currently interested in ways to make the museum collection more accessible to the public online and in-person.

Steve Luebke

Steve Luebke is the Museum Programs Specialist at Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park, where he has worked for nearly two years. He has worked in the museum education field for over a decade. He holds an MA in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Colorado Denver with an emphasis on working with populations from underrepresented communities. He is originally from Colorado and enjoys hiking, biking, snowboarding, and sampling delicious green chile at every available opportunity. He lives in Lakewood with his wife and nineteen-year-old cat.

About the Cover Photos

The front cover photo shows students at Bear Creek Consolidated School, a Kindergarten through 12th grade school, circa 1930.

Photo courtesy of Heritage Lakewood Belmar Park.

The photo on the back cover features the historic Ute Council Tree. From Sally L. White’s article in the 2013 edition of Historically Jeffco:

This large ponderosa pine tree has long been remembered as a place where original settler Alex Rooney met with Colorow and other Utes and also reportedly negotiated peace between the Utes and neighboring Arapahoes. Colorow called it his “Inspiration Tree.” ... This ponderosa pine is estimated to be more than 400 years old, an exceptional age for its species.

Photo courtesy of Renae Hansen
The Jefferson County Historical Commission (the JCHC) connects people to Jefferson County’s past in three ways:

1. **Promote and foster historic preservation in Jeffco**
   
   Assist property owners with identifying, designating and preserving historical sites by providing resources and help with compliance and research; and assist County governmental entities with developing procedures or guidance for identifying, designating and preserving official historical sites in Jefferson County.

   **Programs:**
   - **Landmarks Program:** Encourages Jeffco residents to nominate significant historical sites, structures, or districts.
   - **Norm and Ethel Meyer Award for Historic Preservation:** Honors those who have preserved valuable historic properties in Jeffco.

2. **Educate others about the people, places and events that have shaped Jeffco**

   Advance knowledge and inspire curiosity in people of all ages about Jeffco’s diverse and distinctive past; and liaise with local historical societies to share information and resources.

   **Programs:**
   - **Historic Preservation Symposium:** Forum for learning and sharing knowledge about Jeffco history.
   - **Historically Jeffco Magazine:** Annual publication that preserves and informs about Jeffco’s rich and captivating history [https://www.jeffco.us/3449/Historical-Publications](https://www.jeffco.us/3449/Historical-Publications).
   - **Special Projects:** Most recent project is creating the Judges’ Wall in the Jeffco Courts & Administration Building, honoring judges in Colorado Judicial District One since 1858.

3. **Honor those who value and steward Jeffco’s rich heritage**

   Recognize and celebrate the people who support and preserve Jeffco’s invaluable history.

   **Programs:**
   - **Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony:** Honors selected individuals and groups for their unique roles in preserving Jeffco history.
   - **Emeritus Program:** Recognizes selected retired JCHC members for their JCHC activities, offices held, and general support of JCHC historical and educational programs.

**How the JCHC is supported**

- The Board of County Commissioners appoints volunteers to sit on the Historical Commission; volunteers reside in all three Jeffco districts.
- The BCC also allots the JCHC an annual budget to help it carry out its work.

**Friends of the Jefferson County Historical Commission**

Friends of the Jefferson County Historical Commission is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to funding preservation of Jeffco’s heritage. Contributions may be made at: [https://give.burtonplatform.com/jhc/?p=775d240c75c8b51798c0ea213168fe4e](https://give.burtonplatform.com/jhc/?p=775d240c75c8b51798c0ea213168fe4e). Donations to the Friends of the JCHC are tax deductible. Contact jchcchair@jeffco.us for more information.

**Contact Us**

*JCHC is supported by the Jefferson County Planning & Zoning Division and the Archives Office.*

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**Ronda Frazier, Archivist:** archivist@jeffco.us; [www.jeffco.us/county-archives](http://www.jeffco.us/county-archives)

**Website:** [www.jeffco.us/historical-commission](http://www.jeffco.us/historical-commission)

**Facebook:** Jefferson County CO Historical Commission

**YouTube:** Jefferson County Historical Commission or [youtube.com/channel/UC0t7utpwouwy3OKOsFXBRrA](https://youtube.com/channel/UC0t7utpwouwy3OKOsFXBRrA)

**Twitter:** @JeffcoHistory
2021 Jefferson County Historical Commission Members

Biographies are in pictured order, from left to right

Kayla Gabehart, Editor, Historically Jeffco 2021

Scott Crotzer (not pictured), 2020—Buildings and Historic Sites Specialist, Jefferson County Open Space. Bachelor of Fine Arts in Historic Preservation, Savannah College of Art and Design.


Richard Scudder, 2017—JCHC Vice-Chair; Chair, Landmark/Preservation Committee. Former Professor and Associate Dean in the Daniels College of Business at DU. Ph.D., Educational Technology from University of Colorado. Lives near Shaffer’s Crossing in Pine and Lakewood.


Bonnie Scudder, 2015—JCHC Secretary; Chair of Special Projects; Co-Chair of Publications. Former teacher, administrator. Ph.D. Staunton State Park volunteer historian. Author. Formely of Pine; resides in Lakewood.


Kelly Cvanciger, 2020—Educator at Bear Creek High School, National History Day Colorado Board Member, City of Lakewood Historic Preservation Commissioner, Colorado Council on Social Studies Member, Jeffco Schools ASD Strategic Committee Member. Lives in Lakewood.


Emeritus Members

Deborah Andrews, 2000-2018
Robert Briggs, 2009-2011
Erlene Hulsey-Lutz, 1986-2010*
Nina Kite, 2004-2015*
Rose Lewis, 2009-2013
Mary Lindsey-Hepp, 2010-2016
Norman Meyer, 1986-2010*
Stan Moore, 2004-2008

Commission Staff

Ronda Frazier, Archivist
Renae Hansen, Design and Layout
Brittany Gada, Planning and Zoning
Felicity Selvoski, Planning and Zoning

Dave Nelson, 2008-2012*
Kathryn Ordway, 2006-2011
Rita Peterson, 1981-2020
Jack Raven, 1997-2011*
Milly Roeder, 1995-2013
Burdeett “Bud” Weare, 2003-2012

* Deceased

Jefferson County Commissioners

Tracy Kraft-Tharp, District 1 (right)
Andy Kerr, District 2 (left)
Lesley Dahlkemper, District 3 (center)
... I was completely taken by this story when I heard it. Little did I know, in just a few short months, the entire world would grind to a halt in the face of its own plague—the COVID-19 Pandemic. As I write this, more than a year later, we are only now beginning to emerge from quarantines, work-from-home orders, and mask mandates as revolutionary vaccines race against variants and the continued spread of the most virulent pandemic since the Spanish Flu of 1918.

In the first days of the summer of 2020, as we yearned for the human and physical connection that COVID-19 and its consequences had deprived us of, another, perhaps more insidious disease, one that has spread for centuries, reared its ugly head—racism. Desperate for physical connection, we were forced to reckon with how deeply divided we really are.

The Dancing Plague of 1518 was not the first of its kind, but rather one of the most extreme in a series of such events that took place along the Rhine River between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. The centuries-long suppression of social, economic, and political issues that plagued the Rhine River Valley eventually exploded into these very public displays of dance that demanded to be seen and could not be ignored.

The past year and a half is not so different. Decades of ignoring the warning of public health experts that the next catastrophic global disease was just around the corner proved to be true. Denial of continued racial injustice and inequity which led to a summer of social justice protests ensured that we could not, that we should not, look away. Our survival as an American people demanded that we face our pandemics, both the viral and the social.

Frau Traffea's name is now part of history; a housewife of the Middle Ages seared into the annals of history because of her contagious dance that sparked a plague. Our own plagues have similarly ensured other names will not be forgotten: Anthony Fauci. George Floyd.

I am so proud to edit this year's issue of Historically Jeffco, which aims to unearth the untold stories in our small corner of the world, those lost to time, oppression, and other barriers. This issue is dedicated to connection, inclusion, communication, and bridging the gaps. And, to, avoiding plagues in all their forms.

Kayla Gabehart, Editor