



Summer 2008

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CHSM

Conifer Historical Society and Museum

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Grace Helker, Carolyn Dieter, and Suzi Morris pose next to the display of gift cards and books that were sold at the Conifer Neighbors and Newcomers fest in early November. The two photos below show part of CHSM's display at the Tales and Trails event.



photos by Suzi Morris

* DID YOU KNOW *

High Grade Road used to be known as Upper Falls Road.

The mission of the Conifer Historical Society and Museum is to share the region's legacy by collecting, preserving and exhibiting historical and cultural materials and providing public access to services, collections, exhibits and a research library.

This issue of CHSM can be found at:
www.coniferhistorymuseum.org

CHSM is Everywhere

by Elaine Hood

The Conifer Historical Society and Museum (CHSM) is everywhere these days.

On September 8 society members had a booth at the Conifer Tales and Trails event at the high school. The large display included the stained glass window from the old Hi-Lander restaurant, an antique spinning wheel and tools, and a desk from the Pleasant Park School, to list just a few items. In addition, the DVD of area "old timer" residents describing what it was like to live in Conifer 50, 60, 70 years ago was playing to lure visitors to stop by the booth. The DVD is available for sale and would make a great gift for any resident interested in local history.

A CHSM booth was also present with soci-

ety members selling notecards and books at the November 3 Conifer Newcomers and Neighbors festival.

While displaying "old stuff" is fun and interesting, the point of CHSM's efforts to "be seen" is to raise awareness in local residents of the rich history we have around us. History may be found with your elderly neighbor who was born and raised here or it may be your middle-aged neighbor who moved here in the 1980s. Conifer is growing and changing so rapidly that today's events are tomorrow's history. We are already telling new neighbors about where "the old Safeway used to be."

If you think an antique spinning wheel, a stained glass window from a popular restaurant of a bygone era, or stories of how things used to be are worth preserving, check out CHSM. Preserving history is our mission.

Suzi Says

Letter to the community

by Suzi Morris, CHSM President

Dear Friends,

The Conifer area is changing rapidly! Historic structures, both homes and businesses, are disappearing. The stories of our pioneer families are fading. **Before they are lost forever**, oral histories of pioneer descendants and long-time residents must be **recorded**. **Supporters and members of the** Conifer Historical Society and Museum (CHSM) are **doing just that, and by doing so, are helping to** preserve the stories and artifacts of Conifer and the 285 Corridor. Collecting, preserving, and sharing family histories is a massive, nation-wide effort that brings generations together.

What brought early pioneers to Conifer? Neighbors were few and far between. Winters were difficult without snow plows, propane deliveries, and groceries stores. What can we learn from the strength and resiliency of our early residents? What issues did our first businesses face?

One of our earliest retail businesses was the Fields' Trading Post. The store was open every day until 8:00PM. This "home of the four-legged chicken" was a grocery store, convenience store, ice-cream shop and 17 cents per gallon gas station all-in-one! The "old" Safeway store has faded into history. Will future



generations still be talking about *your* turn of the 21st century business?

The Conifer Historical Society and Museum began as a project for the century old Pleasant Park Grange. The "Museum at Conifair" in 2004, 2005 and 2006 and exhibits for Conifer Tales and Trails in 2007 were our first efforts. "Conifer History: Stories and Photos of Pioneer families" and "Growing Up in Conifer (1945-55)" were very successful programs. These "Armchair Adventures" were cosponsored by CHSM and the Mountain Area Land Trust at the beautiful Meadow Creek B&B pavilion **in Pine**. We look forward to forming new relationships in addition to **those with** Mountain Area Land Trust and Save the Yellow Barn at Bradford Junction.

Where *is* this museum? Until we have a permanent location (perhaps in the Yellow Barn?) we will continue to produce quality programs and exhibits throughout

the community. Visit us online at www.coniferhistorymuseum.org to listen to oral histories and view photos. Our online store includes local history books, note cards, and professionally produced DVDs that were recorded at our programs.

Monthly meetings, the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30, are open to the public at the historic and beautifully preserved Pleasant Park School and Grange. Become a member and support our efforts for only \$25 per year. A membership application is available at www.coniferhistorymuseum.org. Your financial support will help us purchase the necessary archival quality video recording equipment for oral histories and display structures for artifacts. Do you know a Conifer area resident with an interesting history in the area? Get involved and help us record oral histories. For more information call 303.697.0871.

To learn more about the Conifer Historical Society and Museum and our talented and enthusiastic Board and Committee members, please send an email to me, Suzi Morris, at president@coniferhistorymuseum.org.

Please join us in preserving Conifer area history for future generations!

Suzi Morris

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CHSM is published quarterly for the Conifer Community, past, present, and future. It is intended to be an online publication with limited hardcopy distribution. Story ideas and contributions are encouraged. The photo of Norm Meyer's yellow house on the front page was taken by Lana Turner. Editor: Elaine Hood hood1959@yahoo.com

Arnett Ranch

by Elaine Hood

In 1907 Charles Eckels Arnett and his young bride homesteaded 160 acres of land in the Conifer area. Arnett Ranch is located at the end of Arnett Ranch Road which is at the east end of Pleasant Park Road where it turns into High Grade Road. This area is known as Critchell.

Charles, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, built a one-room log cabin on the land. He and his wife had one son, Charles Manning Arnett.

I interviewed Maxine Arnett, the widow of Charles Manning Arnett, in December 2007. She related stories her husband had told of his early childhood years there as well as her own memories of visiting and later living on the property.

Maxine recalled a story about how her mother-in-law did laundry while living in the remote mountainous area. The closest source of water was a stream about ½ mile below the house. Rather than haul water up the mountainside to her home, she would take the clothes by small wagon down to the stream. She would then build a fire under a large cast iron kettle kept on the banks of the stream, scrub the clothes on a washboard, and then haul the wet clothes back up the mountainside to be hung dry near the house.

Charles and his family eventually moved to Denver and only visited the cabin for weekend getaways.

After Maxine and Charles married in 1933 they would spend summer weekends at the small cabin. She remembers it as a tiny one-room cabin with one window, a wood burning stove, and a small loft that had previously served as a bedroom.

In the 1940s the closest gas station was a Phillips 66 station where South and West Deer Creek Road meet, in what was known as “Phillipsburg – population 1.”

High Grade Road, which today connects South Deer Creek Road and Pleasant Park Road, used to be called Upper Falls Road and was so steep, narrow and treacherous that it struck fear into the hearts of all who attempted to drive it. The old Model T cars had to back up the road to get enough traction to make it up the severe incline. Horses and wagons could navigate it more easily. During the government work programs of the Great Depression the route of the upper part of the road was moved to eliminate the severe incline. The most recent improvements were made about



Yahoo! 2007, Data@Navteq2007

8 years ago as Highway 285 was being widened into a 4-lane highway to Conifer. High Grade Road was paved, widened and guard rails were placed along the side of the road at this time.

The original Arnett cabin was torn down in 1968 and a modern log home was built in its place where Charles and Maxine made their home for several years. Maxine has fond memories of taking daily hikes in the mountains with her Scottie dog, seeing herds of elk traverse their property, and even chuckles at the memory of her dog’s nose being the victim of porcupine quills.

Maxine said she would get groceries once a month at the Bear Creek Shopping Center. Two freezers at home allowed her to keep milk and meat for weeks.

Charles passed away several years ago. Maxine passed away in February 2008 at age 98. Only 40 acres of the original homestead have been sold to two other homeowners. Now two additional families live on what was originally known as the Arnett Ranch. Patsy still lives along Arnett Ranch Road and holds tender memories of her family’s heritage in the area.



photos by Elaine Hood

Patsy Jaynes and her mother Maxine Arnett were interviewed as part of the Conifer Historical Society and Museum’s Oral History project.



The original Arnett cabin was replaced in the late 1960s with this log home, where Maxine and her husband lived in the 1970s.

Know someone who should be interviewed for CHSM’s Oral History project? Contact Elaine Hood at 303.816.0638.

Notecards



Notecards for Sale

Beautiful notecards illustrating the historical buildings of Conifer are available for sale. Over 24 different cards can be purchased in 7 different packages. Each photo was taken by local photographer Lana Turner. Proceeds of sales go towards furthering the endeavors of CHSM.

Cost and order information available on the "Museum Store" page at:
www.coniferhistorymuseum.org

www.coniferhistorymuseum.org

Conifer Historical Society and Museum

The CHSM web site has meeting times and location, contact information, notecards for sale, oral histories ... and more!

RED STAG PRODUCTIONS

Video and DVD production services
 Locally Owned
 Contact Bob Potrykus: 720.261.0860
bob@rstag.com

**Conifer Historical Society and Museum
 Contact Information**

Meetings time/location: 303.697.0871
 Oral History: 303.816.0638
 Membership: 303.838.4805

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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|-------------|--|
| March 12 | Growing Up in Conifer (1945-1955) |
| June 28-29 | Conifer Heritage Festival |
| August 24 | Old-Timers' Picnic for new and old residents |
| December 13 | Holiday Tea and Quilt Show |