

Message from the
President

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Summit Historical Society VOICES

Message from the President

This past year has been one of transition for the Society. Our activities have moved away from dinner presentations to a very popular series of seven evening lectures with coffee and desserts. In addition, we added a hike with lunch at the Montezuma Schoolhouse and tour of the Sts. John mine that was also very successful—so successful, it was offered twice.

After lengthy discussions and many meetings, the Board approved moving the historic photographs and maps from the annex of the Dillon Schoolhouse to the new Dr. Sandra F. Pritchard Mather archive room in the Breckenridge Grand Vacations Community Center (the old CMC building on Harris Street) in Breckenridge. The move assured us that our treasured artifacts, now housed in a 1960s wood-clad building with little fire protection, would reside in a brick building with fire protection, humidity control, and security systems. In addition, the photographs and maps will be more accessible to researchers and the public as they will be located in the same building as the South Branch of the Summit County Library.



We are especially thankful to our new administrator, Christy Nelson, who has worked tirelessly all year and has been extraordinarily creative in bringing new programs and events to our organization. Christy informs me that 2014 will be even better than the past year.

Our programs and finances are looking better for next year. We recently revised our agreement with the Breckenridge Heritage Alliance for leasing our three properties (Lomax placer gulch, Washington mine, and the Briggle house) for a significant increase in fees.

Our archives group, led by Karen Musolf and Deanna Speer, continues to do a wonderful job keeping our current collection in good order and cataloguing new acquisitions. Requests for information often lead to new insights into our history. Deanna Speer has been working with Arjan Blom

of Sweden, whose ancestors had a home in Dillon, and learning some interesting facts.

One of our goals next year is to make better use of our facilities. In particular, we are talking with the Friends of the Lower Blue and the Board of County Commissioners relative to the use of and needed improvements to Slate Creek Community Hall.

The Society wants to thank long-time Board member, Charlie Bond, who retired this year, for his service. Thanks go to Terry Merrick, former president who has moved to California with her husband, Jim. Terry devoted many hours to the Society. Terry, thank you for all of your hard work during the past several years. You will be missed. We welcome Pam Pollack and Sandie Mather to the Board.

Thanks to all of our Board members, volunteers, and supporters of the Society throughout 2013. We look forward to working with all of you in 2014.

John E. Ebright—President, Summit Historical Society

Meet and Greet—March 6, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Your Society has scheduled a “meet and greet” for Thursday, March 6, at the Schoolhouse Museum in Dillon from 5:00 until 7:00. This is not a formal meeting but a time to drop in for a few minutes to greet the new officers of your Society and pass along ideas for fund raising, summer and winter activities, membership initiatives, volunteer opportunities, docents and tour leaders, outreach initiatives, and grant writing. Your Society needs you and your ideas. Come and bring lots of ideas. Light refreshments will be served.

New Officers for Summit Historical Society

At its regular meeting on February 13, the Society elected new officers: Sandie Mather will take on the duties of president and Bill Musolf was elected the new vice-president. John Ebright became the treasurer while Cheryl Tatro remains secretary with Deanna Speer the corresponding secretary.

Volunteers Needed

As your Society moves forward under new leadership, it needs your help in many ways. Commissioners and Board members are the first need. If you are a forward-thinking person with good ideas about how to help the Society meet its mission statement and goals, you are needed for these two important roles. Commissioners and Board members meet every other month. In between meetings, they help the president with many of the projects that you read about in

this newsletter. Cheryl Tatro, our recording secretary, has expressed an interest in “retiring” from that position. We need a replacement for her.

As the number of sponsored activities increased last year, it became apparent that a volunteer coordinator was a dire necessity. This person finds helpers for individual events. Most of the work is done by phone and e-mail, taking less than an hour a week.

The need for docents in the Schoolhouse Museum is on-going. If you like spending time with visitors and telling them the story of Summit County’s interesting history, please let us know. We hold training sessions at the beginning of the summer season.

Karen Musolf, who has taken on the duties of

membership chair, is looking for people to help develop membership initiatives to put into place this summer. Members are the life-blood of the Society and your ideas are needed. Perhaps some members of the Book and Adventure Club would like to help Karen with this committee.

Volunteers are always needed in the archives. With the up-coming move to the new archive facility in Breckenridge and the increasing number of requests for archival information, the need for help is critical.

If you would like to help your Society, please contact Christy Nelson at mail@summithistorical.org or Sandie Mather at mather@verizon.net.

New Iron Fence at Briggles House—Karen and Bill Musolf

Past visitors to the historic Briggles house in Breckenridge probably didn’t realize that anything was missing as they walked by the old iron fence, up the walk, and into the house. Now, however, they must open a gate that stood there many years ago and has recently been returned and installed.

A couple, who said that they lived in the house many years ago, returned the two gates last year that once graced the front of the Briggles house and the historic Milne house next door to the south. Thanks to the efforts of the Summit Historical Society and funding from the Town of Breckenridge working through the Breckenridge Heritage Alliance, the gates are back in their original locations. Strategic Fence Company, which ordered the missing parts from the same company that originally made the fence and gates, installed them. If you haven’t been by the Briggles house at 104 North Harris Street lately, stop by and admire the “new” old gates.



Harold Rutherford



Your newsletter editor received a message from Robin Aggus Benson regarding the death of her grandfather, Harold Rutherford. In part her message read: “Papa passed away at the age of 89—almost 90, having suffered from cancer the past three years. He had compiled and written a couple of books and a booklet, two of which were set in Summit County, one of which I am sure you are familiar, *Dustbowl to Paradise*. I was with him when he was honored to replace the cornerstone in the Summit County Courthouse building a few years back. What a joy that was to him! I have many pictures of the event.....” (Your newsletter editor also enjoyed his company that day.)

“The Rutherford Ranch and Frisco dream came to an end, after a run of Bang’s disease caused the loss of all their cattle. Harold’s father was simply unable to run the ranch any longer after Papa began a life outside the area upon returning from WW II..... The family ranch was sold for next to nothing, just before the reservoir was built and the “boom” came to the county. Papa’s many memories of his childhood in Summit County (are) rich beyond the riches not afforded to his hard-working family, and so many of his stories have yet to be compiled from their first drafts into his dream of another book or two. Thank you for honoring my very own hero and former Summit County resident, Harold J. Rutherford, over the years.”

The obituary in the All Veterans Funeral & Cremation site, read: “Born April 5, 1924; passed away January 2, 2013. Harold was born in Stamford, NE. His family moved from Eckley to Summit County, CO. Harold served in the Navy in WWII then became a custom home and commercial builder and author. Harold thoroughly enjoyed fishing, hunting and ministry. He was preceded in death by his parents Minnie and Russell, brother Dean, and sister Mildred. Harold is survived by his wife Lois; children Danetta (Ken), Donald and Gerald (Kathy); sister Helen; 7 grandchildren and multiple grandchildren, great-grandchildren and friends. Services (were) held at Fort Logan National Cemetery Friday January 10th at 11:00 am.”

Women’s History Month Events



The Society, Frisco Historic Park & Museum, and Breckenridge Heritage Alliance are collaborating on two events in celebration of Women’s History Month in March. On Friday, March 7, Frisco will host “Hats Off to Women!” in the Historic Park’s log chapel on Main Street in Frisco from

5:00 to 7:00 pm. Sandie Mather will portray Anna Sadler Hamilton, wife of Breckenridge meat merchant, Robert Hamilton. A slide show will highlight Frisco women who left their mark on the town's history such as Susan Badger, Jane Thomas, Susie Thompson, and Helen Foote. Participants are encouraged to wear their favorite hat to the event. Light refreshments will be served. On Saturday, March 8, Breckenridge Heritage Alliance is sponsoring a tea with Katie Briggie. Following the walking tour, Katie (Sandie Mather) will welcome participants to her home. She will tell how she came to Breckenridge and what her life was like while she lived on Harris Street. A highlight will be the highly regarded tea ceremony enjoyed by women of that time period. After learning the proper etiquette, participants will enjoy scones, cookies, cakes, and English tea. For this event, reservations are required. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children ages 4 through 12.

Archives Report—Deanna Speer

Carol Kennedy joined the volunteers in the archives. Her family members owned the Smith-Reynolds Ranch, part of the Keystone Golf Course and Ranch Restaurant at Keystone. She has been concentrating her most welcome energies on the biography files, constructing a tailor-made spread-sheet for them. This feature allows easier searching in the files.

Cheryl Tatro and Deanna Speer completed some housekeeping chores in the archives, donating some items to FIRC; others they assigned to the trash. With the transfer of some of the archives to the new Mather Archives Room in the Breckenridge Grand Vacation Community Center in Breckenridge, more volunteers are needed for housecleaning chores.

New Book Leads to Renovation Project

Bill Fountain sent the following letter to your editor. He felt that some of you would be interested and donate some much-needed funds. It read in part: "Prospectors mainly ignored the Middle Swan area during the early years of the gold rush because of limited strikes. A few filed claims in the early 1890s. It wasn't until 1897 that the town of Swandyke came into existence. By 1898 the town had a few hotels and boardinghouses, a saloon, mercantile shops, and other businesses.



In early summer, 1899, the Burgener brothers from Indiana purchased several claims including the Pompeii lode. In January of that year, an avalanche destroyed a mill and some cabins on the west side of town. The Burgeners bought the equipment from the destroyed mill and built a new mill and the Pompeii cabin about 100 feet to the west of the new mill. In the 1970s,

"hippies" replaced the roof and porch and made other "improvements" to the cabin, actually helping to preserve it.



In 2005, after receiving copies of the only known photographs of Swandyke and the surrounding area, I began documenting the remains and initiated a major research project focusing on the town, its mines, and residents. (This research has been used to begin writing the fourth book in the *Chasing the Dream* series Bill is writing with Sandie Mather.) In the summer of 2012, Rick Hague, Rich Skovlin, and I discovered that Pompeii cabin had lost its roof the previous winter.” The collapse prompted action. Bill has been working with various individuals who would be integral to restoring the roof. The Breckenridge Heritage Alliance agreed to handle the funds obtained. Bill Fountain and Sandie Mather are spearheading the fund-raising effort. Anyone interested in the project can reach Bill at BigOBill@aol.com.



Summit Foundation Grant Update—Karen Musolf

The SHS received a \$3000 grant from The Summit Foundation for cataloguing upgrades. Julie Carmen, the SHS cataloguer, enhanced approximately 950 map records and 850 photographic records, adding location tags and subject headings as well as adjusting headers to reflect appropriate icons. In addition, Julie worked with the Summit County Library and Marmot making adjustments to the Society’s records made necessary by changes in software programs used by the library system and Marmot. Julie, with the help of archival volunteers, accessioned new photographic and cartographic donations. As a result of all involved, the number of requests to view items in the Society’s map and photograph collections has risen and complaints about difficulty of access have decreased.

Do You Know—Deanna Speer

DO YOU KNOW that Hazel Schmall proposed a bill in 1899 protecting the Colorado state flower, the lavender columbine?

A fine of up to \$50 can be imposed on anyone pulling up a plant or picking more than 25 blossoms. (Your editor wishes to add that in the “language of flowers” followed by upper class women in the Victorian era, the columbine symbolized folly.)

DO YOU KNOW the first book in the *Chasing the Dream* series is available at the Dillon Schoolhouse Museum?

Co-authored by Bill Fountain and Sandie Mather, *Chasing the Dream, the Search for Gold in French Gulch*, focuses on the Sisler/Nolan family and their holdings in French Gulch. Of particular interest is Katherine Sisler Nolan, who assumed the management of extensive mining properties upon the death of her two husbands. With Women’s History Month in March, this book is es-

pecially appropriate as it tells about Katherine's sizeable contributions to the mining landscape of Summit County. In addition, the book details the rivalry between Ben Stanley Revett and Herman J. Reiling, both owning dredges that scoured French Gulch looking for that last piece of gold.

DO YOU KNOW another book appropriate for Women's History Month is *They Weren't All Prostitutes and Gamblers* written by Sandie Mather??

The book tells about the women who came to Summit County between 1859 and the turn of the 20th century. It answers questions such as where did they come from; did they want to come; what did they find when they arrived? The last chapter is based on the diary of Anna Sadler Hamilton, the wife of Breckenridge meat merchant, Robert Hamilton. Anna arrived as a young bride in 1885. Never quite able to stop looking longingly over her shoulder to the family she left in Grundy County, Illinois, Anna experienced many difficulties adjusting to life in a high-altitude climate with long winters and deep snow.

A New Play at the Backstage Theatre in Breckenridge

The Breckenridge Backstage Theatre on Friday, February 14, presented a new play entitled "The 10th" written by Chris Willard. All seats were reserved specifically for Summit Historical Society and Breckenridge Heritage Alliance members. The play is the first part of a trilogy that will focus on the 10th Mountain Division, which trained at Camp Hale and Ski Cooper.

A Recipe for a Home—submitted by Deanna Speer

Deanna found this poem probably from the 1920s in her grandfather's belongings and wished to share it with our members:

A Recipe for a Home

One half cup of friendship and cup of thoughtfulness
 Creamed together with a pinch of powdered tenderness
 Very lightly beaten in a bowl of loyalty
 With a cup of Faith and one of Hope and one of Charity
 Be sure to add a spoonful each of gaiety that sings
 And also the ability to laugh at little things
 Moistened with a sudden tear of heartfelt sympathy
 Bake in a good natured pan and serve repeatedly.



News from our Sister Organizations

Frisco Historic Park and Museum

The Frisco Historic Park & Museum has scheduled two “egg-citing” events for April. The first is the Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 20, at 12:00 pm in the Historic Park for children ages 6 through 8+. Bring your own basket. On April 26, Judy Anderson will lead a tour of Bill’s Ranch, telling the history of the area and explaining its importance to the town of Frisco. The tour is free but reservations are required. For more information about these events and to learn of other events, check the website:

www.friscohistoricpark.com.

Breckenridge Heritage Alliance

The Breckenridge Heritage Alliance offers two very unique special tours in the coming weeks. The new “Ski through History” tour, offered Fridays through April 18 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, provides the opportunity for skiers and snowboarders to learn about the history of skiing in Breckenridge while enjoying beginner and intermediate trails at the resort. Participants must bring their own equipment, hold a ski pass, and have intermediate skiing ability. Costs are \$20 for adults and \$15 for children ages 10 through 12.

The “Katie Briggie Living History and Victorian Tea” tour includes a walking tour of the Historic District followed by a walk-through of the Briggie house. Participants will hear stories about life in Summit County during the Victorian Era while enjoying treats at the home of William and Kathleen Briggie. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children ages 12 and under. This tour is scheduled on Saturdays: March 8, March 15, and April 19. The walking tour and tea on March 8 are part of the Women’s History Month events sponsored jointly by the Breckenridge Heritage Alliance, the Frisco Historic Park & Museum, and the Summit Historical Society.

In other news from Breckenridge: The Breckenridge Grand Vacations Community Center is currently on schedule with an expected completion date of October, 2014. Move-in will begin as soon as a certificate of occupancy is awarded. The town anticipates the grand opening will be in late November or early December. BHA is seeking applications for an archive consultant who will lead the design and implementation of the archive facility. The selection committee includes Sandie Mather, John Ebright,

Karen Musolf, Robin Theobald, and Larissa O'Neil. The High Line Railroad Park expansion will continue next summer with the completion of the railroad-themed playground, addition of new rolling stock, interpretive signs, and an upgrade to the Leuthe Cabin exhibit. BHA has received approval from the town to begin construction at the Wakefield sawmill site. All sawmill equipment is on hand. Work will begin as soon as the snow clears.

Summer Events in the Planning Stage

Your Board and Society Administrator have been planning some new and some “old favorites” for the summer. The very successful Monday night lecture series will continue as will the Tuesday boat tours on Lake Dillon and the Thursday, Dillon, Denver, and the Dam “land lubbers” walk and talk. The Schoolhouse Museum will be open for visitors and the SHS book table at the Friday Dillon Farmers’ Market will again sell books and memberships as well as advertise our events and museum. There will be hikes for you—some favorites—some new. We are always looking for ideas for new events: contact Christy Nelson at mail@summithistorical.org or Sandie Mather mather@verizon.net with suggestions.

“Treatise on Hydraulic Placer Mining in Breckenridge and Leadville in the 1930s” - Charles O. Moore, C. M.



Cherry Moore of Denver, daughter of Charles O. Moore, presented this treatise to the SHS Archives. Your editor will be printing it in portions as it is very long but quite interesting. Moore wrote: “I feel fortunate to have been in Breckenridge and Leadville during the last vestiges of the early boom times to have known some of the people that lived those times. It all started when my sister was teaching in the Breckenridge High School and ended up marrying a local boy. Also my best friend in college days at CU was from Leadville. Bill Robinson, my brother-in-law, was working for Frank Traylor who controlled the Royal Tiger Mines and was opening up a placer mine at the base of Farncomb Hill at the head of French Gulch. He gave me a job on the crew, first as common labor, then as pit man, and finally as giant man. The wages were \$3.00/day, 7 days a week and no overtime. To get a day off you had to find a cooperative buddy on another shift and negotiate a trade. You each would then work your shift and his too for 16 straight and each would then have one day off. It didn’t happen very often as it just wasn’t worth the effort.

Placer mining as it was done before and after the turn of the century and as we were doing it in the summers of 1933 and 34 would not be allowed today. Washing down the hillside, loading the stream with silt till it would hardly flow and leaving a rock pile where there had been trees,

grass, flowers and soil would bring everyone for miles around down on you today. Then, however, in the depths of the depression and before it was totally acceptable.

For those of you who may have never seen a placer operation, it involved using a high pressure stream of water to wash down the gold bearing dirt and carry it through a sluice box that would retain the heavier gold in riffles fastened to the bottom of the box. As the pit progressed more box was added to both front and rear. The nozzle for directing the stream of water was called a giant and had a goose neck swivel joint so that it could be directed up and down as well as 360 degrees in the horizontal plane. A ditch would be dug from an intake point sufficiently far upstream to deliver water at an elevation considerably higher than the actual working area. There through a head box it would pass into a pipe that led like a power house penstock to the giant. You always had to have more water than the capacity of the pipe and giant nozzle in order to keep a full head. In this case we had an approximately 100' head reduced to a 2 1/2" nozzle. This produced enough volume and force to wash down 18" boulders as if they were sand grains. This operation was near 11,000 feet altitude and the supply ditch had to cross some pretty rugged hillsides including a 50 yard or so long rockslide. How do you build a water tight ditch across an area of 2" to 4" rocks with no soil? Easy if you know how. Horse manure and sawdust dumped in the ditch at the upper end will progressively seal the interstices in the rocks so that in a surprisingly short time there will be a watertight ditch formed across a rock slide which needs only minimal maintenance.

The greatest hazard to a giant operator is that a pinecone or similar obstruction may come down the ditch, enter the pipe and hit or lodge in the nozzle. Two things can happen and usually both do. First there is a terrific water hammer that can burst the pipe or tear the joints apart and second, much more dangerous, the giant tends to rotate like a gigantic impulse lawn sprinkler. This happened to me and as I jumped to get away I saw the pipe and giant coming out of its anchor under a four foot pile of rocks with the giant swiveling around on its ball joint toward me. I was already on my way so all it did was hit me in the seat with a big boost so that I lit unhurt about 30 feet away. I was lucky. Others before me had been killed by a wild giant.

The crew was generally three men—a giant man and two pit men. The pit men's job was to keep the sluices free running by picking out and stacking to the side those rocks too big to free roll through the sluices.

The giant man was boss and was supposed to keep a full head of dirt going through the sluices at all times. Placer gold in nugget form is a fooler in that it is black or brown not yellow gold color until it has been treated with acid and annealed to red heat in a furnace. (Anneal means to heat and then cool slowly; to temper.) All in all it was a most fun job. Name a kid who hasn't got a thump out of washing dirt around with a garden hose. Imagine doing it with a hundred foot head of water, a 2 1/2" nozzle and getting paid for it to boot."

To be continued in the next newsletter.

Moonlighting While Mining—found in the SHS Archives and submitted by Deanna Speer

“Have you heard the term ‘high grading?’ Well, it was the disreputable habit of pilfering gold nuggets, dust, and flakes. As a noun, high grade means high quality ore. As a verb, it means to steal gold in any form, from either a placer mine or an underground mining operation. Plain and simple, it was stealing. From the 1860s to the 1890s, mining transformed from one-man tin pan placer mining, to the several partner operations including mining of multiple claims, to corporate mining—large scale operations—often owned by nameless East Coast investors.

Stealing from people they didn’t see or know, somehow made the stealing okay. Miners’ family incomes were supplemented by high grading, and the management personnel of these corporations, many having high graded themselves ‘on their way up’ simply looked the other way to the illegal activity. What harm could come from stealing a gold nugget here, some dust or flakes there. ..in the ‘big picture’ this was ‘small potatoes.’ Many miners justified the thievery because of the high risk nature of their jobs. Local businesses readily accepted high grade just as if it were cash, knowing full-well that it was stolen property. ‘Soiled Doves’ took this stolen gold as payment for sexual favors. Even the U.S. Mint in Denver accepted high grade with no questions asked.

How did the miners steal gold and gold dust? Miners stole the gold in the false-bottomed tin lunch pails, inside felt hat bands, hollowed out boot heels, body cavities, and into grease applied to their hair.

To combat the thievery, mine owners installed a changing room and showers. Next there were body searches including requiring miners to squat and lift a large heavy object, which would result in the excavation of gold from the body cavities. One upside of these new procedures was that mines were able to take a warm shower after a wet twelve hour work shift, which sent them home warm, before a long walk in the cold of night, which ended up reducing the number one killer of miners...pneumonia.” Author Unknown

SHS Book Club Activities—Karen Musolf

Western Cookbooks and Cuisine

Nearly 20 SHS Book Club members and guests gathered on December 10, 2013, for their annual holiday potluck featuring cookbooks and cuisine of the West. Hosted by new member, Becky Tomlinson, and her husband, Gene, the group met at the Tomlinson’s beautifully decorated country residence to share a multi-course banquet of Western fare.

Passing both the sleigh in the entryway and the tall lighted tree in the front room, guests found their way to the dining area and kitchen for a round of appetizers with a wide choice of bever-

ages. They told about the food items they brought and shared recipes and cookbook titles. Next the guests moved to the bar buffet, kitchen stove, and counter line-up of Crock Pots for soups, stews, main dishes, root vegetables, and salads. With filled plates, they sat at tables festooned with red tablecloths and candles. Lingered long with conversation, everyone broke stride only to sample an array of desserts from apple cobbler to bourbon balls.

Larry Gilliland, per custom, shared a reading from an early Colorado newspaper. One member, who had previously noted that the group sometimes called itself “The Summit Historical Society Book and Adventure Club,” suggested that the group should change its name to “The Summit Historical Society Book, Adventure, and Cooking Club.”

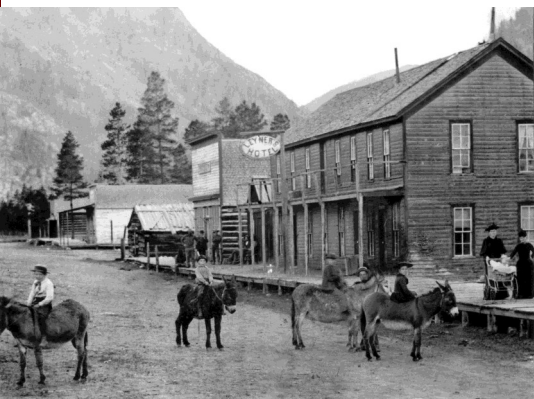
Although all food items presented were delicious and many recipes exchanged, Ray Smith took the honors for most requests for his revised recipe of Salmon Fish Balls, taken from the *Rocky Mountain Cookbook*, 1903, by Caroline T. Norton. Ray’s recipe follows:

1 cup honey-smoked salmon, flakes
2 cups prepared instant mashed potatoes
2 eggs
1-2 tablespoons butter melted

Mix salmon, potatoes, and eggs. Shape into little flat cakes. Brush each cake with melted butter. Broil on rack about a third of the way down from the broiler. Turn cakes halfway through in order to brown both sides. Watch carefully to avoid burning. Broiling time is approximately 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Colorado’s Historic Hotels

Directed to seat themselves by a warm fire in a large stone fireplace, members of the SHS Book Club met on January 21 at Ophir Lodge near Frisco to discuss Colorado’s historic hotels. Shortly after facilitator, Gail Westwood, opened the meeting, Ben Little, host for the event, joined the group. Dressed in cowboy garb, he came not with his preset identity, but in character as Bill Thomas, founder of Bill’s Ranch, Frisco’s first subdivision.



Bearing some historic photos, “Bill” told the group that the room in which they were sitting was once the front room of the Leyner Hotel, built in 1879 by Peter Leyner as the Frisco Halfway House for those on the stage route from Georgetown to Leadville, located 32 miles from each place. Eight years later (1887), Bill said that his parents, Jane and John Thomas, homesteaders of a dairy ranch west of town, purchased the hotel, renamed it the Thomas Hotel and operated it for many years—no doubt sharing their butter, cream, and milk

with the guests. As time went on, the ranch property was taken over by sons, Bill and Walter. During the Depression years when Frisco's population had decreased and the market for dairy products was low, the brothers Thomas needed additional income. Seeking to gather new customers for their goods, they broke up their property into lots and gave many away—all the time hoping that the beauty of the area would attract vacationers willing to build “second homes” on the homestead. One taker was Evelyn Mix, who selected and bought three lots. She purchased the Thomas Hotel in 1930, carefully dismantled it, moved it log-by-log, reconstructed it and opened it as a small resort, the Ophir Lodge, in 1932. Bill then said that additions were made to the building and it is now the property of Jim and Marcia Little. He invited the group to tour the property after the discussion on other Colorado historic hotels.

Book Club member, Mary Ellen Gilliland, added to the Leyner lore with some stories about the diminutive Jane Thomas, who not only served as the proprietress of the family hotel, but also frequently broke up saloon brawls and once braved deep snows to deliver twins at Masontown. Mary Ellen offered information about other Summit County hotels of note: in particular, the Denver Hotel in Breckenridge and the Naomi Hotel and stage stop in the Lower Blue.

Other SHS Book Club members followed with discussions of Colorado's more well-known hotels such as the Brown Palace in Denver, the Stanley in Estes Park, the Redstone Inn in Redstone, the Hand Hotel in Fairplay, Frisco Lodge, and the Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs. Many of the mentioned hotels are said to be haunted, so the meeting ended with highly “spirited” reports.

Thanks to Sharon and Ray Smith, who organized the event and served refreshments, and to the group's charming and highly informed host, Ben Little (alias Bill Thomas) for sharing the Ophir Lodge, Thomas Hotel, and Leyner Hotel with us. For more information about the Ophir Lodge, check the website www.ophirlodge.com.

Winter Adventure 2014

Keeping with their annual Presidents' Day tradition, eleven SHS Book Club members trekked on snowshoes and cross-country skis to a site of historical interest. This year they sought out the Hallelujah Hut, a warming house on the outskirts of the Breckenridge Nordic Center trail system. Led by Maureen Nicholls, three members rapidly skied in and eight followed Cheryl Tatro on the snowshoe trail at a slower pace. Once gathered for lunch inside the hut, they turned their attention to the history lesson, learning that the hut was once the retreat house of Ben Stanley Revett.

Many *Voices* readers know that Revett earned his reputation in the mining world as the dredge king of Breckenridge, tearing up



the Swan to extract bedrock gold for a number of years. A hands-on fellow, he also engaged in gold processing and did his own retort work, a refining process by which gold was extracted from an amalgam with mercury. It was dangerous work involving fire, water, and good ventilation and it is understandable that Revett built a separate building for this endeavor. Once located near his beautiful home, Swan's Nest, it was relocated to the Nordic Center property when Swan's Nest came up for sale in recent years. Now it serves as a welcome resting place for those on the trails. No doubt some do exclaim "Hallelujah" upon arriving there, an echo perhaps of Revett's remarks when he found gold in his crucibles.

Thanks to Cheryl Tatro, Maureen Nicholls, and Gail Westwood, who not only scouted but broke trail to the hut a week earlier, Gene Dayton for complimentary passes, Bill and Karen Musolf for hosting a preliminary coffee hour, and historians Maureen Nicholls and Mary Ellen Gilliland, for sharing the history of the building and its owner, Revett.

Future events on the 2014 Winter-Spring Calendar:

Tuesday, March 18: Railroad Towns—Facilitator: Maureen Nicholls

Tuesday, April 15: Sand Creek—Facilitator: Pat Larson

Meeting location arrangements for March and April still need to be made. If you would like to be added to the SHS Book Club e-mail contact list, notify the coordinator, Karen Musolf, at bdrmoose@msn.com or call 970-453-8874.

New Conservation Easement at Hill's Rock Creek Ranch

In the Fall, 2013, SHS newsletter, an article told of the life and death of Raymond Hill and his donations to the Society archives. Recently, the Continental Divide Land Trust newsletter announced that: "Forty acres in the Lower Blue are now protected with a conservation easement donated by the Hill family and held by CDLT. The easement closed in December, 2013.

A lot of conservation value is packed into these 40 acres, including Blue River frontage, the confluence of the Blue and Rock creeks, scenic views along Highway 9, wildlife habitat, a native spring, and a wide variety of ecosystem types including riparian, sage scrub, and aspen and spruce forests.

The property is bisected by Highway 9 and all development rights have been removed from the 10-acre section along the Blue River, helping to preserve scenic views. One homesite has been reserved away from the river and wildlife habitat areas.

The conservation easement was a long-time wish of Raymond Hill, who passed away in December, 2012. The easement was donated by Marjorie Lott Hill and her daughter, Ann B. Hill, owners of the land.

According to a family history shared with CDLT, all generations on both sides of the family have loved the property at Rock Creek Ranch. Raymond and Marjorie wanted this property in a conservation easement to always protect it. Raymond Hill was instrumental in his quest to get this conservation easement accomplished and to know that the property would always be protected. Although Raymond passed away before the completion of the conservation easement, he knew that it was in the final stages of completion and was very happy.”



Meet and Greet Event Thursday, March 6 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Dillon Schoolhouse Museum

The Summit Historical Society Board

**Invites you to join us for an
Informal Open House**

**Meet your new officers and board members
Share your ideas for the future of the organization:**

Fundraising

Summer and Winter Activities

Membership Initiatives

Volunteer Opportunities

Docents and Tour leaders

Outreach Initiatives

Grant Writing

Refreshments will be served

Summit Historical Society

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Dillon Schoolhouse Museum

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