



# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022

## Great to see you again

Warm weather and lots of space



*Northern Flicker, by local photographer Louis Raynor*

As I write this the ground is covered with a heavy wet spring snow and summer seems so far away! However, the moisture we've gotten the last few days has me looking forward to the summer months and has me hoping they will be unexciting in the best ways. I've enjoyed the new birds singing in the morning, the creek flowing again, and pastures around me turning greener. While the recent fire out my way made me nervous, the support of the community made us so grateful to be here. I think this summer will help our community members shine as we're able to come together. The May Chautauqua

about the Pikes Peak Highway and Summit was a great way to come back to in-person events, and I'm looking forward to what else we can celebrate this year. Like our June Chautauqua – more details on page 4!

*Eva Miranda, editor*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Warm weather and lots of space
- 2 Geocaching Article
- 4 Community Happenings
- 5 Thanks! & Info
- 6 Membership Form

# Pikes Peak Historical Society

## Geocaching Article

### PPHS Twin Creek Ranch Part 2

A cache by Pikes Peak Historical Society  
Hidden : 04/25/2016

N 38° 57.016 W 105° 18.334

Twin Creek Ranch is listed on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. It is a compound consisting of historic structures including:

1. Trapper's Cabin
2. Log Homestead/Barn
3. Harness Shed
4. Bunkhouse
5. Outhouse
6. Carriage House
7. Victorian House
8. Potato Cellars

#### LOG BARN/HOMESTEAD:

Thomas H. Burnham purchased the Trapper's Cabin from Smith sometime in 1872, and lived there while he built his log homestead – he was only 27. Census records show that Thomas Ham Burnham was born in Bunker Hill, Illinois on Jan 29, 1845, where his father was a farmer. Thomas reported on his homestead documents that his “first act was to build a house to live in...I have built a house, 2 stables, a camp house, a corral and have on it 3/4 mile of ditches and have nearly all fenced. Value of improvements \$800.” At that time, he stated that he had a wife but no children. Census records show that he married Ella [maiden name unknown] Burnham, also from Illinois.

The beautiful hand-hewn logs bear testament to the fact that there was no sawmill in the area at that time. Some of the logs used are at least 18 inches thick, from old-growth pines. In the 1880 Census, Thomas lists his occupation as “cattle dealer.” A brand found burned into the shed attached to the log homestead features two “s” shaped lines that could indicate “Twin Creek”



*Twin Creek Ranch Compound  
(L-R) Victorian house, harness shed, Trapper's cabin, log homestead/barn*

### 2021 PPHS Board of Directors

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Susan Weinzapfel	

#### Newsletter Committee

Eva Miranda	eva.miranda717@gmail.com
Robyn Proper	robynproper@gmail.com

Ranch. However, there are no Colorado Brand books prior to the 1900s, so this can't be confirmed. Colorado was open range, so it was common for stock raisers to brand their cattle to facilitate sorting at roundup time.

By the 1885 Census, Thomas and Ella are prosperous enough to have acquired a servant, Murray Sibby (sp?) from Ireland. After the Victorian house was built in 1887, the log homestead was converted to a barn. Some of the original doors and windows were boarded over for this, and a second floor was added for hay storage.

When Burnham filed his Homestead Proof in 1892, he stated that he was a widower. Apparently, sometime after 1887 his wife gave birth to a stillborn child, and in her postpartum depression, she hung herself in the hayloft.



*(L-R) Carriage House, Bunkhouse*

### **BUNKHOUSE, HARNESS SHED, CARRIAGE HOUSE:**

In Burnham's 1886 Homestead Affidavit, and in Witness Testimony by Frank Castello and Fredrick

Smith, he states that he is the head of a family, and that his improvements consist of a 20x24 log house, two one-story stables (6 ft long) [harness shed and carriage house], a storehouse 12 ft x 14 ft (the Trapper's Cabin), a shed 10 foot-long (bunkhouse).

### **VICTORIAN HOUSE AND POTATO CELLARS:**

In his 1892 Home Stead Proof, he states that he built an 8-room frame house in 1887. His southern pasture includes the rail bed of the Colorado Midland Railroad. He probably built the Victorian house with the right-of-way proceeds from the CMRR. He maintains that he is now a widower. John Wilson and Count Louis Otto de Pourtales provided Witness Testimony for his Proof. Wilson provided the additional information that Burnham planted 6 acres of potatoes every year since 1887. Therefore, we can deduce that he built the potato cellars around 1887. It was profitable for the area homesteaders to provide beef and produce to the miners via the CMRR. Both Wilson and Pourtales stated that Burnham's land was excellent for raising stock.

### **SUBSEQUENT OWNERS OF TWIN CREEK RANCH 1892-1901:**

Sometime after 1892, Thomas Burnham's Twin Creek Ranch passed to his older brother, Frank J. Burnham. We can speculate that he fell ill, and transferred ownership. Thomas Burnham passed away on Jan 14, 1900. In 1899, Frank sold the ranch (which was now 2200 acres) to Charles H. Sisler for \$2000. Charles continued the ranching operations of Twin Creek Ranch, and registered his brand as "Lazy C" above an "H", closed by a crescent on the right.

Charles adopted two brothers, Robert and Tom, from an orphanage in Cripple Creek. During the typhoid epidemic, in 1892, the brothers (then 10 and 7 years old) were quarantined in the Trapper's Cabin, where the both succumbed to the illness. They are buried in the Florissant Pioneer Cemetery.

*To be continued...*



# Community Happenings

Our events are making a tentative comeback, with an eye on COVID rates and weather.

Both cooperated enough for us to have a fun and successful May Chautauqua event! Eric Swab, a notable historian, provided interesting stories of the Pikes Peak Highway and Summit.

Our June event, **Opportunities to learn about the trails of Zebulon Pike through Colorado** will be held Sunday, June 19 at 2:00pm at the Lake George Charter School. No reservations needed! Our expert and Vice President of the Pike National Trail Association, Linda Balough, will present Lt. Zebulon Pike's trek through the Pikes Peak and South Park regions.

The museum opened for the season! If you haven't yet, contact Sheila Naviasky ([sheilan@mesanetworks.net](mailto:sheilan@mesanetworks.net)) to get on the schedule or to become a docent. So far, we're scheduling the museum to be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

While we're moving ahead with the museum hours and some events, we're still taking a tentative approach to others. As we have them we'll be sharing updates on things like:

- Annual Meeting
- Volunteer Appreciation Day
- Florissant Days (July 30<sup>th</sup>)

## *Gee, Thanks!*

We always have people and businesses to thank for their contributions to PPHS in the form of money, time, energy, materials; so:

Thank you to all of our wonderful members who came to our May Chautauqua! It was wonderful to see you all again and we're looking forward to doing it again.

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Thank you to all that contributed time, energy, and attention to making our May Chautauqua a success.

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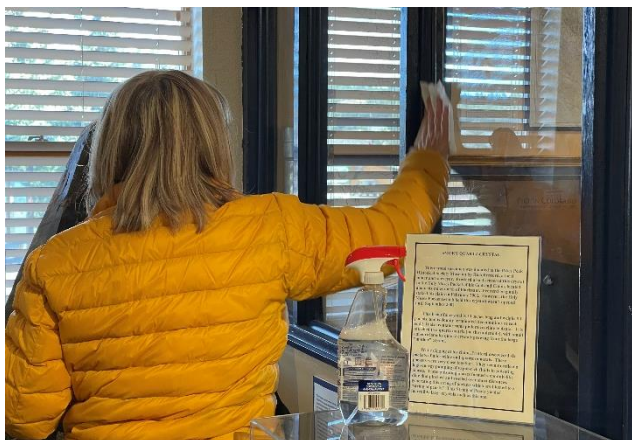
Thank you to the Museum Spring Cleaning crew – Elaine Godsoe, Susie Heimsoth, Doris Kneuer, Juan & Eva Miranda, Sheila Naviasky, Debbie Orłowski, and John Rakowski.

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*Elaine Godsoe in her yellow gloves*

# Gee, Thanks!



*Everything is now squeaky clean!*



*Vacuums in full force*

## Amazon Smile Program

Your Amazon shopping can benefit the Pikes Peak Historical Society. The Amazon Smile program donates .5% of most purchases to your chosen charity, and we're a registered participating organization.

To start donating, go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Pikes Peak Historical Society from the list of charities. That's it!

## Membership Information

If you have questions or need to make changes to your contact information, members may call 719-748-8259 and leave a message for a call back; or call President John Rakowski at 719-748-3861; or contact Lois Voeltz, Membership Chairman, at [PPHSMembers@gmail.com](mailto:PPHSMembers@gmail.com); or use the 'Contact Us' form via the website:

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

Memberships may be renewed either online through the PPHS website using PayPal or via the U.S. mail (PO Box 823, Florissant, CO 80816).

Remember you have the option of receiving your Newsletter by email or regular mail.

## FLORISSANT PIONEER CEMETERY

Florissant's cemetery received its first permanent "guest" in 1874. This is not surprising, since the town of Florissant was established by Judge James Castello in 1870. What is surprising, however, is that Frank, James' son, waited until 1886 to incorporate a Florissant Cemetery Association. This was probably in anticipation of the boom that would come to the area with the arrival of the Midland Railroad. The Pikes Peak Historical Society maintains this tradition of stewardship with its management of the Florissant Pioneer Cemetery on behalf of Teller County. If you meet the residency requirements; you may also secure a final resting place in this historic cemetery. Donations of \$400 are requested for a full burial, and only \$200 for cremains. Call Pikes Peak Historical Society at 719-748-8259 to secure your future at this historic site.

ATTENTION! The Editor is always looking for articles, old clippings, old photos, and story ideas for upcoming newsletters. Email the Editor with your submission or to set up an interview. [eva.miranda717@gmail.com](mailto:eva.miranda717@gmail.com)  
Please send us your memories of our area "back in the day."

## MEMBERSHIP



The Pikes Peak Historical Society (PPHS) is a non-profit corporation organized under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). The purpose of the Society is to encourage the preservation of the history of Florissant and the West Slope of Pikes Peak, and to educate the public regarding this historical legacy.

Pikes Peak Historical Society is funded solely through memberships and donations, and supports its mission through volunteers who serve on its numerous committees.

PPHS owns and operates two museums: The Pikes Peak Historical Society Museum, at 18033 Teller County Road CR1 (across from the Florissant Post Office) and the Schoolhouse Museum, located at Teller County Roads CR31 and CR3 (Wildhorn Rd.).

Our Cemetery Committee manages the 1874 Florissant Pioneer Cemetery on behalf of Teller County. Our Beautification Committee sponsors an area-wide clean-up each spring and plants flowers throughout the town of Florissant. Our Chautauqua Committee sponsors free educational programs during the year. If you become a Docent (Museum Volunteer), you act as host at the Museum, and meet wonderful, exciting people from all over the world.

The volunteers and members of the Pikes Peak Historical Society make all of these community projects possible. Your membership entitles you to our tri-annual newsletter. Life Members receive a 10% discount on all items at the Museum Gift Shop.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (please print):

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail1: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail2: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer Newsletter by: Email \_\_\_\_\_ US Mail \_\_\_\_\_ both Email and US Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP TYPE

\_\_\_ Sustaining. . . . . \$20/year

\_\_\_ Family. . . . . \$30/year

\_\_\_ Supporting . . . . . \$50/year

\_\_\_ Castello Life . . . . \$200

### COMMITTEE INTERESTS

\_\_\_ Auction      \_\_\_ Beautification      \_\_\_ Cemetery

\_\_\_ Geocaching      \_\_\_ Hwy 24 Cleanup      \_\_\_ Museum

\_\_\_ Refreshments for Chautauqua

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR \$ \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO:      PIKES PEAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
                 P.O. BOX 823  
                 FLORISSANT, CO 80816

OR JOIN ONLINE AT:  
[www.pikespeakhsmuseum.org](http://www.pikespeakhsmuseum.org)

For more information, call John at 719-748-3861. Thank you.

( Updated 02/14/2020)



Pikes Peak Historical Society  
P.O. Box 823  
Florissant, CO 80816