NEXT MEETING (Field Trip):

Tour of the New
HISTORY COLORADO CENTER
Saturday, August 25, 2012
10:00 am to 12:00 noon

Our next summer activity will be a visit to the History Colorado Center, the new state history museum. CCVHS member Peter Faris has volunteered to show us around this new hands-on and high-tech museum. A former Vice-President of CCVHS, Peter is a member of the History Colorado Board of Directors and is familiar with the new facility.

Meet in the lobby of the museum, which is on the northeast corner of 12th and Broadway in downtown Denver. The price for each person attending is: $10 for adults, $8 for seniors (65 and older) and students (ages 13-22 with student ID), and $6 for children ages 6-12; children ages 5 and under and History Colorado members are free.

We need to know how many people to expect at this event, so please contact Garry O'Hara to RSVP. He can be reached at (303) 751-3140 or gohara46@aol.com.

In 2009 the Colorado Historical Society changed its name to History Colorado, and its Colorado History Museum was moved a block south and renamed the History Colorado Center. After more than two years,
during which the museum’s entire collections were moved into storage and then into the new building, our state’s new history repository opened in April of this year.

*The Denver Post* says that the new 200,000-square-foot Center “… has ‘digitized’ the traditional museum experience. Visitors have several opportunities to interact with the exhibits, enjoying such things as touch-screen tutorials and simulator rides.” One of the first things you see when you enter the History Colorado Center is the 40-foot by 60-foot topographical floor map of Colorado, which is lit by a huge skylight. Visitors can move “time machines” across certain places on the map to visualize important points in Colorado history. Visitors can then experience the first phase of the Center’s exhibits, which include displays of the 1915 ski jump at Howelson Hill in Steamboat Springs; the Great Depression’s affect on the town of Keota; the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans at Camp Amache; the Sand Creek massacre of 1864; the Lincoln Hills resort for African Americans in the 1920s; and a recreated Silverton mine of the 1880s.

Afterward everyone is invited to a pay-as-you-go lunch at the Rendezvous Café, which is the buffet-style restaurant at the History Colorado Center. According to the “to go” menu, “The café features salads, soups, traditional grill favorites, sandwiches, and pizza, with vegetarian and gluten-free options.”

The best place to park is in the parking garage directly across Broadway from the museum. This is the garage of the Civic Center Cultural Complex, which is entered/exited on 12th Avenue just west of Broadway; fees start at $1 per hour. (An alternative would be to park in the garage of the History Colorado Center itself, located adjacent to the Center on the north side [enter on Broadway], but there is a flat fee of $7 at that facility.)

History Colorado’s website states that the museum is a “new and provocative destination for learning, an engaging center for civic conversation and an environment that encourages an inspirational journey into the future.”

*We hope to see you at the History Colorado Center at 10:00 AM on Saturday August 25.*

*We also hope to see you at our September 15 field trip, see page 3.*
AURORA FIELD TRIP IN SEPTEMBER
We’ll meet at the trolley warehouse at 9:30 AM on Saturday September 15.

The CCVHS late-summer activity will be a field trip on Saturday, September 15 to see the historic Aurora trolley car followed by a visit to Aurora’s historic Centennial House. CCVHS Member Ruth Fountain will be our guide. Ruth is the Assistant Treasurer of the Aurora Museum Foundation and a past President of the Aurora Historical Society.

Trolley Trailer No. 610 was used from about 1914 to 1932 to transport passengers along East Colfax Avenue in Aurora. It was discovered in an old Aurora farmhouse in 2006 and lovingly restored by a group of about 15 volunteers who couldn’t think of this historic relic being destroyed or forgotten. Member Bob Eide, Ruth’s husband and then President of the Aurora Museum Foundation, was one of the leaders of the renovation effort. The three-year job included member Gary Wolf and others who met faithfully every Monday morning in a warehouse north of Buckley AFB. The restoration is now complete, and the tram awaits a decision on where its final destination will be. The best solution (but most expensive option) would be to house it in an eastern extension of the Aurora History Museum, where it would be respectfully displayed and also protected from the elements and vandals. Unfortunately Bob Eide never got to see the restored trolley on display, for he died in 2009.

Ruth will also be our guide on a tour of Aurora’s Centennial House. Built in 1890, the Centennial House is located at 1671 Galena Street (corner of 17th Street). This Queen Anne Victorian structure is the oldest of nine remaining houses that Donald Fletcher built in the original part of Aurora (then called Fletcher). Like the other “Fletcher homes,” it has indoor plumbing and the “luxury” of an upstairs bathroom.

The house was purchased in 1990 by the City of Aurora and opened to the public in Aurora’s centennial year of 1991. For the past year the Aurora History Museum has been doing needed work on the structure and restoring it back to its original appearance. Much of this renovation was funded by the Aurora Historical Society. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places and is Aurora Landmark No. 11.
TO GET THERE: The trolley is located in a warehouse at 775 N. Telluride Street, Aurora 80011. On 6th Avenue, go for a half mile east of Airport Blvd. (Buckley Rd.) to Telluride Street; Buckley AFB (with the big white “golf ball” enclosures) will be on your right/south. Go left/north on Telluride for one-fourth mile to an unnamed street that is approximately 7th Avenue. Go left/west on this street a short distance to the last of three warehouse buildings. There is no name on the warehouse, but this is Warehouse A and the trolley’s unit is number 9. There is ample parking in the vicinity of unit A-9.

From the warehouse we will drive to Centennial House, which is almost 6 miles to the west. The address is 1671 Galena Street, Aurora 80010.

TO GET THERE: Go back to the intersection of 6th Avenue and Telluride Street, and go right/west to Airport Blvd. (Buckley Rd.). Take Airport Blvd. right/north one mile to Colfax Avenue. Go left/west on Colfax for just over four miles to Galena Street (3 streets west of Havana). Then go two blocks right/north to 17th Street. Park on Galena or 17th.

It should be around lunchtime when we finish touring Centennial House. So between then and now we’ll come up with a couple of nearby choices for an optional lunch.

*The above directions will be repeated in a separate message sent to members about two weeks before the field trip.*

Contact Garry at (303) 751-3140 or gohara46@aol.com if you have questions.

2013 CALENDAR

A message to CCVHS members went out in May regarding a 2013 calendar that Historic Douglas County is planning to produce as a fundraiser. The calendar will feature one prominent local deceased woman for each month of next year. Our Society was asked to select a woman to be honored, and we asked our members to come up with nominations by June 15. We are pleased to report that you have selected Clarice Crowle as the CCVHS nominee. The others receiving votes were related to 17 Mile House: the Cummings women (no particular one) and Dorothy Race. We’ll keep you posted as we get more information.

CCVHS ROSTER FOR MEMBERS

Some members have said that they would like to have a CCVHS roster for personal phoning and mailing purposes. We are exploring the possibility of coming out with such a one-page directory that would include members’ names, street addresses, and phone numbers. This list would not include members’ e-mail addresses.

If you have an objection to such a roster or the use of your information, please contact Garry at gohara46@aol.com or (303) 751-3140.
ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR

Due to delays beyond our control, all CCVHS trips and meetings related to 17 Mile House are “on hold” for the present time. This also applies to the group that has formed to write pamphlets/booklets for the farm park.

We thank members Lee and Jane Whiteley for accompanying CCVHS Vice-President Nita McKnight to the April meeting of the Eastern Colorado Museums and Historical Societies in Castle Rock. The autumn meeting for this group is scheduled for Saturday October 6 in Burlington. Anyone interested in representing CCVHS at that meeting should contact Garry at (303) 751-3140 or gohara46@aol.com.

We hope that a good time was had by all members who attended the Douglas County Open Space Day at beautiful Prairie Canyon Ranch on June 16.

Member Casey Davenhill of the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners invited CCVHS to sponsor a lunch for their teachers’ workshop on Tuesday, July 10. This event was held along Cherry Creek just west of 17 Mile House. About 20 teachers attended and they all remarked that the lunch was outstanding. We sincerely thank members Nita and Herb McKnight, Jane and Lee Whiteley, Charlotte Faris, Shirley Miller, Garry and Joan O’Hara, Ruth Fountain, and Susan Knapp for all their work in making the luncheon a success. (They brought a lot of food!) At the event Lee Whiteley led a well-received hike on the history of the area. We greatly appreciate the use of Susan Knapp’s large canopy and give many thanks to her son Stephen and dad Elmer, her friend Kathy, and to Chuck Fleming of Arapahoe County Open Space for setting up and taking down this canopy. But our special thanks go to CCVHS Secretary Karen Sear for arranging the luncheon and working so hard on all aspects of the event to make it so enjoyable. (Karen baked five pies for the dessert!)

We decided not to have a CCVHS booth at this year’s Arapahoe County Fair. But we would like to do so at the 2013 fair if we get enough members to volunteer for the multi-day event. The fair should be an excellent way to promote our Society.

As mentioned in previous Quills, we are planning to have this autumn’s meeting at the Melvin Schoolhouse, where we will hold a 90th anniversary reunion of the school. We are looking at having an informal panel discussion of former school attendees. We are asking for members’ help in locating former Melvin students and teachers. We also need members’ help in preparing for this event and participating in it. If you are interested in helping, please contact Karen at (303) 514-2094 or ccvhsco@gmail.com or Garry at (303) 751-3140 or gohara46@aol.com.

The trip to Sentinel Rock in Perry Park is now planned for the September-October time frame. The trip to the Hildebrand Homestead at Chatfield State Park has been moved to next year.

Also, if you picked up a draft CCVHS information flyer at the last meeting, please let Garry know of any changes or comments you may have.
MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations go out to member Carl Sandberg for the publication of his “Ghosts of Baca County” in the January-February issue of The Denver Westerners Roundup. He presented our October 2010 program “Ghost Towns of the Eastern Plains.”

And we congratulate Casey Davenhill for being selected as one of thirteen Women Making History earlier this year. The award was presented in Denver by the Colorado Black Women for Political Action to “women who rock the Rockies.”

Unfortunately we have lost contact with longtime CCVHS life members Bob and Gloria Griffin. The last address we have for them is in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. Please call Garry at (303) 751-3140 if you have any information on the Griffins.

Senior Trailblazers Lunch and Program:
Friday, August 10, 2012 at 12noon, Smoky Hill United Methodist Church 19491 East Smoky Hill Road, Centennial, CO 80015
The group will present Martha Leiker, author of From Silence to Secrecy, describing her experiences from eight years as a missionary to Africa and her 20 years with the CIA! Come and hear this dynamic and interesting speaker. For reservations please call Charlotte Faris at (303) 690-8466. The cost is $6.00. Enjoy an excellent lunch and program! Help cleaning up after lunch is appreciated.

APRIL PROGRAM

The speaker at our previous meeting on April 21 at the Melvin Schoolhouse was Dottie Jefferies, who appeared in period costume as the “Unsinkable” Molly Brown. She gave us a very informative talk on Molly Brown and Molly’s heroism during the sinking of the Titanic, which met its demise exactly 100 years ago. Dottie has been a volunteer docent, presenter, and Victorian tea server at Denver’s Molly Brown House and Museum since 1995. She also sews, quilts, and gardens as a volunteer at The Four Mile House Historic Park, where CCVHS plans to hold a field trip next year. We thank you, Ms. Jefferies, for giving us such an enjoyable and well-researched program.

According to the winter 2012 edition of Historic Denver, Inc., “100 years after the sinking of the Titanic, this compelling human story continues to engage people of all ages…. Additionally, after the ship was found on the ocean floor in 1985 we have the eerie footage of the wreck site from two submersibles that explored the sunken ship.”

In a recent discussion of Kristen Iverson’s 1999 book Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth, Colleen Slevin wrote, “Iverson says two books written in the 1930s created the image of Brown as a gun-packing, wisecracking former saloon girl, accounts that became the basis of the Broadway play and later the 1964 musical starring Debbie Reynolds” as well as actress Kathy Bates’ role as Molly Brown in James Cameron’s epic movie Titanic. Slevin goes on to write, “Before the disaster, Brown was well known in the Mile High City for her charity and social reform work, such as fundraising to build Immaculate
Conception Cathedral and mountain camps for poor children and orphans. After the sinking, she gained fame for raising money from rich Titanic survivors to help poorer passengers, making sure they had a place to go when they got to New York….”

Cate Terwilliger, in a 1999 article in The Denver Post, wrote, “Thanks to James Cameron’s 1998 blockbuster movie and ‘The Unsinkable Molly Brown’ a generation earlier, the Denver socialite is remembered mostly as Titanic’s give-em-hell heroine…. The Brown myth has reduced an educated, sophisticated humanitarian who worked tirelessly for the rights of women, children and mine workers to a bawdy backwoods heroine…. Even the name ‘Molly’ was a Broadway fabrication perpetuated by Hollywood; Brown never used it in her lifetime. ‘The idea that she was uncouth, unsophisticated, didn’t fit in – that is not true,’ Iverson says. ‘That’s not to say that she didn’t rock the boat, so to speak; she was absolutely unafraid to express her opinions.’”

In July the Molly Brown House held a 145th birthday celebration for Ms. Brown (1867-1932). Some people have asked if she is buried here in Colorado. She is not. Molly and her husband James J. (“J.J.”), who were estranged at the time, are buried next to each other in a cemetery on Long Island outside New York City.

*See the exhibit “Unsinkable Molly Brown: Denver’s Heroine of the Titanic” at the Molly Brown House and Museum, 1340 Pennsylvania Street, Denver, CO 80203. The exhibit is showing through the end of this year. For reservations and prices call 303-832-4092.*

**FEBRUARY PROGRAM**

Our speakers at the February 2012 meeting were John Dale and Jennifer Kuehner, who presented an informative program on “Historic School Buildings in the Cherry Creek and Aurora Public Schools.” John is a former principal of several Aurora schools, and Jennifer is the Executive Director of the Aurora History Museum. They showed wonderful photos in a PowerPoint presentation, and both believe that there is nothing like seeing our local history to understand it.

Cherry Creek School District organized in the 1950s with the consolidation of the Adams County, Sable, Altura, Tollgate, Clyde Miller, and First Creek school districts.

Melvin School was built in 1922 at Belleview and Jordan Roads. Because it was condemned to accommodate Cherry Creek Dam, it was moved to the corner of Parker and Quincy Roads to become the original Emerald Isle tavern. Eventually it was saved and moved to the Smoky Hill High School campus, where it stands today as the unofficial “clubhouse” of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and is the first historical landmark of the City of Aurora.

Other schools discussed include Maple Grove (southeast of Four Mile House) and Cunningham (now on the grounds of the Cherry Creek Challenge School). Central grade school (1892-1919, burned down and rebuilt) changed its name to Martha Crawford Elementary in the 1950s. William Smith High School was built in 1931 and is an Aurora landmark; it became West Junior High and is now the Aurora West Collegiate Preparatory Academy. The original Tollgate and First Creek school buildings are gone. Coal Creek is a one-room schoolhouse that was shown on the cover of the February 2012 Quill; it was located north of Buckley Air Force Base but was recently moved to the historic DeLaney Farm property near Aurora Community College.
A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE MELVIN SCHOOL

1922 - The Melvin School was built in the NW1/4 of Section 13, T5S, R67W, Arapahoe County, Colorado on land donated by Hans Dransfeldt. The DeBoer brothers built the school for $4,450. The original site was at the junction of Belleview Avenue and the old Sullivan Road (now Jordan Road) in Cherry Creek State Park. The school opened in September of 1922.

1949 - Families in the community of Melvin received condemnation papers telling them to move from the area in preparation for the building of the dam. The school was included in this area, and it closed its doors in June of 1949. The building was sold to J. Edwin Stout for $1,500. He sold it to William Minshall who had it moved to the southwest corner of the intersection of Parker Road and Quincy Avenue (Section 12, T5S, R67W).

1953 - After extensive remodeling, the former schoolhouse opened as the Emerald Isle Tavern on Saint Patrick's Day. Glenn Barrier managed it as Glenn's Emerald Isle Tavern until 1970.

1975 - Five area residents who were interested in local history and in saving the old Melvin School incorporated and became the first Board of Directors of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society, Inc. They persuaded Mr. Silverberg to donate the building to the Society in trade for their moving it elsewhere and leveling the site after the moving of the building. The Society's purpose was to restore the old Melvin School and to use it as a classroom-museum-library for the study and collection of local historical information.

1976 - Cherry Creek School District offered a site on the campus of Smoky Hill High School. It was moved on December 14, 1976.

1977-1981 - With the help of the community, the school district, and the historical society, the Melvin School was restored. The exterior was authentically restored as was one classroom. The second classroom, the one which originally had a stage, was adaptively restored into a museum and a library. A plaque which honors those who helped in the restoration has been engraved with the slogan: “Restored by the Community - For the Community.”

1984 - The Melvin School was put on the National Register of Historic Places.

1988 - The City of Aurora honored the Melvin School as Aurora Historic Landmark #1.

The Quill is the quarterly newsletter of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society (CCVHS). The purposes of the Society are to study, record, preserve, and display the history of the Cherry Creek Valley and surrounding areas. Membership is open to anyone interested in this history. Quarterly general meetings are usually held at the Melvin Schoolhouse, 4950 S. Laredo St. (between Smoky Hill High School and Laredo Middle School) in Aurora, Colo. Correspondence concerning The Quill should be directed to Garry O’Hara, editor, at (303) 751-3140.

YOU CAN HELP MAKE HISTORY

Collect the past  Preserve the present  Plan for the future