Peter Faris
“Rock Inscriptions as Historic Documents”

While historians base most of their research on written sources, one important record seems to be almost universally overlooked. Rock inscriptions provide records of historic events in many cases just as surely as a traveler’s diary, and when combined with other sources, can add depth and enrichment to the story of the past. Peter Faris will present the stories behind some historic rock inscriptions from Colorado’s past including the 5th US Cavalry, the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, and the iconic Kit Carson.

Peter’s degrees are in art and art history. For more than 30 years he has focused his studies on rock art and Native American art and history. After college teaching he gravitated to cultural institution management, serving from 1995 to 2001 as the exhibits curator of the Aurora History Museum where he designed 30 major exhibits. From 2001 to 2005 he was a reference librarian in the Aurora public libraries. Since 2006 he has been on the Arapahoe County Cultural Council, which distributes Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) funding to non-profit groups in Arapahoe County. He served on the Board of Directors of History Colorado from 2008 to 2013 and continues as a member on the Program Committee and on the Archaeology and Historic Preservation Committee. He has been a member of the Colorado Archaeological Society for over 30 years, and he worked at the Smoky Hill branch of the Arapahoe County Library system until this May.

In 2003 Mr. Faris became the founding president of the Colorado Rock Art Association and its Archives Coordinator. A former Vice-President of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society, he showed us the exhibits at the new History Colorado museum two years ago.
NOTE THE MEETING TIME: Because of scheduling problems, this meeting is on a Friday afternoon. This is a departure from our normal weekend meeting times.

OUR LOSS OF ROBERT WILSON

CCVHS member Robert Wilson, Sr. died on June 26 in Centennial at the age of 92. His wife, member Catherine, died in 2011 after 63 years of marriage. Bob had degrees in law and engineering and worked in the legal department of the Gates Rubber Company for over 40 years. He was on the school board of Cherry Creek schools for 30 years and served as its president more than once.

MEMBER NEWS

We welcome new member Denice Dirks of Centennial. Denice is a member of the Piney Creek chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution who visited Melvin School last month.

We sincerely thank Ruth Dolan for her generous donation to the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society for the 17 Mile House Farm Park.

CCVHS congratulates Assistant Secretary-Treasurer Nita McKnight and her husband Herb on the recent occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. And we congratulate our Treasurer Kevin Sear and his wife Karen (our former Secretary) who recently celebrated their 25th anniversary.

FIELD TRIP TO THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY MUSEUM

On June 4 and 25 CCVHS members visited the museum of the Telecommunications History Group (THG) in the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Building in downtown Denver (931 14th Street). The mission of the THG is to preserve and publicize the heritage of the U.S. telecommunications industry. The visit was a result of Michael W. Nearing’s presentation on the history of telecommunications to CCVHS in 2013. Michael, Jody Georgeson, and Renee Lang were outstanding as our tour guides to this fascinating place. In the museum we got to view the development of the telephone from early “muttering machines” to later telephones with which we are familiar, to modern cordless and smart phones. On the top floor we were shown the stately executive offices of past presidents of the predecessors to CenturyLink (“the phone company”). Here some of our younger members got to do something they had not done before: make a call from a phone booth! The THG’s virtual tour is at www.telcomhistory.org.

Our June 4th group also got to see part of the THG’s archives, which is one of the nation’s largest archives and research libraries of the telephone industry. Here we saw thousands of old phone directories from this region, numerous examples of telephone stock certificates, and many other historical documents and photographs. During his program last year, Mr. Nearing had presented CCVHS with a copy of the book Muttering Machines to Laser Beams by Herbert J. Hackenburg, Jr., and this time we were able to exchange it for a copy signed by the author. A side-benefit was the chance to tour much of the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Building itself. (Mr. Nearing gave us a print from The Denver Post of June 12, 1925 showing the demolition of the Moffat and Daniels houses to make way for this building at 14th and Curtis.) This 15-story landmark was the city’s tallest office building at the time and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Gracing the two main entrances are several murals by renowned local artist Allen True that depict the development of communications in Colorado.
FIELD TRIP TO THE ADAMS COUNTY MUSEUM

On August 6th we traveled north to the Adams County Museum near Brighton. We found that there is much more to see than just the main museum building, which is quite large and interesting in its own right. Joseph McSorley was our tour guide, and he spent two hours showing us the extensive museum grounds. We got to tour the 1887 Victorian house and marvel at its beautiful period furnishings; the old Conoco gas station; the railroad caboose; the blacksmith shop, which was in use as of a few years ago; the Little School House; the drive-on weight scale; Hoffman Hall, which houses many old farm implements and numerous other historical exhibits; the replica fire station; and the Carlson Cultural Center that displays many old photographs and other changing exhibits. The museum is operated by the Adams County Historical Society and we thank ACHS President Clifford Lushbough, museum coordinator Terry Hagen, and museum administrator Dixie Pierce for arranging our trip. We especially give our appreciation to Joseph for giving us such a great tour. The Adams County Museum was badly affected by last year’s flooding. Several of the outdoor exhibits we saw on our tour of the museum grounds had been deluged with several inches of water and mud; the parking lot was covered with 18 inches of water last September. But the Victorian house suffered the worst damage; the house’s basement was filled with eight feet of water and many antiques, old furniture pieces, and holiday decorations that were stored there were destroyed. CCVHS salutes the Adams County Historical Society and Museum for enduring all this anguish and courageously emerging from it to have a great 2014 season.

FIELD TRIP TO THE ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM

On August 15, shortly after our trip north to Adams County, we traveled south for our field trip to the Elbert County Museum in Kiowa. There we saw the first phase of the exhibit on the Smoky Hill Trail, which ran in front of the museum and through the middle of the town of Kiowa. To quote the museum’s literature, “Imagine traveling the 600 miles from Leavenworth, Kansas to Denver… walking the ruts of a dusty wagon road, always keeping an eye out for rattlesnakes, and yearning to see that first glimpse of Pike’s Peak on the horizon. Imagine no more. The Shortcut to the Rockies exhibit is the first phase of a three-year project focusing on the Smoky Hill Trail, its impact on Colorado, and how that early travel inspired later modes of transportation. The exhibit features the trail’s origin, destination and purpose, including the three branches that crossed Elbert County.” Next year’s Phase 2 will focus on the trail’s use by railroads through Elbert County; Phase 3 in 2016 will focus on the highways that used the trail and how the automobile affected the county. Our thanks go to Elbert County Historical Society & Museum President Joe Martell; exhibit designer Rand Hood, who was on hand for our visit; and especially to Hank and Donna Smith, who introduced the exhibit and answered all our questions. The Elbert County Museum closed for the year on Labor Day, and we plan to return there next year to see the next phase of the Smoky Hill Trail exhibit.
HAPPENINGS AT 17 MILE HOUSE
The 17 Mile House Farm Park was the scene of Arapahoe County Open Spaces department’s annual Shareback ceremony and breakfast on the morning of June 27th. (Half of the revenue generated by the Open Spaces sales and use tax is shared back to incorporated towns in Arapahoe County for the development of open spaces, parks, and trails.) Karen & Kevin Sear, Charlotte Faris, Hannah Sear and Garry O’Hara were on-hand to answer questions about 17 Mile House.

On August 19th 17 Mile House was opened for members of the Race family for a celebration in honor of Ruth Dolan’s and Jack Race’s sister Jean, who lives in Buena Vista. Jean lived in the house when Ruth and Jack did but she had not yet seen it since its restoration. The celebration doubled as a birthday party for Jean, who loved seeing the old home for the first time in many years. We thank Karen Sear and Garry O’Hara for being present to help out as needed.

CCVHS thanks all those who have helped clean the 17 Mile House barn and make its displays of donated artifacts more presentable. Our appreciation goes to Karen Sear, Nita and Herb McKnight, Mary Louise Link, Gary and Sherrie Wolf, Vonnie C’deBaca, Garry O’Hara, and Carol Epps for taking on this difficult job for the last few weeks. And particular thanks go to Nita’s brothers Leon and Loyd Link for identifying the artifacts and assessing their condition.

The CCVHS Board received the following note from Glen Poole, Arapahoe County Open Space Operations Manager:

I understand last Saturday’s open house at the 17 Mile property was a great success. I wanted to “Thank you” for all your efforts so far supporting these activities and your enthusiastic response to helping us with school groups in May. The Operations staff could not offer these opportunities to the public without your volunteer assistance. Well done!

On September 8th CCVHS gave Jennifer Kuehner and her staff of the Aurora History Museum a guided tour of the 17 Mile House and barn.

PINEY CREEK DAR VISITS MELVIN SCHOOL
On August 16th the Piney Creek chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution held a social meeting at the Melvin Schoolhouse. Garry O’Hara spoke about the history of the school and CCVHS, and Nita McKnight spoke about her experiences as the “schoolm’arm” for various school groups. At this meeting we learned that the Piney Creek DAR’s nametag depicts a drawing of Melvin School.

UPCOMING CCVHS EVENTS
Friday October 10th, 2pm – 4pm, Home School tour of 17 Mile House Farm Park
Saturday November 8th, time to be determined, Melvin School Open House
Saturday November 15th, Noon – 2pm, 17 Mile House Farm Park Open House
Saturday December 6th, Noon – 2pm, 17 Mile House Farm Park Open House
FALL FESTIVAL AT 17 MILE HOUSE

Arapahoe County Open Spaces is holding their annual fall festival at 17 Mile House Farm Park on Saturday October 18th from 10am to 4pm. This event is supported by CCVHS. We need a number of volunteers for the following jobs.

Setup/Cleanup: At all areas of the property. Need to be flexible and help with various jobs including assist setting up canopies, tables, and chairs; unloading pumpkins from trucks to the display area; and setting up butter churning display.

Greeter: At various locations including front gate outside, front and back doors of the house, and barn. Welcome visitors to the fall festival, hand out fliers, and answer general questions about location of vendors and activities.

Historian: At various locations in the house and north section of the barn. Provide information about a particular room and answer questions relating to the 17 Mile House history. Areas include the original log cabin room, ballroom, master bedroom/sewing room, kitchen, second floor rooms, and north section of the barn. Training provided.

History Information Table: At Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society table outside the house. Provide handouts and fliers, and answer general questions about the property. Accept new memberships and donations, and help with sales of books and genealogy jars.

“Meet Your Wild Neighbors”: At Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners table outside. Using the Colorado Parks & Wildlife ‘Critter Crate’ and other materials, discuss the various critters that live along Cherry Creek. We include discussion of water, geology and plant life; all part of the ecosystem we share. Emphasis on safety and awareness in our beautiful open space parks. Training provided.

Butter Churning: At demonstration area outside. Help with butter churning information and demonstrations. Includes teaching children using small jars, and supervising adults on large churns.

Pumpkin Selling: In the field near the barn. Help with selling pumpkins.

Roving Assistant: All around the property. Check with all volunteers in the house, barn, and vendor areas. Deliver water bottles to volunteers and provide help as needed.

If you can help contact Bill Bauer at Arapahoe County Open Spaces (720) 874-6555, bbauer@arapahoegov.com or Karen Sear with CCVHS at ccvhsco@gmail.com or (303) 514-2094. Please see the attached volunteer form.

MILESTONES THIS YEAR

This year marks the 200th anniversary of The Star Spangled Banner. On September 13, 1814, young U.S. lawyer Francis Scott Key was sent to a British ship in Baltimore harbor to negotiate a prisoner’s release. This was during the War of 1812 and the British had already burned down much of Washington and were about to begin an assault on Fort McHenry, the American fortress that was guarding Baltimore. Ordered to remain on the British ship during the nighttime bombardment of the fort, Key wrote his memorable poem “Defence of Fort M’Henry” the next morning when he saw that “our flag was still there” and the British were giving up the assault. This victory was a boost to American morale, and the U.S. flag then became even more of a revered symbol of our country than it had before. The poem was later put to the tune of an old English drinking song to become The Star Spangled Banner, which didn’t officially become our national anthem until 1931. (The huge 15-star Fort McHenry flag, minus countless souvenir “snippings,” is on permanent display at the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution.)

2014 marks another milestone: Curtis School, in the Cherry Creek Valley town of Greenwood Village, is celebrating its centennial this year. Serving as a school for 53 years and later as town hall and community center, in 1991 it became the Curtis Arts and Humanities Center. This is an excellent historical repository and art museum that conducts many adult art classes and over 40 youth arts programs every year. It is considered the oldest building in Greenwood Village, which was incorporated in 1950 and borders the west side of Cherry Creek State Park. See “Events of Other Societies” in this Quill for directions and coming activities.

There are several other milestones in 2014. Two of the more significant are that World War I started 100 ago (it began in Europe in 1914 but the U.S. didn’t become involved until 1917) and that World War II began 75 years ago (it broke out in 1939 but the U.S. didn’t become militarily involved until Pearl Harbor in 1941). To go back even further in time, the negotiations that ended the War of 1812 took place 200 years ago in late 1814, although Andrew Jackson’s famous victory in the Battle of New Orleans occurred in early 1815 (word got around more slowly then).
This November marks the 150th commemoration of the Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyennes and Arapahos by Colorado troops in southeast Colorado, and this April marked the 100th anniversary of the Ludlow Massacre of coal miners’ and their families near Trinidad in southern Colorado.

On a lighter note, 2014 is the 150th anniversary of the University of Denver (then Colorado Seminary) and the 125th anniversary of the University of Northern Colorado (then Colorado State Teachers College). It’s interesting to note that the state bill authorizing what is now the University of Northern Colorado was signed on April Fool’s Day 1889 and that the school’s first building was dedicated on Friday the 13th 1890. Other “birthdays” this year were Elbert County (140 years old in February) and St. Mary’s Academy in Cherry Hills Village (150 years old in August).

This month marks another anniversary, the one-year commemoration of the most extensive floods in our state in recent memory. For almost a week last September the rains kept coming down in northeast Colorado, causing rivers and creeks to overflow, damaging or washing out roads and bridges, and resulting in nine deaths and over 1800 homes lost.

We also congratulate the Lyons Historical Society (LHS) and its Redstone Museum for “weathering” last September’s devastation. Lyons is about 20 miles southeast of Estes Park. LHS president and CCVHS member LaVern Johnson reports that the museum was not affected by the flooding because it occupies an 1881 school building that was built on a hill. The museum (303-823-5271) closes for the season on September 30 and plans to reopen for the 2015 season next May. The town of Lyons, however, was one of the communities hardest-hit by the floods; it was virtually “cut in half” and is still recovering from the catastrophe that destroyed or severely damaged 100 houses. It is estimated that it will take five years for the town to get back to “normal.” This month the town is holding “Viva Lyons” and “One-Year Strong” events. Donations may be sent to the Lyons Community Foundation, PO Box 546, Lyons 80540.

Next year we will have a special anniversary to celebrate: Our own Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society turns 40!

REPAIRING AND REGILDING THE STATE CAPITOL DOME
The Denver Post articles “Gold at its peak” by Joey Bunch (12/27/13) and “Capitol treasure” by Colleen O’Connor (3/5/13) were used for the following story.

The 272-foot-high dome of the Colorado State Capitol building has been closed for repairs since 2007, when a 10-pound chunk of cast iron broke away and fell onto the public observation deck. This incident highlighted the deterioration that the dome had undergone after decades of freeze-thaw cycles and water damage; immediate structural repairs were imperative. While interior repairs were underway, the state used the opportunity to sand-blast and resurface the gold exterior of the dome. Most of the indoor and outdoor work was completed at the end of last year, and minor touch-ups are now almost finished. We are happy to report that the dome is scheduled to reopen to the public this October 2nd.

A controversy emerged when the Colorado legislature announced that State Historical Fund (SHF) money would be used to fund a major part of the dome work (the rest coming from the state’s general fund a campaign led by Colorado Preservation, Inc. to solicit private donations). Many people thought that the entire project should be paid for from the general fund and that the SHF’s traditional role in historic preservation would be permanently weakened. This has not happened, thankfully, and the State Historical Fund remains the primary source of historic-preservation money for most towns in Colorado. This year the SHF has awarded more than $8.8 million for 120 grants in 40 counties. The Fund has also provided emergency grants to several buildings that were damaged in last year flooding, such as the Lyons Depot Library.

The regilding job involved covering the dome with a shroud and scaffolding and then recoating it with gold leaf. Only 65 ounces of 24-karat gold were used in the resurfacing effort. This small amount of gold was made into 140,000 3-inch-square leaves that completely covered the 2842-square-foot dome. A company in Italy milled the gold leaves thinner than tissue paper.

A dollar doesn’t go as far as it used to: The entire Capitol originally cost almost $3 million to construct, whereas the cost of the current repairs has been about $17 million. It took from 1886 to 1903 to build the Capitol building, even though the land had been
donated years earlier by Henry Cordes Brown (the same Mr. Brown who commissioned the construction of the Brown Palace). The Capitol’s architect, Elijah E. Myers, had already designed the statehouses for Texas and Michigan. The dome was completed in 1898 and for the first ten years was coated with copper, but this tarnished to a dull color and was not considered representative of our state’s heritage. The copper was replaced by gold from the same mine in Teller County that provided the gold for the current regilding effort. Since then the dome has been recoated three more times, the last time in 1991 (which was also the last time that non-Colorado gold was used). The current Colorado gold was generously donated by the Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mining Company, which is owned by the AngloGold Ashanti Company.

Around the interior base of the newly repaired dome you can again view the stained-glass likenesses of 16 persons who contributed to the initial development of Colorado. These persons in the “Colorado Hall of Fame” are Native American Chief Ouray; Colorado Springs founder William Jackson Palmer; Rocky Mountain News founder William Byers; territorial Governor William Gilpin; Kansas Governor James Denver; territorial Governor John Evans; “Mother of Charities” Frances Wisebart Jacobs; U.S. Senator Nathaniel Hill; frontiersman Kit Carson; state Senator Casimiro Barela; Pony Express founder Alexander Majors; state Governor Benjamin Eaton; frontiersman Jim Baker; railroader Bela Hughes; Denver Mayor Richard Buckingham; and “Snowshoe Preacher” John Lewis Dyer. In other areas of the building are the stained-glass portraits of 18 other important people in the history of Colorado.

Colorado building materials were used as much as possible in constructing the Capitol. Accordingly, granite from the town of Granite was used to build the outer walls and marble from the town of Marble was used to make the floors and stairways. Much of the pink interior walls is made of rose onyx (also known as Beulah red marble), which has been found only in the Beulah area; in fact, all known deposits of this rare stone were used in the building of the Capitol.

The first-floor rotunda of the Capitol is adorned with eight Colorado-history murals by Allen True, who also painted the murals we saw at the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Building.

According to the www.colorado.com website, “The Colorado state capitol building sits at exactly one mile above sea level. On the western entrance’s 15th step you’ll notice the inscription “One Mile Above Sea Level.” Don’t be fooled, though. This is not the true one-mile marker. The inscription was made based on measuring techniques from 1909 by students of the University of Denver. Originally, a brass cap was installed to commemorate this first measurement, but after the cap was stolen seven times in a matter of 38 years, the state carved the claim into the stone step itself. In 1969, engineering students from Colorado State University re-measured the distance and found it was slightly off. To compensate for the discrepancy, they installed a brass plaque two steps higher – however, their measurement was off as well. Finally, in 2003, college students from Metropolitan State College of Denver re-measured the height, and in a dedication ceremony that same year, Governor Bill Owens placed an official marker on the 13th step – the true mark of one mile above sea level.” That is, until measuring equipment and techniques improve to where a fourth marker is needed to indicate “the real” elevation of 5280 feet.

EVENTS OF OTHER SOCIETIES

The Aurora History Museum will sponsor an Antique Appraisal Fair from 9:00AM to 3:00PM on Saturday September 27th at the Aurora Central Library (located almost next to the museum). This is Aurora’s own “Antiques Roadshow.” You must reserve your entry time by calling (303) 739-6705 (no walk-ins accepted). The fee is $5 for one item with a 5-item individual limit; oral appraisals only.

The Four Mile Historic Park’s Pumpkin Harvest Festival takes place on Saturday-Sunday October 4-5 from 10:00AM to 4:00PM each day. Admission is free (there may be fees for food and some activities). The Four Mile Historic Park is located at 715 S. Forest St., Denver 80246 (720-865-0800, www.FourMilePark.org).

The top entries the All-Colorado Art Show will be on display through October 31st at the Curtis Arts & Humanities Center. The Center is housed in the century-old Curtis School located at 2349 E. Orchard Road (one-half block west of University), Greenwood Village 80121 (8:30AM to 5:00PM Monday-Friday, 303-708-6110 or 303-797-1779). The Center has been holding this event for 31 years and will host a reception for the public on September 27 (5:30-7:00PM). The Curtis Arts & Humanities Center is also hosting “A Performance with Poe” on October 29th and 30th starting at 6:30PM each evening. Dramatic readings of Edgar Allan Poe’s haunting works, including “The Raven,” will be accompanied by old “scary” movies (suggested for age 13 and older). All public events at the Center are free of charge.
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 Bellevue 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.

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