



# THE QUILL

CHERRY CREEK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Founded in 1975

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Volume XXXXI, No. 3

August, 2015

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**NEXT MEETING:**  
**Saturday, August 22, 2015**  
**9:30am to 12:00pm noon**  
**Lamb Spring entrance on Titan Road near Roxborough Park**

**Visits to the**  
**LAMB SPRING ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE and the**  
**1874 MIKSCH-HELMER LOG CABIN**



On August 22nd we will team up with the Roxborough Area Historical Society (RAHS) to “travel through time to 10,000 years ago with a stopover in 1874.” We will visit two historically significant sites in northern Douglas County. Each field trip should take about 45 minutes, so we should be done by around noon.

We will meet at 9:30am at the Lamb Spring entrance on Titan Road near Roxborough Park. To get there take I-25 south to Highway 470, and take 470 west for 9 miles to Santa Fe Drive (US

85); there are no tolls to pay. Then go south on Santa Fe Drive for 4.5 miles to Titan Road. Go west on Titan Road for 2.5 miles (just past the intersection with Roxborough Park Road) to the entrance to Lamb Spring. This entrance is not marked, but its mailbox address is 9498 Titan Road (Douglas County Road 7). I will be there to direct you to parking, which is a short distance south.

Our Lamb Spring tour guide will be archeologist and author Jack Warner. At this archeological preserve you can view the site where the bones of over 30 mammoths and other ancient mammals have been discovered. The actual bones have been covered by the soil until a working museum is built to enclose the site, but you will see replicas of the skull and tusks of a mammoth that was excavated at the site in 2001.

We will then carpool to the Miksch-Helmer log cabin, which is only about 5 minutes from Lamb Spring. Our tour guide there will be CCVHS member Susie Trumble, who was the manager of Roxborough State Park for 22 years and who was a founding member of RAHS. The log cabin was built by homesteader Amos Miksch in 1874 and is in unusually good condition. John Helmer later occupied the cabin and his descendants lived here for more than a century.

RAHS needs to know how many participants we will have from CCVHS. Please email or call me (home 303-751-3140 / cell 303-709-7295) and let me know AS SOON AS POSSIBLE if you plan to go. I will relay the headcount to Roxborough.

## PREVIOUS PROGRAM

On May 3rd Amy Gibson treated us to her program “The Hive Lives On: How Quilts Still Bring Us Together.” She discussed how quilting bees brought America’s rural communities together 150 years ago and how this concept continues to thrive today, which is experiencing a resurgence of quilting as an art form and source of recreation. Amy showed us numerous quilts, most of which she had made herself as an acknowledged master and instructor of this craft (which she refers to on her blog as her “quilty sewing obsession”). She presented many examples of her mixing of traditional patch pieces with bold modern fabrics, because “quilting feels like coloring” to her.

Ms. Gibson’s new book *For Keeps: Meaningful Patchwork for Everyday Living* is now in bookstores; you may call me (303-751-3140) to obtain a copy. A copy is also in the Clarice and Fred Crowle Library at Melvin.) Two of the photos she used in the book are from the interior of Melvin Schoolhouse. The book’s theme is stated in the title of the first chapter, “Quilt Making Basics from A to Z.” If you want to learn about this avocation she is so passionate about, this book is for you. Thank you, Amy.

## KATIE SHERMAN RETURNS TO MELVIN SCHOOL AFTER 80 YEARS



Anne Crain – Courtesy Kathleen Sherman

Longtime CCVHS member Kathleen “Katie” Sherman was a second grader at Melvin in 1933-34, and her teacher at the time was her mother Anna Crain. She and her son Jeff dropped by last year as they were traveling back to Oregon. We thank Ms. Sherman for renewing as a life member and for presenting us with the Bible she was given in 1934 by her Sunday School teacher Mrs. May Obrecht, who herself had been a Melvin student. The following was posted on the website of the Cherry Creek School District’s Communications Services office, which interviewed and videoed Katie at the Melvin School last October. We are grateful for their permission to reprint this.

“Katie Sherman’s grade-school stories sound as if they’ve been plucked straight out of a novel by Mark Twain. There were the classroom sessions that included exacting penmanship lessons, exercises in proper calligraphy that saw the teacher tapping students’ worksheets with a long, wooden ruler to make her points. There was the unruly classmate who dropped a toad down the back of Sherman’s shirt and earned a stern reprisal for his prank. Sherman remembers getting her tongue stuck to the school’s frosted metal doorknob during a freezing, frigid day on the Colorado plains and the painful extraction process that followed.”

“These are tales that come straight from Sherman’s months as a second-grader in the Melvin Schoolhouse during the 1933-34 school year. The squat, one-room structure that now sits on the periphery of the Smoky Hill High School campus then sat at an isolated and rural intersection.... When Sherman attended the second-grade class taught by her mother, Anna Gertrude Crain, the Melvin Schoolhouse stood at the

fringe of the untamed prairie in the opening years of the Great Depression. The Melvin School, which had been constructed 11 years earlier for a little less than \$4,500, featured the kind of classroom dynamic that had marked one-room schoolhouses across the Western states. Now the schoolhouse stands as a relic of Colorado's past, a precursor to what would eventually become a bustling urban school district of more than 54,000 students. In 1950, what had been the Melvin School District No. 4 dissolved and became a part of what is now the Cherry Creek School District."

"Happily, that evolution didn't see the destruction of the Melvin Schoolhouse. With the construction of the Cherry Creek Reservoir ..., the building's [new] owners relocated and repurposed the one-story building; it stood as a bar and restaurant for decades before dedicated historians worked with the Cherry Creek School District to restore and relocate the schoolhouse to the Smoky Hill site."



Kathleen Sherman – Courtesy Cherry Creek Schools

"The decades haven't dimmed Sherman's memories of her fondness for the place. 'I wanted to come back. I love coming here,' said Sherman, now 88, during her latest visit to her former schoolhouse on Oct. 7. 'I think it's a masterpiece,' she added, seated at the teacher's desk in the back of the rectangular room and flanked by the portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln hanging of the wall."

"It's not the first time Sherman has made a long journey to revisit her second-grade classroom. She first made the trip to the rebuilt schoolhouse in 2002, and she recalls finding a preserved attendance roll from her mother's class. This time, she traveled from her Oregon home with her son, Jeff Sherman, and her grandson, David Sherman. The Melvin building in Aurora was just one of many stops on her itinerary. The Sherman family had plans to visit other Colorado sites from Katie Sherman's childhood, including the small town of Bonanza where she attended a different schoolhouse."

"This has been a lot of fun, and we're not in a hurry,' said Jeff Sherman. 'We've been traveling and hearing stories about what it was like."

"Standing in the Melvin Schoolhouse, it wasn't so difficult to imagine. The restored building features authentic furniture, decorations and books straight out of the 1930s. Wooden globes, a paper dunce cap, bound textbooks, printed rules for turn-of-the-century teachers that encourages them to 'fill lamps and clean chimneys' daily – all of these touches speak to a different era in education."

"That era doesn't feel so far removed for Katie Sherman when she revisits the historic schoolhouse at Smoky Hill. 'She remembers a lot of small details,' said her grandson David Sherman."

EDITOR'S NOTE: As Katie's father traversed Colorado wherever the work took him, she and her mother Anna followed. During a 40-year teaching career (about 1908 to 1948), Anna Crain ended up teaching in at least 12 schools on the eastern plains and in the mountains. Katie remembers living in a remodeled saloon and in a converted railroad boxcar; her mother teaching 90 Spanish-language children at one time; and that shovels were used to kill rattlesnakes. In the late 1930s Anna taught at the school in Adena, about 16 miles south of Fort Morgan, and she provided photos of the remains of that abandoned school building. (Your editor drove out there a few months ago and found the abandoned shell of the Adena School just as it looked in those old pictures.)

## **OUR LOSS OF DORMAN LEHMAN**

We regret the loss of member Dorman Lehman who passed away on June 1st at age 88. He was a highly respected historical researcher and had been director of history museums in Kansas and Minnesota. Most recently he was a docent at the history museum in Greeley. Mr. Lehman was one of the foremost experts on the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express from Kansas to Colorado, and he wrote an authoritative article on this stage route for an issue of Colorado Heritage. This remarkable man will be greatly missed.

## **MEMBER NEWS**

Our condolences go to life member Jan Herman whose husband Chuck died on July 1st. Jan and he had been living in Arizona because of his health problems, and Jan has now moved back to Douglas County.

We appreciate our new life member Susie Trumble. Thank you for your long time support to the Society.

We are also happy to welcome our new members Lynne Evans, Carol Epps, and Bruce & Marcy Leonard.

## **CCVHS ITEMS**

This spring we were honored by a visit to 17 Mile House by Ed Atwood and his wife Barbara. Ed is the great-grandson of Clement Hightower, who was the son of Mary Hightower (the first known resident of 17 Mile House in the 1860s). They toured the old house with relatives Robin and Ash Atwood, who now live in Parker.

On July 25th we hosted ten members of the Aurora Historic Sites & Preservation Commission at Melvin Schoolhouse, which the commissioners recognize as Aurora Historic Landmark No. 1. CCVHS and the Commission agreed that we should work more closely together on historic preservation.

CCVHS has purchased a Homestead Dress pattern, circa 1860s-70s, for use by anyone who would like to sew that particular dress, perhaps for the fall festival or open houses at the 17 Mile House. It is drawn for sizes 8-26 so a tracing wheel should be used to preserve the multiple sizes on the pattern. A size 14 takes about 7 yards of fabric. The pattern is being housed at the 17 Mile House office. Be sure to use the checkout form with date, name, and phone number and return it in a timely manner. Happy stitching!

Denver is hosting the 52nd international convention of the Society for the Preservation and Advancement of the Harmonica--seriously, there really is such a society and several hundred usually attend. The convention is being held at the Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel. There is a free concert open to the public on Wednesday August 12th at 7:00pm.

## **MELVIN SCHOOL NEWS**

Over the summer months we have continued our schedule of holding an open house at Melvin School on the first Tuesday of each month from 1:00 to 4:00pm. With each open house we have had baked goods for sale and have generated a few dollars each month. Gary Wolf and Herb McKnight are working on refurbishing the map of the Cherry Creek Valley in the "Grange Area." Sherry Wolf is using her expertise in reorganizing the library and getting all the books in order. We are also busy organizing the files that were donated by Clarice's family. There is a lot going on! For the past three months we have had visitors coming in, so we are planning to keep the schedule: 1st Tuesday of each month from 1-4 p.m., and are committed for three months through November. We would love to have others join us. There's lots of work getting done, and we would welcome your help.

## 17 MILE HOUSE NEWS

The 17 Mile House and CCVHS Volunteers have been very busy since the last Quill was published. Summer offers the opportunity for many people to visit the Farm Park! In April the 17 Mile House Volunteers were thanked at the Arapahoe County Volunteer Connections Awards Dinner. This year the 17 Mile House Volunteers were honored for their work in 2014 and awards were presented to Vonnie C'deBaca, Bonnie Bowman, Garry O'Hara, Kevin and Karen Sear, Carol Epps, Ruth Dolan, Jack Race, Nita and Herb McKnight, and Sherrie and Gary Wolf.

Our school programs have provided hands-on lessons both in the house/barn and at the creek thanks to the cooperation between Arapahoe County Open Spaces (Bill Bauer, Derwin Milton, and staff), Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners (Casey Davenhill and staff), and CCVHS volunteers. Groups visiting in May and June included Ambleside Elementary School, Innovage Seniors, Red Hawk Ridge Elementary School, and Common Ground Home School.

In June volunteers spent one day "spring cleaning" to prepare for the summer events. Arapahoe County Open Spaces held their annual Shareback Ceremony and Pancake Breakfast at 17 Mile House on June 26th to celebrate this year's recipients of the sales tax funding.

Volunteers staffed an information table at the Arapahoe County Fair to promote 17 Mile House and other CCVHS interests. The butter churning and "Guess the Object" activities were very successful and sparked many conversations among fair attendees of all ages. Many thanks to Bonnie Bowman, Estee Fraitag, Garry O'Hara, Karen Sear, Nita McKnight, Kathy Odon, and Ruth Fountain. Special appreciation goes to the Kastens family (Christine and Charles, Paige, Emily, and Jackson) for all their enthusiasm and help. Also, congratulations to Paige who won the "Fastest Fingers In the West" knitting contest!

## FRANKLIN HARN'S REMINISCENCES OF PARKER IN THE 1930s

The following contains a series of excerpts from Parker, Colorado and Surrounding Area in the 1930s. A copy of this excellent booklet and the accompanying map were presented to CCVHS in 2012 by its author, Franklin L. Harn, who unfortunately died on June 5th at the age of 93. A Parker resident from 1933 to 1941, Mr. Harn later lived in the same house in southwest Denver for over 60 years. He remembered many original buildings in and around old Parker, as shown below.

Deepe Hall: "The facility included a grocery store on the first floor and a large hall on the second floor. I went to the movies here (Rin-Tin-Tin the Wonder Dog and Tom Mix). We sat on wooden benches, and it cost ten cents." He recalled that the Deepes also operated the telephone exchange and that Gus Deepe was the town constable for several years.

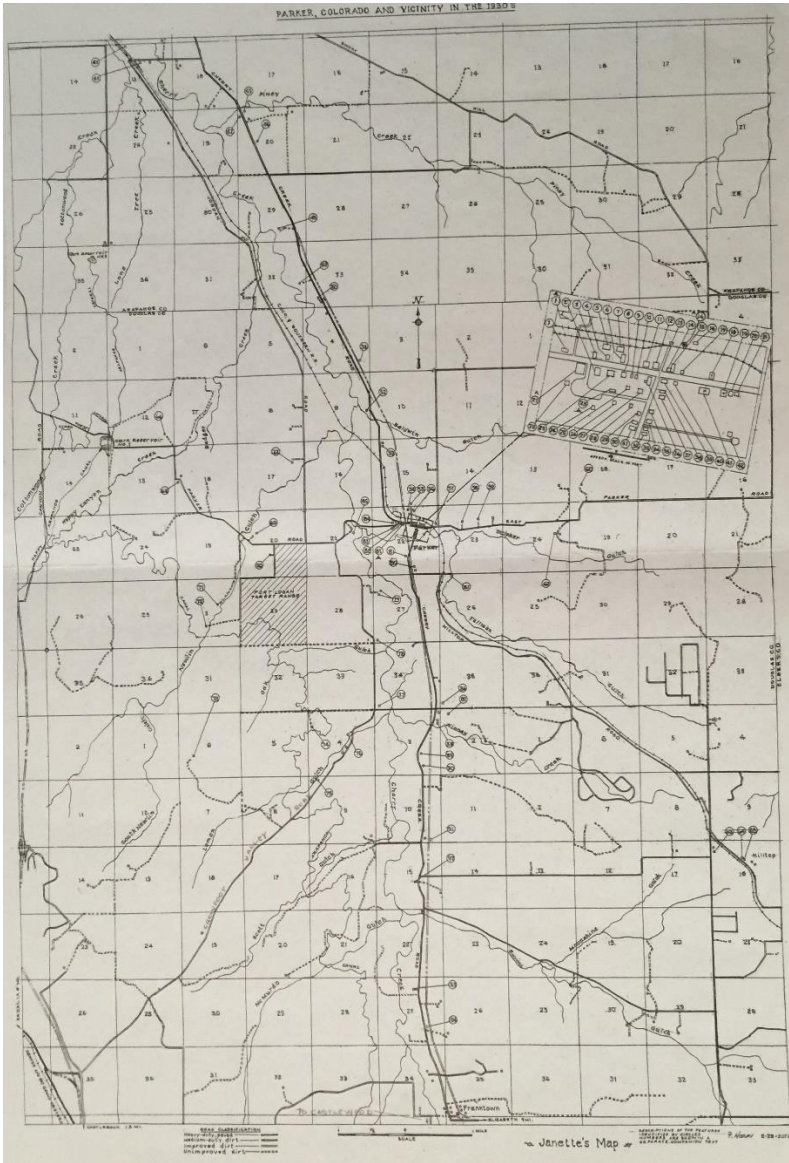
The John and Elsie Lewis residence: "At one time, John was the school custodian. I did yard work for Mrs. Lewis whose one rule of conduct was, 'Absolutely no whistling.'"

The Parker Pool and Lunch building: "This property was originally and historically named the 'Cottage Hotel'. The business was purchased by Lucy Harn [Mr. Harn's mother] from Mr. Lehman in 1933. Mr. Lehman was the 'section boss' for the railroad.... My mom sponsored me in baseball and my uniform had 'Parker Pool and Lunch' printed on it."

"In June of 1933, my mother, my brother (Trusten) and I came to the Parker area. We were going to Windsor, Colorado where she was to interview for a nursing position. We came from a very small town (Jaroso) near the Colorado/New Mexico state line in the San Luis Valley. An acquaintance (Mr. Jensen) asked for a ride so he could visit his grandson living on a farm south of Denver. We arrived at the farm in the late evening. I think the farm was the 17-mile House. At that time, the S.J. Lindholm family lived there. When we were ready to leave, we were informed that hotel accommodations were available in Parker. It was decided that we would go there rather than [go] to Denver to spend the night. The next morning, discussion revealed that the business was for sale. Mother decided to purchase the business, which



included the hotel, a beer bar, lunch room, pool hall and barber shop.” Mr. Harn wrote that his mother sold two diamond rings to Ed Loup, the town’s jeweler, to get the money for the down payment on the business.



He remembered Melvin School at its original location in present-day Cherry Creek State Park: “The school was moved from this original site to a location at the southwest corner of the Smoky Hill High School location. It has been restored by the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society.” He also recalled the Melvin store, Cherry Creek Grange hall, and Cherry Creek School. He worked at Rich Hawkey’s blacksmith shop and said, “Rich Hawkey told me that he remembered, as a child, the Indians peeking through the windows of the school house.” The Hawkey house, torn down in 1987, was the last original house in the Melvin area: “This was one of the very few brick structures that I can remember. Rich Hawkey told me that when he was a boy he stayed awake at night listening to Indian ceremonial dances down on Cherry Creek.”

The restored Tallman-Newlin cabin in the Canterbury area of east Parker: “I don’t know the name for the old gentleman who lived there, but we called him Uncle Billy. He was probably in his late seventies and had lived there as a boy. He told me a story that in his boyhood he was out riding when the Indians tried to catch him. He had the best horse, so he got home safe.”

At the Watts farmhouse west of town: “One night a small group of young people, including my girlfriend Elsie Motsenbocker, her cousin Edna Motsenbocker, and my

brother Trusten Harn had a car break down near the Watts farm. They were coming home from a movie in Denver. Mrs. Watts decided they should stay all night and proceeded to assign sleeping spaces. She went around the room telling each person where they would sleep. When she came to my brother, she said, ‘You can sleep with her.’ This caused by brother considerable concern until it was clarified that she had said, ‘Herb’ not ‘her’. She merely had failed to pronounce the ‘b’ clearly.”

And he remembered the Pikes Peak Grange: “Public dances were held here on the first Saturday of the month during the summer. It was one of the very few recreational venues available. My future wife (Elsie Motsenbocker) and I sure didn’t miss many dances. The music was provided by the local Wheeler family. They played piano, violin, guitar and a saxophone.”

Although Franklin and his daughter Janette Wilkins worked diligently to verify the information in this book, he said that we should “consider it a recording of the memories of an old man.” This very interesting memoir is accompanied by Mr. Harn’s thorough map of the Parker area. We thank the Parker Area Historical Society for allowing us to reprint passages from the book. This book and map may be found at the Clarice and Fred Crowle Library at Melvin School.



## **ARAPAHOE COUNTY OPEN SPACES “OUR PROGRESS TAKES FLIGHT” AWARD**

On June 26<sup>th</sup> Arapahoe County Open Spaces honored the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society with this year’s *Our Progress Takes Flight* Award for our work in educating the public and school children in the history of the 17 Mile House Farm Park. This is especially meaningful to us in that the award was presented jointly to the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners, with whom we have accomplished so much at the 17 Mile House Farm Park. None of this would be possible without the hard work of the people of the Arapahoe County Open Spaces office and the dedication of the wonderful volunteers of our Historical Society and the 17 Mile House.

### **PENNY BURDICK HONORED**

Late CCVHS member Penny Burdick, who died in early 2014, was honored on June 13<sup>th</sup> by a bronze plaque that was dedicated in her memory at the historic Spring Valley School in southern Douglas County. Penny was instrumental in preserving and landmarking the Spring Valley School and several other historic sites in the county. Larry Schlupp, President of the Larkspur Historical Society, said at the dedication, “When she passed last year, the community really lost a strong block in its foundation.”

### **EXHIBITS AT THE AURORA HISTORY MUSEUM**

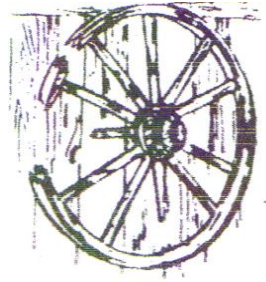
Through September 13<sup>th</sup> the Aurora History Museum is showing “Behind the Badge: Public Safety in Aurora,” which recounts the history of the city’s Fire and Police Departments. Also through September 13<sup>th</sup> the museum is displaying “Scenes from The North American Indian Project,” which will be closed to the public for several time periods this month. Visit [auroramuseum.org](http://auroramuseum.org) or call (303) 739-6660 for details. The museum is located in the Aurora civic complex at 15051 E. Alameda Pkwy, Aurora 80012. Hours are Tuesdays-Fridays 9am-4pm and Saturdays-Sundays 11am-4pm. Admission is always free.

### **NEWS OF OTHER SOCIETIES**

The Colorado-Cherokee Trail Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association is holding a meeting on Saturday August 29<sup>th</sup> in the Philip S. Miller Library, 100 S. Wilcox in Castle Rock. A PowerPoint presentation of mapping and research methods (9:15-10:45am) will be followed by lunch at Subway; then from noon to 3:00pm CCVHS member Lee Whiteley will lead a carpool tour of the segment of the Cherokee Trail that goes from Blackfoot Cave to 20 Mile House.

The Parker Area Historical Society (PAHS) is partnering with several other groups to sponsor the fourth annual Parker Quest on Saturday August 29<sup>th</sup>. This is a scavenger hunt that begins at 10:00am in the O’Brien Park gazebo and makes its way to places of interest in the Town of Parker. Register for this free and family-friendly event at [parkerhistory.org](http://parkerhistory.org). After the Parker Quest (at 12:15pm), Mayor Mike Waid will officially redesignate the Mainstreet Center as The Schoolhouse. (This originally was the Parker Consolidated School, which is now 100 years old.) There will also be the grand opening of the Parker Heritage Center in The Schoolhouse, which includes a new PAHS museum, the PAHS diorama of 1917 Parker, and a new video on the town’s history. (Thanks go to CCVHS and PAHS member Susan Knapp and her family for providing the screen for this interesting video.) The celebration will include refreshments, old-fashioned games, and a car and fire-truck show.

The History Colorado Center (the state historical society museum) is showing “Toys of the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s” through October 4. The exhibit “El Movimiento: The Chicano Movement in Colorado” is on display through October 25. The museum is located on the northeast corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Broadway in downtown Denver. Admission is \$12 for adults; \$10 for seniors (65 and older) and students (ages 13-22 with student ID); \$8 for children ages 6-12; children under age 6 and members are free. Visit its website at [historycoloradocenter.org](http://historycoloradocenter.org) or call 303-HISTORY.



*Address Correction Requested*

Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society  
16100 East Smoky Hill Road  
Aurora, Colorado 80015

## **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.

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### **YOU CAN HELP MAKE HISTORY**

*Collect the past*

*Preserve the present*

*Plan for the future*