

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

APRIL 2016

NEWSLETTER

ROYAL GORGE
REGIONAL
MUSEUM & HISTORY
CENTER

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joined us in March 2016:
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We invite you to come
to our Board Meetings,
each month, last Friday,
2:00 p.m.
RGRM&HC

The Cotopaxi Colony did not fail. More likely, it was a great miracle that these Jewish immigrants survived at all. There are many stories about the Colony today, but most have errors. If you would like to read more on the Colony, these 3 sites have the most accurate information. See Page 3 for the story by Jennifer Moore Lowe.



HISTORY DAY FAIR WINNERS WITH MUSEUM FRIENDS CERTIFICATES AND CASH PRIZES!

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FREMONT COUNTY HERITAGE COMMISSION HAS SELECTED 12 SITES FOR LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION



NAME OF LOCAL LANDMARK	INVENTORY NUMBER	LOCATION
Fremont County Administrative Building	2014-006-1	Cañon City
Greenwood Cemetery	2014-006-2	Cañon City
Castle Hall - Knights of Pythias	2014-008-3	Florence
Bell Tower Cultural Center	2014-008-4	Florence
Deputy Warden's House	2014-006-5	Cañon City
Prospect Heights Jail	2014-006-6	Cañon City
Coaldale Charcoal Kilns	2014-004-7	Coaldale
Old Howard Church	2014-010-8	Howard
Julius Parker Homestead	2014-004-9	Coaldale
St. Anthony's Catholic Church	2015-002-10	Brookside
New Hope Cemetery Assn. & Baptist Church	2015-009-11	Fremont County
Vista Hogan, Reel California Girls	2015-009-12	Fremont County



Carol McNew, Tom Monaco and Ann Swim

The Greenwood Pioneer Cemetery Committee was at the PCC Senior Mini-College on Tuesday, Resource Day, with their display and books. On Thursday, the class on the Pioneers of Greenwood was given to over 30 people, and a tour was conducted on Friday, March 25, at the Cemetery.



1Margaret Storm helps people understand display

THE JEWISH COLONY IN COTOPAXI - (C) 1882-1884

An Overview by Jennifer Moore Lowe (Continued from Page 1)
March 10, 2016

In the late 1800s, Jews living in Russia were being subjected to torture, robberies, lootings and murder. They needed to get out. They could no longer own land, but they heard about the Homestead Act in America. In 1880, Saul Ber Milstein sent his nephew, Jacob Milstein, to America to scout out the situation. Jacob contacted the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society in NYC.

About that same time, E. H. Saltiel had relocated to Cotopaxi. He was developing mining claims and wanted to grow the tiny village. He was a Jew and knew that NYC was being flooded with about 10,000 immigrants every day and that HEAS was looking for agriculture colonies where these immigrants could be relocated. So Saltiel offered them land just south of Cotopaxi. He promised furnished houses, livestock and tools.

Fifty Jewish immigrants arrived in May, 1882. They found 8 houses, 4 cooking stoves, 2 cows. These were religious Jews who did not speak or understand English, and their new neighbors did not understand their customs or culture. These Russian immigrants were truly foreigners in a very foreign land. Their first priority had to have been shelter, then food, clothing, tools and so on. In late July, 12 more immigrants arrived and in August, 8 more came: a total of 70.

Saltiel left almost immediately. He was traveling across the country still trying to get miners to work in his mines. He had 3 young children and had just divorced his wife in 1882 and then he remarried in February 1883. Busy man. Probably little time for the Colonists. He was also embroiled in a number of lawsuits and a variety of liens being placed against his mines.

The Colonists wrote to HEAS in NYC, but the letters went unanswered. Little did they know that HEAS had disbanded. Next, the Colonists turned to the Denver Jewish community for help.

A late start to planting in 1882 guaranteed a failed crop. There were floods in the spring of 1883. A very short growing season and the crops failed again. With no food, the Colonists found work in Saltiel's mines. They went without pay for as much as 2 1/2 months. They filed a lien against his mine. There is a possibility that they were given credit at Hart's store, but the store was near bankrupt that spring and Hart, himself, was in the middle of an ongoing lawsuit with Saltiel (his distant cousin). They were also able to secure short-lived work on the railroad west of Salida.

Yet with all these hardships, they formed a Jewish shul and named it Olev Shalom, Lovers of Peace. They had escaped the Pogroms in Russia and found Peace in Cotopaxi. There were 3 weddings in the fall of 1882 which means there might have been a bit of matchmaking going on. They received a Torah (Old Testament scroll) from NYC and kept the Jewish feasts.

Much has been written that the Cotopaxi Colony failed. Perhaps a better conclusion is that it was set up to fail. Additional conditions to consider:

- The southern Colorado Rocky Mountains are not suitable for farming due to the altitude, short growing season, lack of water, and rocky soil.
- The McCoy gang - known for cattle rustling and murder - was present at Cotopaxi.
- The last treaty with the Indians had been signed, but they were still present in the area.
- The train tracks had just been laid, but there was no road. The stagecoach from Cotopaxi to Cañon City took 2 days.

These Colonists were experienced farmers, having farmed in Russia before coming to America. They were not lazy. They walked the 8 miles from their farms to the Shul in Cotopaxi to worship. They broke the ground using hand shovels. They planted crops. But they could not control the weather and most likely weren't prepared for their first winter.

We know that some left in the spring of 1883. A few stayed on until 1884. And as of May, 1884, the Colony had completely disbanded. They relocated to successful farms and/or created successful businesses that laid the foundation for Denver, Seattle and Sioux City, Iowa. For more information go to the websites below/

The Cotopaxi Colony did not fail. More likely, it was a great miracle that these Jewish immigrants survived at all. There are many stories about the Colony today, but most have errors. If you would like to read more on the Colony, these 3 sites have the most accurate information.

www.cotopaxi-colony.blogspot.com

<http://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/cotopaxi/>

www.cotopaxi-colony.com

From Page 1: PICTURE OF HARRISON SCHOOL HISTORY FAIR:

Even though it may be our slowest time of the year for visitors, it does not mean that staff is slowing down. In fact, we have been working hard behind the scenes on a number of different projects. The first project is the redesign of the fossil exhibit. The museum received a grant from the Bureau of Land Management to update the old exhibit so it will include more fossils and better hands-on interactives.

The second project staff is working started this fall. The museum is collaborating with the Cañon Exploratory School 7th and 8th Grade Classes in the development of a new exhibit on the Rudd Family and the stone house. Students researched and designed labels for the exhibit and developed a hands-on interactive as well. The opening for the exhibit is set for May 20th.

Work has also begun on the Rudd House Roof Rehabilitation project. A member of the architectural firm did an inspection of the roof the first full week in March. He took photographs of both the exterior of the roof and the attic interior. We hope to have a final report and bid documents in the coming weeks.

Finally, Lisa Studts served as a judge in this year's Harrison School History Day Contest in conjunction with National History Day competition. Students from the 7th and 8th Grade class submitted their history project to be judged in one of four different categories (exhibit, website, documentary, or paper). The students' projects were judged on historical content, relationship to the National History Day theme, and having a clear thesis. The Friends of the Museum offered a certificate and a cash reward to all of the first place winners this year. We would like to congratulate all of the winners and participants on their hard work in making this year's History Day contest a great learning experience.



Resource Day, March 22, 2016, at the Pueblo Community College Senior Mini-College was a great place for the LADIES OF THE MUSEUM and HISTORY CENTER to tell folks about all the wonderful exhibits, events and projects which are being planned for 2016. From Left: Sue Cochran, Kelli Cheever, Curator, Lisa Studts, and Nancy Masimer (seated.) (Picture courtesy Carol McNew)



FLORENCE HISTORICAL ARCHIVE, INC.

From Left: Dorothy Cool, Melvena Benham, Martie LaCasse, Jenny Miley, and Millie Wintz

MOTTO: HISTORY BELONGS TO EVERYONE

Florence Historical Archive, Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization incorporated in Colorado with a Board of five Directors and is governed by its bylaws and policies and is bound to follow all local, state, and federal laws while fulfilling its mission. We are interested in working with all local history organizations and municipal entities.

The Florence Historical Archive is located in the Florence Municipal Building, Suite H (H for History) The address is 600 West Third Street. Florence, Colorado 81226.

We store flat history – the FAHI is not a museum,. A museum deals with 3D artifacts. The FHAI deals with 2D flat materials, printed materials: documents, organizations' records, cemetery listings, birth and death records, newspapers, maps, posters, photographs and negatives. Letters plus other printable materials are solicited from local people for preservation. We are a repository dedicated to protect and preserve the historical data of our area. The Florence Historical Archive is a public records center. We provide local hands-on access in a welcoming research environment, open all year, with a regular schedule and knowledgeable staff available to researchers students, teachers, historians, genealogists, residents and tourists, and make that access easy through the accession list and searchable databases that are compatible across the historical organizations of the county and available for generations to come.

The Florence Historical Archive, Inc. is a product of Carol Fox and her 50 years of collecting, preserving and providing our history to the public.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the FHAI is to protect, preserve, and provide to the public the historical data of Florence, southeastern Fremont County, and northeastern Custer County of Colorado, organized in a cohesive, searchable database in accordance with standard archival methods, a historical repository, and a public research center for educational, cultural, community and personal enrichment.

Picture: courtesy Carol McNew

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM & HISTORY CENTER

Carol McNew, /Newsletter Editor

Margaret Storm, Proof Reader

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**PLEASE SEND YOUR MEMBERSHIP CHECK
TO:**

Friends of the Museum

P.O. Box 481, Cañon City, CO 81215 - 0481

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Membership envelopes are available at the Museum - We encourage you to pick one up. Lifetime membership was started in 2015 as a convenience to our long-time supporters and as an additional fund-raising program. We now have 6 lifetime members, and hope that many more of our yearly members wish to support us in this way:



JoAnn Grenard
Broker, Owner

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