

Continuum

Newsletter of the Boulder History Museum

Rocky Flats Turns 50

Spring 2002

“Boulder Gets \$45,000,000 Atomic Plant,” boasted the headline from the March 23, 1951 Boulder Daily Camera. “There’s Good News Today,” proclaimed the Denver Post mirroring the general excitement. Area chambers of commerce had proposed the site as part of a national competition for construction of a vast nuclear weapons complex, now being dismantled after fifty years.

In April 1952 the first production occurred at the Plant, whose primary role was to fabricate plutonium triggers for the hydrogen bomb, and to recover valuable plutonium metal sent from other federal sites. The workforce at Rocky Flats became among the best in the world at precision metal-



working and metallurgy. They developed methods to achieve precise tolerances and bond different types of rare metals to meet exacting standards. The triggers were designed so they could be transported without detonating yet would be reliable when used to detonate the weapon. *Cont...*

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President's Message

Our museum has an updated logo and a slightly different name. We heard from our members that “History” needed to be included in the name for the museum, and it has.

The Boulder History Museum is a bit easier to say

and describes what it is about. If you have not been a visitor recently, bring a friend or two along and sign them up as members. It is great to see how the neighborhood is improving. The University Hill Neighborhood Association is well organized and

energetic. Several institutions, including The Boulder History Museum, The Economics Institute and Grace Lutheran Church are working together to support positive activities in the neighborhood. The Harbeck House is a great icon that lends majesty to

the area. Whether or not you live or work on the Hill, it is an important part of Boulder's history. Beach Park is worth a visit too. It has received a much-needed face-lift and compliments our site.

Rocky Flats Cont...

Nearly every nuclear weapon built in the United States in the last fifty years contains parts made at Rocky Flats. At one time over seven thousand workers were employed there. The land and buildings are owned by the U.S. government's Department of Energy which employs a small oversight team. All production, security, support, and cleanup work is done by the private sector. Dow Chemical, Rockwell International, EG&G, and Kaiser-Hill have been the major contractors. Unions have been actively representing most workers since the 1950's.



The \$45 million it took to construct the Rocky Flats Plant contrasts with the nearly \$7 billion that will have been spent since production ceased to deal with the legacy of nuclear materials and chemical contamination at the site. The Rocky Flats Plant occupies about 400 acres in the center of a 6,400 acre buffer zone bounded by Highway 93 to the west, Highway 128 and the National Renewable Energy Lab Wind Site to the north, Indiana Street to the east, and private land adjoining Highway 72 to the south. All but a small parcel is located in Jefferson County.

Security has always been high at the facility. The first buildings were constructed underground to protect from attack. During production, multiple layers of security protected against revealing secrets of nuclear weapons production to an adversary. In fact the government did not acknowledge the

“Nearly every nuclear weapon built in the United States in the last fifty years contains parts made at Rocky Flats.”

presence of plutonium at Rocky Flats until 1957. In recent years, security has focused on the stockpiles of nuclear materials—primarily plutonium and enriched uranium—still stored there. Worker health and safety concerns are also part of history. The culture of secrecy that resulted from the emphasis on security contributed to a lack of trust when accidents, spills, exposures, and waste management practices were not disclosed.

Following a major fire in 1969, concern grew in surrounding communities about airborne transport of plutonium, pollution of groundwater with chemicals, and general fears of living close to a nuclear facility. People who disagreed with U.S. nuclear weapons policy and funding priorities also were opposed to Rocky Flats operations. During the 1970's and 1980's there was increasing attention, protest and vigilance on the part of citizens, local governments and

environmental regulators. In 1986 the first Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement was signed by the Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Colorado Department of Health. These three agencies continue to regulate the dismantling and cleanup of the site. Protection of the workers and community is much greater today than in the early days due to increased knowledge of the nature and impact of the risks and how to manage them, and a decreased emphasis on production of the nuclear arsenal as the higher priority.

Nuclear production at Rocky Flats peaked during the Reagan administration in the 1980's but ceased in June 1989 following a raid by 80 FBI agents seeking evidence of environmental, safety and health violations. The cost of meeting new enhanced standards combined with the end of the Cold War meant that production would never resume. Today, a workforce with a different set of skills is decontaminating and dismantling dozens of buildings and removing chemical and radioactive pollution from the soil and water. This cleanup project is projected to be complete in 2006.

In 2001, Congressman Mark Udall and Senator Wayne Allard successfully passed legislation designating Rocky Flats to become a wildlife refuge under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This transfer will be made after the cleanup is completed according to the standards in the agreement.

DeAnne Butterfield was executive director of the Rocky Flats Local Impacts Initiative from 1992 to 1999.

New board members...

Karl Anuta, Attorney
Marilyn Haas, Consultant
Donald R. James, Jr., Owner, James Travelpoints
LeRoy Leach, Principal Engineer, Maxtor Corporation
Elisabeth Patterson, Co-owner Printed Page II

Visit our Rocky Flats Exhibit, prepared by Kaiser-Hill, at the Museum through April 7th and 'Reflections on Rocky Flats' 50 years' Panel Discussion on Thursday 4th April at 7:30 p.m. at the Economics Institute, 12th at Euclid.

State of the Union Address Inspires Volunteerism

“My call tonight is for every American to commit at least two years, four thousand hours over the rest of your lifetime, to the service of your neighbors and your Nation. Many are already serving, and I thank you.” President George W. Bush



*By Meredith Loughlin,
Volunteer*

If you were to have gone shopping at Liquor Mart in the few weeks before

Christmas, you would have noticed a gift-wrapping stand by the door as you were leaving. The stand was provided by Jack Stoakes of Liquor Mart to help the Museum raise money during the holiday season.

Liquor Mart donated all the boxes, paper, and ribbons, and had us provide the gift wrapping service to their customers. My experience wrapping bottles at the stand was wonderful, and the kindness of the employees only made me more in awe of the complete generosity being shown to us. What amazed me most about my experience was the curiosity of the shoppers, who would come up, not even always wanting something wrapped, and ask all sorts of questions concerning the Museum and the history of Boulder. The unrelenting interest of the people in their community over the course of the few days that I volunteered there, gave my job an even greater sense of importance. Not only was Liquor Mart helping us raise money, they were also helping us instill a greater sense

of community by grabbing the attention of people curious about the place in which they live. I myself got to benefit the most, by working with the volunteers from the Boulder History Museum. The information they relayed and stories they told made my time go by almost too quickly. Here's to next year!



Volunteer Value...

Volunteer hours for 2001 totaled a staggering 2,635.75 Equivalent to \$40,564.19 in paid salary.

THANK YOU
to all our volunteers!

Join us!

Tour guides are needed for the new Boulder History exhibit.

Call Nichola about this exciting opportunity on 303 449 3464.

Boulder History Museum volunteer gets high!



John Huyler, DeAnne's husband, proved just how dedicated a volunteer he is when he went to great heights to string the Christmas lights on the

tree for the Museum's first annual carol concert in December. The sparkling spruce is taller than a three story building, so the task was no small feat. Thanks John! Thanks also to Nations Rent who donated the cherry-picker!



Program Notes:

'Storymakers' ~ A New Boulder History Exhibit

Flora Ewing was two years old when her family started their 1000-mile journey across the plains to Colorado from Kansas in 1880. The trip took a full month. "My parents' assets, all in the covered wagon, consisted of a few farm tools, chief of which was a plow, provisions for the journey, necessary clothing, bedding, and five small girls, of which I was the youngest. . . . One of Father's brothers—Uncle El had trekked across the plains with his large family several years before. It was largely due to his letters of the wonders and opportunities of the west that Mother and Father were induced to leave their homestead in Kansas." Flora's autobiography *The Ewing Family, Pioneers of Boulder County, Colorado* tells the story of growing up on a farm in eastern Boulder County in the late 19th century. Flora's stories, as well as those of other early Boulder Valley settlers, are revealed in the new exhibit at the Boulder History Museum, opening on April 30th.

A team of historians, educators, and designers has been working for many months developing an exhibit that tells the story of the early history of the Boulder Valley. This new permanent exhibit will begin with the Native American inhabitants and move through the early 1900's. The story is



The John N. Ewing family, 1884.

told through the fascinating people who have lived here and will capitalize on the rich resources of the Museum and community, including historic pictures, oral histories, and many fascinating artifacts and costumes from our extensive collection. Hands-on, interactive components and recordings of

quotes from early Boulder residents will bring our local history alive. The exhibit team has been working with community members as well as teachers in the school district to insure that the topics covered are not only of interest to our visitors, but also will match the curriculum at various grade levels in the schools. Please join us when we celebrate this new exhibit at a member's only reception on **April 28th** and then on **Saturday May 18th** when we invite the entire community to celebrate *Boulder History Day* at the Harbeck House. Fun, educational activities will include panning for gold, "shopping" for items to pack in a covered wagon, churning butter, and meeting some early Boulder personalities.

NEW EXHIBIT OPENS!

'Storymakers - A Boulder History'
Members & Volunteers Preview

Saturday 28th April

4 p.m. — 6 p.m.



Revealing Our Routes:

Women of Boulder County

The Boulder History Museum is excited to be a part of a new project that celebrates the women of Boulder County. *Revealing Our Routes: Women of Boulder County* was developed by the Women of the West Museum, in collaboration with many other local organizations, foundations, and individuals. The project explores the contributions, accomplishments, struggles and challenges of women throughout Boulder County. One component of

the project is a Women's History Trail. This includes an illustrated trail map that circles Boulder County, highlighting the women who have played a role in the history at the various sites identified on the map. The trail and biographies will be expanded in a website, www.revealingourroutes.org. A fun Family Activity Guide will also be produced to help young people discover history, available at the Boulder History Museum. Another component of the

project are two pieces of original public artwork; a sculpture created by CU fine arts professor Antonette Rosato and her students and a painted cover to accompany the sculpture by Betty Ridgley, an Arapaho from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. The piece will be installed at the Boulder Public Library in March. Please join us at the opening reception at the library on **Thursday, 21st March at 4 p.m.**



During the past few months, twenty two items have been accessioned into the Boulder History Museum's Collection. Among the most interesting are the baseball uniforms and trophies from the Boulder Collegians. Sybil Moschetti donated them in Bauldie Moschetti's memory. Bauldie created and sponsored the team from 1964 to 1980. Many of the players went on the the

Major Leagues. Some of the uniforms will be in the "in use" collection and available to outfit a games team or two for exhibition.

We also received a doll bed and bedding. In 1930, the bed was a project for 7th graders at University Hill School, which was then "Southside". The boys made the bed of wood strung with string and the girls made the bedding including a mattress, two pillows, two sheets, a blanket and a bedspread.

From the collection...



Valentine's Card, dated 14th February 1906 from Elsa

Colorado History Day

In September 2001, 4,000 Colorado students in grades six through twelve embarked on a year long historical adventure to examine the theme of *Revolution, Reform and Reaction* in history through their participation in the Colorado History Day program. Their research projects will be showcased in a series of local and district competitions that will culminate in the 21st Annual National History Day contest June 9-13th, 2002 at the University of Maryland.

The Colorado History Day competition provides a unique educational opportunity for young people to demonstrate their individual talents through a variety of avenues that help make history come alive for them in non-traditional ways. The Boulder History Museum is proud to be a part of this event.

If you would also like to be a judge, simply complete the form below and mail it to Nancy Brown & Wendy Rex-Atzet, Colorado History Day, c/o Department of History, Campus Box 234, University of Colorado—Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309-0234.

Boulder Valley History Day finals

April 3rd

2 p.m.—8 p.m.

Angevine Middle School

Judges Needed!

720 304 0440

Yes, I'll be a judge for Colorado History Day 2002.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #:() _____

E-mail address: _____

Please mark your first and second choices:

Papers Tapes/CDs/Displays

Performances Media Presentations

[No Preference]

Yes, I'll judge for coffee in addition to the first round.

Colorado History Day

When?

Saturday 27th April, 2002

Time?

8:00 a.m- 2:30 p.m.

Where?

CU Boulder Campus

Reward?

Breakfast, lunch & t-shirt!

Questions?

Call 303 492 5845

Or email

chd@colorado.edu

Info?

www.colorado.edu/
history

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The BHM Seamstresses

Membership

New
Renewal

- | | |
|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joint w/Historic Boulder | \$80 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime | \$1000 |

Also enclosed, is a contribution in addition to my membership.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donor | \$25-74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | \$75-124 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$125-499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$500-1000 |

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zipcode _____

Day Phone _____

Evening Phone _____

Email _____

Payment Options

- CHECK.
Please make your check payable to the Boulder History Museum.
Enclosed is my check for \$ _____
- CREDIT CARD.
Please charge my credit card for the amount of \$ _____

VISA Mastercard AMEX

Card #: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

(Required for all credit card processing)

- MAIL TO: Boulder History Museum
Attn. Membership, 1206 Euclid Ave,
Boulder, CO 80302

Membership dues and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.



Boulder History Day



Saturday 18th May, 2002



11 a.m. ~ 2 p.m.



Tour our new exhibit 'Storymakers - A Boulder History', interact with costumed personalities from Boulder's past, try out Native American and Pioneer arts and crafts, see living history presented by a mystery historic character and have a BBQ chuck wagon and Indian Fry Bread lunch!



WE NEED: We need volunteers to dress as characters from Boulder's past, help with children's activities and to give tours of the new exhibit.



Call Nichola Lake or Nancy Geyer on 303 449 3464.



Don't forget our...

16th Annual Victorian Fair & 8th Great Boulder Pie Festival

Saturday 20th July, 2002

10 a.m. ~ 4 p.m.

WE NEED: Silent Auction items, books for book sale, mad volunteers, pie contest entrants, living history and old time craft demonstrators. Call Wendy Gordon on 303 449 3464 or email wgordon@boulderhistory.org

Cultural Calendar



If you would like to include your event in the next issue, please call Nichola on 303 449 3464

April 2 - Boulder Genealogical Society meeting at 7:30pm at Mt. View Methodist Church (Ponca Place & Sioux Drive) Call 303 494-7688.

March 21, 4-6pm - Women of the West Museum 'Revealing our Routes: Women of Boulder County' History Trail kick off. Boulder Public Library Main Branch. Call for info 303 449 3464.

April 4, 7:30pm at the Economics Institute. 'Reflections on Rocky Flats 50 years' panel discussion. Call 303 449 3464 for information.

April 20-21 - Historic Boulder Home Tour—Landmarks of the Future featuring NCAR. 303 444 5192

April 27 - Colorado History Day Finals. 8am -2:30pm, Grades 6-12. Theme: Revolution, Reform and Reaction. CU Boulder Campus. Call 303 492 5845 for info.

April 28 - Members & Volunteers ONLY preview of the new Boulder History Exhibit at the Boulder History Museum. 4-6pm.

May 18 - Boulder History Day - Come & celebrate your town at the Harbeck House from 11am—2pm. Meet Boulder personalities from the past, pan for gold, churn butter and much more...

May 18, 1pm—Historic Boulder dedication of Morris Well at Flagstaff Amphitheater. Call 303 673

0485 for information.

May 29 - Colorado Historical Society presents Colorado Authors Lecture Series. Silvia Pettem 'Boulder: The Athens of the West'. 7pm at the Colorado History Museum. For further info call 303 866 4686.

Useful Contacts

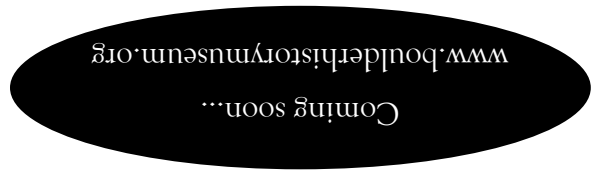
Carnegie Library for Local History
303 441 3110

Colorado Chautauqua Association
303 442 3282

Colorado Historical Society
303 866 3682

Historic Boulder
303 444 5192

The Boulder History Museum fosters understanding and appreciation for the unique history of the Boulder region and the resourceful and innovative people who have chosen to live here - a living history that grows with each new generation.



Phone: 303 449 3464
Fax: 303 938 8322
Email: info@boulderhistory.org
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**Newsletter of the
Boulder History Museum**

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