

# TRACES OF THE PAST

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## HISTORY TOURS

### 1. **How a Cow Started a Thirty-Six Year War**

The Horse Creek Treaty was only three years old and already the peace between the United States Army and the Plains Indians was put into a tenuous position. In the flood of westward migration an animal wandered away from its tender and was dispatched by a Native American man. Its disgruntled former owner reported the incident to the commander of nearby Fort Laramie. What resulted changed history.

### 2. **Johnnies on the Frontier: The Story of the "Galvanized Yankees"**

While Confederate forces were lowering their guns and furling their banners in capitulation east of the Missouri River in the spring of 1865, some of their comrades were just beginning to fight...in the Far West. And their experience would be much different. Join Traces of the Past History Tours for our July program and learn more about an extraordinary group of soldiers called the "Galvanized Yankees" whose Civil War continued in the vast reaches of western America.

### 3. **"The Mails Must Go Through," the Western Mail System 1850-1866**

How did people maintain contact during the westward migration of the mid-nineteenth century? The U.S. Mail became a vital component to the lives of all, as there was nary a person who was not involved or affected. Communication lines were lengthened dramatically and emigrants found themselves hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away from family and friends.

### 4. **Second Blood on the North Platte: The "Hornet's" Sting**

Sheepishly surprised and stung by the suddenly aggressive nature of the Brulé Lakota at James Bordeaux's trading house in August, 1854, the U.S. Army reeled in the aftermath of the massacre of Lieutenant John Grattan's command. Their eyes blackened and their reputation tarnished, retribution was swift in the offing. A little over one year later the Army struck back...hard. As a reprise to our June program on the Grattan Fight, join us for Part II as we outline the Army's countermeasure known as the "Sioux Expedition" of 1855.

### 5. **"The Big Issue," The Horse Creek Treaty of 1851**

By 1850, Indian agent, Thomas Fitzpatrick, recognized that prompt action was required by the government to quiet growing Indian discord over increased numbers of emigrant wagon trains rumbling through their domain on the Great Plains. He spearheaded the formation of a grand treaty council that lasted almost all of September and included upwards to 12,000 Native American attendees!

This was the pivotal event that established the original foundation of Indian-white relations in the northern and central plains.

## 6. **The Deadly Dyad: Cholera and Consumption in the Nineteenth Century**

With respect to organic lifeforms, small can be harmful, but microscopic can be lethal. Microbes have devastated mammalian life on Earth as long as our existence. Although not associated with etiology (cause) of disease in the mid-nineteenth century, they nonetheless were responsible for two of the deadliest scourges that raced through America during that time – cholera and consumption.

Our first program of the season focuses on these powerful unseen killers in the nineteenth century.

## 7. **Nantanää: Calling the Buffalo**

Numbering perhaps as many as three to five million during the early nineteenth century the bison population on the Great Plains dramatically plummeted to less than 2,000 by the late 1880s! How was the American West's most iconic animal pushed to the brink of extinction in less than one hundred years? Most of us believe that it was due solely to overhunting by white "buffalo" hunters, but that is only one of several causes.

Join us for our July Riverside Lantern Talks as we explore the majestic bison and why it almost vanished forever.

## 8. **Traveling the Great Highway: The Saga of the Santa Fé Trail**

When four bedraggled men plodded into the wooded hamlet of Franklin, MO from the west leading in their pack mules, it drew the keen curiosity of the townsfolk. It was late in January 1822 and they were traders having just arrived from Santa Fé, the capital of the Mexican province of New Mexico, 865 long miles to the southwest. To the eyes of the interested onlookers it didn't appear to have been a particularly successful venture. But, when one of them cut open a leather bag from which spilled a cascade of Mexican silver dollars, all eyes became as large as the shining coins themselves!

The lucrative trade with Mexico had been initiated.

The route blazed by the trading party the previous September was led by William Becknell and would soon come to be known as the "Wagon Road to Santa Fé," and still later as the Santa Fé Trail.

## 9. **Voices of Colorado Territory**

Written letters were the primary form of communication for Americans in the nineteenth century. When hundreds, if not thousands, of miles separated family members and friends from one another, missives were vital in both maintaining connections to the news of the world and in easing the omnipresent pain of loneliness.

Traces of the Past opens its company archives and shares some letters of the common people who ventured out to the West during the 1860s. Gather round. Listen. And let the voices of a

Colorado long since gone lead you back to a different time.

Join us for an evening of personal experiences through the letters of past individuals in Colorado Territory.

#### 10. **"I Would Advise No Man to Emigrate to this Country," the Life of a Soldier in the Frontier Army**

"I have plenty of Duty to Do now So there is only once in a while a Day that I can write and everything is so Dull that I cannot think of anything to write." - Pvt. William A. McMann, 7th Michigan Volunteer Cavalry, Park Creek Station, Colorado Territory, Oct. 1st, 1865

They enlisted for a myriad of reasons; hailed from many places; and with most, felt experiences much different than they anticipated.

Who were the men and boys of the frontier army?

Join the ranks for our presentation and discover the frontier soldier's experience! Partake in period soldier fare and recline among the serenity of towering cottonwoods along the Cache la Poudre River as you experience the traces of the military past.

#### 11. **The Significance and Value of Historic Maps, an Interactive Study**

Sagacious is the individual who reads history with a map at their side.

Historically, maps have been (and still are) indispensable aids for geographic orientation, which is critical to directional and spatial comprehension. Only after this basic understanding can there be any form of analysis.

Join Traces of the Past for an interactive, fun presentation as we examine both historic and modern maps of the NE Colorado, SE Wyoming, and W Nebraska region. You'll be pleasantly surprised at how much can be learned simply by studying these documents!

#### 12. **"A Shrewd Enterprising Money-Making Sort of Character," Joseph Mason as Fort Collins Sutler**

Arguably the most influential of Fort Collins' early settlers, Joseph Messier (Mason) represented the quintessential nineteenth century frontier entrepreneur. His business pursuits were many, but he is best known as the military's merchant, or "sutler." His doors were opened to not only soldiers, but the surrounding civilian population, too.

Join us on a brief journey through the life of this most important individual in the Cache la Poudre River valley, his mercantile activities in his store, known as "Old Grout," and the relatively little-known profession of suttlng.

### **13. Birth of a Colony: The Founding of the City of Fort Collins**

Approximately ten miles from where the Cache la Poudre River enters the plains from the mouth of its namesake canyon the U. S. Army relocated its garrison in 1864. When the fort closed and the military abandoned the area two years later the beginnings of a settlement had already been initiated.

By 1873 the town of Fort Collins was incorporated and, with the exception of a few short years immediately after its establishment, steady expansion and growth has occurred up to the present day. In this program learn the genesis of Fort Collins, the town that had an unusual and interesting beginning.

### **14. Early Settlement on Thompson's Creek, The Founding of the City of Loveland**

In 1837 a newcomer arrived at Fort St. Vrain, a fur trading post located along the South Platte River. Somehow, within a few years, a heretofore unnamed stream in the nearby area began to assume this man's name – Thompson's Creek. After the rush for riches in 1859, the valley started to attract settlers and by 1861 the name of the watercourse was altered to Big Thompson River.

In the years that followed settlers were drawn to the river valley for many reasons. Learn about the historic names and events that ultimately led to the creation of the city of Loveland.

### **15. "Like So Many Dry Goods Boxes Scattered Across the Plains," Greeley from Conception Through the Early Years.**

For most of his life, an eclectic Ohioan was imbued with a Utopian vision of establishing his own community centered upon industriousness and social equality. The local economy would be based upon agriculture and residents would live in harmony in their "Garden of Eden." Then, in 1870 his dream was realized on the plains of Colorado Territory.

Join us for a lively program on the founding of Union Colony (present Greeley) and its eccentric founder, Nathan Meeker. This is part one of a three-part series.

### **16. 'The Utes Must Go,' Trouble in the Mountains.**

Beset with a large amount of debt and worried about his struggling Union Colony, Nathan Meeker sought out, and obtained, a government position as Indian agent in far northwestern Colorado in 1878. Much like the fictitious character he created in 1856, 'Captain Armstrong,' Meeker planned to civilize his native charges through firm, but kind, paternalism.

What ensued was not quite what he expected. Designed as part two of a three-part series, this program continues the intriguing story of both a prominent figure and event in the history of Colorado.

## **Additional Subjects:**

- *The Tension Builds, The Decade of the 1850s*
- *The Saints are Coming, Mormon Settlement of the West – Chronicles & Controversy*
  - *Part I*
  - *Part II*
- *Early Expeditions of Future Colorado, Pike to Fremont*