

THE SPOKE



Grand County Historical Association

Spoke, No. 4, 2002 and No. 1 2003

“Gram” Wood by Nina Wood

Calendar of Events



sets that survived intact. Do your math and you discover that her mother had 5 babies in diapers at the same time, before conveniences we take for granted were invented. There was probably at least water available from a pump in the yard, but that was the extent of any ease on washing that many baby things.

tain sheep through heavy snow when darkness became imminent. Wil elected to keep going after the others decided to turn back. When he failed to return that night, a search party began looking for him at first light. They found him dead of injuries sustained in an avalanche. Still Lillian and Bessie elected to remain in Colorado and likely by that time had found beaus in the community.

Jan

12 2:00 pm Second Sunday at Cozens Ranch

Feb

9 2:00 pm Second Sunday at Cozens Ranch

Mar

8 6:00 pm Mid-winter Potluck at Kremmling

9 2:00 pm Second Sunday at Cozens Ranch

Most history is created by both events and people, people with character, or in some cases people who are characters. In the case of Middle Park, I think it was both.

Lillian Russell Smith Wood spent her adult years on the Williams Fork and then in Parshall. Known as “Gram” Wood to most everyone who knew her, she was grandmother to 39 of us who wear the names Wood, Noell, Stack, and Black. And her history in Grand County beginning in 1905 made her one of our pioneers.

When she was born in Dunlap, Kansas, in 1884, she was not a particularly healthy child. Born just before her and just after her were sets of twins, 2 of the 4 sets born to her parents and the only 2

When she came to Colorado, it was to Summit County, Breckenridge, Montezuma, and Argentine, mining camps where she helped her sister Bessie cook. The exact year isn't known, but she came between 1900 and 1903 and possibly 1902, when she would have reached her 18th birthday. Her brother, Wil, owned and operated a sawmill in partnership with another man and may also have had interest in a boarding house. The housekeeping and cooking skills of the two girls, coming from a family of 16, no doubt made them valuable assets in the mining communities.

Tragedy struck in December of 1902. Wil and a hunting party were tracking a moun-

In the fall of 1905, the local newspapers report that Herb Wood had lost a large portion of his right hand in an ore crusher accident. Herb had come into Summit County originally with a mule team for “Uncle Joe” Coberly, another Williams Fork resident and apparently worked in or around mines and mining equipment while also hauling the timbers for mine use. Herb needed some round the clock nursing, and in those days, for Gram to take proper care of him and still be in an acceptable position, they needed to be married. One source says the situation was

so different that a Denver newspaper picked up the story with a headline of “Loses Three Fingers, Wins a Bride”, indicating that they married 3 days after they met. Research has never turned up a trace of that story, and it's unlikely in the mining camps in the area that they hadn't met until he was injured. Still, they were married by Judge Swisher, well known area businessman, in short order in the hotel room where Herb was recovering. A short time later they made a brief wedding trip to Denver and then returned to Argentine.

Before fall set in that year, the

newly married couple moved to the Little Muddy. Herb had been sending money to a partner who was helping him to secure a homestead there not far from where Joe Coberly lived. It was probably with anticipation of a great future on their own land that sent them into Middle Park to face their first winter as a couple without having had a chance to raise a garden or preserve any winter supplies. They moved into one end of a two room cabin with a man named Ranger Charlie in the other. And about that same time, they discovered that Herb's partner had been drinking the money he'd sent over the years. What devastation that must have caused!

On the other side of the valley just across the creek was the large ranching operation known as the Hermosa Ranch, owned by Dr. T. F. DeWitt, a well-to-do doctor from back East. With the dream of his homestead gone, Herb went to work for DeWitt, eventually becoming one of his foremen. Gram probably helped out with cooking and cleaning, but within a few months, she went back to Kansas to await the birth of their first child. Over the next 21 years, she raised kids and gardens and developed her love of fishing, which helped feed a family that eventually totaled 13 kids, including a set of twins born 2 weeks before Christmas and delivered by Herb when a doctor couldn't reach them in time. Pictures of the time show a large family of 9 boys and 4 girls with Gram, all 5'2" and maybe 100 pounds of her on one end, and Herb with a child or two on his lap at the other. The kids recall Christmases being supplied mostly by Mrs. DeWitt and sometimes being late if the trains got snowed out of the area. All attended one room schools, Hermosa and Columbine, and stories of their lives together can make one wonder

why any of them survived.

Life continued pretty much routinely until 1928. That summer, the youngest daughter, Marilyn, a premature baby and ailing child caught whooping cough. She lingered and languished until early October, and then she passed away. The close-knit family had suffered it's first loss. Two weeks later, Herb came in from the hayfield complaining of not feeling well. Gram followed him into the living room and sat down with him on the couch. Minutes later, he collapsed in her arms and died of a cerebral hemorrhage. They buried him alongside Marilyn in the Hot Sulphur Springs Cemetery.

The boys continued the work for Dr. DeWitt for several years, and in 1932, they built a 2 bedroom house for Gram several miles from where DeWitt had relocated his ranch. Her sons made sure she had what she needed as she finished raising the youngest ones who had been little more than toddlers when Herb died.

By the time I was old enough to remember much about Gram, she was already a "little old lady" who lived in a small, pink mobile home next to Uncle Kenneth in Parshall. Everyone knew that she was one of the best fishermen in the country, having caught as many as 1200 in a season when she was feeding her family by herself. She enjoyed creek fishing the most, and even as she got older her ability to maneuver around the biggest holes and catch fish in any small body of water never faltered. I never saw her get wet.

In the winter, she was totally unafraid getting a couple of her grandkids on a sled and making a run down the hill in Parshall that ended at the store and U.S.

"Gram" Insert

40, which then went through the center of town. Had her feet not worked so well as brakes, we could have ended up on the pavement. But we never did.

She must have driven many teams of horses in her day, and I believe she was a good rider. She never drove a car, but unless she needed to go to the doctor in Kremmling, she didn't need to leave town. Her friends included Doc Ceriani's mother and fellow fishermen from Hot Sulphur, a couple from Poland with heavy accents. Somehow, somewhere she had met Ralph Moody, author of the "Little Britches" series. And she, too, had a "fish" experience with warden Henry "Rooster" Wilson.

Only once did I get into trouble because of Gram. She was fishing one day near where I was getting ready to ride, when she laid down her pole and walked over to me. After watching me for a minute she said, "Can I ride?" What do you say to your 80 year old grandmother but, "Of course!" I saddled up the gentlest mare we had and helped her aboard. She only made a couple of trips around the small pasture, but as she rode, walking only, I'm sure I saw a young woman next to her husband on horseback in front of one of the Hermosa's big



barns. It's one of the pictures you'll find at the County Museum in Hot Sulphur. When

dad found out what I'd done, he turned deathly white. "Don't you know if she'd fallen or been thrown she could have been seriously injured or killed?" No, I had to admit. This was one rider's request to another, with age no consideration. And to her at that particular moment, had either occurred I believe she would have considered those few moments worth the risk. When she was finished, she walked back to her fishing pole, satisfied that now she was done riding.

Gram introduced me to horehound candy, something I will also think about each time I taste it. And because she didn't like my first name, I didn't even know what it was until I started school. She taught me that barn cats do fish and that survival in a small living space was possible. The one thing she didn't teach me was anything about her growing up years or about my grandfather. It seemed like we knew as very young kids that we didn't ask about him. I believe that hers was a love so strong that even to the point where her mind grew dim, the pain of losing him was too much to bear. One regret we all have, however, is that we never asked to her to go with us up to Summit County to show us where she lived and to tell us stories of that life and time. And unfortunately that's been lost forever. Gram passed away in 1980, at the age of 97. She is buried with Marilyn and Herb and their son, Melvin who died during World War II in a family plot in Hot Sulphur with other family and pioneers characters nearby.

Still, she left a legacy, and to walk into the homes of her kids and grandkids is often nostalgic with traditions and even the smells the same ones we experienced when we were allowed to spend the night with the lady who was "Gram" to so many.

Grand County Characters

The Grand County Characters present living history interpretations through historic figures from Grand County's past. While they've performed throughout Grand County, their true homes are the Stage Stop Theater at Cozens Ranch Museum in Fraser, Colorado and the Pioneer Village at the Grand County Museum. Based on the late nineteenth and early 20th century, the Characters use living history as an engaging educational tool for the local public and tourists alike.

Two important and well-played characters are William and Mary Cozens, the owners and operators of one of Grand County's earliest guest ranches and stage stops. Their story depicts early Colorado mining history, Colorado's colorful law enforcement history, and US western expansion through their journey to the Shining Mountains. Then there is Solomon Jones, who came to Grand County in the early 1880s and remained for the rest of his life, as well as his family, all of whom played integral roles in Grand County's development. Additional characters like the old mountain man Ute Bill Thompson, county clerk Jake Pettingell, stage driver Charlie Free, school teacher Elizabeth Jones, and the "Railroad Pathfinder" Edward Berthoud depict Grand County's pioneering past through colorful programs based on local history. Many other historic personalities, like William Newton Byers and David Moffat, present great opportunities for local history interpretation as well.

Don't miss the Grand County Characters' Second Sunday Free performances in the Stage Stop at Cozens Ranch in Fraser each month throughout the year. Call Judy at 970-726-5488 for more information about the characters or to volunteer.

Follow up from p. 2 Calendar of Events. Please note that some events have been changed to different months than listed on p. 2 of this Spoke. These are specific dates throughout the year as set by the GCHA board of directors.

2003 Calendar of Events

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|------------------|---|
| <i>March 8</i> | Mid Winter Pot Luck in Kremmling |
| <i>June 28</i> | Rocky Mountain Wild West Show in Fraser |
| <i>June 19</i> | Henderson Mill/Williams Fork Trek, begins at Hot Sulphur Springs |
| <i>July 16</i> | Rollins Pass Trek, begins at the Stage Stop Museum at Cozens Ranch |
| <i>July 24</i> | Geology Trek, details TBA |
| <i>Aug 1</i> | GCHA Annual Picnic in Hot Sulphur Springs |
| <i>Aug 7</i> | Grand Lake Trek |
| <i>Aug 9</i> | Sagebrush Golf Tournament in Kremmling |
| <i>Aug 12</i> | Rollins Pass Trek, begins at the Stage Stop Museum at Cozens Ranch |
| <i>Aug 23</i> | Annual Garage Sale and Evening Antique Auction in Tabernash |
| <i>Sep 19,20</i> | Ranching: Romance and Reality, a two day celebration of the McElroy Livery Stables' 100th anniversary at Heritage Park in Kremmling |
| <i>Sep 25</i> | Yust Ranch Trek, details TBA |
| <i>Oct 16</i> | Golf Marathon at Pole Creek Golf Course |
| <i>Nov 8</i> | Annual Dinner |
| <i>Dec 13</i> | Pioneer Christmas at the Pioneer Village in the Grand County Museum Complex |

Mid-Winter Potluck Dinner in Kremmling *March 8, 2003*

On March 8, 2003, join GCHA for the Mid-Winter Pot Luck Dinner at the Grand County Extension Hall in Kremmling at the Fair Grounds. Arrive in Kremmling with your favorite dish (salad, vegetables, desserts, etc.) and enjoy good company, a great meal with meat and drinks provided by GCHA, and an after dinner presentation on Grand County history by Joe Kelley and the Grand County Characters!

The evening schedule will be as follows:

- 6:00 Doors open, bring food!
- 6:30 Dinner
- 7:00 Program: **Where The Rivers Meet; Early Kremmling** by Joe Kelley and the Grand County

Characters

Support GCHA and have a great evening of fun and history too.

DON'T FORGET: Bring your plates, serving utensils, and silverware! Cups, drinks and meat will be provided, as will a great time. Show off your favorite recipe, bring out a friend, and share your Historical Association with others!

While RSVPs aren't required, anyone who calls Judy at 726-5488 to confirm attendance by March 2, will be entered to win a genuine GCHA door prize on March 8.

Donations warmly accepted \$3

GCHA Memorials

Bill Carnal

Paul & Madalyn Hendren

Don Chaloupka

Robert & Mary Lou Wilkins

Jack Bobier

Bob & Jeannene Temple

Darlys Jones

Bob & Jeannene Temple

Memorials support GCHA's endowment fund, which will insure that GCHA has financial resources for the future of the organization.

Trips—Treks—Lectures—Events

We are in the final stages of putting together our 2003 events and treks. When the dates are final, we will send a notice to all members. If you have treks or lectures you would like us to include, please give us a call. We are always open to new ideas for adventures.

For suggestions on Treks & Lectures, contact Judy at 726-5488.

Mar	Mid-winter potluck		Garage Sale
June	Sagebrush Golf	Sep	Trek 5
	Rky Mtn Wild West		Middle Park Fair
July	Trek 1	Oct	Golf Marathon
	Trek 2	Nov	Raffle
Aug	Annual Picnic		Annual Dinner & Auction
	Trek 3	Dec	Calendar
	Trek 4		Pioneer Christmas

Building Fund Started

Thanks to the generous support of an enthusiastic visitor to the Pioneer Village at Hot Sulphur Springs, the Danvera Foundation has sent us a check for \$20,000 to start our building fund off with a big bang. We can't thank them enough for their tremendous support. Why do we need an addition you ask? We are in desperate need of environmentally controlled space that is suitable for artifact storage. We also want a gallery that can be used for rotating exhibits and a lecture room. It is our intent to add on to the back of the existing museum with a 35x65 extension. We would like to break ground as soon as we reach \$200,000 in our building fund or 2004 whichever comes first. So you can see we need serious support to accomplish this goal. We will be sending more specific information on lasting ways you may choose to participate in this effort. If you have a foundation or know of a foundation willing to support this project, please let us know. Would you like the gallery to have your name? Are you a pioneer family that would like to have your name on the founders' wall?

Planned Giving

A properly structured plan adds value to the traditional charitable gifts.

- * Provide GCHA with a substantial gift
- * Provide you with an income for life
- * Provide you with substantial income and capital gains tax savings
- * Replace the value of your gift with the cash proceeds of a life insurance policy—estate and income tax free

Contact us at 725-3939 for more information.

Pioneer Christmas and the Grand County Characters

The Grand County Historical Association's Pioneer Christmas on December 14, 2002 drew nearly 100 people to the Pioneer Village at the Grand County Museum. With lots of tours, lots of Christmas carols, lots of volunteers and lots of Christmas goodies, the event was a smashing success. There was something for everyone at the Pioneer Christmas.

For those who enjoy music, Sue Walker Taylor played historic tunes on her violin while local grade school students sang traditional Christmas Carols. Brianna and Sarah Beckerle, Anna and Janni Conrad, Jacob Magee, Elise Matson, and Maggie, Katie and Sean Germany – as well as their parents – donated their time and talents as carolers throughout the evening.

Of course, what is Christmas without Santa Clause? From 4pm to 5pm, Kevin Davlin volunteered as Santa in the museum, treating some of the smallest children to their first visit with Jolly Old Saint Nick. The museum itself was decorated with traditional ornaments, festive bows, and strings of popcorn and cran-

berry. Those who enjoyed the evening were also treated to ginger bread cookies, eggnog and hot cider. The community spirit of the event showed too, as Barbara Mitchell, Ida Sheriff, Therese McElroy and Betty Birdsill volunteered their time and talents to decorate the site, bake cookies, make popcorn and cranberry strings, and even tend to wood fires in the Pioneer Village.

Finally, the Grand County Characters performed "Over the Hill and through the Woods" for 6 guided tours from 5pm to 7pm. The living history interpretation began with Maggie and Lulie Crawford, played by Kathy and Heidi Ziegler, receiving Christmas candy, nuts and fruit from Charlie Royer, played by Jeremy Kennel. The tours then moved over to the 1889 Grand County courthouse with Bill Cozens, played by Stan Jones; Mary Owens Jones, played by Lee Gaal; Solomon Jones, played by Fran Cassidy; and occasional appearances by Ute Bill Thompson.

A glimpse of Ute Bill Thompson's wedding rounded out

the evening in the 1920s school house. Ute Bill, his bride Mabel Smith, played by Katelyn Ziegler, and an anonymous church member, played by Joyce Ackerson, interpreted the history of the community church in Hot Sulphur Springs and the growth of the community up to 1894.

From Santa Clause to decorators to musicians to historic characters, more than 20 volunteers put together a wonderful program at the Pioneer Christmas. Tour guides Judy Stanfill and Allyson Lansa did a great job of leading folks through the candlelight tour in the historic village while parents of the carolers helped their young musicians do an outstanding job throughout the evening. It was fun, festive and enjoyable for all who volunteered or attended as guests.

All in all, great events like the Pioneer Christmas bode well for 2003. Come out and join the Grand County Characters at the Stage Stop Museum at Cozens Ranch every second Sunday of each month. And volunteer with GCHA. It's fun!

New Members Supporting GCHA

Robert & Mary Ann Jackson, Grand Lake	Carol Kelly, Kremmling	Laura Rokosz, Westminster	Jim & Susie Noel, Tabernash
Willard & Nancy Lewis, Grand Lake	Lucille Gallagher, Denver	Luke Lemke, Grand Lake	Bob Scott, Grand Lake
Ray Taras, Fraser	Robert & Judith Daniel, Lake Wylie	Julie & Patrick Pine, Winter Park	Randee Stapp, Denver
Richard & Dorothy-Dreith, Winter Park	Nancy Roark, Winter Park	Robert & Carolyn Lindig, Denver	Thanks for supporting the mission of the GCHA
Glenda Bell, Windsor	Capt Gary deVries, Fraser	Edward & Venetta Tupa, Granby	
Don Lago, Flagstaff	Ann Wheeler, Fraser	Susan Zietkiewicz, Lyons	

**Grand County
Historical Association**

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Museum Hours of Operation
Oct through May,
Wed-Sat 10am to 4pm
Sun. 1pm to 5pm (Cozens Only)

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**Mid-winter Potluck
March 8, 6:00 pm
Kremmling—Grand County
Extension Hall at the Fairgrounds
“Where the Rivers Meet”**

Come and enjoy an evening of food, fellowship and fun. Members and their guests are asked to bring along their favorite side dish and dessert to share. Meat, cups and drinks provided. A suggested donation of \$3 will be accepted and new memberships are always welcomed. The entertainment for the evening will be offered by the Grand County Characters portraying scenes from Kremmling's past.

www.grandcountymuseum.com

