

Palmer Historical Society

Newsletter

Volume 24, No. 4

April 2009

President's View from Farm Loop

The view from my window today is snow and sun—with a steady stream of solar energy warming the house and it feels mighty fine. April is upon us and it's time to think about the garden. It serves to remind us that agriculture has a special place not only in Palmer's history but its future as well. Our local farmers continue to provide locally grown food to the market while many residents take advantage of our favorable growing season and deep soil to produce their own vegetables as well as to raise livestock.

We have great programs in both April and May, as well as our annual dinner raffle May 17th. This month, DeLena Johnson will be making a presentation on her work restoring the Colony Recreation Center. This award winning project is a major addition to our historic district. Next month we will hear from Pat Durand, who will talk about the history of the Matanuska rail spur and provide some insights about trains and coal and the development of Palmer. I encourage you to attend as our meetings always seem to generate some interesting discussions. With summer approaching another tourist season will soon be upon us and the Colony House Museum will be very busy. You might still contact Gerry Keeling or Arlene Fox if you would like to donate some time helping out.

Finally, this would be a great time to renew your membership if you haven't already, and thanks to all of you who continue support the Palmer Historical Society in so many ways.

Chuck Logsdon

Dust Off Your Best Bib & Tucker

Just around the corner, two lucky dinner raffle winners will share a festive scene at the Colony House Museum! And it may be lucky YOU, if your enclosed dinner raffle tickets have been returned for the winning draw!

Enclosed with this PHS newsletter are two chances to win dinner for yourself and your chosen three guests. A fine dinner prepared by **Chef Pete Scott** at the **Inn Café** will be followed by a dessert especially created by **Denise Staats** of **Non-Essentials!** This fine repast will be served in grand style by our smiling and friendly wait-staff and will be followed by a humorous entertainment reminiscent of nostalgic years past. Guests may discover a bit of "Palmer" and "Museum" history during this evening which gives all participants a chance to "revisit the olden days"...all in the historic ambiance of the 1935-1945 Colony House Museum!

This year's annual dinner raffle is the eleventh and is one of the Museum's main annual fundraisers. Tickets cost \$5.00 each. Two winning tickets (and two alternates) will be drawn on Tuesday, May 12, and the winners will be telephoned promptly. Our eight guests will be served dinner at 6:00 p.m. at the Museum on Sunday evening, May 17.

Continued on Page 2

March Speaker Sue Merritt Packs the House

contributed by Ralph Hulbert



Our March meeting was a hoot – Sue kept us enthralled and laughing all through a delightful evening. Her stories of coming to teach at Palmer high school in '43 vividly recounted the people, places, and crazy situations befalling a young single schoolteacher – and how bad times can be laughed into great memories. Old friendships were renewed and new ones formed.

Oldest Business...continued

Last newsletter and meeting we tried to identify the oldest business in Palmer. As usual, I needed correction – thanks to Janet Kincaid. Sure enough, the Valley Hotel shows up clearly on a 1949 aerial photo, just as Janet said (I thought it was ~'52). Does anyone recall how long it took to build or when it opened for business?

We shared some stories of Con Pearski's liquor store, Buck's Place, next to Felton House. Con would refill old whisky bottles from a keg for resale, and affix a tax stamp to keep it legal. The old-timers would gather for cards in the back room. Recycling the bottles was the first job for some Palmer kids. When he died, \$30,000 cash was found in coffee cans in the basement. The story, related by the old-timers, is included in "A Man and His Mountain" by Mary Jane Phelps (rare books, Palmer Library).

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Raffle Dinner Continued from page 1

Winners are invited to “dress for the occasion” if they wish, either in high style or vintage style, to add to the flair and flavor of the evening. You may “gift” your tickets in someone else’s name. Additional tickets are available...call any PHS Board member for information.

Raffle tickets may be turned in at PHS’s April 15th program, dropped off at the Museum after May 1 summer hours begin, or turned in to any Board member. This raffle is one of the many ways that Museum friends lend support to the Colony House Museum, and you are totally thanked for your involvement in this volunteer effort for our historic community.

Pioneer Recipe

Contributed by JoAnn Utt

Vi Redington’s Easter Eggs (Makes 3 lg or 6 small)

2 lbs powdered sugar
2 tsp vanilla
½ lb butter or margarine
4 sq bakers unsweetened chocolate
6 tsp evaporated milk or cream

Stir butter till creamy, work sugar into it. Adding milk and vanilla, alternately. Mold first, let chill before dipping into melted chocolate (grated and melted in double boiler). Add paraffin to chocolate for firmness. Dip eggs and lay on flat surface to harden.



Vi and Joe Redington

Photo courtesy of Mary Ann Anderson

Upcoming Events

Programs at the Palmer Library Start at 7:30 pm

April 15th --DeLena Johnson presentation on the Rec. Hall

May 20th --Pat Durand presentation on the Matanuska rail spur

Colony House Dinner Raffle--Buy your tickets now for a chance at dinner for three at the Colony House Museum May 17th

Colony House Museum Open House June--13th

PHS Annual Picnic--July

PHS Annual Historic Site Visit--August

DeLena Johnson to Speak at April 15th Meeting

DeLena Johnson will make a presentation at our April meeting on the restoration of the Community Center Building now known as the Dahlia St. Market. The building was constructed in 1935 as part of the Matanuska Colony. In 2005 when DeLena bought the property, it had been vacant for a couple of decades and was in very bad shape.



Please join us for what should be an informative and fascinating story.

Next Question – What is the Oldest Road in Palmer?

Categories may include existing or long gone roads, trails, or transportation corridors in greater Palmer or within the city – you choose. Given the current road planning, the city might like to know the history of some of their roads. The wise guys think some roads may go back to 1916, when the railroad came through, or even earlier. As always, anecdotes and wild stories are welcome, but photos or plats might be better proof. Please contact us with your “guesses” or expert opinions.

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