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**THE BROOMCORN EXPRESS**  
Vol. 1, No.2, 2021

## ~Upcoming Events~

- **July 31 4 p.m.** JQA by Aaron Posner, presented by Butterfly Effect Theater of Colorado (BETC) at the Broomfield Depot Museum. John Quincy Adams was a brilliant but quick-tempered diplomat, one-term President, and Congressman. Award-winning playwright Aaron Posner imagines conversations between Adams and extraordinary Americans like George Washington, Frederick Douglass, and Abigail Adams. Free and outdoors, grab your chair or blanket, pack a picnic basket, and join us for an evening to remember.
- **August 2** Harvard Case Study ERA presentation at Broomfield High School
- **August 28** Opening Party for an exhibit on Broomfield Heights
- **September 18** Broomfield Days
- **September 25 10a.m.** Historic Baseball game at Zang Spur Park

## ~Call for Members to help with fundraising ideas!~

We're looking for FoBH members who are available to help us generate some ideas for fun and fundraising for the Friends of Broomfield History. If you would like to help, please reach out to Annie Lessem at [quixoticmeow@gmail.com](mailto:quixoticmeow@gmail.com)

## *Oh Wow!*

### **Being Community: A letter from the President, Annie Lessem**

I live in a funky mid-80s neighborhood near the southeast corner of Broomfield. It's made up of typical small mid-80s homes—predominantly raised ranches and split levels mixed in with a few cape cods, farmhouses, and saltbox style homes. In fact, it looks pretty much like every other mid-80s neighborhood, whether in Broomfield or in nearby communities.

But in its own way, my neighborhood is special. It's one of the oldest single-family neighborhoods this far east in Broomfield, with the surrounding neighborhoods not built until the 90s or 2000s. And that makes me wonder why. Why did this particular plot of land get built out when, at the time, it was remote from the rest of Broomfield? Why did the developer decide to mix in a few more traditional style homes with the ubiquitous 1980s style of raised ranches and split levels? Why did people decide to move out here? What kind of access was there to the

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## *A Dynamic Depot*

—David Allison

The Broomfield Depot has been put to many different uses since it was built in 1909. It served as a workplace and home for at least five different station agents and their families. It was a meeting place for the Jaycees. It housed the offices and collection for a volunteer-run museum. Now it is a City-run museum with a collection of 1930s artifacts meant to evoke Broomfield's railroad history.

As community needs and interests change over time, so too do the uses towards which the Depot should be put.

In partnership with the Friends of Broomfield History, we hope to expand the Broomfield Depot Museum's focus and interpretation towards community co-created projects and exhibits, as well as towards the broader history of Broomfield. In doing so, the Broomfield Depot will expand its relevance to the community and promote its role as a 'third space' for learning and dialogue.

Museum theorist Stephen Weil wrote many years ago that museums have changed from being about something to being for someone. This fundamental shift in perspective should animate the future uses for the Depot. Making connections to people's lives today and opening critical dialogue that is informed by contextualized history creates engaged, caring citizens.

The work that still needs to be done in the community is to gauge what stories are most resonant (and that the Broomfield History team can uniquely tell) and then to develop community partners to elevate these stories through programming, exhibits, and other public engagement.

In 2020, the Friends of the Broomfield Depot Museum changed their name to the Friends of Broomfield History. They did this to reflect their changing focus towards creating broader connections to the history of Broomfield. In the wake of the pandemic, they shifted their ACS funding away from a Speaker



Broomfield Depot, 1914

Series toward the *Broomfield in the Time of COVID-19* project, which captures and disseminates stories from Broomfield residents about their experiences during the 2020-2021 coronavirus pandemic. Both relevant to residents today as well as useful for historians in the future, this project reflects the Friends of Broomfield History's desire to serve the Broomfield community more broadly than it has in the past.

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“***Making connections to people's lives today and opening critical dialogue that is informed by contextualized history creates engaged, caring citizens.***”

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As we look toward 2022, we seek to continue to find new and innovative ways to engage our community and we welcome your input! Please contact Annie Lessem (quixotic.meow@gmail.com) or David Allison (dallison@broomfield.org) to share your vision with us. ■

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## *Oh Wow! Continued from page 1*

rest of Broomfield when the neighborhood was built?

Regardless of the answers to these questions, I really like my neighborhood. It's small—around 200 homes—so I can literally walk on every street in the neighborhood in less than 30 minutes. It's pretty obscure, with no identifying sign other than one that reads, “no outlet,” so there is not much traffic other than from the people who live here (and, of course, from delivery vehicles and garbage trucks). It's adjacent to a large park, a smaller “pocket park,” and within easy walking distance to at least five open spaces. It even has its own “Little Free Library” neighborhood book nook. It's multi-generational, with retired or soon-to-be retired individuals, empty nesters, families with school age children, young families that are creating a mini-baby boom, and for some reason that I cannot figure out, young men. The neighbors say hello and wave to each other, we shovel each other's snow, we know each other's kids and dogs. The neighborhood is also undergoing a renaissance because, based on Broomfield standards, it's “affordable.” We don't have an HOA so homeowners can freely exercise their creativity in home colors, and they can rockscape and/or xeriscape their yards without having to get prior approval. Trampolines can be seen behind fences, sidewalks have become chalk-decorated thoroughfares for strollers, bikes, scooters, and skateboards, and our pocket park frequently hosts impromptu gatherings of neighbors and children. My neighborhood has a story and I intend to learn more about that story from both original and newer owners.

Your neighborhood has a story, too. Do you ever wonder about it? Maybe you live in a neighborhood that has some homes with those odd roof lines that were popular in the 1970s. Or maybe it's a neighborhood with single- or double-digit addresses. Or a neighborhood where all the street names are related to water, or minerals, or plants. Or maybe the streets are in alphabetical order, or the sidewalks are super narrow, or run behind the houses rather than in front. Is there a park close by? Are there fun places within walking distance? Do you know what was there before your neighborhood was built, or even why your neighborhood was built? Do you know what Native American tribes might have lived and/or wandered on the land on which your neighborhood was

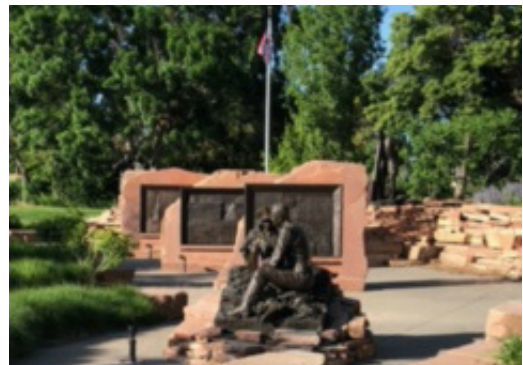
built? The story of your neighborhood is a large piece of the story/history of Broomfield. The more we know and understand about Broomfield and why it looks like it does, and the more we appreciate the uniqueness of our neighborhoods and our city/county, the more we (all of us, together) will “BE community” rather than just a bunch of random people who happen to have homes here.

So let's do this—let's learn our neighborhoods' stories and take some photos of our neighborhoods. If you are interested in being part of this adventure, please get in touch with me at [quixotic.meow@gmail.com](mailto:quixotic.meow@gmail.com) and together we can dig into the past and record it for those who choose to make Broomfield their home. The museum is preparing to have an exhibit about the Broomfield Heights neighborhood, but that could be just the start. All of the other neighborhoods in town are important as well. ■

## *Walk this Way*

—Sallie Diamond

Walk .1 miles or 3 minutes east up Community Park Road from the Library to the **Broomfield 9/11 Memorial**. The Memorial features three bronze statues, one incorporating a piece of steel from one of the fallen Twin Towers. The statues represent the firefighters, police officers and civilians who helped one another through the tragedy. There are also six bronze panels which represent each of the three sites of the plane crashes and include the names of those who died on September 11. The Memorial was designed and built by Reynaldo “Sonny” Rivera and was dedicated on Sept. 10, 2006. ■



Broomfield 9/11 Memorial

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Cottage Schools in 1956 with bikes out front

## *A Young City Needs Schools- -and Fast!*

### *Broomfield's Cottage Schools 1956-1958*

—Elizabeth Beaudoin

In October 1955, The Boulder Daily Camera stated that Broomfield had 36 pupils housed in a two-room schoolhouse, and predicted that there would soon be an increase of 500% (between 150-200 students) in the next six months. Hundreds of young families moved to Broomfield Heights in the subsequent year, and new houses were being built at rapid pace. The quick solution would be the quaintly named

“Cottage Schools” —taking a few of the newly built ranch-style homes and turning them into small schools. Broomfield ended up with four of these Cottage Schools, before the city’s first formal elementary school (Emerald Elementary) could be built.

Before 1921, Broomfield school children attended school in one of two one-room wooden schoolhouses: the Lorraine School at the southern end of town, and the “Old Broomfield School” further north. Both of these buildings have now been demolished; the Lorraine School is thought to have been demolished sometime in the mid-20th century, and the Old Broomfield Schoolhouse was unfortunately demolished in 2012 to make way for 120th Avenue Bridge over Route 36.

In 1921, a two-room brick school was built to serve Broomfield’s students through grade 8 (if students wanted to continue to high school, they would have to travel to Louisville or Lafayette). By 1955, this brick structure no longer met the expectations of a modern school. The Broomfield Builder (a newsletter for new Broomfield Heights residents), reported in February 1956 that the building “was in a bad state of repair, and had to be closed on cold days.” By 1956, the old brick school would be closed for good, and demolished in 1958.

Confidence was high in Broomfield’s growth and its need for classrooms. That same 1956 Broomfield Builder stated that by 1958 (less than two years later!) there would be 11 cottage schools with the predetermined names of Aspen, Birch, Cedar, Cherry, Hickory, Holly, Linden, Maple, Poplar, Spruce, and Willow. To be built and named in that order, and “all built at no cost to the Broomfield School District.”

The first cottage school to open was the Aspen School in December 1955 with 32 students (an additional 17 students remained at the Old Brick School through the school year), at 450 West 1st Ave. The school had three teachers: Ruby Rosenberg (grades 1-2), Helen Lundberg (grades 3-5), and Helen Musselman (grades 6-8). Birch, Cedar, and Cherry Schools were all built within the year, all lined up next to each other on 1st Ave.

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The other seven planned schools never came to fruition, as Emerald Elementary opened for the 1958 school year. The cost of the new school was \$455,000, with the land being donated by the Turnpike Land Company. The school was designed to hold 480 elementary students, plus an additional 120 kindergartners. Yet only a year later, Kohl Elementary School would be built; the school enrollment was already at 1,169 for the 1959 school year. Broomfield's school population grew from 32 to 1,169 pupils in less than four years.

In 2021, the Broomfield Depot Museum recorded an oral history interview with Debbie Baker. In 1957, young Debbie moved with her family to one of the new houses being built in Broomfield Heights. She entered school at the Cherry Cottage School, and remembers that each of the four cottage school houses held a different grade. She vividly remembered when they moved to the new Emerald Elementary School, having to walk their belongings from the old school to the new one, and it was blisteringly cold.

Do you, or someone you may know, have memories

of attending one of Broomfield's early schools? The Depot Museum is actively collecting stories, objects, and photos from Broomfield's past, particularly from the years of intense growth and transformation in the 1950s and 1960's. Oral histories are simple Zoom interviews with Museum Coordinator David Allison (and aren't we all pros at socializing via Zoom after this year??) that will help preserve memories. ■



1956 - Officer Ed McCarthy and children outside the school



Cottage school in 1956

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## The Broomfield Civic Chorus

—Sandra Roberts

When Elis-Barbara Schipper moved to Broomfield with her husband Bud and daughter Lynnette in 1972, she knew she'd found her forever home—finally, a permanent home after many years of moving around the world for Bud's military career. Barbara quickly settled into the community and also found her spiritual and musical home in the Broomfield Presbyterian Church on Main Street. Within a year, she was directing the church's small choir, but Barbara also dreamed of leading a larger musical group, and in 1989, her dream became a reality: the Broomfield Civic Chorus. After practicing and performing at the Broomfield United Methodist Church for a few years, the chorus eventually moved its practices and major performances to Broomfield Presbyterian Church.

Barbara's work was a labor of love; she did not accept any money for her work with the chorus. Grant funds covered the accompanist and sheet music. In addition to their piano accompaniment, the chorus has performed with percussion, hand bells, flutes, and even trumpets. Once they sang with the Golden Eagle Brass Band, but even with help from microphones and amplifiers, the singers struggled to be heard!

Over the years, Broomfield Civic Chorus membership has fluctuated between 25 and 45 people. The chorus typically sings popular songs from bygone days, such as "Dream a Little Dream of Me," "Stardust," and "The Sound of Silence." Show tunes from musicals such as "South Pacific" and "The Phantom of the Opera" also have a place in their large repertoire, along with a variety of Christmas songs for the holiday season.

Performances and venues include a Veterans Day concert at Broomfield High School as well as a performance in the Broomfield Presbyterian Church's auditorium; Memorial Day in Broomfield Commons;



Broomfield Civic Chorus, May 1, 1993



Elis-Barbara Schipper

concerts for Christmas and Spring in the Broomfield Presbyterian Church's auditorium; and the tree-lighting ceremony at the Broomfield City and County Building. Longtime member Dr. Bob Pearson remembers singing in a snow storm at one of the early Christmas tree lightings, before the chorus moved inside: "Just as they finished lighting the tree, it started to snow. I have the water spots on my music to prove it!"

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*Broomfield Civic Chorus - Continued from page 6*

On the Tuesday or Wednesday night before Thanksgiving, Broomfield churches from various denominations hold a combined Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve service. The chorus always sings for this program, which may attract up to 200 attendees. Of course, the real draw may be the pies—audience members and singers alike are encouraged to bring pies for a time of fellowship after the service.

In 2007, the chorus also sang at Carnegie Hall with three chorus groups from other states, performing Fauré's "Requiem" under the direction of Ron Williams. The audience was enthusiastic, and the singers received a rather unusual standing ovation—from the orchestra members! It was the experience of a lifetime for members of this small-town chorus.

2020 was a year of heartache for the group: the pandemic forced them to pause their work, and Barbara Schipper, beloved founder and director, passed away at the age of 90. On two occasions, masked chorus members serenaded Barbara in her driveway. The first driveway concert was covered by the Broomfield Enterprise.

Lynnette Muncey, Barbara's daughter, says that her mom was always impressed by people's willingness to perform: "They loved it. The men were rascals. They would pull something every concert just to tickle my mom—it was usually some kind of costume. [Chorus members] would regularly come to practice, and she didn't do lots of easy music—they'd look at it and say, 'I don't know if we can do this.' And she said, 'Just give me some time.' She showed them that they could do anything. Music does something for people. You get to stretch yourself. Her little chorus was able to bring these people together and produce beautiful music."

This year, the Broomfield Civic Chorus is looking forward to starting again after a long year of waiting. They will have a new director, Sue McKnight, who is also the Children's Choir director at the Lutheran Church of Hope in

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Broomfield Civic Chorus, May 10, 2008

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Broomfield, and undoubtedly, some new members, too.

At every major concert, Dr. Bob Pearson invites members of the audience to join the chorus. He tells the crowd, “We’re open to anyone who likes to sing. We don’t require you to be able to read music or audition; there is one condition—you like to sing and want to come join us!”

The first practice this year will be September 13, 2021, at 7pm, at the Broomfield Presbyterian Church. For more information, please contact the chorus organizers through their website: <http://www.broomfieldcivicchorus.org/>

Thanks to Lynnette Muncey, Dr. Bob Pearson, and Marla Layman for sharing historical information and photos! ■



Broomfield Civic Chorus, 2018, courtesy Werner Hoellerbauer



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Be to sure to always go to smile.amazon.com before making a purchase! All of the same items will be available, but now 0.5% of your purchase price will be donated!

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## Membership

The Friends of Broomfield History is dedicated to sustaining the history and heritage of Broomfield through our relationship with the Broomfield Museum, our members and other community partners. Your membership or contribution bolsters all our work, and we greatly appreciate your support.

"Be in! Be appreciated! Be connected! Join today!"



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### *Friends of Broomfield History Membership Form*

**Basic: \$20/year**

**Contributing: \$50/year**

**Sustaining: \$100/year**

Mail to: Friends of Broomfield History

P.O. Box 274

Broomfield, CO 80038-0274

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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