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~Upcoming Events~

- » Preserving Our History at the Veterans Museum, 10/6/21
- » BCAH family Halloween Walk (Depot is a stop), 10/31/21 <http://www.artsinbroomfield.org/event-calendar.html>
- » *Only the Earth and the Mountains* film screening, 12/1/21
- » Volunteer appreciation at 6 Garden Center, 6-7:30pm, 12/9/21
- » Polar Express at the Depot, 12/18/21 and 12/19/21
- » Original David Allison Poem Fundraiser, 10/1-12/1/21

THE BROOMCORN EXPRESS
Vol. 1, No.3, 2021

Oh Wow!

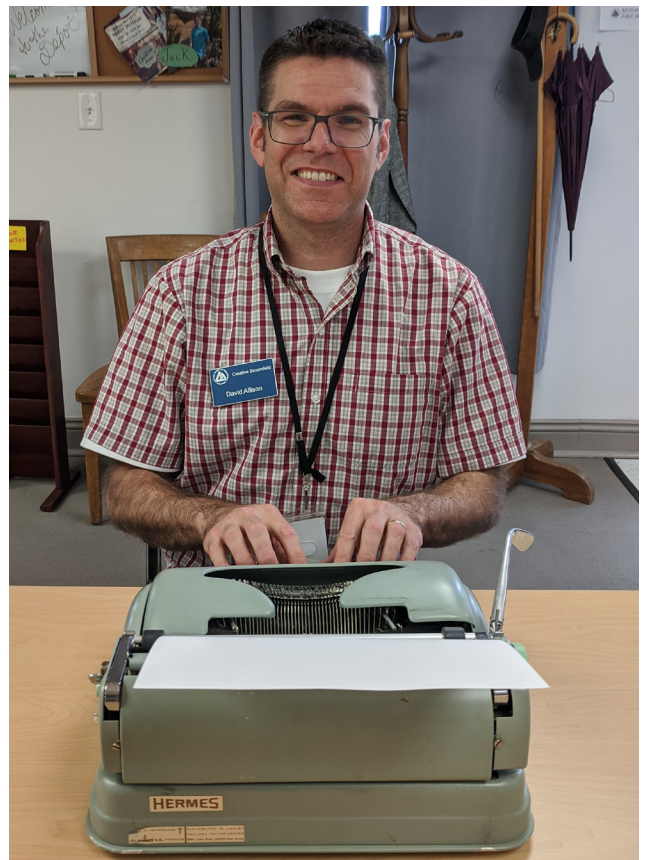
A letter from the President, Annie Lessem

“I THINK THAT I SHALL NEVER SEE A POEM AS LOVELY...”

Many of you probably filled in those missing words. But probably not as many of you understood why my letter in *The Broomcorn Express* would start off with a poem. To tell the truth, up until about a week ago I would never have thought of doing that. And then David Allison, the Depot Museum Coordinator, suggested a fundraising activity for the Friends of Broomfield History that involved poetry.

David volunteered to write original short poems that would be typed on an old typewriter and delivered to anyone willing to donate to the Friends of Broomfield History. I thought it was a lovely idea and so did the rest of the Board of Directors. And quite coincidentally, I happened to own a relatively old (circa 1965) Hermes 3000 portable type-

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Monumental Poetry

—David Allison

As I write this article (September 8, 2021), a huge equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee in Richmond, Virginia is being cut in half and taken away from the city. It's a big moment for our nation. As the culmination of years of advocacy for the removal of statues that glorify leaders who sought to preserve the institution of slavery and to defeat the United States of America in a war, the Lee statue was one of the largest and most prominent remaining monuments to the "Lost Cause." I, for one, am glad that it's gone.

If I could point to any incident that triggered this large-scale rethinking of our nation's monument landscape, it would be the killing of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville in August 2017. Shortly after this tragic incident, as historic sites, politicians, and community leaders started grappling with the troubling legacy of the Confederacy, I answered a call to edit a book about controversial monuments and memorials for the publisher Rowman & Littlefield. Published in 2018, *Controversial Monuments and Memorials: A Guide for Community Leaders* is a compilation of essays from scholars, public historians, and community members that dispels myths about monuments and shares ways that communities can work together to reckon with the painful past.

While there are some fascinating essays in that book and I have been proud of its reception by the public, I wish that I had been able to add an appendix for some poems I wrote on the topic of monuments. Poetry is more than a nice, flowery diversion. It is an agent of change. It is a new perspective. It is a way to work out problems and to carve clarity out of the hard block of intransigence.

So here is my opportunity to share this 'monumental' poetry with you....

Virginia Lament

*Sheen of dew and fading night cool stifled by sticky summer heat,
Arrayed in hate, arrayed in love.
Puerile words flung, received,
Repeat, wave the past's shards and forget shared stories,
hands made strong in unity.
Destinies tied, humanity shirked,
Eyes a pale, cold blue as steely and pitiless as the cries
of blood and soil from his brethren.
Heap the flowers and tributes upon she who died,
The age-old shackles jangle, the seeping sins yoke us to
memory and extend our guilt.
America the beautiful on the outside only, soul gangre-
nous and degraded,
Reflects now a tawdry, empty striving for lucre, for
fame, for power.
Chrome and glass, glinting and broken on a Virginia
street,
Hers is the blood, ours the soil.*

Empty Temples

*What does this cold, carved stone say?
Epochs, eons, and eras of history haven't altered our
glorification of the trappings of power.
Solemn temples, antiseptic in their callow spaciousness
—
Bright and hot, air still and clear outside,
Cavernous halls and towering faces, dedicated to deeds
long forgotten.
Never more flush with the vigor of humanity,
Reflects our need to matter.*

Image by Will Fisher from Richmond, VA, United States - BLM RVA, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=92785995>

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Oh Wow! Continued from page 1

writer with a script font (quite unusual for typewriters of that time frame), that David could use to type his poems.

While thinking about the fundraiser, it occurred to me that there might actually be some important connection between poetry and history, so as many of us would do, I did a Google search. Through that search I discovered that poetry is a very important component to history and historical research. In one form or another, poetry has been around for thousands of years. Historians believe that poetry was one of the first ways that ancient peoples remembered and passed along information about rituals and traditions, so it was essentially the first form of oral history. As time progressed, different cultures began to use poetry in a variety of forms. Because those poems contained words and ideas that were typically different than normal speech rhythms and linear thought processes, poetry helped (and still does help) historians see the past in a new light.

But you might ask, what about today with all our social media and instantaneous connectiveness? Is poetry really of any use today other than to confound students in academic courses, or conversely, to create



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mildly sexual images via limericks? Interestingly, the significance of poetry is highlighted by the fact that a poem can have many forms, such as off-color limericks, children's nursery rhymes, rap song lyrics, free-form verses, or long and rambling epics, etc.

Prior to this fundraiser, I didn't think much about the intersection of poetry and history. However, I now know that I will value poetry and poems differently in the future because poetry, in its many forms, extends our ability to communicate, and in doing so can provide valuable insights into history.

This newsletter contains a donation and order form for one of David's original poems.

We are also inviting you to be inspired by the importance and significance poetry can have at this time in our history, and to record that inspiration in your own original poems. And, if you would like to share any of those poems with us, we would be happy to receive them. So in the words of Shel Silverstein, we invite you to "come in" to history (and perhaps to the history of Broomfield) through poetry. §

*If you are a dreamer, come in,
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer...
If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire
For we have some flax-golden tales to spin.
Come in!
Come in!*

--Shel Silverstein

Walk this Way

—Sallie Diamond



Walk to the back of the Broomfield Depot Museum grounds located at 2201 W. 10th Ave. and you will find the grave of Shep the Turnpike Dog. He is Broomfield's first celebrity!

Shep was a shaggy shepherd mix that was adopted by the toll takers in the 1950s and became a notable fixture at the Broomfield toll booth for 13 years. He was laid to rest in 1964 and a small grave and headstone was erected next to the onramp on U.S. 36. Once plans for the construction on the 120th Avenue Connection became a reality, a new home for Shep was created between the historical Honey House and the Depot Museum in Zang's Spur Park. The relocation of his new home coincided with the 100-year celebration of the Depot on October 17, 2009. §

A Letter from 101 Years Ago: Can you Help Us Identify its Writer?

—Elizabeth Beaudoin, Curator

The Broomfield History Collections recently received an April 1920 letter written by a mystery writer. We are hoping that readers who enjoy genealogy research might help us find the writer's identity. While many handwritten letters often focus on the mundane (weather, health, crops, etc), this letter not only sheds light on local Broomfield life, but also on international events.

The letter was donated by longtime Broomfield native Nila Brummund, niece of William Crooks (aged 19 in 1920), the recipient of the letter. Clearly, the writer was a man who had lived in Broomfield, at least for a while, as he references the Grange and people living in the area. When he talks of the "flu" he is likely referring to the infamous Spanish Flu, which took the lives of 50 million people between 1918 and 1920, a historical period that we occasionally hear about in the news because of COVID-19.

Our mystery writer was also an enlisted soldier, as he was writing from Fort William McKinley (now Fort Bonifacio) in the Philippines. He also mentions being in Russia, which may indicate he was enlisted in the 31st Infantry Division, a unit that was sent to Siberia to keep supply lines open for Allied Troops in Europe during WWI, as well as to potentially weaken Bolshevik power. Because of their service in Siberia, the 31st regiment became known as "The Polar Bear Regiment." We know that the 31st regiment returned to Fort McKinley in April 1920, when our letter was written.

Below is the transcript of the letter; I have edited some of the spelling and grammar for better readability.

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A Letter , Continued from page 4

*"Ft. Wm. McKinley
Manila, P. I.*

Apr. 21, 1920

Dear Friend Bill,

I received your kind and welcome letter some time ago and will try and answer it now. I was very glad to hear from you and glad to hear that you are well. I am certainly glad you all got over the 'flu' without any deaths.

It was too bad Mrs. Church died with it, but she was getting pretty old anyway, wasn't she?

I am sorry to hear that Beatrice Berkeley died. She was such a nice young girl. I would feel sorry if Mrs. Bonar died. It would be hard on her children.

Yes Bill, I certainly would like to be there to buy a few of those baskets. Bill, do you remember the basket supper the grange gave shortly before I enlisted when I bought a basket and thought I was buying Ruth's basket all the time? And then later I found out which one really was Ruth's and I bid it up to about ten or twelve dollars and then sold the first basket I bought for three dollars. I found out later the first basket I bought was Gertie McKees'. I sure had fun that night. No, I guess I won't know Broomfield when I get back there if it is growing so much.

I certainly am glad to hear that the Broomfield Drill Team won the flag again. Give them my congratulations. I suppose though that there are very few in the team that remember me. The last time I served the team drill was at the Stock Show in 1918.

I am glad you have done so well trapping, and that it is making good jingy [DYEHN'-gee] which is money in Russian.

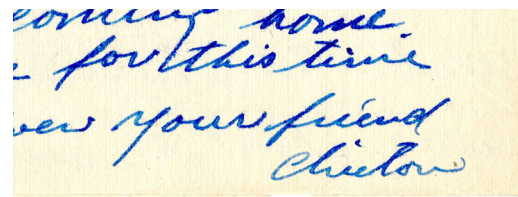
You wanted to know what I did xmas, but I celebrated Russian xmas which was about 2 weeks later. During any holiday the Russians all believe in getting drunk (girls and all) and believe me I sure got drunk. In Siberia they have what they call vodka, it is something like

gasoline. In fact, they can run a motorcycle on it and it sure has a kick.

Yes Bill I am afraid I won't know Ruth by the time I get back, they say she has got to be quite a young lady by this time. Well I should worry. I have got a nice girl in Council Bluff, Iowa.

Yes you can be looking for me this fall alright, for I am coming home. I must close for this time. I remain as ever your friend.

C???????"



Without knowing our writer's name, we are left with so many questions; Who was he? Where in the Broomfield area did he live? What happened to him after the war? Did he marry that "nice girl in Council Bluff, Iowa?" What was his connection to Iowa? Was he from there or did he live there later, maybe even enlisting from there?

The date of the letter makes genealogical research difficult. The 1920 census in Broomfield was completed in January, so our writer was likely in Russia at the time (Russian Christmas is January 7). In 1910 he would have just been a kid. But my digging into the census records led me to information regarding the other people mentioned in this letter. Old "Mrs. Church" may have been Sarah Church, one of the area's earliest homestead families. Beatrice Berkeley was a relation (a niece maybe?) of Sarah Church, and appears to be living in the same household as Sarah in 1910 (when Beatrice was 14). In 1920, Beatrice was a 23-year-old school teacher in Boulder, but she died in February of 1920, shortly after the census was taken. She was probably about the same age as our writer. "Mrs. Bonar" may be Lavica Bonar, a 34-year-old mother of three children living on Wadsworth Ave in 1920. I was unable to find "Ruth" or "Gertie McKee," but someone else might be able to identify her with a bit more research.

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A Letter, Continued from page 5

For me, this letter became a catalyst for learning more about the period of 1918-1920, both in Broomfield and beyond. Through this letter, we get a glimpse of what life was like in Colorado, and how international events such as the Spanish Flu and WWI affected their lives. §

Ft. Wm. McTuley
Manila P. I.
Apr. 21, 1920

Dear Friend Bill:

I received your kind and welcome letter some time ago and will try and answer it now, I was very glad to hear from you and glad to hear that you are well, I am certainly glad you all got over the "flu" without any deaths.

It was so bad Mrs. Church died with it, but she was getting pretty old any way wasn't she?

I am sorry to hear that Beatrice Berkeley died she was such a nice young girl.

I would feel sorry if Mrs.

Continued on page 7

Bonar died it would be hard
on her children

Yes Bill I certainly would like
to be there to buy a few of those
baskets, Bill do you remember the
basket raffer the grange gave
shortly before I enlisted when
I bought a basket and thought
I was buying Ruth's basket all
the time and then later I
found out which one really
was Ruth's and I bid it up to
about ten or twelve dollars and
then sold the first basket
I bought for three dollars, I found
out later the first basket I
bought was Lertie McKeen's

I sure had some fun that
night. No I guess I won't
know Broomfield when

I get back there if it is grow-
ing so much.

I certainly am glad to hear
that the Broomfield Drill Team
won the flag again, give them
my congratulations, I suppose
thought that there is very few
in the Team that remembers
me, The last time I saw the
Team drill was at the Stock
Show in 1918

I am glad you done so well
trapping that is making good (jingy)
which is money in Russian.

You wanted to know what
I done Xmas, well I was in the
hospital in bed so I didn't have
such a nice Xmas, but I sure
celebrated Russian Xmas which
was about 2 weeks later

Pages 2, 3 and 4 of
the original letter

During any holiday the Russians
all believe in getting drunk (girls
and all) and believe me I sure
got drunk, in Siberia they have
what they call vodka, it is
something like gasoline in
fact they can run a motor-
cycle on it and it sure has
a kick,

Yes Bill I am afraid I won't
know Ruth by the time I get
back, they say she has got to
be quite a young lady by this
time, Well I should worry I have
got a nice girl in Council
Bluff Down.

Yes you can be looking
for me this fall alright for
I am sure coming home.

I must close for this time
I remain as ever your friend
Chilton

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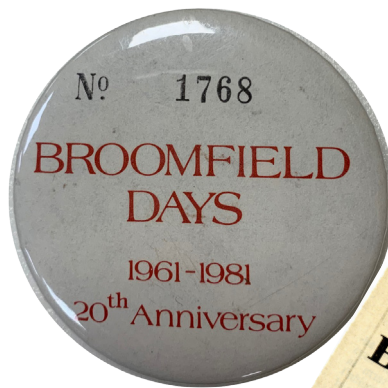
Broomfield Days Buttons

—Sandra Roberts

Did you enjoy Broomfield Days this year? Sadly, I was unable to attend, but there's always next year! My first Broomfield Days was probably in 1990, a few decades after the start of the tradition. For many years, Broomfield commemorated its annual celebration with buttons, and the Broomfield Depot Museum archive contains quite a few of these interesting artifacts. Here are some excerpts from their collection:

The first button celebrates 30 years since the groundbreaking for a new city in Broomfield Heights.

In 1981, Broomfield celebrated its 20th anniversary as a city. A button could give the wearer a 25¢ discount at the barbeque booth, or it might keep them out of the Broomfield Days “jail.”



Broomfield Days parade, 1975; private submission



Clipping from the Broomfield Enterprise

Sandra Roberts, Editor

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MAKE A DONATION TO RECEIVE AN ORIGINAL DAVID ALLISON POEM

Here's is how it works. You should be able to print the form below straight from this newsletter. Or, if you prefer to wait for a short while, we will be sending out the form to everyone via email, and it should be easy to print that one out. Or, if printing out the form seems to be tricky, just copy the categories yourself and provide the relevant information. Whatever way you choose, please surface mail the information to Friends of Broomfield History (address is below) with your monetary donation in any amount of your choosing. In return you will receive by surface mail an original poem composed by David Allison. It's that easy. Thank you for being a friend of Broomfield history.

I'D LIKE A DAVID ALLISON ORIGINAL POEM

*NAME: _____

*SURFACE MAIL ADDRESS: _____

TOPIC OR THEME YOU'D LIKE THE POEM TO BE ABOUT (optional):

*AMOUNT OF DONATION:

CONTACT INFO IN CASE WE HAVE A QUESTION OR NEED CLARIFICATION

Email (optional): _____

*Phone: _____

*Required field

MAIL YOUR COMPLETED INFORMATION TO

Friends of Broomfield History

P.O. Box 274

Broomfield, CO 80038

Support us while you shop through Amazon Smile!

The Broomfield Depot Museum is registered with AmazonSmile! By adding us as your charitable organization with Amazon Smile, 0.5% of your purchase price will be donated to the museum.

How to add your charitable organization:

1. Go to smile.amazon.com
2. Search for "Broomfield Depot Museum"
3. Click the yellow "Select" button next to our name

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!

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!"



Find us on Facebook!
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Friends of Broomfield History Membership Form

Donations received now will apply to a membership through 12/2022

\$20 donation: Basic Membership

\$50 donation: Contributing Membership

\$100 donation: Sustaining Membership

Mail to: Friends of Broomfield History

P.O. Box 274

Broomfield, CO 80038-0274

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

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