
What's New at the *Grand Lake Area Historical Society*

Our mission is to preserve, protect and promote the history of the Grand Lake area.

“Tenting on the Old Camp..... Ground”

by GLAHS Board Member, Steve Batty

This is the title of a famous American Civil War folk song written in 1863 by Walter Kittredge and particularly enjoyed by northern enlisted soldiers. I can see in my mind's eye the soldiers at night sitting around a campfire surrounded by hundreds of one and two man tents singing the slow ballad and wishing they were home. Here's a good *youtube* version of the song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh7Mw2S8mdE>

Why do I write about the old 1863 folk song? If you take a look at the associated photo you will see that Bessie Mason titled the photo of her family tent “Tenting on the Old Camp”. I would put down a small wager that her idea for the photo title came from that famous old ballad.

If you read my story in the GLAHS June 2015 annual newsletter you would remember that I talked about the old leather bound photo album that I attribute to Bessie Mason. I called it the Mason album because Bessie, her little dog Tatters and her parents are in many of the album's photos.

Several of the photos in the old album were of the Mason tent on the west shore next to the old Adams hotel, which burned to the ground in 1901 and helps date the old photos. The other location was on their eventual building site on Jerico Rd. (now spelled Jericho Rd.), on the southwest corner of the lake. Both locations had flat areas making them suitable for tenting.

Their west shore tent was placed on top of a large wooden platform and the sides secured by ropes to posts running the length of the canvas tent. The name Mason was on the front of the tent but their tent on Jerico Rd. appears smaller and not as substantial, making me think the one in this photo was borrowed or supplied by the owners of the Adams hotel. If you look closely you will see it is tall enough for the three Masons to stand up in it. Looking over the top of the structure you can see a stovepipe extending up above the tent.



The style of tent used by the Mason family is called a wall tent because of the vertical sidewalls that allow more room inside for its occupants. It might even have been purchased from The Colorado Tent Co. (now called the Denver Tent Co.) in Denver since the company was established in 1890 and the Mason family purchased their lakeshore property about 1900. Based on the company's standard sizes it might have been 10x12 or 12x14. By the looks of the tent in relationship to the young man standing out in front, I'm guessing it was probably the 12' by 14' tent or larger with 5 foot vertical sides.

An even earlier summer resident family that tented prior to building their permanent cabin was William Harry Bryant and his wife Birdie Minnie Routt Bryant. In a video oral history Mary Beth Lagerborg, Jane Kemp and I did with Scally O'Donnell during the summer of 2015, he mentioned that his grandparents tented from 1892 until their cabin was erected in 1898. He said there were two large tents with wooden floors. One was for sleeping and

the other for cooking. Scally's older sister Dorothy O'Ryan, in her book *Sailing Above the Clouds*, has several photos on page 8 of the family and neighboring tents. The two Bryant tents were replaced in 1898 by two log structures. Dorothy told me one fall that the logs had been hauled in from Lulu City (1880s abandon mining town). Scally, in the video, thought the logs had been from an old boarding house in one of the old mining towns now in RMNP.



Mason family at the Wall Tent

The Masons and the Routts were not the first to tent on the shores of Grand Lake. The first tenting summer residents on those shores were the Native American Ute and Arapaho Indians. Their tents would have been made with the tall straight lodge pole trees for support and with animal hides like buffalo and deer, unlike the treated, or untreated, woven cotton cloth called duck canvas for the later summer vacationers.

Three important considerations for a good tenting site were and are a flat piece of ground, close proximity to good water for drinking and cooking, and a privy or outhouse. Tenting next to the Adams Hotel would have supplied the clean water (the well is still there), a privy, good meals and association with other lake guests.

One reason I enjoy researching topics like this one and the other two newsletters' articles I've written are the side trips I take in my research. On this journey I discovered a couple of interesting facts.

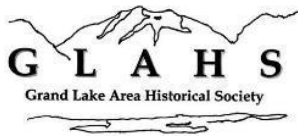
First – many town/city lots are 25' wide by 100 feet deep. This even holds up in the town of Grand Lake. When I went looking why, I discovered it went back to how the city of New York City was laid out. It was established back in 1811 by a hand picked group of city commissioners which must have established the standard as people moved west from there. Even in my little town of McCook, Nebraska, downtown streets are 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep. When you next walk down the boardwalk of Grand Avenue take a look at most store widths. Most are 25 feet or a multiple of 25 feet. My lot on Lake Ave. is 50 feet wide by 100 feet deep.

If you were to walk around the lake or look at a plat of the lots on the south shore they would approximate that standard. My cottage on the south shore was approximately 100 feet wide and back to the wagon road labeled Jerico Road but had been laid out using "metes and bounds". During World War II the one large lot was divide in half and each lot came out to be 55 feet wide. No tenting on our lakeshore property, most likely because it had no flat land on it.

Another side journey was to learn that William Harry Bryant's wife, Birdie, was the daughter of John Long Routt, Colorado's last territorial governor and first elected governor of the great state of Colorado.

Routt was appointed as territorial governor to Colorado by Hiram Ulysses Grant or as most of us think of him, U. S. Grant. It turns out that Routt served under Grant during part of the U. S Civil War, both being part of the Illinois Volunteers. Grant spent the last months of his life, while dying of cancer, writing his memoirs to provide for his family after his death. Grant's work is still considered the most well- written memoirs by a U. S. President. But then, that could be another long story in itself.

The next time you walk around the shore of Grand Lake and see a flat piece of land near the water, envision a tent staked out and a family sitting around it enjoying the cool summer breeze, reading a good book or writing a poem capturing the essence of the beautiful summer retreat.



Visit our Websites:

www.grandlakehistory.org

Facebook: Smith-Eslick Cottage Court

www.cottagecourt.wordpress.com

**Send us your e-mail address so we
can send you our E-Blasts:
historygrandlake@gmail.com**

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407 Pitkin Street
Grand Lake**

**Smith Eslick Cottage Camp
729 Lake Avenue
Grand Lake**

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News From the The Cottage Camp

So much has been accomplished in the last year as we work to make the Smith Eslick Cottage Camp a terrific museum and community events site!



The central building at The Cottage Camp is the Smith Eslick Cottage Court, the oldest original condition motor court in the region, and perhaps the nation. Water was brought to the Court site, funded in part by grants from the Town of Grand Lake, Grand County and the Grand Foundation. A generous donor provided installation of additional irrigation, sod and seed, and it's looking great.

The Cottage Court will be soon be completely restored, making it very like its original self, but also making it sturdy enough for visitors' entry and installation of exhibits. This project was paid for in part by a History Colorado – State Historical Fund grant.

Also coming soon is installation of an exhibit panel at the site, funded by the Town of Grand Lake and the Grand Foundation. Local support has been invaluable as this project progresses, and we are grateful!

More exhibits for the Cottage Court site are in the final planning stage. Exhibit topics have been researched and developed by the very dedicated Cottage Camp Planning Committee and Traub Design Associates, Inc. of Kansas. Topics to be explored in exhibits will include the history and importance of automobile tourism in the Grand Lake area and the American West, the unique rustic local architecture, area entrepreneurs like the Eslicks who responded to the influx of auto tourists with new and changing businesses, area recreation and landscape features now and in history, the development of roads to meet the challenge of auto transportation, and more.

Later, a welcome center and gift shop, community events spaces and much more are to be added. It's exciting, and your help is always welcome and needed. Call us! Jet us an email!

2017 Coming Events – Mark Your Calendars



May 27th Kauffman House Museum opens for the season.
Open Daily 11:00 am – 5:00 pm through Labor Day, and weekends in September. *Many* new exhibits to be enjoyed!

June 14th, 7:00 pm, Grand Lake Community House
GLAHS Annual Meeting & Election of Board

Come join us for a presentation by artist Nancy Zoller sharing history and stories of the El Navajo Lodge. Her family, the Robinsons, owned and operated it back in the day!

It's all-FREE and we always have yummy treats and coffee. Stay for the Annual Meeting after the presentation to get the latest news.



June 24th, 5:30 -9:00 pm

Souper Stars for the Cottage Camp GOES WESTERN!

There'll be super soups and fixins, excellent live entertainment from Tight Like That, wonderful old and new friends, adult beverages, a really unique live auction, and a great time altogether. \$50 per person; all proceeds benefit the Cottage Camp Campaign. If you'd like a mailed invitation, or to reserve or for location and more information, 970-627-8324, historygrandlake@gmail.com.

Wednesday, July 19th, 2:00– 4 pm , **Victorian Tea at the Historic Rapids Lodge**

Join us for a lovely Light Tea in a wonderfully historic setting. Bring your own, or borrow one of our hats! \$20 All proceeds benefit the Cottage Camp Campaign. For more information, or to reserve, contact historygrandlake@gmail.com, 970-627-8324 or call the Historic Rapids Lodge directly: 970-627-3707.



Sunday, August 20th **Third Annual Community Chicken Dinner** at the Cottage Camp, 729 Lake Avenue. It's an all-Town party with plenty of great food beginning at 5:30 pm: dinner with chicken cooked on-site and loads of delicious side dishes, campfire and marshmallows, vintage automobile rides and more! The music will again be from the delightful "Kauffman Combo" with their fun swing tunes! 970-627-8324 or historygrandlake@gmail.com for more information. We've got a second, covered site in case of rain! Don't want to miss this! Dinner for adults \$10, for kids \$5, beverages purchased separately.

Coming to the Cottage Camp

A last remnant of the Cairns #3 Ditch, which carried and distributed water to James Cairns' fields and to other owners along the "old road" into town, is located in front of the Smith Eslick Cottage Court. This is a rare thing, an open ditch that carried water for people to use. Visitors come by often completely unaware of its historical value, but not for much longer. An exhibit panel is being prepared to explain how and why this ditch came about before the turn of the century. This exhibit has been funded in part by the Grand Foundation and the Town of Grand Lake, and we thank them very much! Great pictures and surprising facts!



A Walk Back in Time



This year's special exhibit at the Kauffman House Museum is actually many exhibits! It's called "A Walk Back in Time" and features some early history and more recent history as well. For example, there is an exhibit about early camping in the area, but also an exhibit celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Rocky Mountain Repertory Theatre. This promises to have something for everyone in addition to all the amazing history already shared at the museum. Don't miss it!

The exhibits will debut May 27th when the Kauffman House opens for the summer – open daily 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Adults \$5.00, Free to Children 12 and Younger, Active Military and GLAHS Members.

Docents Welcome Visitors – and We Need You to Help!

People love to visit the Kauffman House Museum. They feel like they've truly come to someone's home when they are warmly greeted by volunteer docents who are ready to answer questions or to tour them through the House. There are always two docents on duty so someone's always at the entrance to greet folks, and there's no reason to hurry through the visitor conversations. Volunteer docents work a three hour per week shift, either 11:00 am-2:00 pm or 2:00 to 5:00, so it takes 28 people to keep the House open and running smoothly! We need a few more folks for this summer's season, and would love to have you join the team. It's fun, and you'll meet very interesting folks. There's a little training, but that can be arranged to suit your needs. Give Frank a call at 301/980-9081 or e-mail frankreardon@gmail.com! Thanks!

Website: grandlakehistory.org

Visit the website for information about Grand Lake History – the People, Places and Events that tell the interesting stories of long ago. We update the site regularly with current events sponsored by GLAHS and add pictures of current and past exhibits.

You will be surprised at what you are able to read at our grandlakehistory.org website. Some of the wonderful exhibits from past years that are available in "Grand Lake History/Places" include Changes in RMNP's West Side Over the Past 100 years, and Historic Guest Ranches now gone. You can search various people with fascinating lives and impacts on our area. There's even a lesson plan for classroom use built around our website. The historic pictures are amazing, well worth a look!

Let us know what more you would like to see on our website, www.grandlakehistory.org. And check out our other sites: Facebook: Smith-Eslick Cottage Court and Blog: cottagecourt.wordpress.com.

Donated Items From the Past Year

An amazing array of items are donated to the GLAHS every year. Some reflect local area events, some have national historic importance, and most are treasures with connections to local families. All are valuable in interpreting our area history to visitors, either at the Kauffman House Museum, in special presentations, or soon at the Smith Eslick Cottage Court Museum.



1930s radio from Cecelia and Jack Bender

Of course, history is being made at this very minute, so items that tell stories of more recent history are important, in addition to items from long ago. We like to think “should today’s kids learn about this?” Here are a few examples of this year’s additions...

1950 Fishing Regulations
Donated by Edward M. Green
“Resident combined fishing and small game hunting license, Three Dollars”



One of 67 blotters from Fred McClaren, each different, and each with his name on it. Remember ink pens and blotters? Donated by Martha and Lee Boehner

The President's Two Cents

What a busy year it's been, thanks to our members, volunteers and Board members! The Kauffman House Museum is looking marvelous. The exterior restoration project is complete, and the Kauffman House is warmer because of it!

Our dedicated volunteer docents continue to welcome visitors from around the world all summer long, plus several special dates through the winter, including New Year's Eve. Last year's special display of antique, vintage and altogether unusual dolls was a hit with both young and old. Thank you to Kathy Means, her volunteers, and to all who lent dolls for that exhibit. Coming this summer is a "Walk Back in Time", with rows of interesting exhibits of past and much more recent history. It's new and fascinating!

We celebrate the installation of the Smith Eslick Cottage Court's electricity, and donation of irrigation and landscaping by a generous community member. We were thrilled to receive funding from the State Historic Fund for restoration of the Court to its 1930's condition, due largely to the efforts of Elin Capps and Dennis Humphries. Work on this \$145,000 project is scheduled for completion early this summer. We are continuing to implement the Master Plan developed for the site. We are now embarking on efforts to build displays interpreting the Smiths and Eslicks, the Cottage Court, early automobile tourism, and the importance of water in Grand Lake and the American West.

We have received a challenge grant from the Rotary Club of Grand Lake towards purchase of a \$3,100 rehabilitated Model A Ford for display at the Cottage Court. This vehicle will have all its parts, but won't move. Visitors will love to explore this, but we need *your* help to purchase it! Please call for 970-627-8324 or contact us at historygrandlake@gmail.com for more information about how you can help.

So much going on! So much important work to do! If you can contribute 3 hours a week, 2 days a month, one day a year, or a few hours here and there, I encourage you to contribute what you can toward our common goal of Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the History of the Grand Lake, Colorado Area. Thank You!

Your Financial Support is Needed!

I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to join with us in supporting the Grand Lake Area Historical Society. We are an extraordinary and very hard-working all-volunteer organization. Your dues help create a history experience for visitors and local citizens alike. Following are a few of the products and services we provide: Kauffman House Museum -FREE ADMISSION for MEMBERS; family history research, recording and access to records and artifacts; research of local business histories including people, structures, stories; historical picture reproduction; archival storage of photographs and artifacts; ever changing fresh exhibits: research, development, presentation; Grand Lake Walking Tour; interviews and transcriptions of local histories; advise and counsel to local government and site owners regarding restoration and preservation.

The money we receive from memberships goes toward funding the behind the scenes work required to accomplish all that needs to be done to keep Grand Lake history alive to be enjoyed by people like you. Please join us by returning the "Yes! I want to become a member" form in this newsletter or through PayPal on our website www.grandlakehistory.org. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Sharon King, Membership Chair.

Yes! I want to become a member of the Grand Lake Area Historical Society:

Date _____

☐

New Member

☐

Gift

☐

Renewal

☐

Individual Membership..... \$25

☐

Family Membership..... \$40

☐

Business Membership..... \$50

☐

Benefactor \$100 - \$1,000

☐

Other Contribution

☐

Heritage Coalition Master Membership.... \$175 Includes membership in four organizations

Grand Lake Area Historical Society, Grand County Historical Association, Moffat Road Railroad Museum, Grand County Characters

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Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Signature: _____

☐ GLAHS may publicly acknowledge my contribution.

☐ Gift in honor or memory of

☐ I wish to learn more about naming opportunities.

☐ I'd like more information about including GLAHS in my
Estate plan.

Method of Payment (please check):

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Cardholder's Name: _____

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Expiration Date _____ 3-Digit Verification Code: _____

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Make checks payable to GLAHS/Cottage Camp Campaign and
Mail to GLAHS, POB 656, Grand Lake, CO 80447

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