

History...

Broomfield saves governor from Indian ambush

This is one of the last articles depicting Broomfield's history by authors Lou Walther and Laura Spitler. It consists of three segments depicting events in the making of this area and the town of Broomfield.

In the Introduction to Colorado's Century of Cities by Don and Jean Griswold, there is an interesting explanation of "kiting," and it is not what the average individual might believe.

According to the authors, "Intrigued by Bayard Taylor's statement of 1866 that in Colorado, if one talked much about the mining towns, he must add one seventh to his speech in repeating the useless word 'city,' we set out to rediscover something about Colorado's 'cities.'"

Residents of the Colorado Territory and later of the State, after 1850, followed the custom of "kiting" a town. After a town site was laid out a name would be chosen and then the word "city" would be added, "just as a tail is added to a kite before it is sent into flight."

Thus, Montana City, Denver City, Pike's Peak City and El Paso City were designated in 1858. Until Garden City in 1936, more

Broomfield, fearing for the Governor's safety on the last lap of his journey, and he, himself, already having had his share of Indian fighting, called together a group of the famous Julesburg Scouts, formerly banded together to repel the Indians, and led them out on the trail an hour before the expected arrival of the Governor's party.

For ten miles no "Injun Sign" was seen. Suddenly, the Scouts came upon a band of about 20 warriors hidden behind a small bluff.

than 200 so called "cities" were started during the past 100 years.

Whether Broomfield was ever known as "Broomfield City" is doubtful, but according to a Colorado Magazine article on "Colorado Place Names," Broomfield, founded in 1887, its present name when the Denver and Salt Lake Railroad (narrow gauge) established a station here and one of its officials noticing a small field of broom corn growing east of Main St. suggested the name "Broomfield" which was accepted and replaced its older designation as "Zang's Spur."

Hero History

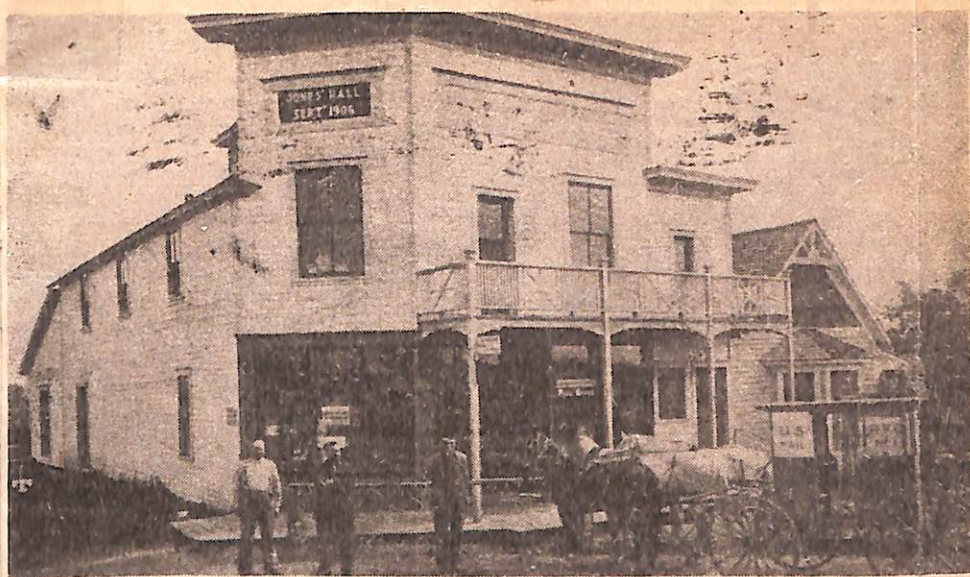
If Broomfield wants a hero's name to back its own cognomen, it might consider a man named "Broomfield" who saved Colorado's Governor Evans and his family from an Indian ambush, in 1866.

The story recorded on microfilm in the Western archives of the Denver Public Library goes thusly: (Rocky Mt. News, March 8, 1931).

"Sixty-five years ago Charles Taylor, Broomfield, led a group of Scouts who discovered an Indian ambush and saved the lives of Governor John Evans and his family while enroute to Denver."

In 1866, Broomfield was manager of the Overland Telegraph Company, with its office at Julesburg, Colo. Word had been received there, the only town between Fort Kearney and Denver, that the Governor, his wife and two small children, Ann and William, would arrive with an escort of two United States soldiers.

At the time, the territory between Julesburg and Denver was terrorized by war parties of Arapahoe, Sioux, Cheyenne and Blackfoot Indians.



Old Post Office — Jones' Hall, 1906. Left to right, O. P. Smith, Postal Route Carrier; E. J. Jones, Postmaster and W. P. Burgess, Rural Carrier.



At sight of the Scouts, the Indians took to their horses and scattered over the plains.

Gordon's Conoco Station as it used to look in the 1920's. Note the Roadster. Wonder what the price of gas was back then?

and belongings. Part of the fixtures of the Bungalow Lunch were saved.

The fire started in the Highway Lunch during the absence of Fowler and his wife. Mrs. Oathoudt noticed the flames and immediately drove her car through the town trying to summon help. Her son Jack, eight years old, emptied the cash register of the day's receipts, \$8.

The towns people formed a bucket brigade, but their attempts to check the spread were futile. The frame buildings "burned like tinder." Denver, Lafayette and Arvada sent fire equipment, but to no avail.

Firemen said that the Broomfield Depot and the Post Office were in grave danger because they were so close by, and were saved only because the wind died down.

The Scouts continued until they reached a ranch half way to Denver, well out of the danger area. When the Governor's group arrived three hours later at the ranch, nothing was said of the ambush. Two months later in Denver Gov. Evans learned of the ambush awaiting him on the trail.

Two adjacent restaurants in Broomfield were leveled by flames, according to an item in the Rocky Mountain News, March 1, 1933.

The fire occurred the night before, probably started by a faulty kerosene stove. For a time it was feared the whole town of Broomfield would go up in smoke. Total loss was estimated at \$7,000.

The Bungalow Lunch was owned by Ralph Oathoudt and the Highway Lunch's owner was Fred Fowler. Both families had living quarters in the rear of their establishments and lost all their furniture