



Issue no. 3

# Fountain Valley Historical Society Newsletter

Member of the Pikes Peak History Coalition

## The Lock Family By FVHS Member Carolyn Plotner

The Lock story begins: From Saint Louis to Denver to the Fontaine qui Bouille

Mathias and Barbara met in Illinois and married in 1859. He was 29 years and she was 19 years. Both were born in Germany - their families immigrating to America from different locations and at different times. Barbara was the granddaughter of Franz Gruber who wrote the Christmas carol Silent Night.

The newlyweds began their journey West in the spring of 1859 along with many other restless folks with gold fever. Their prairie schooner, pulled by 2 oxen, held Mathias' 2 large grinding stones made of rare black lava weighing 200 pounds each.

Mathias had learned the baking trade, pottery making, grinding grain and running a grist mill in Illinois before he married Barbara. An Indian brave riding along side of the Lock's covered wagon as they were traveling westward tried for several days to trade ponies for Barbara.

After many months they reached a location east of Denver, but decided to travel on to Boulder because they had heard news of another gold strike. The date was June 2, 1860 when they arrived in Boulder. The Locks did not find gold so Mathias found work as a baker. Barbara took in washing and cooked for other families.

Finally, they decided to try their luck in California leaving behind the grave of their first born daughter who died at birth. It was the spring of 1862 and they decided to take a southern route following the Cherokee trail. Traveling with the 2 grinding stones, a coop of Barbara's beloved chickens and a cow, they made their way south following the mountains to the west and remaining close to nearby creeks.

Near the junction of Jimmy Camp Creek and Fountain Creek was the home of Amos and Mary Terrell and their small children. Resisting any thought to end their journey in this valley the young couple pushed on for 2 more miles and noticed a small cabin. The owner was a bachelor who introduced himself as Thomas Owen. He invited the newcomers to share his fireplace and to call him Tom. Although there was no roof on his cabin, the walls made good shelter. By the next morning Tom had convinced the young couple to stay in the valley and take a parcel of land close to him. It was thought that Thomas Owen never married because he was in love with Barbara.

### Fountain Valley Historical Society and Museum

114 N. Main Street, Fountain, CO

Open Saturdays 10 am - 3 pm, or by  
appointment

[www.fountainvalleyhistory.org](http://www.fountainvalleyhistory.org)

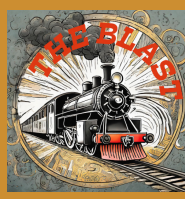
[FVHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:FVHistoricalSociety@gmail.com)

719-382-7379/ 719-244-4747



Mathias and Barbara Lock

Date: February 2025



# The Lock Family (con't)

Under the homestead act Mathias bought 160 acres at a price of \$1.25 per acre plus 5 years of working the land before they could call it theirs. The section they chose included meadows with natural hay which required very little water. Mathias helped Tom finish his place and they all lived there until they could get crops harvested and build a house on the Lock property. The Lock's new home consisted of one room with a dirt floor and a fireplace. The walls of their home were covered with German Newspapers.

The river was a quarter mile away. In these primitive circumstances Barbara gave birth to 2 children both surviving to adult hood. Barbara was the 2nd woman to homestead in the area of the junction of Jimmy Camp Creek and Fountain Creek.

Hunting wild game was necessary to supplement the food supply as were trips to Denver each year to buy other supplies. Mathias built a 2 wheel ox cart for these trips which would take up to 4 weeks. In the spring of 1863, Mathias was working in the fields some distance from the house. Barbara saw several Indians riding toward the house. She grabbed her young son and ran as fast as she could toward Mathias. The Indians raced after her and reached Mathias about the same time as Barbara laughing and saying, "squaw sure run fast." This experience caused Barbara nightmares the rest of her life causing her to wake up screaming. At one point Barbara was taken to the fort at Sweetlands sick with a fever. It was during this time that her 4th child was stillborn.

## A TARNISHED FAMILY HISTORY

Mathias raised sweet corn, sugar beets, bluestem hay and alfalfa. The family also had cows, pigs, and (of course Barbara's beloved) chickens. In 1864 he built a grist mill on the river where the stream could be diverted to turn the mill stones. It was north of the house and near the head of ditch #14. He milled grain for the whole community. (The mill was destroyed in a flood on Memorial Day of 1935.) According to El Paso County records Mathias was the sole owner of ditch #15. The "Lock ditch" as it was known was dug with a hand plow and mules. It was a 4 by 4 ditch which began near the south end of what is now the town of Fountain and followed the old Fountain Creek bed to the homestead. It was used to irrigate farmland and an orchard located east of the house. There was a well beside the river which pumped water into the ditch when Fountain Creek was low.

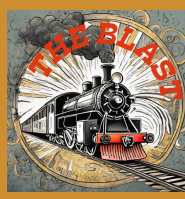
Mathias spoke a little Spanish as did the Utes who periodically passed through the Valley of the Fountain. He was not opposed to giving them food when asked – especially Barbara's biscuits.

The Lock's second house was built in 1868 and had two rooms and a wood plank floor. It took two days to bring the wood planks from Black Forest. The walls of the house are 12 inches thick and are made of rock, gravel, lime and water which when tamped turned to a concrete like substance. The house still stands today.

Although Mathias was innovative and very industrious he suffered much in later life. It was said that he never gave up hope of finding gold and would disappear to the mountains for days at a time wearing Barbara's clothes. He was admitted to the asylum in Pueblo in 1881. Not long after he returned home from Pueblo, he left Barbara and the family. At that time Barbara was pregnant with her last child. Mathias died in Albuquerque, NM in 1888. The family history indicates that Barbara made a trip to Albuquerque to bury Mathias, but there are no official records of his burial.

After Mathias left the family, Barbara and her daughter Hovena worked in Fountain. Barbara and a business partner ran a store called Lock-Ames which was located on the southeast corner of Main and Missouri. She also bought a house 2 blocks from the store where she had a large garden and room for a horse, cow, and her beloved chickens. Barbara lived in her house in Fountain until she died in 1915 at the age of 75.

In 1885 Hovena married John Spicer who wrote his murder confession on a piece of window molding which was later found in a house in Fountain. Hovena's oldest daughter, Marguerite "Peggy" Lock Bulkley began recording the family history at the age of 15. At the age of 89 she was forced to accept the fact that a murder had tarnished the family history.



# Ground Observer Corps

By FVHS Member Kay Hulen

The Ground Observer Corps was originally started during World War II in England and the United States as a program of the Army Air Force to protect against air attacks. The United States had 14,000 coastal observation posts during the war. The program ended in 1944. At the start of the Cold War the second Ground Observer Corps was organized in 1950.

The Ground Observer Corps was operating as arm of the United States Air Force Civil Defense service and was a supplement to the early radar systems across the U.S. Operations were telephoned directly to Air Defense Command ground control interception centers. By 1952 the Corp consisted of 750,000 volunteers aged 7-86 working in shifts at over 16,000 posts.

The Fountain observation tower was a modified outhouse on a silo east of town. It had an open-air window which opened to the south. It contained a telephone, a logbook to document the and identify all planes that flew over the area. It also had several books with pictures of aircraft and a pair of binoculars. Our Fountain members earned GOC wing pins for hours spent in the tower.

I accompanied my mother for her stints in the tower as a young child. I thought it was a great place to play. The Colorado Spring and Fountain area had much less military presence than it has now. In the 50's we had a small airport, and a small contingent of the U. S, Air Force at Peterson Airfield.

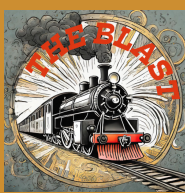
Fort Carson was still Camp Carson. The Air Force Academy and NORAD were still in the dream stages. Needless to say, we didn't have heavy air traffic. We were doing duck and cover drills in our schools convinced the Russians were going to fly over at any minute. The picture above is the wings our volunteers received for hours spent in the Fountain observation tower. The silo and outhouse are just memories now.



## Upcoming Events

- Saturdays:  
Museum is Open 10AM - 3PM
- Monthly Meeting - 2nd Monday, 10:00 at the Museum
- Talks - Future Talks are being scheduled for 2025.
- Museum Fundraiser - TBD

Click Here for [Website](#)



# First Mayor of Fountain



The first mayor of Fountain was Henry Link. He was elected in 1903 to the position in the newly incorporated town of Fountain. He served as treasurer of the school board also. The Links owned the Link Hotel on West Missouri Street. The hotel's livery stable still stands and is one of two buildings on the National Register of Historic Places in Fountain. Link arrived in Colorado in 1887. He was married to Elizabeth and they had eight children. They would later divorce. Elizabeth continued to live in Fountain, and Henry moved to Elk, NV. Link Road is named for the Link the family.

Information from: <https://fountaincolorado.blogspot.com>

## 2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please send your 2025 dues to the Historical Society ASAP.  
Mail to Fountain Valley Historical Society, 114 N. Main St,  
Fountain, CO 80817



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

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

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

Student \$5.00, Individual \$20.00, Family (includes 2 adults) \$30.00,  
Business \$50.00

DONATION: \_\_\_\_\_