



THE BROOMCORN EXPRESS
Vol. 2, No. 2, Apr. – Jun. 2022

Upcoming Events

- *Looking Back for a Vision Forward*, “Transportation” Apr. 7, 2022, 6:30-8 p.m., hybrid session (Depot and Zoom) [REGISTER HERE](#)
- *Looking Back for a Vision Forward*, “Land Use” Jun. 2, 2022, 6:30-8 p.m., hybrid session (Depot and Zoom)
- *Looking Back for a Vision Forward*, “Water” Aug. 4, 2022, 6:30-8 p.m., hybrid session (Depot and Zoom)
- *Looking Back for a Vision Forward*, “Public Health” Oct. 6, 2022, 6:30-8 p.m., hybrid session (Depot and Zoom)



Please visit <https://friendsofbroomfieldhistory.org/shop> to renew your membership today!

Looking Back for a Vision Forward

A Friends of Broomfield History Series
Broomfield Depot Museum and Virtual
April 7, 2022, 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m.

Transportation Past, Present, and Future, **virtual and in person at the Broomfield Depot**. In the second of five facilitated “conversations” about the past and future of our city, we’ll explore ideas around transportation in Broomfield. From wagons to wheels, this session is sure to engage and inspire.



Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://broomfield.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsdOyqrDsQGNXOz1IVytPlSp4HkbDK9re9>

Oh Wow!

A letter from the President, Annie Lessem

Let's Walk.

I really like to walk. When I was a child of about 9 or 10, I often thought I could walk from my house in Ohio all the way to California if I only knew where all the bathrooms were located. I never did figure that out, so the longest walk I took as a child was to some neighborhood that was totally new to me. I was completely lost and it was getting dark. Fortunately there were some local stores around and one of them (a small grocery store) looked friendly. So I went in and asked the man at the cash register if I could borrow a phone to call home and ask my dad to pick me up. The man was very happy to help and explained to my father where I was since I didn't know. To this day I have no idea what roads I took to get to that neighborhood, nor do I know why I chose that particular store from all the others on the street.

But that somewhat scary experience didn't dampen my love of walking. The experts tell us that walking is really important to our physical health, that it's an easy form of exercise and that we should try to walk for about 30 minutes several times a week. What those experts often forget to tell us is that walking is a mode of transportation and obviously, it was our (humanity's) first mode of transportation. This is likely because walking has been "demoted" or "transformed" into a hobby and/or something we do for leisure or pleasure. In the United States walking is usually no longer considered a viable means for accomplishing tasks such as going to a store, or to the doctor, or to a restaurant, or a friend's house, etc. Even though it saddens me that walking has lost its position as a mainstream mode of transportation, I know there are rational reasons for this. Walking takes more time, and many of us do not have that time to spare; walking can be dangerous if there's a need to cross busy roads or get to places where there are no sidewalks or trails; walking can be



Photo by Saliha from Pexels

difficult if there's a need to carry heavy or clumsy items (such as full grocery bags) for any distance; walking can be somewhat dependent on the weather; walking can be nearly impossible for individuals who have certain disabilities; and walking can be impractical in communities that were built to accommodate automobiles, etc.

On the other hand, in Broomfield we are fortunate to have numerous trails and sidewalks that we can access directly from our homes, so there is no need to "drive to walk" unless we so choose. Because of this network of trails and sidewalks, there are also some situations in which we really can use walking as an alternative to driving. A friend of mine regularly walks to the grocery store; there's a restaurant I enjoy that's an easy walk from my house; my dentist is an even easier walk; and the drug store is even easier than that. In addition to being good exercise, walking can be meditative. It can help enhance creativity; it is a good way to get "unstuck" when trying to think through obstacles that seem overwhelming, and it is a fun way to socialize with friends. Walking is also a useful tool in mediating or defusing high-tension situations between individuals because of the rhetoric, positioning of bodies, and the release of energy and tension when we are walking. It makes sense when you think about it. We walk together. We agree on a route and destination, and we are side by side as we undertake this activity. We relieve stress while we are moving, and we accomplish an agreed-upon end result at the same time.

So let's go for a walk. If you can't go far let's start out slowly. If you are disabled, let's find someone who can assist you. Unlike some other modes of transportation, walking is good for us and good for the environment. Walking is free; most of us have the tools at hand; and it's part of our history and our heritage. We can do it alone, or with the dog, or with friends, or with people who are not yet our friends. We can do it for exercise, mental health, accomplishing goals, or the simple joy of it. We can start at my house. No particular reason why—it's as good a place to start as any. If time is an issue, we can

Continued on page 3

Oh Wow! Continued from page 2

take a quick stroll around the neighborhood park. If you have a little more time, I know a peaceful pond that is only about 20 minutes away. Or if you have even more time we could walk to the library. It takes about an hour, but most of the walk is on nice trails so we won't have to breathe car exhaust like we would if we were walking along a road. We'll even go through an underpass with interesting artwork on its walls, and we won't have to cross a busy street.

Wait, I know. Let's walk to the tea shop that's just a little north of here. Then we can reward ourselves with some boba tea before we walk back. Let's walk Broomfield. Let's really pay attention to the sights we see and the people (and dogs) we meet along the way. Let's enjoy our city/county using this most intimate mode of transportation that only puts shoe leather and some fabric between us and our surroundings. Give me a minute to get my jacket and I'll be ready to go.

Come with me. §

Walk this Way

—Sallie Diamond

Only .4 miles, or a 7-minute walk, from the Broomfield Library is the Broomfield Community Center, which was renovated over the past few years and had its grand reopening on October 3, 2020. Renovations and expansion of the \$48.6 million project include a nine-lane competition cold pool, a 6-lane warm pool, hot tub, therapy pool, cabanas, locker rooms, weight and cardio areas, a personal training studio, fitness terrace and two fitness studios. The Center also has an indoor walking track and two full-size basketball courts along with conference rooms, meeting rooms, a full-size kitchen, woodshop and a pottery/creative space. It boasts a spectacular view from its large and airy windows.

If you haven't been to the newly renovated Broomfield Community Center located at 280 Spader Way, it is certainly worth the trip!



Broomfield Community Center: 1973 and today



They weren't horsing around: Transportation in Broomfield prior to the railroad

—David Allison

It's easy to jump to the railroad and to cars when talking about the history of transportation in Broomfield. The Depot Museum captures the history of rail travel so vividly and the Denver-Boulder Turnpike played an outsized role in the development of Broomfield Heights in the 1950s. However, it is important to recognize that trains and trucks were predated by feet—of both the human and the horse variety.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples grazed their horses and hunted and gathered food in the area that is now called Broomfield. Prior to this, the Ute people also lived and hunted in this area. Pathways like the Cherokee Trail often followed traditional trails and paths of native peoples.

Used both by Cherokee gold miners headed to California during the gold rush, as well as by many other travelers making the north/south journey between Denver and Cheyenne, this route was the primary artery along the northern Front Range until the rise of rail travel. Traveling on foot or on horseback, these routes could be muddy, rough, and fraught with difficulty.



Photo by Jules Amé from Pexels

Early farmers and ranchers in the area fed travelers who journeyed on a Western branch of the Cherokee Trail, which was established in 1850, and later became a portion of the Overland Trail, a stagecoach and wagon road. In the 1860s there were two stage coach stations near Broomfield: Church's Station to the south, which was along today's Old Wadsworth Boulevard just north of West 103rd; and Rock Creek Station, along today's US 287 to the north.

The best extant evidence for these stage trails is at Church's Station in present-day Westminster. Despite its current association with Westminster, that area was also connected to many of the farm families who lived in and around Broomfield. In fact, the Broomfield Archive and Collection has many documents and photos from the Church family. The Churches were a remarkable

family—especially the women—and I'd like to share just a bit of their story below.

In 1864, Sarah and George Church settled in the Broomfield area. They built a 12-room Stage Coach Station which served food and offered boarding for those traveling on the popular Overland Trail. Sarah was a former school teacher who wrote detailed accounts of her travels and

adventures in the Western frontier. These accounts have served to give historians a better picture of life in Colorado at this time.

John Frank Church, the only son of Sarah and George, also married an influential woman. Katherine Jones Church was a teacher at Broomfield's Lorraine School. The couple took over the Church Ranch and Crossing Station.

Continued on page 5

Transportation in Broomfield, continued from page 4

However, John, who was a former State Senator and friend of Buffalo Bill Cody, caught gold fever and set out to find their fortune in southwest Colorado. He returned over a year later, penniless. Luckily for John, his wife Katherine had held down the homestead and managed the businesses on her own during his absence, which also coincided with the economic crash of 1929. Upon his empty-handed return, it is said that Katherine greeted him with a milk bucket and directed him towards the barn.

After John's death in a train crash accident, Katherine and her daughter, Ruth, would go on to be some of the first developers in the area. They created the Mandalay Gardens neighborhood in present-day Westminster. §

Sources:

"History of the Cherokee Trail." *Genealogy Trails*, http://genealogytrails.com/colo/jefferson/countyhistory_cherokeetrail.html

Turner, Carol. *Legendary Locals of Broomfield*. Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

Resources on the Cherokee and Overland Trail:

Church's Stage Stop (south of Broomfield on Old Wadsworth)

"Church's Stage Stop" *Golden History Museum*, <https://www.goldenhistory.org/places/churchs-stage-stop/>

Connaroe, Doug. "The Overland and Denver-to-Cheyenne stagecoach lines utilized major pre-Lafayette transportation corridors" *Lafayette History*, Nov. 2018, <http://www.lafayettehistory.com/the-overland-and-denver-to-cheyenne-stage-lines-were-major-pre-lafayette-transportation-corridors/>

Information and Map of Trails and Maps in the mountain West during the 1800s, US Geological Survey, 1999, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/imap/i-2639/Pamphlet.pdf>

Shaler, Andrew. "The Cherokee and Wyandot Companies on the Overland Trails to California: Histories of

Indigenous Migration and the Settler Gaze, 1849–1856." *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 11.1 (2021): 9-35. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/783005/summary>

"The first right after Goa Way: Exploring a stage station on the Overland Trail" *History Colorado*, Aug. 15, 2017, <https://www.historycolorado.org/story/preservation/2017/08/15/first-right-after-go-a-way-exploring-stage-station-overland-trail>

Broomfield Historic Street Plans: A Few Observations

—Elizabeth Beaudoin

When the Turnpike Land Company designed their "Ideal City" of Broomfield Heights, traffic flow was one of the many things they were proud of. Their street plan would be copied over and over again in the following decades. In their marketing material, they described "broad curving streets for delightful residential living" that "conform to the natural landscape," while "principal artery" roads would ferry people to and from places of commerce.

Looking at this c. 1960 map of First and Second Filing, we can see neighborhoods with distinctive curved roads flanking West Midway Boulevard (a "principle artery"). The curving roads do more than just mimic the natural landscape—they also add a layer of safety. Curves require people to slow down, and having them curve around seemingly at random (rather than on a grid) dissuade people from using residential roads as "short cuts," especially when the "principal artery" is so much more efficient.

Additionally the curving residential streets in First and Second Filing link up with one another, although in a serpentine way. This is a much more efficient design than the later popular cul-de-sacs, which offer the ultimate play-in-the-street kind of safety, but the serpentine design may also make delivery services more time-consuming and less fuel-efficient.

While West Midway Boulevard has lost some of its centrality in recent decades, around 1960 it was Broom-



Broomfield Heights c. 1956. Courtesy Broomfield Depot Museum

field's "Main Street" (today's Main Street was the edge of town back then), filtering all the residential traffic through a faster, more efficient route to the shopping and civic/professional resources of Garden Center and the shopping center across the street (where the At Home store is now), and of course to Routes 287 and 36.

This type of street design was successful, and copied again and again as new neighborhoods were developed. Look at a map of Broomfield today, and you will see tidy grids consisting of "primary arteries," each filled with the curving neighborhoods of housing developments. §



Broomfield Heights c. 1955. Courtesy Broomfield Depot Museum



MAP OF BROOMFIELD HEIGHTS
Courtesy Broomfield Depot Museum

Broomfield's 1958 Train Collision

Transportation Safety in Historical Broomfield

—Sandra Roberts

On September 20, 1958, Broomfield was the scene of a horrific train crash. Two Colorado & Southern trains, the Extra 700D North freight train, and the No. 30 passenger train collided, leaving both engineers and one fireman dead. 15 others were injured.

Safety protocols were in place at that time. “Extra” freight train engineers were required to check the clock, make calculations, and take a side route (a siding) when necessary to avoid passenger trains coming from the opposing direction. The safety protocol failed at multiple points in the journey, and the two massive engines met with what one onlooker described as an “awful roar” when one metal giant painfully crawled over the top of the other.



1958 C&S Train Accident, Courtesy Broomfield Depot Museum

The final report seemed to blame the engineer of the freight train. He knew that his train had an “inferior” position, and that he should yield to the passenger train. During the subsequent investigation, the conductor and a fireman said they’d reminded the engineer of the danger, but apparently, the engineer insisted that he still had plenty time to get through before the passenger train appeared on the track. The situation was so unusual

that the conductor wasted precious time double-checking his own numbers. Did the engineer miscalculate? If so, why didn’t someone else in the chain of command step up much earlier and correct the problem? Did they put too much faith in the engineer?

Minutes before the collision, the freight train conductor called the engineer on the internal train radio. He threatened to pull the emergency brake—but it was already too late. In the end, the engineer or deceased fireman may have pulled the brake.

Eyewitnesses estimated the freight train’s speed to be about 30 mph; the passenger train was going much slower at 10 or 15 mph. (This line of inquiry may bring to mind the 2015 Philadelphia train crash: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/us/brandon-bostian-acquitted-amtrak-derailment.html>).

The final report seemed to blame the accident on the engineer, who was not able to tell his side of the story. The report did not recommend any changes to safety protocols, but it is likely that some procedural changes were made to prevent more accidents. Nearly thirty years would pass before Broomfield became the site of another deadly head-on train collision, in 1985. §

Support us while you shop through Amazon Smile and King Soopers!

The Broomfield Depot Museum is registered with AmazonSmile and King Soopers!

Amazon Smile: Add Friends of Broomfield History as your charitable organization and 0.5% of your purchase price will be donated to the organization that helps support the Depot Museum.

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!

King Soopers: Go to <http://www.kingsoopers.com>

Once logged into King Soopers, search for Friends of Broomfield History either by name or KU085 and then click Enroll. If you don't have a King Soopers account, open one today! You will need a loyalty card from the store and an email address.

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!
[@FriendsofBroomfieldHistory](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofBroomfieldHistory)

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: _____