



The printed narratives which accompany each painting in this booklet are from the pens of Logan County historian and author Nell Brown Propst and the artist, Eugene Carara, who was an instructor in our local schools for thirty years.

Logan County is grateful to the following donors for the Carara Collection: Eugene and Wilma Carara, Dorothy Lutin Curlee, David and Genevieve Hamil, Alta S. Herbrick, Propst Family, Effia Sherwin, Dr. Edwards and June Tennant, Donald and Sandra Wilson, former directors and staff of Colorado National Bank Sterling, former Board of County Commissioners of Logan County: Elda Lousberg, Don Langdon and William B. Williams.

Historical Logan County Courthouse

Featuring the ten historical paintings
by Artist Eugene Carara



*315 Main Street
Sterling Colorado*

Historic Built at a cost of \$100,000 by Kaepernik and Jenkins, the eloquent new Logan County Courthouse was dedicated on March 5, 1910 with a local orchestra playing in the rotunda. The Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Grand A decade of renovations has beautifully preserved this masterpiece on the Plains. The last and final phase included the restoration of the Courthouse dome to the original copper finish

Traditional The 3-1/2 story building is an intact example of renaissance revival architecture with corner quoining and simple cornice, and is a downtown Sterling landmark. Lighting the Courthouse at Christmastime is a long held tradition.

Cultural Paintings of early life in Logan County by artist Eugene Carara and framed original linen blueprints by architect John J. Huddart adorn the Courthouse rotunda walls.

"Riding Out The Blizzard"

This painting depicts the hardships endured by the cattlemen of north-east Colorado. Even though the cattlemen were subjected to many difficulties, the sudden appearance of a blinding blizzard was probably the one threat that revealed the hopelessness of facing the forces of nature. For one who has never experienced this phenomenon, the exposure is truly unbelievable. Not only are you subjected to the numbness of the cold, but the whiteness and the loss of direction can create a state of vertigo.

Riding out the Blizzard

When someone in town awakes to a screaming world of white, he is usually inconvenienced at most.

The blizzard may even be a welcome break in routine, a time to sit by the fire and play games with the family.

For the rancher, it is a desperate struggle to provide water and haul feed to his stock.

If the storm comes roaring unexpectedly out of the west when the cattle are still in summer pastures, the rancher must decide whether to face possible financial ruin or whether to risk his own life to bring his "old girls" home.

And sometimes, he loses his life in the effort.

Stories of past storms haunt him. Visions of past nightmares are always close to viewing. That is why the cattleman scans the skies, morning and night.

He knows that you can't lay your head on Mother Nature's breast.



"Survival: My Tribute to Frederick Remington"

This painting reveals the hardship and suffering of the Cheyenne people who lived in this area during some of the severe winters of the 1860s. Besides that, the once abundant bison was now disappearing which made survival even more difficult. Here I expose the viewer to the chill of the northwest wind that must have cut the skin of the Indian women as they went to work "gutting" the fallen beast. The Remington style and pieces of his work are borrowed for this tribute.



Survival on the Colorado Prairie 1860s

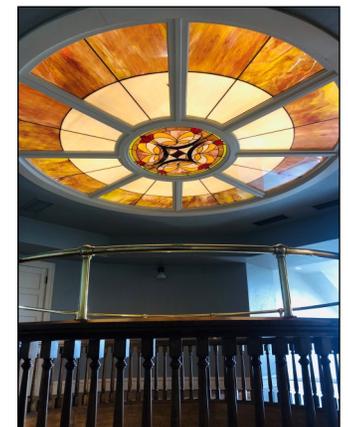
The buffalo was a brother to the Indians. Without him, they could not survive. They ate his meat, made his hide into robes and tipi covers, cooked in his paunch, used his bones for needles and other tools, and even rubbed his brains on their lodges and canoes to

help waterproof them.

Nothing was wasted. All meat not eaten was dried, and thousands of pounds were stored for winter use. And so the Indians were disgusted and finally anguished by the habits of some whites, who often took only the tongue and hide of buffalos and left the carcasses to rot.

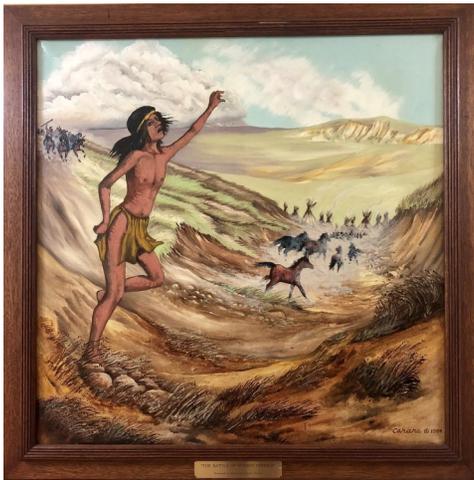
As the years passed and the migration west swelled, the millions of buffalo began to disappear. Finally, the Indians were reduced to long, miserable hunts for survival.

More important, the buffalo was a symbol of life after death to the red men, and the Cheyennes were soon consumed by a terrible fear that an old prophecy was coming true, that they and the buffalo would disappear at the same time, that they and the buffalo would be remembered only their bones scattered over the prairie.



"The Battle of Summit Springs"

This painting depicts how one can sacrifice his life to save others. During a storm-threatened afternoon, this young lad stampeded this herd of horses into Chief Tall Bull's camp in order to warn them of the attacking Pawnee scouts. The young boy was killed, along with many other Cheyenne that day, but because of his heroics, many survived. It is difficult to imagine what went through his mind before making his decision to stampede the herd, but one thing is clear, it was a split-second decision from one so young. Life is so precious, especially young life.



The Battle of Summit Springs

Washington County

July 11, 1869

On a hot July afternoon in 1869, life on the Colorado plains came to an end for the Indians. Tall Bull, chief of the Dog Soldiers, protectors of the Cheyenne tribe, led several bands of his people, plus Arapahoe and Sioux friends, to camp at Summit Springs. He did not dream that General E.A. Carr and his 5th Calvary were close behind.

General Carr was no Chivington. Afterwards, he wrote, "We have...no pleasure in killing." But Tall Bull had given him no choice. A few weeks earlier, his force had attacked several communities in western Kansas, killing people and taking captive Susanna Alderdice and Maria Weichel, both pregnant. They had killed three of Susanna's children and left another for dead. Before July 11 would end, Susanna would also die.

The army was assisted by the Cheyennes' old enemy, the Pawnees, who thundered across the prairie after women and children, killing many. Others escaped only because the Pawnees took time to scalp and mutilate every victim.

Sand Creek and Summit Springs bore dramatic similarities and contrasts. At Sand Creek, an old man folded his arms and bravely awaited death. At Summit Springs, a young boy gave his life to try to save his people. Neither death succeeded except as a source of pride for the Cheyennes.

Sand Creek had launched the war on the South Platte. Summit Springs brought the end of the Indian life on the Colorado prairie.

"The American Indian"

This painting depicts the Indian Societies of North America. No particular tribe is hereby intended, but this is a tribute to all those who inhabited these lands before the white man invasion. The Indian believed that he was a part of nature, just as were the earth, sky, rock, air, and water; and he believed they were all brothers. This painting has many contrasting forces, such as the soft blends of the sky and background in comparison to the sharper lines of the subject. For no matter how much the Indian believed in nature, he had a difficult struggle to exist in it.

The American Indian

The American Indian has been idealized as almost supernaturally attuned to Mother Nature. And the Indian did understand her capricious powers far better than subsequent peoples who have managed to isolate themselves somewhat from those powers.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho came to the eastern plains of Colorado during the 1820s to acquire horses and free themselves from the drudgery of farming. Their nomadic life was near ideal at first. They reveled in Colorado's sparkling clear air, the wild horses, millions of buffalo, and abundance of other life on the prairie, and most of all in the knowledge that they could break camp within minutes and move to a more desirable place whenever they wished.

Yet the very nature which the Indian worshipped could send blinding blizzards that froze him and his horses. Hail stones which she threw at the earth shredded his buffalo skin lodges.

Northeastern Colorado was home to the Cheyenne and Arapahoe for about fifty years. Indian friends, especially the Sioux, often came from north of the Platte to visit and hunt. But the Pawnees also came. The most fearsome of red men, they came not in friendship but to satisfy their hunger for a good fight.

And eventually, the white men crossed the prairie, and the Indians' days on the "Great Buffalo Pasture" were numbered.



“Cattleman: Northeast Colorado”

This painting characterizes the early cattle country of northeast Colorado. The beauty of an August evening is created here by revealing the complex skies and a vast pasture land panorama. The majestic Pawnee Buttes are revealed like giant ships sailing across the waves of cool violet canyons in the background. The setting sun softly warns the cattlemen of the end of another northeast Colorado day. However, experience has taught them that these days are drawing to a close and the severe bite of the winter wind is just around the corner.



Cattlemen: Northeast Colorado 1860—1884

The cattlemen found an ideal range in northeast Colorado, “the greatest pasture ever known.” In summer, the grass sometimes grew belly high on the cows. In winter, it cured like hay, and the herds could continue to graze on it.

John Wesley Iliff, the famous Cattle King of Colorado, controlled

150 by 100 miles of prairie land. His herd numbered in the tens of thousands, and he figured his expenses on the prairie at only 6 to 75 cents per head. But when homesteaders put up fences, his cattle could no longer drift south ahead of the blizzards. They piled on the fences and died by the thousands.

Iliff was succeeded by smaller ranch outfits which raised feed for their cattle and gave them winter protection. But during the past century they, too, have suffered the assaults of nature, and they did not long enjoy the free range that made Iliff rich. They have been battered by numerous economic disasters, as well, and today the ranks of those early ranchers are thinning.

“The Massacre at Sand Creek”

This painting represents the anticipation of things to come before the attack begins. The sun is just rising and the camp fires are cold. Shock and frustration are evident. The elderly chief in the foreground is White Antelope who after realizing the futility of stopping this outrage, decides to fold his arms and chant, “It’s a good day to die.” He is killed along with many women and children. Chief Black Kettle tried to raise the American flag and a flag of truce, but to no avail. This day of infamy started off the famous Indian wars along the South Platte River from Julesburg to Denver.

The Massacre at Sand Creek Southeastern Colorado November 29, 1864

What happened at Sand Creek has been debated for over a hundred years now. One soldier would testify that he saw women and children mutilated; another, that nothing of the sort happened.

One thing is certain: most Colorado whites were behind Colonel John M. Chivington and the Hundred Dayzers who had been recruited to protect the frontier against Indian attacks. Battles had been going on for almost a year, the South Platte Trail had been closed by the Indians for weeks at a time, and now the “hundred days” of the volunteers were almost up.

The Indians felt betrayed. Black Kettle, the principal Cheyenne chief, had initiated peace talks with Governor Evans and the army. He thought he had succeeded. On that cold, snowy morning when he heard the first pounding of hooves on the prairie, he raised his American flag of which he was so proud. Later, he flew a white flag of surrender. Neither stopped the attack. Black Kettle lost the confidence of his people, and he knew he could never keep his warriors from retaliating.

There would be four more years of war along the South Platte.

Black Kettle once said, “The trouble was caused by bad men on both sides,” and the tragedy for him and Colorado was that neither he nor his white friends could not stop the trouble.



"Beware the Earthman"

This painting portrays the early farmers' futile attempts to raise a crop against all the odds that were against him along the South Platte River. But, beyond that, it also exposes the early confrontation of the Cheyenne Warrior with the peaceful farmer. The warriors were informed many years earlier that they need not fear the mountain-man, the cattleman, or even the soldier. That the man who would eventually take their beloved land from them would be the Earthman—the farmer.



Beware the Earthman

The Indian scorned the Earthman (or farmer) because he represented the life of drudgery from which the red man had escaped when he moved onto the "Great Buffalo Pasture" of what was to be eastern Colorado and its endless grasslands.

But he also feared him.

The farmer with his devotion to land represented the gravest threat to the red man.

Eventually, differences between the two forces would boil down to a clash over territory.

Long ago, Sweet Medicine, the Cheyenne Indians' Messiah, had warned: "Some day the Earthmen will come. Do not follow anything they do."

During the Indians' final days on the pasture, that warning must have rung through their heads with increasing bitterness.

"The Return of Sarah Morris"

This painting illustrates more than just the return of Sarah Morris. The contradiction of man's inability to relate to other societies has been evident throughout history. The exposure of the American Indian to the white man is a perfect example of this dilemma. Each hid his hatred for the other during moments of peace. This small group of Indians, which I purposely separated from the rest of the painting to reveal their dignity, swapped horses with the Cheyenne in order to rescue Sarah. They in turn bartered for coffee, beans, etc. I tried to describe Sarah in a severe physical and mental state. The paradox of hatred and love are repeated throughout the painting.

The Return of Sarah Morris

Fort Rice, Dakota Territory

June 21, 1865

Sarah Morris was one of the most tragic women on the South Platte Trail. Before January 14, 1865, life had looked good. She and her husband William and two healthy babies, a neat little house and stage station (south of present day Merino), and hopes for prosperity.



But when the fateful day ended, Sarah, her wounds bleeding, was on a horse headed south with a band of Indians. The stage station was in smoking ruins. The last she saw of her husband, he was surrounded by a close know of Indians, their weapons rising and falling. The fate of her little boys would bring further anguish.

Sarah's rescue by Colonel Charles Dimon in Dakota Territory did not bring happiness-ever-after. She was a casualty of the frontier as surely as her husband had been, and her tormented life has haunted succeeding generations on the South Plate.

“Sterling—Queen City of the High Plains”

This painting represents not only the City of Sterling today, but reveals some hidden history in its development. The vastness of the high plains and the surprising height of some summer cloud formation gently cradles the city lights. Soon daylight will end and the cool evening breezes will usher in another quiet night on the plains.



Sterling Queen City of the High Plains 1873—1984

Sterling was remarkable from the beginning. Settled primarily by Southerners escaping the grim aftermath of the Civil War, it looked like a Southern town with its courthouse square and trees planted by the homesick newcomers.

The people were enterprising. When Greeley shunned them as “rebels,” they came down

river to carve their own civilization from what Nathan Meeker, founder of Greeley, called “the finest body of wild land to be found anywhere in the world.”

They were practical. After several years, they moved their town three miles, close to where the railroad would run.

They were hardworking. Men, women, and children broke the sod and planted crops. Sometimes, a woman worked the farm while her husband walked miles to a budding town business.

They appreciated spiritual and aesthetic values. Churches sprang up all over town, at first in sod huts. Musicales and plays were produced in the “opera house” atop the courthouse. They painted, wrote, discussed.

Next came Midwesterners and then one ethnic group after another. Each put his customs and distinctive foods in the pot. Each brought people of special interests. The first generations may have dug their way through countless fields. The second dug and studied as well and often attended college.

“Fort Wicked”

This painting depicts the gallant stand against the Cheyenne war parties by Holon Godfrey, his family, and friends. Holon, a brave and adventurous man, believed he could hold out against all odds except fire. I deliberately painted this in a primitive style in order to reveal many objects. It is also a very busy painting in order to help convey excitement and panic. I tried to show worry and anger in the face of Holon, weariness in the face of Matilda, and feat in the face of Cecilia (the girl in the window). By the way, after three days of battle, the Cheyenne finally ceased their attack.

Fort Wicked Southwest of present day Merino January 14, 1865

Just before dawn on a January morning, Holon Godfrey saw something coming fast out of the hills to the southeast. It was what he feared—Indians—at least 130 of them. Bloody January had come to his trading post. And he had only three men to help him defend it.



So began a three-day siege that would earn Godfrey the Indians’ respect and their nickname of “Old Wicked” and that would make his ranch the most famous along the South Platte River. Holon had turned his place into a fortress, but he had another asset: his wife and children. They molded bullets, drew water from the well, and formed a brigade to Holon who, with a bucket in one hand and a fun in the other, put out the fires set by the red men. The girls stuck hats on brooms and hoe handles and poked “heads” here and there over the top of the wall to food the Indians into thinking there were more defenders.

“By God, they got us outnumbered, but we’ll lick ‘em with our brains,” Holon cackled.

He was right. Fort Wicked, as the ranch was always known after the siege, was one of only two places along six hundred miles of the trail that escaped Blood January unscathed.

History of Logan County and the Logan County Courthouse

Logan County was formed by an act of the Colorado State Legislature on February 25, 1887. The county was formerly a part of Weld County and citizens from the eastern part of the state were required to travel to Greeley, the county seat, to conduct official business. Citizens petitioned the state legislature to form the new county. Later on, Phillips and Sedgwick counties were created from the original Logan County.

In 1908 J. J. Huddart of Denver was retained as architect to complete construction drawings and specifications for a new courthouse. Huddart was educated in England, had an established architectural practice in Denver, Colorado, and designed other courthouses throughout the state in Adams, Cheyenne, Washington, Summit, Saguache, Elbert, Lincoln and Custer counties. Sterling contractors, Kaepernik and Jenkins, were selected to build the courthouse. Construction was completed in 1910.

The white-pressed brick and white stone-trimmed building cost approximately \$100,000. On Saturday, March 5, 1910 it is estimated that 6,000 persons participated in the formal opening ceremony for the eloquent new structure.

The building is an intact example of renaissance revival architecture with corner quoining and simple cornice. The 3-1/2 story, blonde-colored brick structure has white-colored terra cotta detailing and a poured concrete foundation. The building's water table has one course of a red-colored St. Vrain foundation stone and seven courses of terra cotta on the building's base including water table coping. Decorative terra cotta quoining exists on each corner and also occurs around each entry door. Decorative window labels, lug sills, and chimney and dormer details are also terra cotta. Stairs to the first floor are stone with solid stone balustrades.

On February 22, 1979, the Logan County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Extensive restorations have been done over the years, including rotunda renovations, stained glass replacement, elevator installation, electrical system upgrade, repair and replication of flooring, windows, doors, trim and other woodwork, restoration of exterior brick, stone and concrete masonry, and interior painting using historical color schemes.

Restoration funds were provided from History Colorado State Historical Fund, State of Colorado Impact Assistance Funds and Logan County matching funds.

The last and final phase of restoration included the revival of the courthouse dome to the original copper finish and replacement of the flag pole. In 2013, a Flag Day Ceremony was held to commemorate the first flag flown over the courthouse in many decades.



The courthouse restoration project included the placement of the Eugene Carara art collection in the basement rotunda area on November 10, 1984. The oil paintings were purchased by private citizens and then donated to Logan County to keep the collection together. The paintings are symbolic of historically important events or locations to the people of northeastern Colorado. All pieces are oil on canvas—36"x36"—dated 1984.