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Boulder history: A race through time

Silvia Pettem

In 1867, a 20-year-old man named William Tull was hanged in Boulder for horse theft. The rope used to hang him was thrown, with him, into his grave in the city's first burial ground. Although no one knows the exact location of Tull's remains, they lie -- unmarked -- on the side of the hill northeast of the intersection of Folsom and Bluff streets.

Tull's burial site (between miles 1 and 2) is only a small part of Boulder's past that runners will pass in Monday's Boulder Boulder 10-kilometer (6-mile) run. The course is more than a distance run -- it's also a race through time.

Continuing north on Folsom Street, runners will head into residential neighborhoods that replaced former farm and ranch lands. Near mile 3, as race participants go south on 19th Street, they will be within one block of the still-standing and distinctive home (on 20th Street) built by Captain Clinton M. Tyler, a wealthy stockman who raised sheep, horses, and mules on his 83-acre ranch.

Near mile 4, the two remaining walls of Casey Middle School recall North Side Intermediate School, the building's name when it first was constructed in 1924. Later renamed for school superintendent William V. Casey, the propped-up facade will be incorporated into the new middle school's design.

Even before the site held a school, it was the location of a temporary frame tabernacle built for evangelist Billy Sunday's five-week visit to Boulder, in 1909. Sunday and his delegation stayed at the Hotel Boulderado, just down the street where the race course turns to the east.

Going east on Spruce Street, runners will pass, on their left, the 1905 "Physicians Building." In 1975, it became the home of the Buddhist community. Then, on the northeast corner of the Spruce and 14th streets intersection, will be the second building of the First Methodist Church, constructed in 1893.

Downtown Boulder contains one historic building after another, but those who look closely can also pick out the obscure sites, including a small park on the southeast corner of Spruce and 15th streets (near the Boulder Day Nursery) named for civic leader Hannah Barker.

Immediately south of the park is the former location of the Talmage and Lilly Livery, where stagecoaches departed for the mountain towns of Nederland, Eldora, Caribou, and Ward.

The Odd Fellows Hall, on the northwest corner of Pearl and 16th streets, dates from 1899. Runners who look back at the east side of the building will notice its original stained-glass windows.

Prior to 1960, train tracks from the east to downtown Boulder ran diagonally through the intersection of Walnut and Folsom streets, where the race route takes a sharp turn to the south.

In the years after World War II, the area southwest of Folsom Street and Arapahoe Avenue was a large trailer park called "Vetsville" that housed student veterans and their families.

Just before the final uphill leg to the stadium, runners will cross Boulder Creek. The gold-seekers who founded Boulder 150 years ago had followed this waterway into the mountains in their efforts, to also bring home the gold.

Silvia Pettem and Carol Taylor now alternate as authors of the history column. To reach Pettem, write her at the Camera, P.O. Box 591, Boulder 80306, or email pettem@earthlink.net

As the writer of this article, I apologize for an error. The early burial ground was NORTHWEST (not northeast) of the Folsom and Bluff street intersection.

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