

Sacred Harp Colorado

November 2009

Who We Are and What We Do

The Rocky Mountain shape note singers exist to preserve and promote the music and the traditions of American shape note harmony along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. We sing principally from the 1991 Denson revision of the Sacred Harp (Red Book), but use some songs from the Cooper Book (Blue Book). From time to time we will sing from other traditional books such as the Missouri Harmony and Norembega Harmony depending upon the spirit and the occasion. We welcome any and all to join us at our monthly singings held in the cities along the Front Range. Loaner books are available for use or purchase. Our monthly singings are usually held to the schedule supplied at the end of this newsletter, but holidays or special circumstance may dictate that we move a singing date. If you are new to us, please contact one of our members listed below for current location, day/date and time of a singing in your area.

Editorially Speaking

This month we extend the convention coverage with a letter from Mike Hinton of San Antonio with his observations of the convention and another from Will Fitzgerald to Mike addressing a Library of Congress recording [with an mp3 link] of a 1940s interview with Paine Denson a composer of some of our tunes and one of Mike's Alabama relatives. Also provided are links to You Tube videos of Sacred Harp in Hoboken, GA. I came by this thru a post David Lee made to the singings@fasola.org mail list and feel it is an excellent adjunct to longer Sacred Harp films such as Sweet Is The Day and Awake My Soul. At the request of Carol Selleck, I have included the obituary of John Carter Clary who was a singer with the Albuquerque group for those of you who may have known him thru the years.

Finally, please note the change in day for the Arkansas Valley monthly singing. We had a great turn out for the October singing with 10 in attendance including a singer from Alamosa who has an interest in starting a group in the San Luis Valley. Sing with us now in the Arkansas Valley on the 4th Monday of the month. Also, please see and RSVP to an invitation to our first ever Fall Harvest Singing here in La Junta scheduled [d.v.] for the 21st of November.

20th Annual Rocky Mountain Convention – Mike Hinton

With the snow covered Rocky Mountains in view, the Rocky Mountain Convention was held last weekend in Denver, CO. The mornings were clear and crisp and the grass and trees were ever so green. This convention in Denver or Boulder always make me think of the poetry for 543 - "Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received her frame, From everlasting Thou art God, through endless years the same."

There was a good crowd gathered to sing and sing we did. The Denver area singers did an excellent job with signs directing us to the building where we would sing, the welcoming

folks were ready with a word of greeting and hugs and the convention was off to a very good start.

The convention was well organized and the singing moved along at a very nice pace. The leaders were called and a great variety of tunes were sung. The singing was lively and the parts were evenly matched. Although, Ginny Ely did "get on" us basses a couple times for a "weak" entrance a time or two. But, overall the singing was very good.

The local singers brought wonderful food for us and lots of fresh dishes made the table a beautiful rainbow of colors. The food was wonderful and the desserts were also delectable. Even a couple fresh apple pies, for anyone wanting to taste them.

Gaylon Powell taught a singing school on Friday evening and everyone enjoyed it greatly. He is an excellent singing master who intersperses humor with the lessons. He also helped with the pitching duties and all those gifted folks did a fine job keeping us going, tune after tune.

Pete Mathewson had a sweet and moving Memorial Lesson. He recalled singers past and how they had blessed him and many, many other singers. He talked about the expansive family and how we are all connected from the hollow square. His lesson reminded us all to appreciate those we sing with and appreciate so much. Later Sunday afternoon Leon Ballinger and Carol Selleck led a tune that Elder Hand sang at the convention last year. He was missed at the singing this year but we knew he was singing at that celestial convention that has no end.

The officers did a very fine good job and observed all those things we love and expect at conventions. The traditions are being preserved at that convention.

There were 4 of us who attended the adult session of Camp Fasola last summer. I was a little concerned with one of the "campers" pulled out a grading sheet and red pen when I was called to lead a tune. And I was more concerned as the person made a number of marks on the page too.

Unfortunately this convention competes with the Minnesota Convention for the singers who live in the "middle" of the country. Both are great conventions and it is difficult to decide which to attend.

Thank you Denver singers for such a good convention and for being so hospitable to everyone. We all had a grand time.

Mike Hinton
San Antonio, TX
"Let's Sing On!"

Paine Denson – A Letter from Will Fitzgerald to Mike Hinton

Mike [Hinton]

Some sacred harp singers have discovered some old recordings from 50 years ago from a convention that is still going on. The recordings are in the Library of Congress.

However, something of even more interest to me is a recording of Paine Denson, the oldest son of T J Denson. It was recorded in 1942 and Paine is apparently discussing another sacred tune book called the Southern Harmony. The recording is also in the Library of Congress.

Paine Denson was a lawyer and graduated from the U of Alabama Law School. He practiced law in B[irmingham]ham and in later years had a small office next to his house in

Double Springs[,Alabama]. He died in 1955.

I remember him. We would always go to see him when we went to Ala[bama] during the summer. He was a large pear shaped man. He wore seersucker suits in the summer and loved bow ties. He also wore straw hats with a straight brim. One summer when we stopped by his office in B[irmingham]ham he took me to a nearby store and bought me a straw cowboy hat. He also drove a little car make by Kaiser-Frazier called a Henry J. It was yellow and brown and I can recall it vividly.

He and Aunt Ruth were very close and wrote letters to each other every week and discussed sacred harp all the time. He could also be very stern. Amanda stayed with Uncle Paine in Double Springs and with Aunt Ruth in Cullman [,Alabama] during the summers after her Dad, Uncle Howard, died in 1950 or 51.

Amanda said she could wear shorts when she was at Uncle Paine's house but when he went to the Post Office to get the mail she had to put on a dress or skirt to go with him!

Anyway, this wonderful recording was made and he is talking about another sacred harp book called the Southern Harmony. He does not say anything disparaging, but he is rather dismissive of it. He obviously loves the Sacred Harp that his Dad and his Uncle, Seaborn Denson, put together and published in 1936. Both brothers died after the book was "put together" but before it was published. Uncle Paine, Uncle Howard and Aunt Ruth did all the remaining work to get it published.

I did not recall his voice, so it is really good to hear him. When he would led a song, he would never use a book. He put his left hand in a fist and rested it on his hip and directed with the right hand, also in a fist.

He wrote some really good songs. He wrote my favorite song in the book, called Peace and Joy. He was a gifted tune writer and I think some of the best tunes in the book were written by him.

He was married two times but had no children. Amanda told me his first wife died during childbirth. The tune Horton was named for his second wife.

Anyway, I hope you can listen to this recording and that you will enjoy him and the comments. He had a gift with both written and spoken words. There are some good phrases in this interview. He says "We don't fight books" which refers to some singers of that time who would fuss and not sing out of any other book but the one they liked. He says "we sing from all of them." He also says "we don't love it (the Southern Harmony book) like I do this (the Denson revision of the sacred harp.)"

He talks about some hymns that have been put with different tunes and you can tell he did not like some of the tunes. Like Amazing Grace or the Promised Land. He says "Promised Land in it's purity, page 128, in this song book (Denson book)."

Anyway, I wanted to send this to you so you could hear one of the older sons of T J Denson. It was recorded 67 years ago. Hope you enjoy hearing this.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/natlib/ihas/service/amazinggrace/200049058/0001.mp3>

Will [Fitzgerald]

Arkansas Valley Fall Harvest Singing

A number of you have asked about our house here in the Valley and the three plus years of our lives that have gone into making it our home. Since it is easier to show than to tell, we would like to invite you to come down and spend a day with us on the 21st of November for a house tour and a half day of singing from the Denson and Cooper books. We have discovered and reserved a venue in town worthy of a future convention and would love to have you come down and help us test the acoustics. We think they will be absolutely superb [early 1900s timber construction with segmented vault type ceiling and a hardwood floor. If you can join us, please e-mail me an RSVP so I can reasonably estimate how many will come and plan our dinner on the grounds.

This part of the state offers many interesting things to see and do. The Bent's Fort National Historic Site [<http://www.nps.gov/beol/index.htm>] and the Koshare Indian Museum [<http://www.kosharehistory.org/koshare/museum.html>] come immediately to mind, but there are other things to see and do as well. For those wishing to arrive on Friday or extend your stay to spend Sunday exploring the area, reasonably priced accommodations are available within 5 minutes drive of the house and our singing site. Y'all come, now hear ??

Sacred Harp Singing In Hoboken – Via David Lee

The following two YouTube video clips present parts one and two of a short film by Will Payne of Watertower Films entitled The Sacred Harp Of Hoboken. It is an excellent personal portrait of David Lee and his effort to preserve our music.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVqhRAoLQpc&feature=channel_page

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAvVT-pgpBI&feature=related>

Looking Ahead

Dallas County Singing 7 November [Denson Book] Highland Park Presbyterian Church, 3821 University Blvd., Dallas, TX. More info: [Sonny Erwin](#), (214) 521-7457(home)/(214) 477-7457(cell) or [Cheryl Foreman](#), (214) 497-9911.

Arkansas Valley Harvest Singing [Denson and Cooper books] Harmony Hall #13 5th Street, La Junta, CO. For additional information, see the attached flyer or contact: Pete Mathewson [719]469-5241 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

All California 16 - 17 January 2010 [Denson Book] Templar's Hall, Old Poway Park, Poway, CA. For additional info see the San Diego SH page available at sdfasola.org.

Tucson Annual Sacred Harp Singing Convention 28 February – 1 March 2010 [Denson Book] Sonora Co-Housing 501 E. Roger Road, Tucson, AZ. More info: Paige Winslett 520/743-1268 or Maggie Leonard 520/323-5094

Pikes Peak Sacred Harp Singing 27 March 2010 [Denson and Cooper books] Chapel of Our Saviour in the Broadmoor, Colorado Springs, CO. For additional information, contact: Pete Mathewson [719]469-5241 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

Where We Sing and How to Find Us

Arkansas Valley Regular singings are 4th Mondays of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the home of Pete and Susie Mathewson 417 Carson Ave. La Junta. Contact Pete at 719/383-9056 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

BOULDER Regular singings are 2nd Friday of each month 7-9 pm, at the home of Peter and Mary Lou Van Laanen. Contact Mary Lou for details at 303-447-9379 or e-mail her at vmarylou@indra.com

COLORADO SPRINGS - Sings regularly on the 2nd Sunday from 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Pikes Peak Primitive Baptist Church 12th and Pikes Peak on the Westside. Please bring a dollar donation to the book fund. Pete Mathewson is the contact at 719-469-5241 or e-mail him at 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

DENVER Sings weekly each Monday except the first Monday from 6:40 – 8:40PM at St. Mark's Orthodox, 1409 S. Vine, Denver. Special singings may be arranged, in addition to the regular Monday evening singings, for out of town visitors to the Denver/Boulder area. Out of town singers should call Sharon Kermiet at 303-931-8445 or email her at skermiet@goodwilldenver.org and at coral96@indra.com to arrange a special singing. Bring a dollar as a contribution to the book fund. For the location of any specific singing, please contact Pat Dolan at 303-778-6297 or e-mail him at ruralplain@aol.com or Sharon Kermiet at skermiet@goodwilldenver.org.

FORT COLLINS - The singing is normally the first Monday of each month 7-8:30 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 2000 Stover Street. Contact Hill Grimmett for specifics at 970-231-1197 or e-mail him at hill@sacredharpcolorado.org

Sacred Harp On The Web

Our local websites are Sacred Harp Colorado at www.sacredharpcolorado.org and the Rocky Mountain Shapenote Singers at <http://lamar.colostate.edu/~dakspk>. The national web site is www.fasola.org

Sacred Harp Colorado Newsletter Editor:

Pete Mathewson
417 Carson Ave.
La Junta, CO 81050
719/469-5241 cell
71mgbgt41@gmail.com

John Carter Clary, known by friends and family as "Carter", died on October 11, 2009 at the Heart Hospital in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Carter, a non-smoker, had been recently diagnosed with lung cancer. His death was sudden following a pulmonary embolism. Carter was born on August 3, 1941 in Charlotte, North Carolina. He earned his B.S. degree from the University of Virginia in 1964 where he was a member of the Rugby Football Club and Glee Club. He received a NROTC scholarship, served as a Commander on the NROTC Drill Team, and was a NROTC honorary member of the Trident Society. Carter was commissioned in the United States Navy in 1964. He served as a Naval Aviator aboard the Coral Sea during the Vietnam War and served as an Air Intelligence Officer at the Fleet Intelligence Center until 1970. He earned his Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Cumberland School of Law in 1974 where he was recognized on the Dean's List, represented the School as an Oralist on the International Law Moot Court Team in 1974, was elected Vice-President of the Senior Class, and was a member of the Honor Code Drafting Committee and the Delta Theta Phi legal fraternity. Carter earned his Master of Laws degree (in Labor Law) from the New York University School of Law, Graduate Division in 1978. He practiced law between the years 1974 and 2008 and served as criminal prosecutor for the State of Alabama then the State of New Mexico in Albuquerque, Raton, Clovis, and Las Cruces. He also worked for the Department of the Interior from 2007-08. Carter was a member of five State Bars including New Mexico, New York, Alabama, North Carolina, and Texas and was admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court. He served on the New Mexico Minimum Continuing Legal Education and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Boards for the New Mexico Bar. He also served as a volunteer in the Metropolitan Court Mediation Program. In addition to practicing law, Carter devoted much of his time to teaching. He taught a variety of subjects including English as a second language to Spanish, Japanese, and Russian students, "Aviation English", general English, adult basic education, police administration, and legal research and writing, immigration law, and business law to paralegal students. He taught at Wake Forest University School of Law in North Carolina, the International School of Business in Tokyo, Japan, the Clinical Law Program at the University of New Mexico School of Law, New Mexico State University in Farmington, Bessemer State Technical College in Alabama, the Metropolitan College in Albuquerque, CNM, Catholic Charities of New Mexico, and the Lingua Foundation for the Arts and Humanities in Russia via the internet. Carter was a world traveler who visited Australia, India, Saudi Arabia, Korea, the Philippines, China, Japan, Pakistan, France, Mexico, Canada, Costa Rica, and Spain. His last big adventure was a two-month trip to Spain in the Spring of 2009 where he taught English to students at Colegio Publico Menendez Pidal, Bembibre, Leon, Spain. Carter was also an avid bird watcher, loved music, and enjoyed singing and dancing. He taught dance at the Las Cruces Swing & Country Dance Club in Las Cruces, was a member of the Albuquerque Dance Club, sang with the Shape Notes Group of Albuquerque and the Immanuel Presbyterian Choir in Albuquerque. Carter is survived by his wife, Judith Keller Clary, his step - daughter, Courtenay L. Keller, both of Albuquerque, his sister Lee Davis of Fairfield, Ohio, his sister-in-law, Joan Clary of Oakhurst, California, brother-in-law, James Haag of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and his beloved Daisy and Hardy. The family wishes to express their gratitude to the compassionate care givers at the Heart Hospital of NM. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in memory of Carter Clary to the MD Anderson Cancer Center, P.O. Box 4486, Houston, Texas 77210.

Spend a day with Pete and Susie at the

Arkansas Valley Fall Harvest Singing



Saturday November 21st 2009
10:00AM to 2:00PM

Harmony Hall
13 E. 5th Street. La Junta, CO 81050

Come join us in La Junta for a half day singing with dinner on the grounds. Harmony Hall is a wonderful old meeting hall dating back to the early 1900s with good acoustics and a generous kitchen facility

La Junta is approximately 3 hours drive South and East of Denver and 2 hours South and East of Colorado Springs. This part of the state offers many interesting things to see and do. The Bent's Fort National Historic Site [<http://www.nps.gov/beol/index.htm>] and the Koshare Indian Museum [<http://www.kosharehistory.org/koshare/museum.html>] come immediately to mind, but there are others as well. For those wishing to arrive on Friday or extend your stay to spend Sunday exploring the area, reasonably priced accommodations are available in the Mid Town Motel at 719/384-8010 and the Stagecoach Motel at 719/384-5476. For those inclined toward national chains we have a Super 8 at 719/384-4408, and a Holiday Inn Express at 719/384-2900.

Directions from I25 North or South: Take US50 East from Pueblo approximately 60 miles to La Junta. Turn right onto Colorado Ave. at the light. Continue South to 5th Street. Turn left and Harmony Hall will be on your left just East of the Baptist church. Park in the neighborhood on the street.

Directions from I70 East: Take I70 East to Limon and proceed South on CO71. When CO71 intersects US50 West of in Rocky Ford turn left [East] into US50 and follow the instructions above.

To find Pete and Susie: When entering La Junta on US50 turn right on Carson Ave. at the Safeway and continue South to 417 Carson Ave. House is on the right.

For additional information please contact: Pete Mathewson at 719/469-5241 or 71mgbgt41@gmail.com.

Singers,

This is Harmony Hall and it is the building you are looking for on the 21st of November when you turn East [left] off Colorado Avenue. It sits just East of the First Baptist Church [brick building] which is the Northeast corner of Colorado and 5th. Please park on surface streets in the neighborhood.



Food will be provided by the folks here in the Valley and singers from the Springs. If you are traveling further than that, do not bother with preparing food - Just be our guests. However, no matter where you are coming from, please, RSVP so we can ensure that there is food for all.

Hope some of you can join us on that day

Pete and Susie