

## Taking a Stand in Boulder History

### **Suggested local topics for the 2017 National History Day**

#### **Taking a Stand for LGBT rights: Clela Rorex, Penfield Tate**

Individuals in Boulder history have had profound impact on the Nation's path toward equality, regardless of sexual preference.

Clela Rorex issued the Nation's first gay marriage licenses in 1975. Rorex couldn't see any reason not to grant the licenses, but the backlash that followed – including threats and hate – gave her fight purpose and she became a prominent ally for LGBT rights.

Penfield Tate was Boulder's first black mayor and established a Human Rights Ordinance in 1974 that prevented people from being fired on account of their sexual orientation. In the 1970's, Boulder was progressive enough to elect a Black mayor, but bigoted enough to recall him over gay rights.

*Available materials:* Rorex is still alive, as are several members of the Tate family. The Daily Camera archives will show a number of perspectives from the time.

#### **Taking a Stand against Nuclear Weapons: Rocky Flats Protests**

During the late 1970's and 1980's activists opposed to the operation of the Rocky Flats Plant (a nuclear weapons manufacturing facility south of Boulder) staged several protests at or near the site. Protesters were opposed to the manufacture of bomb components at the site, as well as the environmental contamination and health hazards caused by accidents at the facility. The plant was closed and designated a Superfund cleanup site by the EPA. Today residential neighborhoods sit little more than a mile from the former nuclear weapons plant and contamination is a concern.

*Available materials:* Many residents of Boulder today participated in the protests and could be interviewed and the Boulder Daily Camera covered them extensively. The Carnegie Library Branch for Local History has archives that follow the protests, also.

#### **Taking a Stand for Workers: Josephine Roche**

Roche was the first woman to own a major coal mine and voluntarily unionized her mines and ensured safe worker conditions in an age when most mine owners were deliberately denying workers' rights.

### **Taking a Stand for Peace: Chief Niwot**

Chief Niwot had the challenging job of leading the Arapaho in Boulder while it was being overrun with gold-seekers. He was committed to peace and dedicated his life to maintaining positive relationships between the settlers and his tribe. Ultimately, he lost his life from injuries inflicted in the tragic Sand Creek Massacre.

*Available materials:* The author of the book, Chief Left Hand, is local and could be reached for resources. The director of Motus Theater has also done extensive work on maintaining his legacy and there are videos of the performance *Rocks, Karma, Arrows*.

### **Taking a Stand for our Health: Organic Legislation**

Boulder was a hotbed for natural foods and health consciousness, especially after the '60s, and even as far back as 120 years ago. Boulder natural foods proponents like Horizons Organic Dairy founder, Paul Repetto, fought for specific legislation around promoting commercially-produced organic products.

*Available materials:* Repetto is still alive and in Boulder today, as are many founders of prominent natural foods stores and products that could speak to the impact of organic legislation as primary sources.

### **Taking a Stand Against Segregation: Anti-Apartheid Protest on University of Colorado Campus**

An international campaign began in the late 1970s and continued into the 80s to put pressure on South Africa and combat racial segregation, or apartheid, which was in place from 1948 to 1994. At CU-Boulder, hundreds of students took a stand and defied campus police and faced arrest to call for an end to apartheid.

### **Taking a Stand for Environmental Stewardship: Boulder Open Space**

Boulder voters were the first in the nation to approve a tax to purchase and preserve Open Space around the community, as well as for saving natural lands from development. It is really thanks to the citizens of Boulder that we have so many preserved lands free of development.

*Available materials:* Carnegie Library Branch for Local History: Look for Boulder City Plan Association (Ladies group who hired Frederick Law Olmstead Jr.), 1910 *A Plan for Boulder Colorado*, by Frederick Law Olmstead Jr., The BVCP (Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan), campaign documents; Daily Camera followed the campaign and opinions would show dissenting and supporting opinions.

### **Taking a Stand Through Dialogue: The University of Colorado Conference on World Affairs**

The conference is a platform for discussion on a multitude of topics, many of which exemplify "Taking A Stand," such as environmental activism, diplomacy, technology, spirituality, pop culture, politics, medicine and human rights.

*Available materials:* Organizers and panelists from today and throughout history could be interviewed.