

Introducing the All-New Museum Shop

Get inspired and share your love for the Denver Police Museum with one-of-a-kind collectibles and a unique selection of law enforcement-themed gifts.

We're excited to announce that we've added several new items to our online store, including limited-edition commemorative challenge coins, the Thin Blue Line Baseball Cap, a stainless steel thermal drink bottle, key chains, and many other unique and personal ways to demonstrate your support of law enforcement.

Visit the Denver Police Museum online shop today to browse our selection of one-of-a-kind gifts for family, friends, fellow officers, and yourself. ●



Shop now at denverpolitemuseum.org/shop

You Can Support the Denver Police Museum

Your financial support, stories, donations, and gift of time serve as a living legacy, creating opportunities for community understanding and engagement, strengthening the city's relationship with the community, and inspiring the next generation of law enforcement professionals. Gifts to the Museum support our extensive collection of artifacts, engaging events, and educational initiatives. Your donation will ensure that the story of Denver's law enforcement history will be preserved, explored, and celebrated for generations to come. ●

Learn more or contribute online at denverpolitemuseum.org/support



The Denver Police Law Enforcement Museum, Inc.
P.O. Box 9140
Denver, CO 80209-0140

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
DENVER, CO
PERMIT NO. 336

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MARK AND CHARLOTTE CHAFFIN *Continued from page 3*

importance is the knowledge of the artifacts in the Intake Center. The Chaffins give a very professional tour and have made it a point to learn as much as possible about the many artifacts they are showing. They also incorporate interesting and relevant stories keeping the audience very engaged.

You might also see the Chaffins at several events the Museum hosts each year. Of particular importance is Police Week held every year in May. Along with the other areas of responsibility that Mark and Charlotte have already mastered, they are quick to help out when volunteers are needed for a successful event.

Last, but not least, the Chaffins have showed their dedication and support for the Denver Police Museum by jumping in for a very necessary, but mundane task—of their own volition, they took on cleaning and reorganizing the Museum storage area

housed in the DPD Headquarters. This reorganization took several days to complete, and they pulled it off not worrying about how long it took or getting dirty in the process.

We are grateful to the Chaffins for the time and dedication they have given to the Denver Police Museum. Mark and Charlotte are so appreciated for their willingness to assist when and wherever the request may take them. Thank you for all you do!

Mark retired from the Denver Police Department in September 2005, and Charlotte retired from the Denver County Courts in August 2011. ●



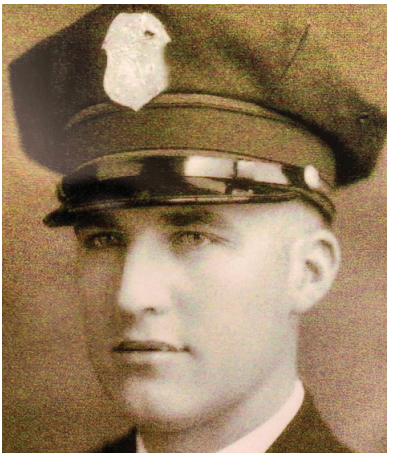
DPM NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021

Denver Police Museum Fallen Officer Project: Officer Jacob Benner

by Bill Finch

Originally from Germany, the George Benner family left Russia and immigrated to the United States just after the turn of the 20th century. In 1907 they arrived in Weld County and settled near Grover; four years later they moved to another tiny crossroads of a town, Keota, which was located some 50 miles east of Greeley. It was here the Benner family—George and Catharina and their nine children—homesteaded. As their sixth child, Jacob, grew up, he decided that country life wasn't for him.



Despite his family's objections, he set out for the bright lights of the big city of Denver to find his own way. In 1935 he married Sally Dell. A year later he was appointed to the Denver Police Department as a patrolman.

On November 6, 1937, he was sent to 3142 Osage St., to assist Detectives Sam Finnie and J.H. Wells in a gambling raid. Anthony Jachetta was running a craps operation there. He and 12 others would be arrested.

On that day, Benner entered through a basement window. When he dropped from the window, he landed on a table. It would not support his weight, and his left leg fell through and was cut by the splintered wood. He injured his back too. The injuries, though painful, were thought to be minor, so he continued working until November 27. On December 1, his condition worsened, and he was admitted to St. Anthony's Hospital. Infection set in, and his spleen and a kidney hemorrhaged. Blood poisoning took his life on February 14, 1938.

Jacob Benner was 28 years old. He was survived by his wife, mother and eight siblings. Jacob and Sally lived at 1240 Bannock St. He was buried next to his father at Fairmount Cemetery in Denver. A year later, Catharina would join them.

The Benner family always maintained that Jacob died as a result of injuries he sustained in the line of duty—and clearly that was the case. However, the police administration

Continued on page 2

The Museum Insider

Upcoming Events and Special Announcements

As we have begun to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Denver Police Museum is planning a number of fun, educational, and historic events for the remainder of 2021. These events will build on the tremendous success of Police Week in May.

Stay tuned for more information on the following:

- **Member Event with the Denver Crime Lab.** The event will be held on **Thursday, September 16 at 5:30 p.m. at the Denver Police Department District 1** (1311 West 46th Avenue Denver, CO 80211) and will include a lecture on how crime lab technicians worked with various websites and DNA technology to identify a previously unknown 1979 Denver murder victim. To RSVP for this event and reserve your seat, call (720) 913-6779 or email mhesse@denverpolitemuseum.org

Continued on page 3



at the time ruled since his death had occurred months after the injury was sustained, and that since it was not the direct result of an assaultive, felonious act, he should not be included on the list of Denver’s officers who were killed in the line of duty.

When the Denver Police Memorial was built in 1991 in the plaza outside the Police Administration Building, the family renewed its efforts to have Jacob’s name put where it belonged. However, again, they were met with disappointment.

It wasn’t until 2010, when Jacob’s nephew, Jerry Benner of Greeley, reached out to Denver Detective Ed David—whose parents also lived in Greeley—that the process was finally begun to make right what had been left wrong for so long.

Detective David knew just who to speak to about getting Jacob’s name put in its rightful place. He called then-Technician Dean Christopherson, a department historian and a founding board member of the Denver Police Museum, and Officer Danny Veith.

Christopherson, with a passion for police history and a soft place in his heart for fallen officers and their families, and Veith, a department peer support member for officers and their families, found the necessary documentation to substantiate the placement of Jacob’s name on the memorial. He submitted his findings to

then-Chief Gerry Whitman. Whitman quickly gave his approval.

During the May 2010 ceremony, Chief Whitman presented Jerry Benner with a framed Purple Heart medal in recognition of his uncle’s injuries.

It was then added to the state memorial in Golden, and the following year to the national memorial in Washington, D.C. ●

Sources

- Keith Dameron, Historian, Colorado Law Enforcement Memorial
- Colorado Department of Public Health: Death Certificate 1239
- Denver Police employment records
- The Denver Post
- The Rocky Mountain News
- The Greeley Tribune
- Ancestry.com

A Small But Mighty Collection of Scrapbooks

First-Hand Accounts Humanize Officers and Help to Tell Personal Histories • By Felicia Sanchez, Curator, DPM

The Denver Police Museum houses many significant artifacts with rich histories essential to our mission of building a bridge between the community and the Denver Police Department through storytelling. Along with artifacts, our collection is also made up of a small but mighty collection of scrapbooks. The term “scrapbook” may invoke imagery of the local craft store and a mother creating a book to preserve the memories of their child’s most prized moments; these scrapbooks are similar in the sense of preservation of memories and stories but tend to provide a toned down aesthetic with more depth. The scrapbooks have been donated to the Denver Police Museum by the families of officers in the hope that the personal history of their family members will be recorded and preserved for future generations.

The Denver Police Museum currently has about fifteen to twenty scrapbooks ranging from the 1930s through the 1990s. These books were created and maintained by the officer or a family member and included everything from newspaper clippings to commendations, academy graduations, birth and death

announcements. They provide a first-hand account of the past from a variety of perspectives. They also provide a visual of what the politics and societal climate was at that particular time in history. The stories highlighted in these scrapbooks bring to life what it was like for an officer during a specific era and their daily life and challenges they experienced on the job. There are stories of criminal activity, acts of compassion, life events, and the difficult times of being an officer through some of the pivotal and incredibly heartbreaking moments in Colorado history such as the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999.

The Museum currently has a dedicated volunteer, retired Denver Police Officer Barbara Cisneros, who performs the laborious but intriguing task of reading through the scrapbooks extrapolating information and documenting everything for the collection records. To date, Barbara has personally read through six scrapbooks. Many of the first-hand accounts humanize the officers and provide a reminder of simpler times and long-forgotten department policies; all of which excites our volunteers as they read



October 3, 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of Denver Police Officer Merle Nading’s line-of-duty death (LODD). This scrapbook of Officer Nading was donated to the Denver Police Museum by his widow, Pat Nading-Amman.

through these personal histories. Reading through these scrapbooks is a wonderful and fulfilling task for our volunteers and they look forward to every new scrapbook they open and read.

The process of recording all of the information within a scrapbook consists of reading every article in the book along with documenting names, dates, and places referenced throughout the articles. Providing a detailed description of each item included in the book is important to gather all pertinent information for our



records. An object ID number is assigned in our PastPerfect software database to each scrapbook along with a brief description and reference to the detailed document created by our volunteers. Once the entire scrapbook has been read through and recorded, it is placed in our collection storage area for safekeeping.

The stories and history pulled from these scrapbooks are invaluable to the Museum. To accurately tell the story of the Denver Police Department we need to have documented first-hand accounts and experiences and these scrapbooks are the perfect catalyst for us to obtain this information. We are truly grateful to the families who have donated these wonderful scrapbooks to the Museum, and we are honored to be the caretakers of these very important artifacts.



Denver Police Officer Merle Nading was killed in the line of duty on October 3, 1971 while attempting to quiet a disturbance in the parking lot of Clark’s Diner at 2201 East Colfax Ave.

That fateful night, Patrolman Nading observed a man and a woman quarreling and arrested the man on a disturbance charge. Off-duty officer Robert Wallis came to assist Nading. Nading gave Wallis custody of the suspect and started walking around the back of his patrol car to inform the dispatcher of the growing crowd.

A man in the crowd threw a punch at Nading, and when he started to arrest the man, a second man interfered and Nading grabbed him. While Nading was holding the second man in a headlock, the man reached around the officer’s body, snatched

his gun and fired once. Nading was shot in the back. When Wallis saw Nading fall, he let go of his suspect and went to Nading’s aid. All of the suspects in the parking lot then fled. Nading was pronounced dead upon arrival at Denver General Hospital.

“I have family and friends to thank who clipped newspaper articles, shared Denver Police Bulletins, and sent priceless letters to me during the most difficult time of my life—all of which were put into Merle’s scrapbook. After 50 years as a mother and grandmother, the scrapbook has become increasingly more valuable. My grandchildren know their Grandpa Merle well as he is spoken of often and the scrapbook paged through. Thanks to Darrel Behrendsen, a copy of Merle’s scrapbook is on the book shelf in the Denver Police Museum Intake Center among many other scrapbooks so that all of these officers can be remembered.” — Pat Nading-Amman ●

Volunteer Spotlight: Mark and Charlotte Chaffin

By Pat Nading-Amman, Volunteer Coordinator, DPM

Mark and Charlotte Chaffin are two of the many dedicated volunteers who support the Denver Police Museum with their time and talent. The Chaffins volunteer in many areas of the Denver Police Museum and are always ready to step in as needed on a moment’s notice. Mark and Charlotte joined the Museum team in 2016 and immediately volunteered to keep the Museum show cases in good shape with artifacts. Their travel for this task takes them to all the six Denver Police Department (DPD) district stations as well as DPD headquarters and the Rocky Mountain Law Enforcement Credit Union. They carefully choose the artifacts that are to be displayed and keep the show cases attractive. Mark and Charlotte complete this important task with enthusiasm, always paying attention to detail and keeping a schedule for refreshing the show cases.

The Chaffins also support another important area of the Museum—becoming a docent giving tours in the Intake Center and other areas of interest connected to the Denver Police Museum. Once again, they demonstrated their enthusiasm becoming knowledgeable and well-prepared docents. Of particular

Continued on page 4