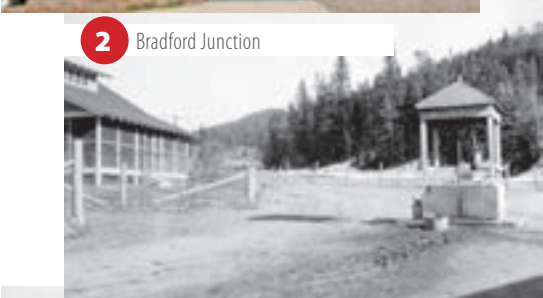
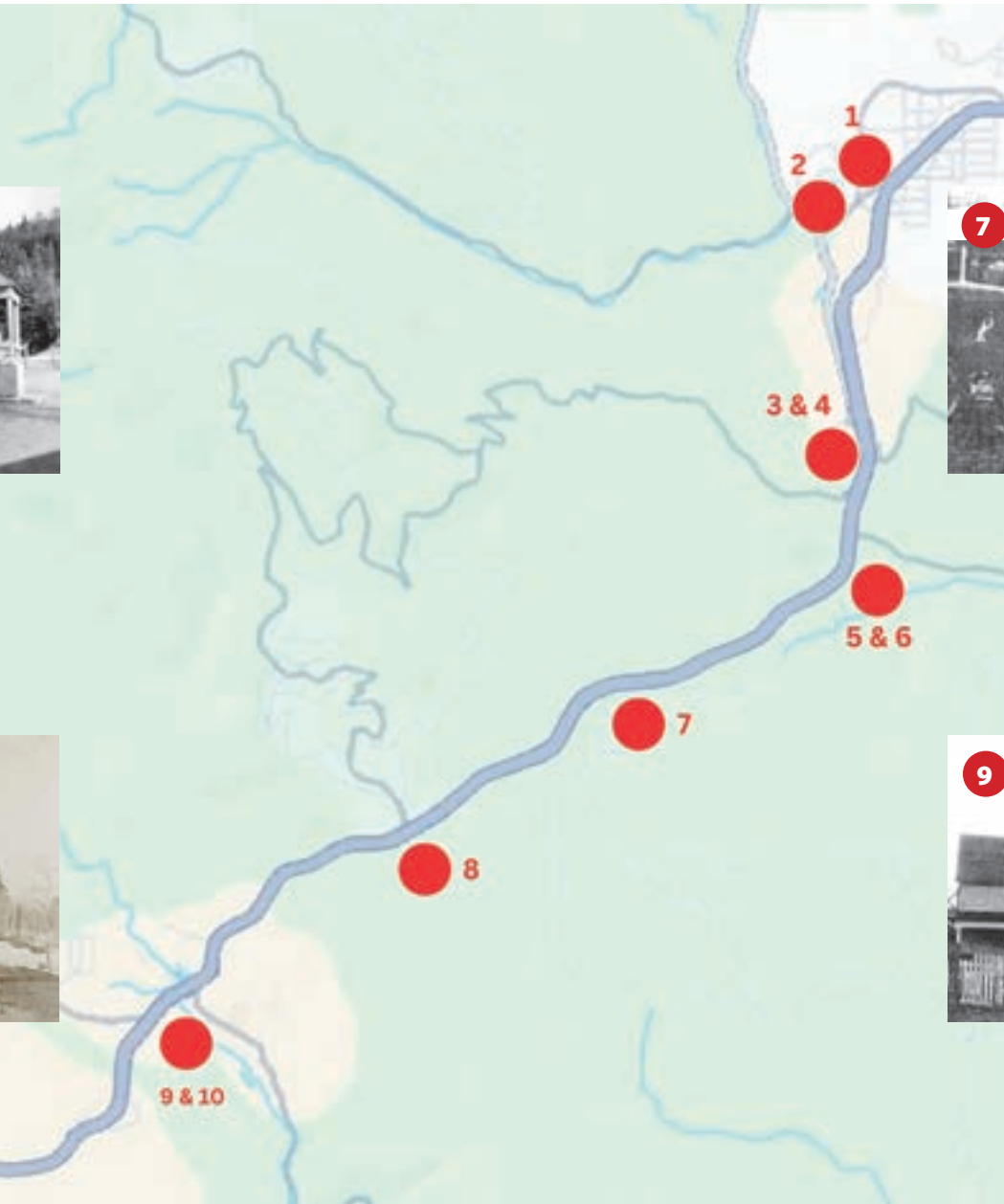




1 Junction School



2 Bradford Junction



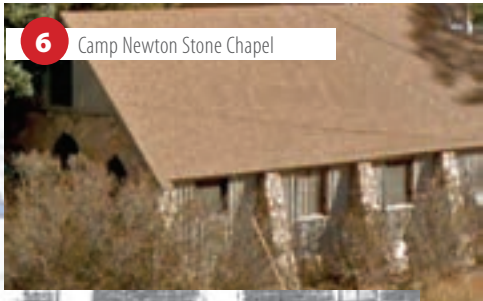
3 Field's Trading Post



4 Hutchinson Schoolhouse



5 Beaver Ranch



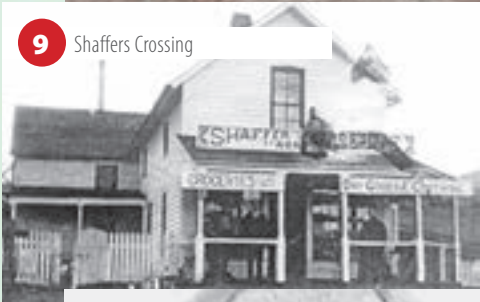
6 Camp Newton Stone Chapel



7 Hotel at Ellistown



8 Clifton House



9 Shaffers Crossing



10 Urmston School/Grange

connection to the past

CONIFER HISTORY TOUR

CHRISTA JOHNSON AND CARLA MINKS | CONIFER HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Part 1 of 2

It's the perfect time of year for a Conifer History Tour!

There's nothing quite like traveling the local roads, wondering what the area looked like 100+ years ago, while following a tour route of historic places from your car or in your mind. Start near Bradford Junction at the Little White Schoolhouse, travel down Hwy 73 and south on Hwy 285 to Shaffer's Crossing. We've provided a map with the locations, with a picture and brief history of each site or landmark.

1 CONIFER JUNCTION SCHOOL

In 1922 local resident John J. Mullen loaned property adjacent to his yellow barn to the area's school district. What we now know as the Little White Schoolhouse was originally built as the Conifer Junction School. It opened in 1923 to eight students 1st–8th grade. In 1946 the schoolhouse was sold to the school district and the building ownership was transferred in 1950. The "new" West Jefferson Elementary opened in 1955, and the little school became an overflow classroom, including kindergarten students. From 1969 to 2013 the historic school served the preschool children and families. In 2013, the preschool classrooms were moved to the next "new" West Jefferson Elementary, and the building was donated to the Conifer Historical Society.

2 BRADFORD JUNCTION

The crossing at today's Barkley Road and Highway 73 was once a stage stop for pioneers and miners traveling several toll roads to the placer mines, including the Denver, Bradford, and Blue River Toll Road, Bergen Park Toll Road, and Denver and South Park Wagon Road. Robert Bradford purchased the original 320 acres, and the crossing eventually included a hotel, restaurant, barn, Post Office, and the Civil War Well. The corner property is best known for the Yellow Barn that was added to the property in 1918.

3 JUNCTION SCHOOL / HUTCHINSON

Many of Conifer's pioneers were members of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, and the community built a church where today's Staples parking lot is. It quickly became an interfaith place of worship for all residents in 1911. In 1911 the school district purchased it as their second school building. Eventually in 1937 the Junction Schoolhouse was sold and dismantled, and students were educated in the area's other schools.

4 FIELDS TRADING POST

Fields Trading Post was built in 1929 and was located where Dutch Brothers Coffee is today. It offered travelers a store, gas station, and small restaurant. The post was famous for its taxidermized 4-legged chicken, perched atop a display cabinet. A glass cover was made to protect it from dust and curious hands. The building was demolished during the Highway 285 expansion.

5 BEAVER RANCH

George O. Kennedy 1860s 583-acre homestead was a favorite stop on the trail to Leadville because it had cold spring water, good corrals, and hotel space for the men and families who made their way to the mountains seeking gold. The ranch included the family home, a hotel, and Conifer's first Post Office. It hosted community events like rodeos and bucking bronco contests. The red barn visible from 285 is the last remaining original structure.

6 STONE CHAPEL

The stone chapel on Hwy 285 dates back to the time when Beaver Ranch's James Quigg Newton, Sr., the father of Quigg Newton, Denver mayor from 1945 to 1951, was the owner of the ranch. In 1939 Mr. Newton donated 583 acres to the Grace Methodist Church, and in 1951 a portion of the property was established as Camp Newton, a camp for girls and boys ages eight to thirteen. The stone chapel was built at this time, and the camp directors, H.R. and Ginnie Linville, lived in a home at the rear of the chapel. The surrounding property is now Newton Park (Denver Mountain Parks) and Beaver Ranch (Jefferson County Open Space).

7 ELLISTOWN

Today's Green Valley was once platted as Ellistown by Silas Elliott—the man rumored to have shot his nephew John Kennedy. After finding gold-bearing minerals on Elk Creek, he formed the town in 1896 and named it after his in-laws John and Agnes Ellis. The town had 3 saloons, a grocery store, and a meat market. When the financier of the venture, Mr. Cole, died, Ellistown died with him. Silas later moved to California and lived to be a centenarian.

8 CLIFTON HOUSE

The Clifton House dates back to 1875 when it was built as a homestead cabin by Rudolph Pollitz. It was expanded into a two-story, 14-room home and served as a stagecoach stop and hotel along the Denver-Leadville Stagecoach Road. The home also housed the local telephone exchange for over 30 years and even had a handwritten newspaper. A little known fact? It was the site of a stagecoach robbery where bandits stole horses from the barn. It's now Conifer Ranch, where guests can stay and host events.

9 SHAFFER'S CROSSING

Shaffer's Crossing was originally the home of Samuel Shaffer, who moved from Wyoming to Colorado in 1902. The spot marked where a stagecoach route crossed Elk Creek. He started a horse ranch and also farmed, threshed, milled, and cut railroad ties. The property included the family home, a store, dance hall, and a church. The store was known to have "everything from a needle to a threshing machine."

10 URMSTON GRANGE

The white hexagonal structure at Shaffer's Crossing was likely built by the Shaffer family and has had a number of uses. Originally it served as a dance hall where couples would arrive in wagons and dance all night. Isham Jones, a musician, played at the hall and composed songs like "It Had To Be You," "I'll See You in My Dreams," and many other songs on his nearby ranch. Later the Grange and the Fire Department met there as well. In the 1920s it became the area school until a brick school was built in 1936. It is now owned by the Archdiocese of Denver but listed on Colorado Preservation Inc's. Most Endangered Places.

Thank you to **Christa Johnson of the Conifer Historical Society & Museum** for her hours of research, write up, photos and map of the historic sites to turn her research into a tour.

There are too many fascinating historic places in Conifer for one issue! Look to upcoming editions for more.

Thanks to Christa Johnson and the Conifer Historical Society and Museum for providing this month's Connection to the Past article. The mission of the Conifer Historical Society is to share the region's legacy by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting historical and cultural materials. www.coniferhistoricalsociety.org