



Littleton Architect J.J.B. Benedict



**Photo of Jules Jacques Benedict
courtesy of Denver Public Library**

One of most flamboyant architects of the early 20th century was Jules Jacques Benois Benedict, a Littleton resident who was also a member of Denver's high society. Benedict was said to be temperamental. He burned many of his blueprints and used his cane to smash workmanship that he considered inferior. He was considered a society dandy and a womanizer.

But he was also a classically trained, excellent architect whose four decades of work, from 1910 to 1948, left an extensive legacy of Beaux Arts buildings. In Denver, his portfolio includes St. Thomas Seminary, Holy Ghost Catholic Church, and many private residences in the Country Club neighborhood.

In Littleton we are fortunate to have four Benedict-designed buildings, including the Town Hall Arts

Center, the First Presbyterian Church, the former Carnegie library and Benedict's private residence, now the Carmelite Monastery.

Littleton was a dusty hamlet of just over 1, 000 people in 1912 when Benedict and his bride purchased a farmsite of 90 acres that had been part of the Gallup ranch. The property included a lake (now called Ketring Lake). The Benedicts named their farm Wyldemere and raised livestock, turkeys and pit bulls. Benedict built a beautiful mansion on the property, with fountains and reflecting pools. Because the Carmelites are a cloistered order, Benedict's former home is not open to the public, but it can be glimpsed through the thick evergreen hedges surrounding the property.

But his other buildings in Littleton are landmarked historic structures that are open to the public. Benedict's work is characterized by the use of intricate terra cotta or stone detailing around doorways and windows. He liked the Italianate style, with tile roofs, arched windows and wrought iron work. Both Town Hall and the Carnegie Library display this style. A number of his buildings contain elaborate stenciled friezes or ceilings.

In May, members of Historic Littleton viewed the stenciled ceiling designed by Benedict when they toured the First Presbyterian Church. First Presbyterian is built in the Tudor

Revival style, and it displays Benedict trademarks of brick detailing around the doorways and on the tower and wrought-iron lanterns. It's worth a visit to the Carnegie Library (now the Melting Pot restaurant) or Town Hall to view up close the architectural details in terra cotta designed by one of Littleton's most interesting former residents.

Editor's Note: For an excellent biography of J.J.B. Benedict, visit the city of Littleton's website and read an article compiled by Doris Hulse. The address is www.littletongov.org/history/biographies/benedict.asp.



**Stenciled ceiling panels at First
Presbyterian Church designed by
J.J.B. Benedict**

Why is Alfred Packer Buried in Littleton?

How did Alfred Packer, Colorado's most infamous citizen, end up buried in Littleton?

Alfred Packer (he supposedly was illiterate and misspelled his own name, spelling it Alferd) was born in 1842 in Pennsylvania. He was a shoemaker who joined the Union Army in April, 1862, and was discharged with a disability pension in December, 1862. He traveled west and spent years working as a guide. In November, 1873, Packer and 21 men left Utah for the Colorado gold fields. Three months later they arrived in Montrose, Colorado, where they found food and shelter at Chief Ouray's camp.

Despite warnings that it was too dangerous to travel in the winter, Packer and five other men continued east. They became stranded in the San Juan mountains. Only Packer survived. Packer admitted he survived by eating his companions' bodies, but he always said he never killed them.

He was tried and sentenced

to death. That sentence was overturned. After a second trial, he was sentenced to 40 years, which he began serving in 1886. He was paroled in 1901.

Packer spent the last years of his life in Deer Creek Canyon. He died in 1907, of "stomach and liver trouble" at age 65. The nearest town with a cemetery was Littleton, which is how Colorado's infamous cannibal came to be buried here.



Photo courtesy of the Littleton Historical Museum and the Colorado Historical Society

ANNUAL MEETING

Historic Littleton Inc.'s 2002 annual meeting was held May 22 in the historic First Presbyterian Church.

The Reverend Dr. Jonathan Masters Hole and Earl Brett led tours of the 1929 structure, including a close up look at the stenciled ceiling and original roof and a visit to the bell tour, where members

were allowed to ring the bell. A reception was held afterwards in the Ayers Parlor.

Donna Smith brought her wedding album, which showed photos of First Presbyterian taken when she was married (we won't reveal the year!) The evening was a lot of fun. Thanks to all involved in helping make it a success!

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Trial of Alfred Packer on Sept. 14

Members of Historic Littleton Inc. and the Colorado History Group will find out whether Alfred Packer really is guilty of murder when the trial of Alfred Packer is held on September 14, 2002.

Tom "Dr. Colorado" Noel will conduct the trial of Packer, which will feature Littleton and Denver personalities in the cast of characters. This day-long program will also include a walking tour of historic Littleton, lunch at Jose's, a tour of the Littleton cemetery (including visits to Packer's and other notable Littleton residents' graves), a wake at 5280 Roadhouse, and dinner at the Littleton Historical Museum. The event is \$50.

To attend the Trial of Alfred Packer call Rebecca Kast at 303-730-2639 or Barb Eaton at 303-977-4054.