

History Trail Run - The Husteds By Jack Anthony

From the Kinner Country section of the New Santa Fe Regional Trail, we complete our eastbound trek and connect with the Santa Fe rail bed as the trail heads north. From this point north to Palmer Lake the majority of the trail is built right on the original rail bed. The last train traveled these tracks in 1973. For the next 2-3 miles of trail you'll occasionally see concrete structures with remnants of electrical connections that once provided power for railroad lighting. We're now approaching what was once the small community of Husted. Actually, some maps of the era listed this area as the "Husteds." Yes, there were two Husteds. The trail we're heading north on passes through East Husted. About $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the west is West Husted. We'll learn more about these communities after we learn a bit about its namesake.

Calvin Husted, a settler from New Jersey, arrived in the area in 1859. He set up a lumber mill in 1866 in the vicinity of West Husted. His mill operated through 1878. Husted's lumber operation was one of the largest in the region and employed quite a few workers. Timber from the Black Forest area was brought here, cut, and used to build the railroad, as well as homes in Colorado Springs. Many smaller lumber operations sprang up in the Black Forest area. Back then, the railroad would arrange to give a family 500 acres of wooded land IF they would provide lumber for railroad ties.

East Husted was located along the Santa Fe Railroad in the vicinity of AFA's north entrance. West Husted was situated along Monument Creek and on the bluffs overlooking the creek. In 1890 Husted's total population was about 75. There were Husted rail stations along both the Santa Fe and Denver & Rio Grande railroads. The Santa Fe station was about a mile south of AFA's north entrance. You can still see the station's original foundation just off the trail, and the county has placed an informative sign at the site that includes a 1933 photo of the station. In the early days (pre-1900's) Husted had two hotels: the East Husted Hotel, and the St Johns Hotel. Both these hotels were built in 1883. East Husted's main town featured a general store, post office, saloon, and church. In the 1930's the Kinner service station and store and the Neustle's General Store (later called Jones Store) was located here. Also located in East Husted was the Branding Iron Café. That building was first Scribner family home, then it was converted to a church and in the late 40's/early 50's it became the Branding Iron Cafe. These were convenient stops along for motorists traveling Highway 85-87; I-25 wasn't built until the late 50's. West Husted.

At West Husted, "helper" steam engines were added to assist northbound Denver & Rio Grande trains climb the uphill grade over the Palmer Divide. A small roundhouse/turn-table was located in West Husted and used for turning the helper steam engines around. At Palmer Lake, the helpers would be turned around on section of track called the "Wye". The "Wye" was located just north of the Palmer Lake and was simply a "Y" section of track and switches that in three movements and flipping some switches would enable a helper engine to turn around. The helper would return to West Husted, turn around on the turn-table and be ready again to pull another freight or passenger train "over the divide". In the 1920's, larger, more

powerful train engines enabled the railroads to eliminate the need for helper engines and crews in Husted.

As settlers moved into the Husted area in the mid 1860's, they faced tough and dangerous situations. Whereas the Ute Indians were friendly and helpful to settlers, the Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians were very dangerous. Settlers regularly had to band together as the threat of attacks constantly loomed during those early times. In 1868, an Indian uprising occurred in the area, and nine heroic families held up in a fort-like homestead located northwest of Husted. They waited out the troubled times in their fortified home (built in 1861 by Alonzo and Levi Welty). Similar acts of heroism and perseverance occurred at the Teachout homestead near Edgerton and the McShane homestead near Monument. The McShane's hosted 42 settlers in their stone fortress for a two-week period.

Of all the acts of pioneer heroism documented, perhaps none are more harrowing, yet fascinating, than a story relayed by Walter Husted (son of Calvin Husted) in a March 27, 1949 Gazette Telegraph article. This article described a youthful hero's daring gamble in a potentially volatile situation. Here's how the story goes. While the men of Husted area were away aiding settler's being threatened by Indians, several Indians attacked and killed two settlers on the western edge of the Black Forest. The Indians then emerged from the forest's edge and seemed ready to steal horses and maybe do harm to a seemingly undefended Husted. A young man, herding cattle at the time, could see the hostile Indians surveying the Husted area. He had to act quickly. He stood atop a nearby hill, turned around, and started calling for his small army of followers. "Here they are! The Indians! Let's go get them! Follow me!" The catch here was that his small army was made-up! Imaginary! He waved his hat to rally his yet-to-be-seen band of defenders, and ran unarmed right at the Indians. The youthful hero of Husted played out his ruse. And it worked! The Indians reconsidered their quarry, turned and fled! What a daring and clever act by this brave, young man.

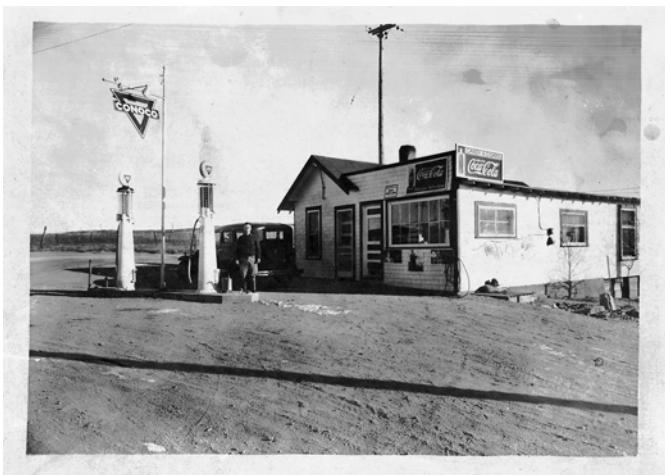
Husted was also an extension of Kinner Country (remember Dixie, Pat and Janet Kinner whom we met last article). The area to the west was the northern Kinner field where corn was planted. The northern boundary is where the "Welcome to Colorado Springs" sign now stands. The field is now full of small 50 year-old pine trees. As you run perhaps you can imagine Emma Kinner and her kids heading north carrying water and a sack lunches as they hike the tracks to the Grandparent's home in East Husted. John (II) and Mary Kinner bought a house just north of the depot on the East side of the highway in the early 1930s. They converted the house into the Kinner Service Station and Store. They operated the filling station until about 1940 and then leased it and moved into Palmer Lake for a short time. They moved back to the store around 1943 and not long after that they converted back into a home where they lived until the AFA obtained the land in 1955.

Dixie, Pat and Janet have many memories in their grandparent's house eating homemade biscuits and fried chicken and enjoying family gatherings with cousins. The State Patrol at that time used motor cycles and when the rain would come, the big barn behind the house was turned into a motor cycle garage. There were chickens and occasionally a mule in the barn as well. After a rain storm, Mary spent

many hours drying out clothes of travelers in front of her pot-belly stove or ironing them dry before sending the travelers on their way. The highway took a bit of a curve just in front of the Kinner house before going on through Husted. This was a treacherous place for drivers and many a night the Kinnners were awakened by the screeching of brakes. Highway 85-87 was known as the ribbon of death. I-25 was built in the 1950s and provided more robust and safer transportation. Grandfather John was also a blacksmith and barber and used his skills to help out his Husted neighbors.

East and West Husted were connected with a road that today is long overgrown. This road was part of the school bus route where children would catch the bus and travel to the Inez Lewis Consolidated School (also known as "Big Red") in Monument. The Kinner's recall that the West Husted station included a work train siding. Railcars full of rail workers would be parked there for days at a time. The cook on the train offered fresh bread with homemade jam to the kids getting off of the school bus there. Yum! Yum!

In the late 1800's, there were several train incidents in the Husted area due to trains literally being blown off the tracks by high westerly winds. The train engines and railcars of the early era were smaller and a lot lighter in the late 1800's and early 1900's. On August 14, 1909, a terrible train wreck occurred on the Denver & Rio Grande tracks just north of the Northgate Road entering the Air Force Academy. A northbound train and southbound passenger train collided head on taking the lives of 11 and injuring 42. In my next History Trail Run article, I will share first hand accounts of this accident from a passenger who was on the southbound train.



Kinner Store and Filing Station, East Husted, CO



Jerry and Janet Hurst Pat and Gene Shannon
Exploring the West Husted townsite