

# SUPERIOR HISTORIAN

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## ONE HUNDRED YEARS: VERA TAYLOR'S REMARKABLE LIFE

CENTENARIAN BORN  
IN SUPERIOR



If life is like a river, Vera Dixon Taylor's course is a long one with many noteworthy landmarks along the way. Vera Taylor was born in her grand-parents' house in Superior on July 7, 1907, and her ancestry includes many personalities important to the early days of Superior and Boulder County.



William Charles and Emeline Hake, Vera Taylor's great-grandparents, settled along Coal Creek in original Superior around 1860 and acquired a homestead in 1870.

William Charles Hake and his wife Emeline were the first settlers along Coal Creek and their son Charles incorporated the town of Superior in 1904. Zelda Hake, the daughter of W. C. and Emeline, married William Autrey, whose family soon followed the Hakes to the Superior area. Their daughter was Addie Autrey who married Newton Dixon and it was this couple to whom Vera was born over 100 years ago.

Newton Dixon's parents immigrated to the United States from England and by 1880 he had worked for a variety of farmers in eastern Boulder County. Not long after Vera was born, the Dixons moved to the farm of Newton's father, Charles, located across the road from the Louisville Cemetery. Newton worked in the engine houses of some of the nearby coal mines. The Old Centennial Mine was located near today's 96th St. and the Regal Mine was within walking distance of the farm.



Vera poses with her father, Newton, and a favorite pony on the family farm outside of Louisville.

It was on this spread that Vera grew up. She walked from the farm to school in Louisville and thought

nothing of it. When weather was bad, Vera would stay overnight with her grandmother who lived in Louisville.

The idea of being driven to school wasn't even considered 90 years ago. Furthermore, Vera remembers that her family didn't have a car until she was around 12 years of age. She also recalls going by horse drawn buggy over dirt and gravel roads to visit relatives in Superior and that the funeral procession for her grandfather, Will Autrey, was comprised of horse and buggies for the trip from Superior to Boulder's Green Mountain Cemetery in 1915.



Stewart Autrey shows off the family's new Buick to Newton Dixon (leaning against the car) around 1920. Vera is on the bumper at left and her sister Thelma sits on the fender.

Vera graduated from Louisville High School when it was at its original location on Garfield Avenue. This building predated the construction of a newer high school during the New Deal (the current Louisville Middle School). She also attended grade school in a building that was in today's Memory Square location that she characterized as being creaky and shaky, and eventually condemned and razed.

After graduation, Vera lived in Boulder while attending the

University of Colorado. She often traveled between Louisville and Boulder on the electric interurban railcars. Her recollection matches many who rode the Denver & Interurban rails: it was a clean, quiet, and efficient transportation system. She was able to catch the interurban at the Louisville depot and she could access it in Boulder either at the Union Depot at 13th and Water Street or the small station on the University campus.

Upon graduation from C.U. in 1929, Vera taught English and Latin in eastern Colorado and eventually settled at Louisville High School. Vera was paid \$100 a month during her first year of teaching. As the effects of the Great Depression deepened, her salary was cut back to \$800 for the approximate nine month school year.

The new Louisville High School, built with WPA funds, opened in 1939. It was there that Mrs. Taylor conveyed her love of language, teaching English and Latin for twenty years. She retired in 1972, when Centaurus High opened.

After Vera retired, following her river's course, she embarked on a new career where she made an indelible mark on the local community. She volunteered at the Centaurus Library for 25 years, daily for 10 of those years. Vera was an ever-present, cheerful face in the school library,

faithfully clipping newspaper articles for the vertical file, cataloging materials, and patiently helping students. Colleagues recall that she also willingly took on less attractive jobs, such as inventorying books, as a part of her volunteer work.

In addition, Vera volunteered in a similar capacity at the Louisville Public Library. Consequently, Vera's influence was profound in the Louisville and Lafayette communities. She interacted with people from many generations and, in the process, left a permanent impression on those she touched.



Addie and Newton Dixon were no doubt proud of their three daughters pictured circa 1942, Thelma (deceased), Vera, and Lola, left to right.

The spirit of giving seems to run in the family. Lola Dixon Gaudreau, Vera's younger sister, lives in Denver and volunteers at the Museum of Nature and Science regularly. Lola has become the keeper of the family history and she and Vera talk by phone every day.

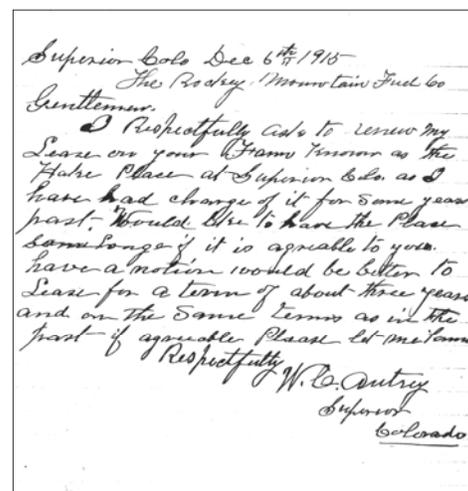
Vera still owns her house on Lincoln Avenue in Louisville, but lives at the Legacy residential home in Lafayette. She welcomes visits from old friends, colleagues, and students.

Over the years, Vera has received recognition and accolades for her unselfish devotion to

volunteerism. Her daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren have a wonderful role model to follow. And to think, the first droplets of the river that was to be her life began in a simple home in original Superior!

Sources: Personal interview with Vera Taylor, Lola Gaudreau; Superior Historical Commission, Lost Superior. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection. Photographs courtesy of Lola Gaudreau.

Below is a communication in W.C. Autrey's hand (followed by a translation) to the Rocky Mountain Fuel Co. requesting grazing rights on property just south of original Superior on what was to become the Rock Creek Ranch residential development.



Superior Colo Dec 6th 1915  
The Rocky Mountain Fuel Co.  
Gentlemen.

I respectfully ask to renew my lease on your farm known as the Hake Place at Superior Colo. As I have had charge of it for some years past.—Would like to have the place — longer if it is agreeable to you. have a notion would be better to lease for a term of about three years and the same terms as in the past if agreeable Please let me know

Respectfully

W.C. Autrey

Superior  
Colorado

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Join us at a meeting on the third Friday of every month at the Superior Town Hall. For more information call Larry Dorsey, 303-499-1969 or Martin Toth, Town Liaison, at 303-554-9005