

# Greer: Experience the Old West

By Anne Groebner

Greer is one of the most beautiful areas found in the White Mountains. A small village nestled along the Little Colorado River, it is a summer and winter destination for those who want pristine surroundings and a one-on-one with nature. The cool mountain air and starlit nights (and you can really SEE the stars!) provide a distinct distraction from city life.

The history of Greer can be found in the names of local ranches and landmarks. Americus Vesputius Greer was a town planner for whom the town was named and Jacob Noah Butler, homesteaded in his namesake, Butler Canyon. One of the most beautiful hikes in town is named Butler Canyon Trail. It was a rough and tumbling time back in the days of settler's wagons, horses and cattle. People came and went, including cowboys and outlaws, artists and writers but Greer survived through persistence and determination.

One of the first settlers was Amberion Englevson (Amberion Point). He was either a Norwegian or a Frenchman. He built a small cabin where he slept with his horses and is thought to have brought the first grain to the area. He was killed by a horse in Springerville. (Some believe he left behind some gold.) Another settler was Tommy Lang who was shot and killed by a Smith, Carson and Co. Twenty-four cowboy named "Youngblood." (Smith Carson and Co. Twenty-four was a local cattle company.)

Next came John A. Norton, who was one of the original Mormons to settle in the area, followed by Peter Jens Jensen, Lehi Smithson, James Hale, Heber Dalton and Richard Lee. According to *On The Road to Nowhere; The History of Greer*, "James Hale was shot on Christmas Day, 1886 on the streets of Springerville. He and Lehi Smithson had been working for the old Twenty-Four and caught rustlers — the Clantons, it is thought — who, had already stolen two herds and were in the process of taking the third. Hale and Smithson reported them to the cattle company and Smith and Carson got their cattle back. The rustlers, however, had it in for Hale after that and later, meeting up with him in town, shot and killed him. Other sources say the Westbrooks, remnants of the Butch Cassidy gang, were responsible for the murder.

According to "The Life and Times of James Willard Schultz (Apikuni)," outdoorsman and author, it was "the abundance of wildlife — grizzly and black bears, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, mountain lions and wild turkeys — and the remoteness and unique beauty of Arizona's White Mountains that led to Schultz becoming the first tourist to build a cabin in the Greer area in 1907." I have read some of his books and my favorite is "In the Great Apache Forest: The Story of a Lone Boy Scout." This is a story about George and Hannah Crosby, who, according to the Butterfly Lodge website ([butterflylodgemuseum.org](http://butterflylodgemuseum.org)), were "teenage children of Molly Butler's first marriage" and the book recounts their adventures as summer rangers under Apache Forest Supervisor Fred Winn on Mount Thomas (now known as Mount Baldy) during World War One. Later Schultz' son (and artist) Hart Merriam "Lone Wolf" Schultz and his wife Naoma used the cabin as a spring/winter studio. Today, it is the "Butterfly Lodge Museum which houses the

history of its past owners along with the Sam and Karen Applewhite Pavilion. The Pavilion provides an outdoor covered stage for the museum's educational and entertainment programs as well as for its annual fund-raising barbecue.

Back in the day, the settlers of Lee Valley lived on deer, elk, antelope, turkey and maybe bear, squirrel and rabbit and I am sure some folks there still do but when you visit Greer, a better choice would be one of their great restaurants like Molly Butler's or the Rendezvous. One of my favorite stops is the Lazy Trout Market which carries just about everything you need for fishing, hiking and more. They also rent out beautiful cabins which comes in handy when attending the biggest event of the year in Greer...the weekend that celebrates the town's history with special events and activities including a parade. Don't miss Greer Days, this summer scheduled on June 9th and 10th. Go back in time with them as they revisit the days of a small village community in the White Mountains of Arizona.

## **GREER DAYS 2017: JUNE 9th-10th**

The village of Greer will kick off a summer full of fishing, hiking and relaxation with the annual Greer Days celebration on June 9th and 10th. At an elevation of 8,300 feet in Arizona's White Mountains, Greer offers plenty of cool weather and beautiful scenery. What folks call that "little slice of heaven." Greer Days will feature an old-fashioned parade, music, arts and crafts, delicious foods, an auction, Lucky Duck race, children's games and much more. Featured events and activities (subject to change) include:

### **Opening ceremonies**

#### **Friday, June 9th, 5 p.m.**

The Greer Desperadoes ain't fooling around as they officially open Greer Days with a Wild West shoot-out at Molly Butler Lodge.

Old Fashioned Main Street Parade

#### **Saturday, June 10th, 10 a.m.**

This is a Greer tradition evoking the good ol' days with horses and riders, Native American dancers, floats, antique cars and more on Main Street in Greer. Arrive early to avoid the closure of Main Street. Enjoy the parade. Apply to be in the parade here.

### **Heavenly Vendor Village**

#### **Friday and Saturday (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), June 9th and 10th**

Exhibitors will offer arts and crafts, food, jewelry, clothes, photographs, paintings, furniture, toys and more along Main Street and in the Greer Community Center. Enjoy the shopping and eats or apply to sell your wares.

### **Children's games**

**Saturday, June 10th, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Round up the kids and head to the field near 92 Beans Coffee and Ice Cream Shop, 92 Main Street, for family fun.

### **Lucky Duck Race**

**Saturday, June 10th, 1 p.m.**

Everyone loves the annual Lucky Duck Race at the Greer Community Center. Children and adults race toy ducks for fun and in pursuit of the big prize. Ducks are run in dozens of heats with prizes for the top winners. Buy as many ducks as you want and see who is the luckiest duck. Buy your ducks in Greer.