

December 12, 1986

Gladys Beuler Talk At January Meeting

Prominent local historian **Gladys Beuler** will be speaker at our January 9th meeting. Her topic is "Round and About the Pikes Peak Region."

We assume we'll resume our present arrangements to meet at the Trinity United Methodist Church for lunch after the talk, although final arrangements have not been made with new officers of the Church Circles who prepare the lunches. If a change is needed, you'll be notified when you're called for reservations.

Luther McKnight Estate, Virginia Cox Add to O. C. C. H. S. Endowment Fund

The Society's Perpetuity/Endowment fund has been increased to well over one-hundred thousand dollars by contributions from a member and from the estate of Luther McKnight.

Virginia Cox made a personal contribution to the fund of \$50.

Leslie Atkins, cousin and personal representative to the estate of **M. Luther McKnight**, has contributed an additional \$10,000 gift to the Society on behalf of Mr. McKnight and his family.

The Society was beneficiary of a dozen certificates of deposit at the time of Mr. McKnight's death.

Mr. Atkins liquidated other assets of Mr. McKnight's, and presented a check to the Society for an additional \$10,000, to make Mr. McKnight's contributions to us total over 103-thousand dollars. Mr. McKnight spent all but the first few years of his life as a Colorado City and Westside resident, and was eager to preserve its unique future.

In addition to financial help, Mr. McKnight left a priceless collection of Colorado City and

A Westside Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Ruth F. Maxwell has been a member since Sept. 12th, but we neglected to welcome her in this column. She lives at 834 Darby, phone 599-3111.

Add the following to your membership roster:

William S. Cook followed his October visit with a membership. P.O. Box 4390, Woodland Park, 80866. Home phone: 687-6357; work: 594-9464.

Another recent visitor, **Erman F. Biondini**, joined. 515 W. Caramillo, 80907; 632-0417.

Westside memorabilia with the intention that a museum would be established in honor of the City, established a dozen years before Colorado Springs and with a character all its own.

Mrs. Cox's contribution will also support such a museum.

I.R.S. rules change at year-end and in many cases will not allow as much of a deduction for contributions.

The Perpetuity/Endowment fund can be spent only after approval by two-thirds of the membership. Contributions are credited to the donor, or as a memorial, as the donor wishes.

Art Comes In Small 3-Dimension Forms

Members who brave a sampling of Colorado Winter will be introduced to the delicate, fairytale world of the Simplicich family Character Dolls this noon.

Vice president and program chairperson **Jan Knox** arranged for us to venture out of our usual luncheon center to eat at Henri's restaurant on Colorado Avenue, and to seek out the Christmas spirit midst the dolls.

Cabinets, Luggage, Chairs Into Storage

The Old Colorado City Historical Society is furnishing a home for items which will someday appear in our museum.

John Keller and his pickup truck, **Ralph Conner**, and two men hired from the State employment office, moved a display case from the Pioneers' Museum to Mr. Conner's rented store on 21st. The Museum staff passed it on to make more room, with our assurance it will be put to good use.

We're preserving several trunks and suitcases, most with no particular historical significance. Bit one trunk came to Colorado City with Anthony Bott, a town founders. It remained at his home until his death.

Another interesting trunk is covered in cowhide, and Museum notes read, "said to have belonged to Horace Greeley."

We also received a number of folding chairs. Only expense of the move was to hire two men from the State Employment Office to help. Mr. Keller donated use of his truck.

Membership Roster Needs Corrections

Two changes of telephone numbers should be made in the Membership Roster which was given to members last month.

Joanne Garrison's office number should be 685-5103.

And **Betsy Evans'** home phone number has changed to 593-2088.

The Secretary thinks he has caught up with memberships and records. If there are other corrections, please let him know.

People:

Dave Hughes was the speaker last month at the meeting of the Historical Society of the Pikes Peak Region. Not surprisingly, his topic was Colorado City.

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New member **Bessie Hegg** has returned home after a hospital stay for hip surgery.

Highlights and Sidelights from our last meeting:

The possibility of buying a computer was discussed briefly at our last meeting, but no decision was made. **Sally Brawner** proposed we investigate the possibility that someone might donate a computer. **John Keller, Jan Knox, and Ralph Conner** were appointed as a committee to study the question and make recommendations.

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Ed Curry and John Keller agreed to serve on an audit committee to check the treasurer's books. Bylaws call for an annual audit, but this policy has been neglected in the past.

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Agnes Johnson reported that the Society has been loaned a map of the underground tunnels under Colorado City and **Ralph Conner** is working on a photo copy. The map belongs to the Colorado Avenue Communications Council.

Visitors and Guests:

We're pleased at the number of visitors at our November meeting. Thirty attended the luncheon; several others were present for the program only.

Our speaker, **Michel Dablin** stayed for the luncheon as our guest.

Other visitors and guests were:

Lucille Arnold.

Olive Haun.

Mary M. Johnson.

Janet Polley.

Vera G. Scott.

Bessie Shantz.

Treasurer's Report:

Current

Balance 11/11/86	526.54
Memberships	+25.00
Bank interest (- chgs)	+4.50
Spplies, lunches	10.49
Newsletter postage	14.24
Manpower to move cabs	20.00
Balance 12/14/86	511.31

Endowment

PP Nat'l (chckng acct)	11,365.00
American Federal	78,596.08
World Svngs (11 accts)	15,133.50
Endowment balance	105,094.58

WESTWORD Item Brings An Instant Response

When **Virginia Cox** attended her first O.C.C.H.S. meeting since her retirement, she little realized that a news item was lying in wait for her in the newsletter!

At the request of **Joanne Garrison** we asked if a Society member knew the former owners of the Colorado House in Manitou. That fitted Ms. Cox, and she and Ms. Garrison got together at that same meeting.

Ms. Cox's sister and her husband had once owned the Manitou hotel and, after they sold it, Ms. Cox and her family managed it for several years.

Old-Time Music At February's Meeting

Our Vice President and Program chairperson **Jan Knox** has shown considerable initiative in searching out unusual programs, and she's promised a first-of-its-kind for February:

The **Fountain Creek String Band** promises a program of "old-time" music in a live performance at our meeting Feb. 13th. They promise it's a Friday the Thirteenth we'll call "lucky."

To make or cancel
Lunch Reservations
please call
Lyn Owen
473-1846

WEST WORD

Volume II, Number 5 December 12, 1986

Published the second Friday of almost every month by
THE OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Post Office Box 6702, Colorado Springs, CO. 80934

The Old Colorado City Historical Society was formed to maintain the memory of Colorado City [1859-1917], to encourage research, to preserve historic buildings, mementos and pictures, and to keep alive the unique culture and spirit of Westside Colorado Springs.

MEETINGS

Meetings are held the second Friday of each month [except in June, July and August] at 11 a. m. at the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1920 Henderson Avenue—across 19th Street, west of Uintah Gardens Shopping Center. The public is welcome at all meetings and no reservation is needed for the program.

The program is followed by a luncheon, served by ladies of the church. Cost is \$4 per person. Reservations are required, and can be made by phoning Lyn Owen, 473-1846. Deadline is normally the Wednesday before the meeting, although last-minute change can usually be accommodated up to 5 p. m. the Thursday before the meeting. Since we must pay for all reservations made, please call Lyn Owen to cancel if you find you can't attend.

MEMBERSHIPS

Individual membership is \$5 a year; family membership is \$10. Renewal falls in April. Members receive our newsletter, and local members will usually be phoned before each meeting.

Also available is a Lifetime membership, for \$100. This amount is placed in our Perpetuity/Endowment fund, to be used for long-term projects which have approval from two-thirds of the members. Only the interest will be used for current expenses. We welcome gifts to this fund, which will be credited to the donor or as a memorial.

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

	Work:	Home:
President:	Agnes Johnson	633-89
Vice President:	Jan Knox	495-3
Secretary:	Ralph Conner	634-0830
Treasurer:	Orville Kenelly	473-5307
	Vera Chambon	634-2340
	Dave Clark	473-3430
	Betsy Evans	634-1698
	Dave Hughes	636-2040
	John Keller	475-8634
	Aldine Lipe	475-1658
	Leon Young	633-1543

End of Rural Isolation Brought an End to an Independent Lifestyle

Brief Eras of Prosperity Never Made Life 'Easy' in Rural Area, but It was Good

SOME WAYS, early-day life in Eastern El Paso County was simpler, but in other ways it was infinitely more complicated and difficult. In any case, time brought changes that are virtually wiping out the county's country life style.

Details of that life were told to us Nov. 14th, often in the voices of the early settlers themselves, when Michel Dahlin, assistant professor of history at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, gave a video-tape summary of research on disappearing rural life. It was the Society's first presentation in that form and the experience will allow us to improve future such programs.

Her study, developed in cooperation with Richard Dukes and generously illustrated, grew from interviews with 30 families and showed the isolated and self-sufficient life around the turn of the century, when a trip to Calhan or Colorado Springs was a several-day trip. Farmers and their wives generally remained on the farm, caring for kids and animals, preserving and canning, butchering their own cattle, washing, ironing and cleaning.

On a rare visit to Colorado Springs they parked wagons and buggies and did business with merchants in the block north of the county courthouse.

Church and School often furnished major social events. One old-timer recalled ice cream socials twice a month. A dance, or a chivaree for a newly-wedded couple sometimes broke routine. School was a six-month activity, for youngsters worked the farms from April to September. Shoes were for school only, and were taken off at home.

Sometimes work brought several families together, when neighbors assembled wagons and teams at harvest time.

This sense of community was important to the farmers and ranchers, and efforts to consolidate school districts met strong opposition from those fearful that loss of the local school would end community identity.

Children's participation in farming taught them their parents' values and made hard work a habit. Play-time relied on imagination. One woman recalled rules for "playing house": the house would be scratched on the ground, and it was clearly understood that you couldn't walk through a "partition."

Most farms were money poor, and increasingly family members might "commute" to a job in the city to raise cash. One man recalled a resourceful young person who gathered what cash there was. His detective work among younger brothers and sisters uncovered what kinds of pie the young

ladies were preparing for an upcoming pie social, and sold this information for a dollar each to young men who had an eye on a particular girl!

Sometimes nature brought far-reaching changes to rural life. Earliest settlers had success with potatoes, but after several years the blight forced them to switch to pinto beans.

World War One and the 20's brought prosperity, but eastern Colorado was part of the notorious "dust bowl" in the 30's: one man recalled driving with headlights in mid-day because of blowing sand. Hail would break windows and kill chickens. In 1913, three or four feet of snow remained on the ground, sometimes drifting to twenty feet. Farmers pooled their teams to clear the roads, and as Spring came the melting snow revealed thousands of dead cattle. Such winters were often followed by spring floods, such as the one in 1965.

World War Two and the coming of Camp Carson renewed good times, as Colorado Springs and rural communities doubled in size in six-months.

Inventions made changes, too, starting with the steam tractors during World War One. Electricity reached the rural areas gradually, permitting refrigerators, cream separators and milking machines to ease the labor burden. Fertilizers, machinery and hybrid seeds gave the farmer or rancher more control, but they also greatly increased the cost of doing business. More than any other single factor, the car freed the rural family from its isolation.

Loss of the rural life style accelerated when Colorado Springs boomed and spread eastward. City jobs paid more; land rose in value so its agricultural use was harder to justify. Schools became overcrowded. Old timers, used to three or four miles between neighbors, had trouble keeping acquainted with newcomers. Traffic was a growing problem and landmarks disappeared.

Ms. Dahlin says water became one of the most divisive issues between town and country. Wells took water from the underground aquifer; rights were sold from the Ellicott Valley and for development of Cimarron Hills' residential area.

Now farming is a part-time occupation for old-timers and newcomers alike, and a family's main income is likely to be from a job "in town." Family life and moral virtues associated with hard work—in the view of many early settlers—are being lost. While Ellicott is becoming a trade center, other communities such as Drennan have disappeared and eastern county residents feel more of Colorado Springs' economic muscle.

State Society Offers Ways To Preserve Family Papers

The Colorado Historical Society **News** recently offered suggestions of ways to preserve family papers, aimed at the non-professional who inherits responsibility for taking care of family documents.

The general idea, it suggested, is to make the environment as safe as possible, applying common-sense ideas. Specific ideas follow:

1. Remove paper clips and staples, because metal rusts.

2. Unfold and flatten documents to the extent that storage space allows, since the creases become weak and tend to tear.

3. Clean papers with a soft-bristle brush. If you can do it without damaging the document, remove tape.

4. Place documents in sturdy manila folders, 25 to 30 sheets per folder, then file the folders in clean, durable containers such as uncorroded steel cabinets or covered cardboard boxes.

5. Place containers off the floor—preferable on shelves. Best area would be cool, ventilated, remote from sunlight or

Jacob Schmidt Shoe Brush Given To Us

O.C.C.H.S. has received a rare relic of Colorado City's past from Charles L. Dynes.

Mr. Dynes made a presentation through member **Aldine Lipe** of a brush, apparently intended for polishing shoes, with a wooden back engraved with the name "Jacob Schmidt" and an address of 610 Colorado Avenue.

The brush was made in Germany and must have been a "choice" premium of its day. Jacob Schmidt had a saloon whose address is usually given as 612 Colorado.

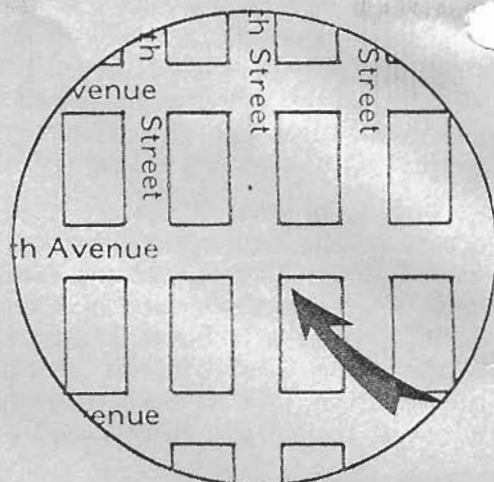
Mr. Dynes, formerly a movie projectionist in Colorado Springs and Florence, doesn't know how he got the brush, but he'll be happy for it to take its place in a Westside museum someday.

Next meeting:
JANUARY 9TH

Trinity United Methodist Church.

fluorescent bulbs.

The article warns against making repairs without knowledge of the materials.



HISTORIC SITE: Edgar G. Forsythe often stood at the point marked on the map above in the early 1930's waiting for someone to ask for directions to the Garden of the Gods. He had paced off the distance and was prepared to give very explicit instructions. The only question he was ever asked was the time, but since M. Forsythe had no watch he was unable to reply. He remembered the exact instructions for reaching the Garden of the Gods from the marked location for many years, even after he and his wife retired to a nursing home in Topeka, Kansas. —From *Little Known Milestones in Colorado History*, 1937.

Old Colorado City Historical Society
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