

Friday, June 14, 1991

**Phase II: OCCHS Conditional Offer on Colorado Ave. Building for Museum Is Accepted****Study Is Under Way to Determine the Suitability of Historic Jacob Schmidt Saloon Building as Site of our Future History Center**

The Old Colorado City Historical Society board made an offer on a prominent and historic building on Colorado Avenue to house its museum and history center, and its offer was accepted.

The way is open, if we raise funds for purchase and preliminary remodeling, and if our members approve, to have ownership by the end of the year.

It's at 2611 W. Colorado, south side of the street. It was built as Jacob Schmidt's saloon, was headquarters for the Westside Commercial Club, a mattress factory, and (most recently) apartments.

It's a two-story, red-brick building on three lots. When remodeled for apartments a balcony was added on the east, and on both sides grow trees and grass, enclosed by Hassell fencing. To the east is the Argyle Block and west is a free city parking lot for 26 cars. It has 5,700 square feet on two floors, and a basement. It appears sturdy, though it needs a new roof and interior apartments must be cleared out. Each floor has 13-foot ceilings.

The property, across the alley from the Mountain View Care Center and owned by investors associated with the nursing home, was priced at \$140,000. An O. C. C. H. S. offer of \$125,000 was declined; a second offer of \$135,000 was accepted.

There's a small, cinder-block building in the rear—a laundry for the nursing home. We'd rent this to the home at \$100 a month for up to a year.

**Fund-raising Becomes New Phase**

The board intends to spend up to \$50,000 of the Society's money for the purchase and an additional \$25,000 for repair, if members approve. Our resources now total roughly \$150,000, so this would leave half our funds to draw interest to cover running expenses. The balance of the purchase price and additional sums for remodeling will be sought through fund-raising, including foundation grants.

The board committed up to \$3,530 to pay for an architectural study by Michael H. Collins. He'll determine the condition of the building, draw up tentative plans, and solicit estimates of rehabilitation costs from representative contractors. He will study asbestos elimination, strength of the foundation, and possible city requirements, such as additional parking.

We hope to accomplish basic rehabilitation of the whole building, but to prepare only the first floor for exhibit, meeting and work areas. We'd develop the second floor as funds became available.

President Joyce Johns delivered a check for \$5,000 "earnest money" to Andrew H. McElhany, who handled the sale. The \$5,000 would apply to the purchase price if the deal goes through, and would be returned to us if we decide by July 15th not to buy the property; after that date we would give up \$1,000 of the earnest money each month until we canceled or closed the deal.

Thus, if we can't fund the purchase or the building's rehabilitation seems overwhelming, we are committed only to paying for the architectural study, and perhaps sacrificing some of our earnest money. A tentative timetable calls for us to complete the deal around the first of November.

**Board Needs Members' Response**

If the deal is made, it will be necessary to spend some of our Perpetuity/Endowment fund. Before this money can be spent it is necessary to have approval by two-thirds of our membership, and thus the board is asking for a response from each member. Enclosed with this newsletter are ballots and an envelope for mailing, and we ask each member to cast his or her vote.

We also invite those who approve of the project to support us with a cash donation. At our meeting May 10th members pledged more than \$500; \$100 of that was paid on the spot.

This serves two purposes. Obviously, the money is timely. But beyond that, most foundations look favorably on projects that have support from the organization's membership. Your contribution in whatever amount will give concrete evidence of our Society's enthusiasm for our museum. Note that the ballot gives you the option of having your contribution returned if current plans don't work out.

The board is confident that this is our best opportunity to preserve Old Colorado City in a tangible way, and the board earnestly solicits your "for" vote. If you do approve it is vital that you return your ballot, marked and signed, since we must have approval by two-thirds of the total membership, and anyone who fails to vote will be casting a vote against the project.

If you have questions after reading this newsletter please phone any officer or board member.

## Purchase Is the Climax To Lengthy Procedures

Our page one headline calls the proposed purchase of property for a Westside history center "Phase II." What was Phase I?

We were born with the dream of a history center and museum, and members have long been alert for a suitable building. July 23, 1981, then-president Ray Castillo asked the city Community Development program for a block grant of \$10,000 for "erection, renovation and maintenance" of a center at 2617 W. Colorado.

Our ambitions got a boost when we became beneficiaries of the estate of **Luther McKnight**, who left much historic memorabilia and a bequest of \$100,000.

We took steps needed before seeking financial support from foundations, getting IRS recognition as a non-profit organization.

Serious attention was given to the former Baptist Church at the southeast corner of Pikes Peak and 24th. We liked its location, though we had reservations about its frame construction.

Countless other buildings were considered, without stirring enough enthusiasm to lead to bids. This ten-year period of search and speculation marked phase one.

At a recent board meeting the former Schmidt property was brought up, board members saw it and became interested. After our April membership meeting, we had another opportunity to visit it.

By the time we made a bid on 2611 W. Colorado, we were well along with organizing material from Mr. McKnight and twenty other contributors, and we understood procedures for making grant requests; we were in a new phase. Phase II centers on a historic and attractive building in a prominent location. We have carefully laid groundwork towards an exciting future. Success depends on our ability to get membership approval and the necessary funds.

## Territory Days Brings Us Modest Rewards

Good weather swelled the crowds at this year's Territory Days, and the Old Colorado City Historical Society was on duty at the Garvin cabin in Bancroft Park.

Greatest interest was in the the cabin itself, though one display reflected Pikes Peak anniversaries: the Cog Road's 100th and the auto highway's 75th. We invited everyone to guess the number of pennies in a milk bottle, and offered them a listing of "Things to Do in Colorado Springs Without Charge" in return for a donation.

Again this year, **Jean Sheetz** of the Pikes Peak Weavers' Guild demonstrated her skills at the spinning wheel (Saturday morning), and **Paul T. Kunkle** practiced his rare art of chair-caning (on Monday).

Visitors responded enthusiastically to the penny contest and we had 500 children's and 600 adult entries. Financial rewards from donations were modest, adding a net of \$110 to our treasury. We also added two new members.

### Sidelights:

We didn't "register" people as in years past, so we don't know where our visitors were from.

Among local visitors was **Bob Steinborn** who lives in a unique, six-sided house at 2428 W. Vermijo, which began as a beer-garden.

**Laura Phillips**, a 1990 winner in the guess-the-bean-supply, was again a visitor and contestant.

**Clyde G. Norman**, a 67-year resident of the Westside, recalled helping move the Garvin cabin on two occasions.

Somebody stole two American flags from in front of the cabin!

Among suggestions from visitors: resume tours of the Avenue like those **Agnes Johnson Loesch** conducted several years ago; distribute a program of events; "Make this building bigger and have more things in it."

### Winners:

There were 819 pennies in the milk bottle. Winners (of \$5 each) in the three categories were:

**Kevin Jacobs**, of Delighted Circle, 5, guessed 800.

**Christopher Hoener**, 10, Vindicator Drive, estimated 811.

And best of all, was **Nathan Kahn**'s answer among adults, 817. He lives on Templeton Gap Road.

### Honor Roll:

Thanks to members who contributed time and talents to Territory Days. Without them O.C.C.H.S. and Old Colorado City would be a bit less known and appreciated.

Exhibit and set-up

**Ralph Conner**

Chauffeurs:

**Joyce Johns**

**Ed and Martha Curry**

Shift workers:

**Jo Alden**

**Dale Bryan**

**Ralph Conner (2)**

**Virginia Cox (2)**

**Lucille Cunningham**

**Joyce Johns (2)**

**Ruth Maxwell**

**Doug Neely**

**Patrice Neely**

**Lyn Owen (2)**

**Pat B. Walters**

The Park and Recreation Department of Colorado Springs deserves thanks for their prompt response to an act of vandalism shortly before Territory Days. They covered up a hole left when someone kicked in a door panel of the Garvin cabin, and before Territory Days crews replaced the door and painted it. They even supplied "antique-style" hinges in keeping with the cabin's history.

### Tutt Library Gives Us City Directories

We gratefully recognize the gift of recent City Directories from Colorado College's Tutt Library. Copies offered at a sale that weren't bought were given to us for our research library.

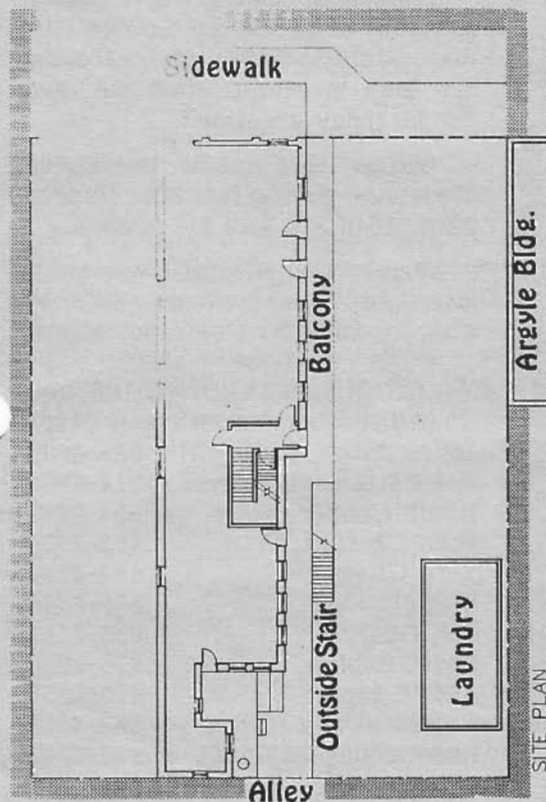


## OUR FUTURE MUSEUM?

(RIGHT) Looking south from Colorado Ave., the Argyle building is at left. A 37-foot patio sits between it and the Schmidt saloon. A grassy area lies 23 feet wide at the right, with the parking lot off the picture to the right.

(BELOW RIGHT) A closer look, shows the balcony, portion of the fence and street lights. The front is solid brick, but a steel beam is in place which would make it easy to open up the front.

(BELOW) Site plan showing the total property and its buildings.



## Architect Working On Plans to Adapt Building

Conferences have been held between the board and architect **Michael Collins** to consider best use of the Schmidt property. He's enthusiastic about the property's potential and is conscious of its historical nature. His earlier revitalization work in Colorado City included the Argyle building.

His preliminary plans and estimates from contractors are necessary before we can apply to foundations for financial support.

**Schmidt Personifies** Jacob Schmidt was born in Germany and came to Colorado City in its early days. He originally ran a bakery but later had a popular saloon in the building shown above. Despite being in the liquor business, he and his family held considerable prominence in Old Colorado City.

At his home at 931 Colorado Ave. he and his wife had two children: a son, Henry, and a daughter who became Mrs. Chester Huff of Simla.

When Colorado City voted dry, Schmidt didn't join the exodus to Ramona to continue the liquor business; according to contemporary accounts he installed a pro-

**Saloon Era Tragedy** duce store at his old location, and operated a saloon in Manitou Springs for a short time.

He finally moved to a ranch 12 miles north of Florence, where he and one employee raised cattle and where he brooded increasingly about the unwillingness of his family to join him, and about his declining health. He was about 60.

In May of 1914, his employee returned to the ranch-house to discover that Schmidt had stood a short-barrelled shotgun between his feet, placed the muzzle in his mouth and fired both barrels. His will left everything to his widow.

## Audit Completed; Books Turned Over to Croff

An audit committee, consisting of **Dave Hughes** and **Joyce Johns** examined the financial records of outgoing treasurer **Rosemae Campbell** before transferring responsibilities of office to our new treasurer, **John Croff**.

The committee had the benefit of a balance sheet and earnings statements compiled by **Judith Kasten** of Kasten Accounting when she arranged our tax-exempt status and examined tax situation.

The committee summarized our liquid assets as follows:

Bank Western CD	34,475.88
World Savings CD	38,170.39
US Treasury Note	60,000.00
Pikes Peak Nat'l CD	8,000.00
Interest due on above	4,132.85
Checking acct, PP Nat'l	3,133.49
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>147,912.61</b>

Our perpetuity/endowment fund totals \$121,892.27, and other funds contain \$26,020.34.

It found no discrepancies in financial records. It noted that since the 1989 audit assets increased \$16,112.66. It urged, in view of financial activity to come, a more formal accounting system be established, an inventory of Society documents be created and accessioning of artifacts continue.

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Old Colorado City Historical Society  
June 14, 1991

## Briefly:

Many of the normal features of our newsletter don't appear in this issue; they'll return when regular publication resumes.

President **Joyce Johns** is recovering from an auto accident which destroyed her car. As she drove to a meeting with our architect, a driver from a parking lot went through one lane of traffic and crashed into the front side of Joyce's car. After three hours in the emergency room she reported the greatest pain came from bruises induced by the seat belts. But she was told that if she had not been wearing the safety belts the accident might well have been fatal.

O.C.C.H.S. board held meetings April 17 and May 14 and 20. Most business concerned our intended purchase of 2611 Colo. Ave. and decisions are indicated elsewhere in this issue

**Lucille Cunningham** contributed doubly to Territory Days. She not only did her usual impressive "selling" job to cabin visitors, but artifacts she has recovered from Westside homes were part of our exhibit.

A note from the staff of Whitter School thanks **Joyce Johns** for her presentations at the school's 90th birthday observance in April, calling her talk "a wonderful learning experience" for students and teachers.

## TRANSITION

MARY ANNA TRACY

One of Colorado City's honored pioneers, **Mary Schaeffer Tracy**, died June 8th after hospitalization for a fall, just 15 days short of her 100th birthday.

She was born June 23, 1891, at Danbach, France, to Joseph and Caroline (Nartz) Schaeffer and came to Colorado City with her family at the age of 14 months. Her father worked on the Midland. She was married to James Tracy, who died in 1946.

She was among 32 charter members of the Old Colorado City Historical Society and attended our May meeting, when we sang our birthday greetings.

She is survived by her sister, **Madeleine Schaeffer**, who lives at 22 N. 13th St., and by cousins.

Memorial contributions may be made to Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 2030 W. Colorado, 80904.

### O.C.C.H.S. BOARD MEMBERS:

(All numbers' area code: 719)

Joyce Johns, president	635-4649
Pat Patton, vice pres.	574-6976
Ralph Conner, sec'y	634-0895
John Croff, treas.	632-2896
Vera Chambon	634-2340
Virginia Cox	635-8705
Bob Gaarder	632-7412
David Hughes	636-2040
Aldine Lipe	475-1658
Ruth Maxwell	599-3111
Leon Young	633-2621 or 633-1543

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