

WEST WOOD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

Volume 25, Number 2

March, 2010

Historic Buena Vista School

By Dave Hughes

Historic Buena Vista School is no more. The buildings remain and have been put to new uses, but the Westside Elementary School which operated for 109 years at 1620 West Bijou is gone. The children who were attending last year now go to what was only West Junior High School until School Board 11 made a series of big changes, closed a number of Westside schools, consolidated others, and turned West Junior High building into both an Elementary - Pre-school to 5th grade as well as a 6-8th grade Middle School.

Buena Vista, the first school in the Pikes Peak region whose name reflected the region's Spanish heritage, has a small history worth remembering. Its somewhat unusual school ground layout reflects decisions made 110 Years ago when the School Board paid \$2,000 for an entire city block. The District first moved a school building from Vermijo and Cascade onto the lot. That was in 1900. As the Westside and Colorado City population grew, in part from the stimulating effects of the Cripple Creek gold rush on gold mill and railroad jobs, the number of families and children increased. More classroom space was needed.



The One Room School Cottages of Buena Vista in early 1900s.
From Harriet Seibel's 1975 book on School District 11.

Instead of just building one large schoolhouse, the district looked to the 'cottage system' used in other cities. They built 4 separate one room classroom 'cottages' 25 feet by 33 feet on their large lot as well as the central school house. All were served by central heating plant. The main building cost \$15,000, and each cottage cost \$10,000.

The school was dedicated on October 11th, 1911.

Because the size of the block, the playground was very large for an elementary school. Its legacy can be seen today as the school property has become city property and the West Agricultural Learning Center (WALC) would like to use that as an independently run 'garden plots' adjunct to the Westside Community Center. So that will be put to good use for more than a large parking lot for the Center.

As the population continued to grow in the early 1900's a second story was built on top of the main School 'cottage' and additions were made between the cottages so they all became connected. That accounts for the rather sprawling, multiple-building look of the now Westside

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Old Colorado City Historical Society

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The Old Colorado City Historical Society

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LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIFACTS AND STORIES CAN BE
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1 South 24th Street

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

or Don Ellis - splderwort@pcsys.net

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 15th OF EACH MONTH

MISSION

Revised April 2004

The Old Colorado City Historical Society was founded as a volunteer organization to recognize the historical significance and unique culture of original Old Colorado City and early El Paso County. This spirit is perpetuated through the preservation of artifacts and archival materials, encouragement of research, education of the children and the community, through the membership and the operation of the History Center at 1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships are welcome at any time. Membership renewals are due on the anniversary date of the initial membership. Members receive the *West Word* newsletter, discounts, local meetings and programs.

Annual membership classifications are:

Student	\$15	Lifetime	\$150
Individual	\$25	Business	\$50
Family	\$30	Corporate	\$250

Funds from a Lifetime membership are placed into a Perpetuity/Endowment Fund to be used only for projects which have been approved by two-thirds of the membership. 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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Joanne Karlson	475-2574
Vice President	Phil McDonald	532-0881
Secretary	Janice deChadenades	598-7183
Treasurer	Johnie Jackson	550-0999
	Art Crawford	578-1158
	Beverley Disch	634-5023
	Tom Hendrix	633-7392
	Paul Shepard	633-8090
	Sharon Swint	630-8384

MEETINGS

OCCHS Monthly Meeting & Program is held at 11 a.m. on the second Friday of each month, except during June, July, and August. The History Center opens at 10 a.m. on the day of the meeting for refreshments and visitation. The program begins at 11 a.m. This meeting is free and open to the public.

WELCOME TO OCCHS! ~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Chuck Adams

Allen County Public Library

Joe Barrera

M. Bukowski

Janice deChadenades

Pat Doyle

Shirley Ewing

D. H. Farthing

Larry Glueckert

Molly Gustafson

Bob & Christine Heinrich

Mary Hickox

Irma Hilfers

Jacqueline Hooker

& John Jackson

Paul Kahrs

David Kilman

Sharon Knapp

Glen & Mary Martin

Mary Jane Nelson

Elinor Messerschmidt

Adell Siegel

John & Susan Spengler

Patty Strauch

Marjorie Swearingen

Stormie Wells

... 309 members now!

For the record:

When the History Center and Bookstore opened in May 1997, Thelma Williams was the buyer for giftables, mostly Indian items. Jan Knox purchased the books and did the accounting. After a while, Betsy assumed her role as bookstore manager. Bob Heinrich was president of OCCHS. Paul Idleman was the newsletter editor and History Center director.

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Community Center that dates back to the school-cottage period of the early 1900's.

On the side facing Bijou Street the main once-school building still proudly displays in deeply etched letters "BUENA VISTA SCHOOL." That sign is destined to be there indefinitely to remind people of the long lived Westside Elementary School.

We can get an idea what that school meant to the surrounding community it served by the stories told by those Westsiders who attended it through the years. After the School Board announced its closing in 2009, the school had a gathering in April, so that an 84 year old woman - Ann Tilton Newport - who attended that school in 1929 and through the Great Depression could reminisce with the children and staff.

According to Kenyon Jordan, Publisher of the Westside Pioneer, who interviewed and photographed her with some of the students, over 50 children and staff attended. Here are a few of her quotes he reported in the Pioneer. "We didn't think we were poor," she recalled. "Everyone was just like us. We didn't know a better life. We made our own fun, which is a wonderful thing to do."

She recalled using ink wells; the gym in the basement; games with clothespins, paper dolls and balls (a tetherball was called a "buff bag"); separate playgrounds for boys and girls; and being seated in rows ranging from high achievers down to the "awkward squad."

She wrote in a letter to the Principal asking

to visit "one more time before it is closed" about a field trips they took. "My father used to invite the second grade class each year to come visit his poultry farm and hatchery, which was at the end of North 16th Street but is now covered with houses."

She attended that school when the second story was added to the one floor level of 1911. The students had to attend school in the West Junior High Building temporarily.

Mrs Newport went on to become a teacher and principal in other schools. She provided the Pioneer the accompanying priceless photograph taken in the 1929-30 school year. She is the second girl from the left. She was dressed for a special occasion that day as a tulip.

A Westsider I got to know well - Leroy Ellinwood - during the 1976 Centennial-Bicentennial celebrations - was a Principal at



Ann Tilton Newport and 5 of today's students - Westside Pioneer photo



1930 Second Graders with 'Tulip Girl Ann Tilton' second from left - Photo from Ann Newport's collection

Buena Vista School in the 1940s. Later - in the 1950s he became Principal at Palmer High School. He was a native of Colorado Springs, and his mother was the Librarian of the Old Colorado City Carnegie Library. Her picture still hangs in that Westside library.

In 1976 he gave me a 106 page hardcover book he wrote and published in 1955 for young Elementary and Middle School students 8 -

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12. It is named "The Young Fifty-Niners." Entertaining fictional story - but historically accurate - from the viewpoint of youngsters coming by covered wagon to Colorado City during the 1859 Gold Rush I am sure it was part of Buena Vista's education on Colorado History, even about the origins of the place they lived in.

Our Society could well look into reprinting that long out of print and rare book for today's Westside youngsters.

There are other noteworthy things about Buena Vista Principal Ellinwood that reflects just how much he cared for the education of his young charges including the history of where they grew up.

In 1976 when I was the Chairman of the Pikes Peak or Bust by '76 Centennial-Bicentennial El Paso County wide Celebrations, he and Luther McKnight - came to ask me if I could somehow 'do something' for "Old Town" during the celebrations. I answered yes, but that even though I grew up on Wood Avenue in Colorado Springs, I knew very little about the history of the 'Westside. They would have to help me get started.

They both really did, and were the main inspiration for my delving deeply into the unique history of the original 'Colorado City' which was referred later as "Old Town" and of the general Westside, spending the last 35 years immersed in it. In fact, while Luther McKnight was the main benefactor for our Old Colorado City History Center, Leroy Ellinwood even gave me a priceless part of history, one of the only four known original copies of the November 28th, 1861 Colorado City Journal, which was given to him by his father-in-law from Canon City in the 1920's. And which resides in the archives of our History Center, while reprints of this periodically are displayed in our main room. It's a treasure trove of the earliest Colorado City history.

Buena Vista Elementary School is now history. The legacy of its name continues, however, with the Montessori School that occupied half of the Buena Vista Building until it was closed, moving into to what was Washington Elementary on Pikes Peak Avenue, while the other Buena Vista students



Buena Vista building after it was closed in 2009 - Hughes photo

moved into the West Junior building. So that Pikes Peak avenue school is now called Buena Vista Montessori school. And the name of 'Washington School' is no more.

If the private efforts to save the Westside Community Center succeed Westside youngsters and oldsters who attended school there may be able to visit it again via the Centers youth and elder's programs. And the large playground may become a large Westside Citizen's Garden. A very Westside outcome.

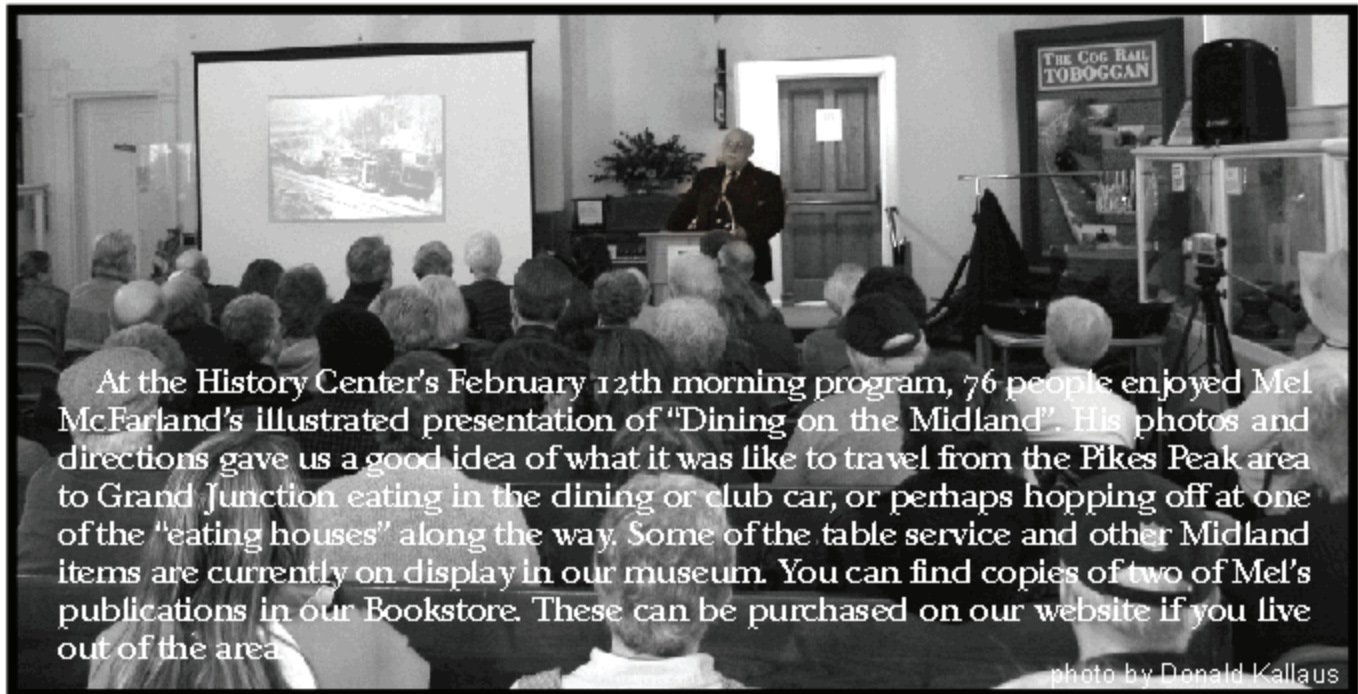
If the effort to save the Center fails, I am afraid that School building and grounds will be sold by the City to a developer, and the historic school will be torn down.

But we can hope that the spirit of old Buena Vista school lives on, even if the school is gone. And the laughter of children will not be lost on our Westside.

Election coming up!

At our May meeting the Old Colorado City Historical Society will elect 5 members for 2 year terms on our Board of Directors. The nominating committee is now preparing its slate of Board candidates.

If you think you might be interested in serving on our Board, please contact either Paul Shepard at 633-8090 or Kay Atteberry at 599-3187.



At the History Center's February 12th morning program, 76 people enjoyed Mel McFarland's illustrated presentation of "Dining on the Midland". His photos and directions gave us a good idea of what it was like to travel from the Pikes Peak area to Grand Junction eating in the dining or club car, or perhaps hopping off at one of the "eating houses" along the way. Some of the table service and other Midland items are currently on display in our museum. You can find copies of two of Mel's publications in our Bookstore. These can be purchased on our website if you live out of the area.

photo by Donald Kallaus

Announcing

"The Midland Days" Railroad Symposium

Saturday, March 13, 2010

at the John Wesley Ranch in Divide from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The Colorado Midland and Midland Terminal railroads are gone forever, but their impact on the local culture, the mining transportation and agricultural elements of all the Ute Pass/Pikes Peak communities cannot be denied. The legacy they left behind lives on to preserve their immortality. This symposium will include conversations and comprehensive presentations charting the history of both railroads, as well as their lasting influence on the area. OCCHS presenters for the day are noted local author and historian, Mel McFarland, and historian, Art Crawford. The event will be moderated by Teller Historic and Environment Coalition Coalition Chairman, Dave Martinek.

This event is a fund-raiser in support of the Midland Depot at Divide Preservation project and is sponsored by the Teller Historic and Environment Coalition (T.H.E.) and its partners, the Divide Chamber of Commerce, the Rampart Library System and the Ute Pass Historical Society, to assist with expenses surrounding the stabilization of the Divide Depot foundation and other related efforts.

Advanced reservations are \$75 each, including lunch.

Advanced reservation R.S.V.P.s may be submitted prior to March 1, 2010

by calling (719) 687-1516 or emailing MidlandDays@yahoo.com.

Late registrations of \$80 each will be on a space available basis.

Please mention that you are a member of OCCHS.

Come see our newest display - The Order of the Knights of Pythias

by Barbara Barbaro

During the era of Colorado City (1859-1917) numerous fraternal and secret organizations existed for men, including the Elks, Masons, and the Odd Fellows. One of those organizations, the Knights of Pythias, apparently held a strong influence in Colorado City. As evidenced in the local City Directories, the Knights of Pythias met weekly in Colorado City, first in private residences, and then in their own Knights of Pythias Hall, as far back as 1894. They continued on through 1917, when the town was formally annexed to Colorado Springs. A look through old Colorado Springs Gazette newspapers shows that in addition to their regularly-scheduled meetings, the organization held numerous social events throughout each year for families and friends.

The Knights of Pythias was a fraternity founded in Washington DC in 1864. The Order of the Knights of Pythias was the first American Order chartered by an act of Congress. Its primary objective was to promote friendship, loyalty, and good will among people. The Order was based on the story of two historical Greek characters, Damon and Pythias, two close friends who remained loyal to each other, even in the midst of peril and death. Because Damon opposed the king of Syracuse, he was condemned to death. Pythias stepped forward to be a hostage for Damon as he was permitted to say goodbye to his wife and child. Each was willing to die to save the other.



The Pythian Principles were:

- The Fraternal Order of the Knights of Pythias promotes cooperation and friendship between people of good will.
- Pythians know one way to happiness is through service to mankind.
- Pythians believe that friendship is an essential ingredient in life.
- Pythians make benevolence, kindness, generosity and tolerance a reality in their lives.
- Pythians place home ties at the top of their priority list.
- Pythians are interested in public affairs on the local, state or province, national and international levels.
- Pythians are eager to enhance the communities in which they live.
- Pythians respect and honor the law of the land in which they live.
- Pythians seek to expand their circle of influence by association with people of like interests and energy.

Our display contains several pieces of the regalia that members used and wore during their meetings and ceremonies, including a helmet, a crown, a sepulture, and a shield. One of the most fascinating objects in the collection is a "black box", used by members to secretly vote for or against the acceptance of a prospective member into the organization. The design and configuration of the box allowed members to place a pale-colored marble (a vote for the person), or a black marble (a vote against the person) into the box through the back, thereby ensuring that his vote would not be known to others.

The logo of the Knights of Pythias was a triangle containing three letters: F for Friendship, C for Charity, and B for Benevolence.

The next time you're shopping on Colorado Avenue or in town visiting family or friends, stop by the History Center to take a look at the display. You can't help but be caught up for the moment as you relive yet another exciting aspect of life in Colorado City as it was, way back when.

From the President's Desk~

As of February 15th, your Society now has 309 members! Your membership dues are the core of our financial budget along with the Endowment Fund and investments. We appreciate contacts with you by email as well as letters and phone calls. The many volunteers, their enthusiasm and professionalism are the "core" of keeping the History Center doors open to the public and presenting our programs, exhibits, research, and preserving our history.

We currently need additional volunteers in the areas of fundraising and events, research, data processing/filing, oral history interviews, some spring cleaning and yard maintenance. Even a few hours or days will be helpful! Please call or email the Bookstore.

The Research Library coordinator is Kathy McBride. She reports that donations the last few months include Ralph Conner's extensive file collection of facts from early area newspapers which is being used by several members in their research. The book, "Historical Atlas of Colorado", is a recent addition. If you wish to do research either in the library or archives, please make an appointment so someone can be scheduled to meet with you.

Dave Hughes has written another lead article for this newsletter. And he has another article "ready to go"! We thank you, Dave! If research and writing are some of your interests, please contact the newsletter editor, Don Ellis, before submitting an article. Contributions are welcome!

Spring will soon be here with increased activity at the History Center. Bring your friends to our programs, browse the Bookstore, and meet other members. We look forward to visiting with you!

Best regards,

~Joanne Karlson

A PICTURE SAYS 1000 WORDS

OCCHS needs your help. We are preparing to publish a calendar that will be sold in our bookstore later this year. The calendar will feature history, fun facts and photos of the old Westside.

We are looking for old photos dating from 1860's to 1917 illustrating life in Colorado City and early El Paso County - the buildings, people and events.

Does your family have old photos belonging to your family that you might want considered for use in our calendar? We will be making copies and can return originals if you wish.

Please contact Suzanne Schorsch at 636-1225 or on her cell, 331-1786.

TREASURER'S REPORT BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 15, 2010

The Society received \$997.95 from USAA Insurance Company to repair the burned fence, Charlie Patterson Construction has repaired the fence. Charlie has also put in the new front door. Our income exceeded our expenses by \$2,351.90 in January. Our heating costs were \$558.82 in January compared to \$671.00 in December. We also received \$3000 transfer from the Bookstore instead of the \$2500 budgeted for 2009. The following is a brief recap of our financial position.

We have also received as of Monday, February 15, 2010, \$3,480, as reported by Dave Hughes, for our project to save the Westside Community Center.

Memorial Hospital Revenue Bond	\$51,245.88
Cal Regents Revenue Bond	\$25,403.04
Fixed Endowment Savings	\$14,433.59
Earned Income Savings Account	\$10,922.35
Shirley Bond Digital Account	\$5,325.00
Total Liquid Assets	\$122,131.83

Submitted by Johnie E. Jackson, Treasurer
Old Colorado City Historical Society

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ONE SOUTH TWENTY-FOURTH STREET
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80904-3319

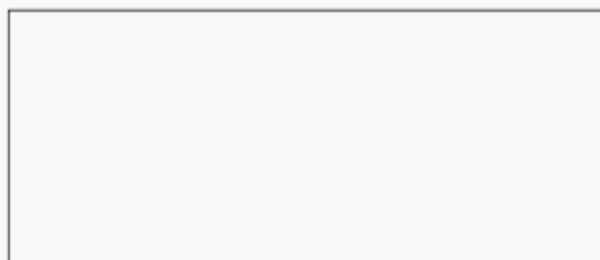
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MARCH 2010 OCCHS CALENDAR

~new programs ~new topics ~bring your friends ~come early for coffee~

Friday, March 12
11 A.M.

Program: **“Bicycles of Yesteryear”**, presented by John Crandall , owner of Old Town Bikes, and several of his friends.

Don't miss the museum's antique bicycle exhibit.

Thursday, March 18
7 P.M.

Workshop: **“How to Get the Most out of the OCCHS Website”**, led by Dave Hughes.

For members as well as the general public.

Reservations not required.

Museum Hours: Tues. thru Sat, 11 - 4 Free Admission.