

Colorado City and the Civil War - Setting

Category: Colorado City and the Civil War

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Written by Super User

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The original Colorado City, now known as Old Colorado City and parts of the Westside of today's Colorado Springs suffered and triumphed through the Civil War right from its 1861 beginnings, 150 years ago. For this - 2009 was the Sesquicentennial Year of that great war which so shaped this country.

Colorado Springs never went through that war. It was not even founded until 1871, six years after the Civil War was over. That is why very little will be printed or broadcast in greater Colorado Springs or Manitou Springs about the Civil War here in the far West. If the Gazette writes anything, it will only try to lionize 'General' Palmer who was a veteran of that war far back east years before. (But he was involved in one of the most controversial mutinies of that war which has ever since been covered up locally, including by the Pioneer's Museum, and by the Colorado Springs Telegraph newspaper even while Palmer was alive.)

Above all, those 20,000 souls who today live west of Limit Street and east of Manitou – the "Westside" and 'Old' Colorado City - deserve to know the true history of those pioneers who settled here where Fresh Ink is distributed, and were caught up and engaged in that war.

Colorado City folk seeking gold came from the north and the south, had strong opinions on states rights and slavery, on Lincoln and the Union, Davis and the Confederacy. There were shootouts in downtown Denver. One founder of Colorado City was a closet Rebel who paid for it with his life! Volunteer settlers engaged in everything from guerilla and counterinsurgent warfare - also involving Indians tribes - in southern Colorado. There were stand up classic Blue-Gray battles in which Colorado City volunteers were recruited, West Pointers and Regular Army men were involved. A Regiment marched right down Colorado Avenue in 1862 to stop a Rebel Army from Texas taking over this Territory and its Gold.

So I intend to run a series of stories in Fresh Ink right through 2012 to educate locals about the real Civil War history that happened right here. And how it shaped Colorado and Colorado City. For I have spent 35 years mastering the distinct history of the earliest El Paso County, the original Colorado City, and the life and times on the Westside since it was annexed in 1917.

So lets get started, with extracts of one of the only copies of the Colorado City Journal of

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1861 which still exists and I own. Given to me in 1976 by elderly Leroy Ellinwood, once Principal of Buena Vista School, who knew I would do it justice as part of the Colorado City story. Now is the time.

Look at the masthead! The great American Eagle gripping the flagstaff and Old Glory. Proclaiming "Union and Constitution" With the motto below it "Faithful But Fearless" And the paper identified as Volume 1, Number 1. Colorado City, Colorado Territory, August 1st, 1861.

You don't think that '59er gold rushers tramping up Colorado Avenue through Colorado City in the summer of 1861 weren't caught up in that War, which had started April 12th with the shelling of Fort Sumter back east? Think again.