

# WEST WORD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

July 2000

## MCKNIGHT BEQUEST BENEFITS SOCIETY with Memorabilia and Finances

ARTICLES OF HISTORICAL INTEREST FROM THE OCCHS ARCHIVES  
*from Previous Issues of the West Word*

### His Enthusiasm for the Westside Leads to Generous Grant Towards our Museum

The vitality of the Old Colorado City Historical Society in the closing months of Luther McKnight's life gave him faith enough in our plan for a future museum that he arranged to make the Society his major heir.

The Society benefited in two important ways. First, we are acquiring a major collection of priceless items from Colorado City's and the Westside's past. Secondly, Mr. McKnight assigned several certificates of deposit to the Society which give us considerable financial security.

Leslie Atkins and his wife Christine, of Wauxahachie, Texas, have been living in Colorado Springs off and on for several months, while Mr. Atkins, Luther's cousin, disposes of the accumulations of a lifetime from the McKnight house at 2111 West Pikes Peak. Every item with potential historic interest has been turned over to the Historical Society.

Mr. McKnight was an instinctive historian and saved countless documents and items that came his way. Although many are of little intrinsic value, they are historically priceless: a receipt signed by Anthony Bott, programs from band concerts, church presentations and school graduation ceremonies. He preserved his own

toys, and premiums given away by early Colorado City merchants. He has remarkable collections of popular sheet music and of church hymns and quartets. While most people throw away a map when a later map is issued, Mr. McKnight kept the old ones, giving us a useful souvenir from the region's past, and documenting the rising importance of the automobile. He saved license plates from the time a motorist made his own plate.

This legacy preserves materials simply unavailable elsewhere, and is a useful asset for any future museum.

Despite (or perhaps, because of) his modest living style, Mr. McKnight accumulated a sizable estate and the Old Colorado City Historical Society is the principle beneficiary. While final settlement occurs in October, several certificates of deposit became the property of OCCHS at his death. Eleven saving certificates with World Savings, averaging 8.63% and maturing in 1988, now amount to \$14,787.22. A certificate with American Federal Savings, drawing 10% and maturing in October, totals \$76,640.05.

We obviously have a reason to be grateful to Mr. McKnight, and to Mr. Atkins and other surviving relatives, for the generosity behind these rich bequests. Interest alone, conservatively figured, will be \$4,000 a year. The board and membership will need to decide on the use of this interest - how much should be but to work on current projects, and how much reinvested in savings.

Even with volunteer help, some money needs to be spent in processing and preserving Mr. McKnight's

memorabilia. The same resources could improve facilities for accepting other historical donations and caring for them. We have the talent to establish a computer center to receive and make available historic information.

Officers of the Society investigated a building available this summer. We might have been able to buy it, but there would have been no money left for remodeling, insurance, and utilities. But future fundraising will be easier thanks to Mr. McKnight's contribution, and our prospects for a respectable Westside museum have improved infinitely.

*(West Word - August, 1986)*

#### President's Note:

Almost 14 years have elapsed since the above article was written. As a result of the generous financial grant, the Society was able to buy the History Center building. We have restored this historic building and have an outstanding facility in which to display Luther's priceless memorabilia (now known as artifacts). Through us (OCCHS) his legacy exists for current and future generations to enjoy. As members of the Society we should take pride in this collection (and all of our collections) and be ever mindful that it is our job to preserve them.

One question I would like to ask Luther McKnight today is "Are you pleased with what OCCHS has done with your financial bequest and your lifetime of memorabilia?" I would hope his answer would be "YES, and keep the legacy going forever for once it is gone, it cannot be replaced."

Do YOU think Luther would be pleased with us? I welcome your comments, so please send them to me.

Gordon Gray

## From the Board

**The President's Report.....**As I write this message to you it is raining in Colorado Springs. We sure need the rain and welcome it. The two recent forest fires in Colorado have been devastating. We have friends who live close to one of the fires. They said it was heart breaking to see the plumes of smoke, the raging flames, and the homes that were being destroyed. We live in a heavily wooded area on the west side of the Springs. The fires got my wife and me to thinking (again) about identifying all the things in our home that are "family treasures" and "heirlooms" and can never be replaced. All my genealogy work is backed up on disks and CD-ROMs are stored off site. The photos have been scanned BUT to lose all the original source information and original photos would be overwhelming. So, we are looking for a fireproof safe so we can protect these valuables. Have a spare safe sitting around? Give me a call.

This past month, it was necessary to cancel the *Blast From the Past* we were planning in Bancroft Park. Lee and Dianne, the organizers of this event, were not successful in getting vendors to commit to selling their antiques and collectibles outside in an open-air market. Vendors would have been receptive if we had been able to find space inside to have them set up. Dianne, Lee, and I hope to be able to get a fund raising event organized for the fall.

Jan Knox has stepped up to the challenge and has organized Craft Fairs in Bancroft Park on five Saturdays this summer. See the calendar on the last page for the dates. A big thank you to Jan for getting these events planned and organized.

On page seven of the newsletter, you will find the notice of a big fund raising day on Saturday July 15th. In addition to the Craft Fair, we will have a Treasure Sale and a Bake Sale. Also, the Summer Farmers' Market is in full swing and will be open from 7 a.m. until Noon every Saturday. If you can help in any way, please contact Jan, Bev, or Betty. If you live in the Springs area, please plan on coming to the Center on the 15th and do some shopping.

The Board of Directors reluctantly accepted the resignation of Agnes Johnson from the Board. Agnes felt that she would be unable to participate on the Board due to personal and health reasons. I appreciate all the work Agnes has done on the Board and her many contributions to the success of OCCHS. I will miss her and wish her a speedy health recovery. The Board voted to ask Karla Hefferan to join the Board and fill Agnes' term. Karla and her husband, Rex, are the owners and operators of the Awareness Victorian Bed and Breakfast Inn on the Westside. I welcome Karla to the Board and look forward to working with her.

LaDonna Gunn and her group of volunteers continue to catalog the collections that are stored in the basement of the Center. We are in dire need of metal shelves to store the artifacts. If anyone has any spare metal shelving or would like to make a contribution to purchase shelving, I would appreciate it very much. If so, please give me a call at 630-8238.

And a reminder – take the challenge and get at least one new member for the Society this year.

Until next month.

*Gordon*

**The Treasurer's Report.....**This report is as of May 31, 2000. Financial results to date reflect that we are NOT generating the projected income from membership renewals and new members that we projected in the budget in January. I hope that each of you will accept Gordon's President's Challenge that was presented in the June West Word and make every attempt to bring at least ONE new member into the Society this year. We need to grow our membership and we need your help to do this. The lower projected revenue is also the case for the Book Store sales and our fund raising events. We are hoping the summer tourists will flood the Center and buy the Book Store out. Also our summer fund raising events that have been planned by Jan, Betty, and Bev are critical. These need to be successful in raising money for the Society. Please help in any way that you can.

At the end of May, cash in the General Account was \$4,911.00. Our Maintenance fund, which pays the utilities, insurance, security, telephone and copier is averaging \$500 a month and is OK. With the projected interest from the endowment fund it appears that we will be on budget at the end of the year.

The General Fund must pay for everything else and this is where we must generate additional sources of income in the last half of the year. It is critical that our fund raising events be successful and we are able to add critically needed revenue to the General Fund. I hope each member will contribute in any way you can in helping the Society in this area.

The Guide Book Fund is set aside for the completion of the book by this fall. We will not see revenue from book sales until November or later. The book will sell for \$10 and it is possible to generate up to \$10,000 a year from this project.

So, bottom line.....we have to maximize our income this summer. Like the squirrels that run around the Center, we have to store some nuts (\$\$\$) for next winter.

Dave Hughes

### ***The President's Membership Challenge***

- ◆ Step up to the Challenge!
- ◆ Sign up one or more new members this year!
- ◆ Help your Society GROW!
- ◆ Help "double" our membership by Jan. 2001.
- ◆ Send your new member information and payment in NOW!
- ◆ Your new member will be sent a card announcing your membership gift.
- ◆ We NEED your help!
- ◆ Questions/comments??

Give Gordon Gray a call (719) 630-8238  
or by e-mail: ggray01@aol.com

## The COG RAIL TOBOGGAN

There is an outstanding new exhibit in the History Center on the Cog Rail Toboggan. This exhibit was done by Paul Idleman and has received many words of praise. Many people who have seen this exhibit never knew that the toboggan existed. The following text was taken from the the exhibit.

After the rails were laid for the Manitou & Pike's Peak Railway in 1890, employees and others discovered there were faster methods for the downhill trip than the Cog. With considerable skill and grace, gandy dancers and hikers were seen riding down on shovels or flat rocks. In 1955, G.B. "Perk" Hibbard recalled his days as a M&PP Cog section man when he would balance flat rocks or his shovel across the rail and rack. "We crossed our feet on the rail ahead and squeezed our heels together for a brake." The practice was frowned on by the railway's officials, but no one seemed to notice that most of the employees had worn out the inside of their boot heels.

This practice quickly evolved into the construction of a more reliable device. The vehicle used had several names, such as "scooter", "go-devil" and "toboggan". According to Morris Abbott, "a moderately good one could be made by any handyman with a few pieces of wood, a few bolts, a few feet of strap iron and a hunk of rubber." More refined and safer toboggans were made using iron in the Cog shops by the employees. Many employees would carry their toboggans up on the train in the morning and use them for a speedier trip home after work.

The original type of toboggan was a rider's seat that rested upon the center rack rail with arms that extended from both sides to glide over each running rail. John Falsgrove is pictured in the exhibit on a toboggan and according to his niece, Mary, he could get from the Halfway House to the depot (about 2 1/2 miles) in about 10 minutes. Mary wrote, "Mother insisted someone would get killed on the crazy contraption but Uncle Ed had the only serious accident. Something went wrong and he was thrown off to skid a short distance on the cogs. He was only bruised and ate his meals standing up for a few days."

Toboggan riding down the Cog rails was not advertised as family entertainment. And



there were actually more injuries involved with sliding down the rails than just Uncle Ed's ego. The toboggans were difficult to control and downhill accidents did happen. In 1905, an Iron Springs Hotel employee tried to ride down seated on an empty quart liquor bottle. Rumor had it that the bottle's contents had given this waiter the confidence to try the stunt in

the first place. The bottle shattered after only 20 feet severing an artery in the man's leg. He died on the way to the hospital. Another fatal accident occurred when Cog machinist, George DeWalt, died on October 27, 1911, after he "was violently thrown from a toboggan he was riding .... from the summit of Pikes Peak" according to the Coroner's report.

The fastest rumored trip from the summit of Pikes Peak was made by photographer, J.G. Hiestand. Without mentioning Hiestand's name, Railway and Engineering Review wrote that an intrepid speedster had made the descent in 11 minutes for 8.9 miles, including the time necessary to stop and carry his sled around the switches. OCCHS member George M. White recalls riding a flat rock down the rail, and member Jim Bates remembers a toboggan ride from the summit that had his cheeks flapping in the wind with the speed at Windy Point. Toboggans and other methods of riding the Cog rails are now against the law.

*Editor's Note: If you have not seen this fine exhibit, please plan on visiting the History Center. Thank you Paul for the acquisition of the toboggan, the research on this topic, and the construction of this fine exhibit.*

## \* \* \* \* \* Family Legends Preserved or Lost? \* \* \* \* \*

When families are scattered around the world, as many are nowadays, will those family stories and jokes be lost? Some children establish their homes and careers near the family homestead. But how many find they must travel great distances to visit with the home folk?

We moved to Colorado Springs, with our five children, leaving our folk 2000 miles behind. Now these children have found careers and homes all across the world. In our case, they live in Los Angeles, Washington DC, Dallas, and Fort Collins. Our grandchildren live in Cambodia, Los Angeles, Maryland, Seattle, Boston, and Dallas. Our great-grandchildren live in Cambodia and Maryland.

How can we possibly let them know about "puapa"? That is a word the matriarch of the family created in the early days. It means "pick up and put away". The list was of twelve puapa items, only one of which survived the years. Pick up and put away your dirty dishes. Pick up and put away your clean laundry. Pick up and put away your dirty clothes. The rest were not only not obeyed, but were forgotten.

Here's what our family did to remedy that problem. We established a newsletter, to be published between family reunions. Ours is called "Kolstads Today and Other Times", published occasionally, but mostly bimonthly. A written paragraph about events, aspirations, is preferred. Being realistic, notes from phone calls must be transcribed for publication.

Photographs are easier nowadays to include with the written accounts. Old portraits can be scanned to introduce the ancestors whom the younger ones may not have even heard about. Snapshots that bring back memories of events in childhood are especially appreciated. Congratulations on achievements are welcome reading.

Mainly, the family newsletter keeps them in touch in spite of the distances between the cousins and siblings, and between the generations.

*We need this sense of family to be preserved in America today.*

*By: Mid Kolstad*

# West Side Memories

**One Hundred & Twenty-five Years Ago  
February 1875**

Mr. Graham Olde has been the first sufferer under the new Ordinance for the protection of the shade trees. Mr. Olde has a horse, which was caught in the act of stripping the bark from one of the trees, and he was ordered by Justice Lyon to pay treble the value of the tree and costs, amounting to forty-one dollars. Horses with a taste for cottonwood bark will soon be a drug in the market, we fancy. (2/13 CS Gazette)

Our County Clerk has moved into his residence on Platte Avenue, and has now begun married life in earnest. (2/13 CS Gazette)

Mr. William S. Jackson is having the property known as the Grannis House, corner of Kiowa and Weber Street, enlarged and improved. (2/13 CS Gazette)

Ouray, Chief of the Utes, passed through Town a few days ago, on his way to Denver, to attend the trial of Tabweah, who killed Marksbury. (2/13 CS Gazette)

Mr. R.M. Chambers is building himself a stone residence in the Garden of the Gods. If living in Paradise will not make a man happy, what will? (2/27 CS Gazette)

Dr. Strickler has removed from Colorado City, and has taken an office in Union Block. The doctor, we believe, has been resident in the County longer than any other physician. (2/13 CS Gazette)

**March 1875**

Died in Colorado City, March 7, Edwin Innis, aged 37 years. (3/13 CS Gazette)

The Fire Company had the Babcock out on Tuesday, when they discharged the cylinders and recharged them, putting the Extinguisher into good order for prompt action. The working of the machine was tolerably satisfactory. (3/13 CS Gazette)

General and Mrs. Palmer arrived in New York from England a few days ago. They will probably spend some weeks in the East before returning to Colorado. (3/20 CS Gazette)

An accident happened on Tuesday last in Ute Pass. As a lady and gentleman were driving along the narrowest portion of the road, the horse got

frightened at a dog and became unmanageable, and ran for nearly a mile before he was stopped. Luckily, the only damage done was to the breaking of one of the wheels of the buggy. (3/27 CS Gazette)

There is one consolation about the hard Winter. They say that the grasshoppers have all had their teeth frozen. (3/13 CS Gazette)

**April 1875**

W.S. Stratton came down from Lake County the early part of the week, and reports everything in a prosperous condition in that neighborhood. (4/17 CS Gazette)

Judge Hallett, now presiding over the District Court here, is also Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory. He was among the first settlers in Colorado, coming here in 1860. After devoting a few months to mining, he removed to Denver and engaged in the law with hon. H.P. Bennett. He was appointed in 1866 to the office he now holds. Judge Hallett stands deservedly high as a just Judge, able lawyer, and gentleman of unquestioned integrity. (4/24 CS Gazette)

Parties engaged in building should be careful about excavating too near the foundation of standing buildings. About two weeks ago one end of Mr. Loper's store-room fell, in consequence of being undermined by workmen who were digging a cellar for an addition, and one day last week the north end of the brick office just above Mr. Wanless' Clothing house tumbled into the cellar dug for a new building. Unless precaution is used in this matter, we fear we shall soon be obliged to chronicle some injury to life or limb. (4/24 CS Gazette)

District Clerk George A. Bute, now a resident of Pueblo County, was one of the earliest settlers of this county - having located in Colorado City about 1858. Upon the organization of El Paso County he was made County Clerk, which office he filled for eight years. (4/24 CS Gazette)

The "Globe Billiard Hall" positively closed its doors on Wednesday last, and no liquor of any description can be purchased on the premises. Mr. J.B. Newman, one of the proprietors, will probably remain in town and enter some other kind of business, and here-after the Globe Billiard Hall will be a thing of the past. Mr. A.D. Craigie will, on the first of May, move his grocery stock into the building, which is certainly admirably adapted to that business. (4/24 CS Gazette)

*West Side Memories are compiled by: Jan Knox*

## **Volunteers of the Month**

### **Meet Tom & Doris Hendrix**

This very special couple joined the Society three years ago, and have been volunteering their time ever since.

At the present, they are busy taking inventory of the artifacts in the cases on display in the Museum. Doris has also worked on accessioning the artifacts in the basement. Tom is sharing this task, but also identifies and accession photos. He also enters data into our computers. They are knowledgeable and do any task that LaDonna has for them.

Tom was born in Colorado Springs and graduated from Colorado Springs High School. He went into the Army during World War II and served in the South Pacific. He was discharged in 1946. Timkin Manufacturing Company located in the Springs, hired Tom and he was the seventh employee. This was in December 1947.

Doris was born in Chewslah, Washington and went to high school there. She came to Colorado Springs, and was hired by Timken Company as a secretary. She worked there for three and one-half years, and during that time she met Tom. She became the secretary at Coronado High School and retired from the district after fifteen years of service. She and Tom were married in September, 1963.

Tom and Doris have two children. David is a UPS driver and lives in Colorado Springs; Amy is married and is a school psychologist in Jefferson County.

The Hendrixes became computer literate when Amy was in high school, and bought a computer. If they have a problem they call their son-in-law, who is a software engineer for Apple Computer Company.

Tom and Doris like to travel, but limit their journeys to the United States and Canada. They are fond of Hawaii and have visited the Islands three times.

Doris likes to quilt, do counted cross stitch and walking. This charming couple are a pleasure to know and the Society thanks them for all their efforts. They help make the Society and the Center a success.

*Submitted by: Agnes Johnson*

## **A Tidbit of History.....**

Richens Lacy Wooten was better known as "Uncle Dick" Wooten. He was noted for building a toll road over Raton Pass among many other things.

He was instrumental in aiding the Achinson, Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad on their panning a route through Trinidad.

In exchange for his assistance, he was given, along with his family, lifetime passes on the railroad. The railroad also gave Wooten's wife and his invalid daughter lifetime pensions.

The Wooten's lived in a cabin on the railroad property until 1891, when they moved to Trinidad.

*Submitted by: Agnes Johnson*

## **IN MEMORY**

We were saddened to hear of the death of two of our members in the past month. The Board of Directors extends sympathy to the families.

**Sally Brawner**

May 2000

(A Charter Member of OCCHS)

**Margaret Gould**

June 5, 2000

**-- Their Legacy --**

Cherished Memories

## **IN THE BOOKSTORE**

We have many new books in the bookstore but one that you will find interesting is *Healing Waters, Sacred Springs* by Joy Dunkin. It reveals the secrets, stories and mineral content of the ever-flowing waters of the springs in Manitou Springs. There is a map included and you will find this book most interesting. It sells for \$12.95.

## **Welcome to our NEW Members**

Please welcome the following as new members to OCCHS.

We are pleased you have joined the Society.

Elizabeth & Steve Peck  
3805 East 50th Avenue  
Spokane, WA 99223  
(509) 448-6864

*(President's Membership Challenge - Mike Stapp)*

## HERBAL RENEWAL

(A regular column on our "Herbal Renewal Gardens")

**Basil** - Many cooks would find it hard to do without the leaves of basil - spicy when fresh, sweeter when dried. Yet this popular culinary herb has been alternately praised and excoriated during the course of herbal medical history. Some ancient herbalists asserted that basil damaged the internal organs and the eyes and caused insanity, coma, and the spontaneous generation of worms, lice, and scorpions. Subsequent writers argued that basil did none of these things, but was good for a variety of medicinal purposes. These opposing viewpoints were argued in herbal medicine through the centuries. The first century A.D. Roman naturalist Pliny, siding with the defenders, reported that basil relieves flatulence, and this claim is upheld by modern pharmacology.

In folklore as in medicine, basil had a reputation for both evil and good. In some lands it was associated with the legendary reptile known as the basilisk, whose breath and glance could kill. The ancient Greeks believed that basil would grow only if gardeners vilified it while sowing it. Peoples in other countries, however, cherished it as a protection against witchcraft and as a symbol of love.

**Habitat:** *Any well-drained, fairly rich soil.*

**Range:** *Native to tropical Asia, basil is now cultivated in most of North America.*

## The Marigreen Pines Tour

Have you ever wondered what's behind the wall on the way up the Ute Pass near Cascade? Thanks to the Holy Cross Novitiate, you can find out and step back into Ute Pass history as well.

The Italianate 20 room mansion is a showcase of architectural delights. Built to be as fireproof as possible, the two foot thick walls are constructed of steel girders and poured concrete. The roof is terra cotta. The interior features ornate relief ceilings and decorative building materials brought from around the world. Highlights include marble floors and staircases, crystal chandeliers, and intricately carved Roman fireplaces.

The Ute Pass Historical Society and Holy Cross Novitiate will be hosting a tour of Marigreen Pines on Sunday, July 16th from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The tour will last about two hours and is by advanced sales at designated times only. The tours will be conducted in the morning at 9:00; 9:35; 10:30; and 11:15. In the afternoon the tours will be at 12 noon; 12:45; 1:30; 2:15; and 3:00. The adult tickets are \$10 each and children's tickets are \$5.

If you are interested in getting additional information on this tour or want to purchase tickets, please call 719-686-1125.

### OCCHS TREASURE SALE

Many "Hidden Treasures" will be available for sale in the parking lot of the Center. What a great time to clean out your garage/attic and donate items for this sale. If you have any items to donate, please take them to the Center by Monday, July 10th or call Betty Baker (633-2350) for additional information.

### OCCHS BAKE SALE

Delicious home baked goodies will be sold by the Society all day in the park and at the Center. Call Bev Disch (634-5023) if you can bake some of your "award-winning" recipes.

## July 15th - OCCHS FUND RAISING DAY!!

### OCCHS CRAFTS IN THE PARK

This will be the first of six craft events in Bancroft Park during the summer. Jan Knox is in charge of these events and Crafter reservations are coming in every day. A wide variety of homemade and other craft items will be available for sale. What a great way to get those important birthday and Christmas gifts bought.

For additional information.....  
Contact Jan (689-2355)

### FARMERS MARKET

Every Saturday during the Summer  
7 a.m. until Noon.  
On 24th Street - in front of the Center

Plan *NOW* to be present and support the Society on this BIG Fund Raising Day.  
(Want to help? Call Betty, Bev, or Jan)