

WEST



WORD

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 2

February 2003

OUR PAST OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

WHY PRESERVE PIECES OF THE PAST?

BY: GORDON GRAY

Every day fires or other natural disasters destroy or damage homes, businesses, public buildings, and unfortunately sometimes claim lives. If you are like me, you read or hear about these disasters and really don't focus on them because they did not impact you.

It was a crisp, sunny day on December 11th, as I drove to downtown Colorado Springs to a meeting. As I was parking my car, the air was pierced by the sound of fire sirens. Suddenly, a large fire truck raced down Colorado Avenue headed west. I remember thinking how unfortunate it was that a fire was happening so close to the holiday season. I went on to my meeting and didn't think again about the fire.

Upon returning to my car about an hour later, I noticed to the west, smoke rising into the clear blue sky. It wasn't until I turned my car onto Colorado Avenue and headed west, that I saw the billowing smoke ahead of me and my immediate thoughts were there was a major fire in the vicinity of the Old Colorado City historic district. As I proceeded down Colorado Avenue, I could see the spire of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. The fire was beyond the Church and a lump rose in my throat as I immediately thought that the fire could be right where the Old Colorado City History Center was located. Traffic was being routed off Colorado Avenue, and I began to wind through the residential streets of Old Colorado City, trying to get closer to the History Center. By this time, I had convinced myself that

the History Center was in peril. I phoned Bev Disch, OCCHS President, and was relieved when I learned that the fire was not at the History Center but in the Historic Old Colorado City business district. It was in the 2400 block of Colorado Avenue, across Bancroft Park from the Center.

After parking my car in a residential area and walking several blocks, I reached the History Center where I met several OCCHS members. From our vantage point, it was obvious that an entire city block of businesses were aflame. Large black plumes of smoke were billowing into the sky and raging flames were shooting high into the air. The fire was in the block that contains the historic Waycott Opera House, which was built in 1901 by local contractors, Ernest and R. H. Waycott (now containing the Meadow Muffins Restaurant and business offices) and the Colorado Building, built in 1903-1906 by Jerome B. Wheeler for his First National Bank and New National Hotel (now the Michael Garman Galleries). My immediate thoughts were that over 100 years of history were going up in flames. These buildings and many others are an important part of the history of Colorado City. Many times I had walked in front of these buildings and imagined what life was like over a 100 years ago and appreciated the efforts of Dave Hughes and others who were instrumental in renovating the entire Old Colorado City business district in the 1970s. This beautiful historic district is the "living history" of Colorado City.

The Colorado Springs Fire Department is to be commended for their outstanding job in containing
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Old Colorado City Historical Society
 1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

WEST WORD

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 THE OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIFACTS AND STORIES CAN BE DELIVERED
 TO THE OCCHS CENTER OR MAILED TO:

WEST WORD Editor c/o OCCHS
 1 South 24th Street
 Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 15th OF EACH MONTH

MISSION

The Old Colorado City Historical Society was formed to maintain the memory of Colorado City (1859-1917), to encourage research, preserve pictures, and keep alive the unique culture and spirit of West Side Colorado Springs through education of children and the community and through the establishment of a History Center.

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:

Individual	\$20	Business	\$ 50
Family	\$25	Lifetime	\$150
		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	Beverly Disch	719-634-5023
Vice President	LaRue Ebersole	719-685-3265
Secretary	Jo Cervone	719-266-9096
Treasurer	David Hughes	719-636-2040
	Cynthia Estes	719-632-9124
	Nadine Gilman	719-262-6661
	Pat Fejedelem	719-473-8684
	Kristine Van Wert	719-630-2155
	Tom Hendrix	719-633-7392

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.

Next Monthly Meeting
January 10, 2003
At the History Center



Explore the REAL History
 at the
**OLD COLORADO CITY
 HISTORY CENTER**

1 South 24th Street
 (the corner of Pikes Peak & 24th Streets)
 (719) 636-1225

FREE ADMISSION

Old Colorado City History Center encourages you to attend its events, meetings, and projects. Please call 636-1225 for information

Winter Hours

(September – May)

TUES – SAT 11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Closed Monday

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the fire, assisting the tenants of the buildings and controlling the damage. Four businesses, located in between the two historic buildings at each end of the block, were completely destroyed. The Waycott and Colorado buildings suffered major smoke damage and have subsequently been reopened. The accompanying picture shows the height of the fire, with the Waycott Opera House on the left.

Had these historic buildings been destroyed by fire, we would still have a history of them. They are well documented in many books, pamphlets and pictures. We can't destroy history but this fire could have destroyed our ability to enjoy these historic building in reality.



Photo courtesy of Colorado Springs Gazette

This brings me to my thoughts on how important it is for us who have an interest and appreciation of history to focus on preserving "real and tangible" history. This event made me realize the value of the many personal possessions that my wife and I have which would be gone forever if destroyed in a fire or other natural disaster. My genealogy files are backed up on discs and stored in safe deposit boxes. Our many family pictures are protected in acid-free folders and have been scanned to discs and also stored in safe deposit boxes. I can now say we have a fire-proof safe on order and as soon as it is received, we will be placing all our prized possessions in it. We want to preserve the many family heirlooms for future generations of our family to enjoy.

You might ask, "Why is it important to preserve pieces of the past?" Can you imagine a place with no trees, no buildings, no rivers or roads, no landmarks -- nothing at all but the sky above and sometimes drifting clouds. If this were the case, would you know where you were, or where you were going?

The past and all the visible reminders tell us where we have been, where we are now, and where our children will be in the future. The preservation of important parts of our history is more than nostalgia and collectibles. It gives us a point of reference from which we can look out and understand our neighborhoods, our world, and ourselves. If we focus on sweeping away and eliminating all that is old, we in fact eliminate treasures as well as the trash. Each of us can take action as individuals and as a group to encourage preservation, to recognize those who preserve and restore, and to oppose and discourage the destruction of historic structures, sites, and environments. Through the gallant efforts of the Colorado Springs Fire Department, visible historical landmarks in Old Colorado City were spared and they will continue to stand proud for future generations to enjoy.

Our Society is currently involved with the preservation of a piece of the past. The historic log cabin, located in Bancroft Park, is a relic of Old Colorado City's pioneer past. It was built by Doctor Garvin in 1859 and became an office for the pioneer town and then for El Paso County. For a brief time, it served as a meeting place for the territorial legislators. OCCHS has received a grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund to renovate the building and is proud to be a partner with the City of Colorado Springs in this renovation project. This historic building has a false front facade, which is clad with wooden clapboards. The cabin's sidewalls are square, hand-hewn logs and some portions of these logs need to be replaced. This renovation will ensure that the historic cabin will continue to proudly occupy its place in Bancroft Park for future generations to enjoy.

The log cabin is a historic treasure. OCCHS uses it frequently to hold craft and bake sales. We know the importance of preserving this structure and we are working on a project that will offer our members and other interested people a piece of this history. When the deteriorated logs are removed from the cabin, the good pieces of wood will be cut out of them and further trimmed and polished into small wooden mementos. We will

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WESTSIDE MEMORIES

compiled by Jan Knox

One Hundred Years Ago
(Colorado Springs Gazette)
October 1902

An important change in the schedule of the Colorado Midland road was announced yesterday, the early morning trains to the Cripple Creek district being cut off. It was announced that Midland train No. 1, leaving Colorado Springs at 3:10 a.m. and No. 7, leaving here at 8 a.m., will be discontinued, the order being effective Sunday. Train No. 9, which leaves here at 11:20 a.m. will be a through train after the others are discontinued. There will be no delays at Cascade or Divide or anywhere else, and trains will run right on through to the district. It is known as the Cripple Creek Flyer. The reason for the discontinuation of the two trains is the approach of winter. The 11:20 train will make up for the change in view of the fact that it will not be delayed anywhere on the route. 10/2

It is reported that there was a narrow escape from a serious accident at the famous Midland crossing in Ute pass yesterday, where the fatal Wilson accident occurred several years ago and that what came near being an accident yesterday was due to the fact that the gong which is placed at the crossing does not ring. Two men who were driving up the pass in a carriage reported that when they came to the sign erected by order of the county commissioners and listened for the bell, in obedience to the warning, there was no sound. They proceeded and were within only a few feet of the track when a locomotive whistle was heard very close at hand and a passenger train shot out of the cut and across the road ahead of them with no warning whatever from the bell. Had they been a rod further along than they were, they would have been struck by the train and as it was the came near being dashed out upon the rocks by the horse which was terrified at the sudden appearance of the train and made a frantic effort to get away from the danger. "It would be supposed,"

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have these pieces of wood laser engraved to state the source of the wood and the authenticity. We will offer these mementos at a reasonable price to everyone who wants to own a "real" piece of Colorado City history. I hope you will consider buying one of these Colorado City log cabin mementos so that the rich history of Colorado City will continue to live, all over the United States and possibly the world.



Happy Valentines Day

said one of the men who had this thrilling experience, "that after the wreck at Cascade and the two or three at Divide and the washouts and landslides that the Midland has had this summer, they would try to protect themselves by having this danger signal in working order, whether or not they care anything for the lives of the persons who have to take the chances of crossing their tracks. They certainly should either put this bell into such shape that it will ring when a train approaches or take down the sign that directs persons driving up the pass to stop and listen for it." 10/2

Some trouble is being experience with sewers on the west side due to stoppage. The line between Lincoln and Washington streets at Eighth street is stopped up. Saturday the line at Fourth between Washington and Colorado avenue became stopped and men were at work nearly all night remedying the difficulty. 10/2

Treasurer's Report

In spite of the general national recession, the Old Colorado City Historical Society made it through 2002 in fair shape. On revenues of \$30,736 (way down from 2001) and costs of \$28,443, we actually added \$2,293 to our general treasury this last year.

So we are starting 2003 with \$21,941 in the bank in our general fund, \$748 in our Bookstore Account, \$61,000 Principal in our Endowment fund, with \$3,658 in accumulated interest from the Endowment which the Board may, according to our bylaws, spend for general maintenance, if needed. It was not needed in 2002. It might be needed in 2003.

The 2003 Budget, which has been approved by the Board, forecasts revenues of only \$23,080 for next year. If we retain our excellent archivist, Mike Olsen for the entire year, our costs will reach \$31,650. Or we will end the year with a loss over revenues of \$8,670, and finish the year with only \$13,271 in the Bank, and probably \$1,000 in our Bookstore account. That is not a lot to enter 2004 with, with our basic costs running over \$7,000 a year. It will not be enough to retain our \$1,000 a month Archivist for a full 2004 year. But we will have at least \$4,790 in accumulated Endowment interest by 2004. So a decision could be made whether to apply all or part of the interest to our general expenses in 2004, or invest it as an increase to our Endowment principal.

The Bancroft Cabin Project

As members know, the State of Colorado History Fund (from gambling taxes) and the City of Colorado Springs with a 20% match from its park funds, have granted the Society \$91,290 for the preservation and renovation of the 144 year old Bancroft Park Cabin. We have opened an account for the Project, and the state has disbursed us the first \$20,500. This is a totally separate account for the Cabin Project.

Owen Knox will supervise the work on the Cabin, due to start by February. Though I reported two months ago, we might have to either purchase a Bond, or encumber our Endowment to satisfy State Law for its \$68,450 portion of grant to us for the renovation of the Bancroft Cabin, we may be able to be covered by a Bond secured by our General Contractor, Patterson Construction - which was selected with the consent of the City after competitive bidding. We have not received final decision from the state on this alternative, yet.

In any case, however we, the Society, have to pay bills from our own funds, and get receipts for the last 10% of the amount of the State grant, or \$6,845 before we can apply for reimbursement, to close out the project. So in effect we must 'loan' the project that amount until the project, now forecast to only take until May, 2003, is done, and the state gets around to reimbursing us. I estimate that may occur by October. According to my Cash Flow projections, we will be able to handle that 'loan' from March to October.

Dave Hughes Treasurer



**Old Colorado City Historical Society
Hosts HBO's Unchained Memories
Event**

February 8th at 7:00 p.m.

**Reception & Premiere Screening
February 9th at 2:00 p.m.**

**Reception & Premiere Screening
General Meeting, Feb. 14th at
11:00 a.m. (Reception at 10:00 a.
m.) Premiere Screening**

**Free to the Public (Donations to the
Museum Appreciated)
RSV to confirm date**

**Event runs in conjunction with the
HBO Documentary Film
UNCHAINED MEMORIES: READINGS
FROM THE SLAVE NARRATIVES**

**The Documentary Airs: February 10,
2003 at 8 p.m. ET on HBO**

When the Civil War ended in 1865, more than four million slaves were set free. By the late 1930's, 100,000 former slaves were still alive. In the midst of the Great Depression, the Work Projects Administration's Federal Writers' Project hired writers to travel the country, documenting the memories of this last generation of African-Americans born into bondage. The HBO documentary draws on interviews with former slaves, produced in association with the Library of Congress, during Black History Month, exclusively on HBO.

The film is narrated By Whoopi Goldberg, and features readings by Angela Bassett, Don Cheadle, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Robert Guil-

laume, Samuel L. Jackson, Courtney B. Vance, Vanessa L. Williams, Oprah Winfrey, Alfre Woodard and others.

In conjunction with the world premiere of the HBO Documentary Film UNCHAINED MEMORIES: READINGS FROM THE SLAVE NARRATIVES, the Old Colorado City Historical Society is hosting a Premiere-screening Event

**February 8th at 7:00 p.m., February 9th at
2:00 p.m. and again at the OCCHS General
Meeting, February 14th at 10:00 a.m.**

This is just one of a number of similar events that will be taking place across the country in February, honoring Black History Month.

This effort is part of HBO's larger Shared History Project-being launched in collaboration with this film release. In this program, museums, colleges and libraries will be able to use the program and Sharing History materials to engage the public in a more active discourse about history while offering access to primary documents such as the Slave Narratives.

The OCCHS Special Event will feature a full length screening of this HBO Film. In addition, all dates will include a reception and the museum will feature black history memorabilia displays.

Debuting MONDAY, February 10 (8:00-9:15 p.m. ET), the HBO documentary UNCHAINED MEMORIES: READINGS FROM THE SLAVE NARRATIVES brings the words of these former slaves to vivid life through on-camera readings by celebrated African-American actors, as well as archival photographs, music, film and period images. Produced in association with the Library of Congress - home of the Slave Narrative Collection and other Works Project Administration (WPA) collections - the exclusive presentation debuts during Black History Month.

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From 1936 to 1938, more than 2,000 interviews with one-time slaves were conducted for the Federal Writers' Project, with the transcripts (written in the vernacular of the time) forming a unique firsthand record of slave life. **UNCHANGED MEMORIES: READINGS FROM THE SLAVE NARRATIVES** brings this anecdotal history to life with a wealth of archival photographs, authentic slave-era music performed by the McIntosh County Shouters, and footage evolving the brutal legacy of slavery in the United States.

The narratives chronicle the life of a slave, from childhood to adulthood to marriage (which was not legally recognized) to death. Excerpted from dozens of volumes recorded in 17 states, the interviews preserve the memories of the last generation of slaves in the United States, providing detailed accounts of the fabric of daily slave routines in the fields, in slave quarters and at the master's house; the agony of parents and children split at auction; the rape of women at the hands of slaveholders; the punishment of slaves captured after attempting to escape; the Afro-Christian spirituality and deep bonds that sustained most slave families; the exodus of slaves joining the Union cause during the Civil War; and the moments of realization that slaves were now free Americans. While the images evoked are indelible and often deeply disturbing, the narratives also reveal a humanity that transcends oppression.

Samuel L. Jackson reads the words of Marshal Butler, who remembers how white mercenary "paddy-rollers" tracked him down as he sought to visit his "gal" on a plantation several miles away: "No, I didn't get a pass," he remembers. "I was two miles out an' three miles to go. There comes the paddy-rollers... They give me 30 licks... There was belt buckles all over me." The reading elicits memories for Jackson, who says, "All my life I've heard of the paddy-rollers. My grandparents were from Georgia, and when they were angry at white

people they called them "paddys'."

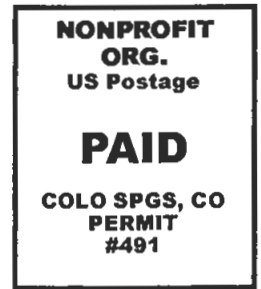
The buying and selling of men and women is a particularly bitter memory. Sarah Francis Shaw Graves, read by LaTanya Richardson, was born in Kentucky and moved to Missouri when she was six months old. Her mother, she remembers, was an "allotted" slave, purchased as chattel for a down payment and a mortgage. Sarah ruminates, "Times don't change, just the merchandise."

Thousand of slaves attempted to escape from plantations, and those who were recaptured faced severe beatings that often resulted in mutilation and sometimes death. But despite being hunted by paddy-rollers, slaves continued to run away in defiance of their master. Arnold Gragston, read by Courtney B. Vance, tells of joining the Underground Railroad and helping smuggle slaves into the free state of Ohio: "Don't know how I ever rowed the boat across the river. The current was strong and I was trembling. I couldn't see a thing there in the dark... That was my first trip. It took me a long time to get over my scared feeling, but I finally did, and I soon found myself going back across the river with two and three people, and sometimes a whole boatload. I got so I used to make three and four trips a month." Gragston eventually rowed his wife across the river and moved to Detroit, where he had 10 children and 31 grandchildren.

During the Civil War, 200,000 slaves, former slaves and freed blacks enlisted in the Union Army, knowing their ultimate freedom depended on the Northern victory. The Confederate Army surrendered on April 9, 1865. Two months later, Katie Rowe, read by Ruby Dee, tells of working in the fields in midday, and suddenly hearing bells that normally marked the end of the workday. As the puzzled slaves assembled outside the master's house, a

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



"stranger in a black hat" emerged and told them to remember the date as "the day of your freedom." Says Katie, "It was the fourth day of June in 1865 [that] I begins to live."

OCCHS is pleased to be chosen as the area Museum to host this HBO Premiere-Screening. HBO has provided all materials needed, the postage, as well as the wine and cheese & crackers for evening Premiere-screening on Saturday, February 8th. We encourage you to come experience this historical narrative showing a unique history that is also part of our American past. Please be sure to RSV which date you will be attending so that we can reserve a place for you! We have scheduled two screenings, in addition to our General Meeting, to accommodate the added attendance we expect from the community at large.

