



OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 19 ISSUE 9

November 2004

MODERN MINING

From then to Now

By Merv Casey

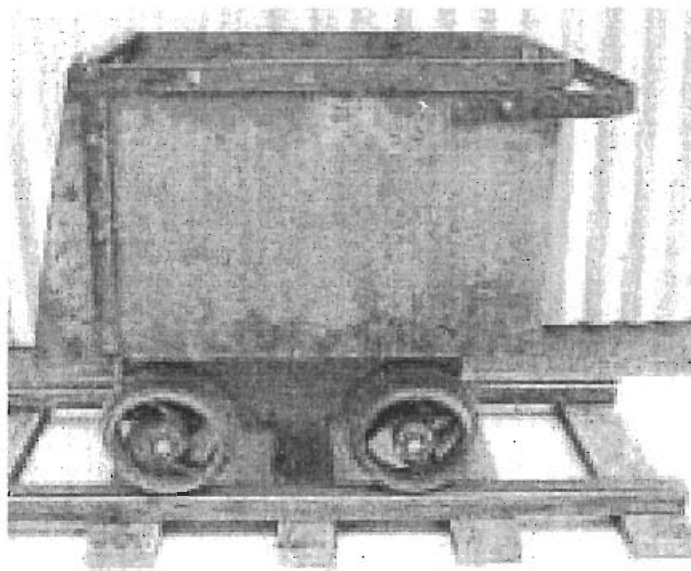
Earlier this month my wife, Arlene, and I along with eight other intrepid members of the Society took a tour of the Cresson Mine near Victor, Colorado operated by Anglogold Corp (a Colorado Corporation) and the Golden Cycle Gold Corp., as the Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mining Company. We were given a tour of the area by Jane Mannon a most delightful, and knowledgeable, lady that heads the Community Affairs office of the Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mining Company. We were shown how gold and silver are still being economically extracted from mines that were first founded a hundred fifteen years ago. It is done a lot differently today and would astound those hardy men that first trudged into the Rocky Mountains and dug into that hard rock inhospitable area nearly two miles above sea level. This is an altitude that approaches timberline and will take the measure of any man or for that matter woman.

I think it is appropriate to look at a little perspective of the mines and how our community ties to this long term endeavor. For indeed Old Colorado City has a rich and direct rela-

tionship with this most interesting area and without the gold in the mountains OCC would not even exist.

In 1859 when the founding fathers of Colorado City hired Mr. Fosdick to lay out the mile wide and two mile long plat of what is now "Old Colorado City" they expected to get rich on the gold in "them thar mountains." No, they didn't envision themselves trudging up Ute Pass dragging a heavily laden burro behind with a gold pan in one hand and a rifle in the other as they watched the creeks and rivers with one eye using the pan to look for gold and with the other eye watched over their shoulder for Indians, claim jumpers and other threats. What M. S. Beach and R. E. Cable had in mind was building a nice cozy, at least for the time, little cabin stocking it with picks and shovels, lanterns and pots along with a little tobacco and the other necessities of the mining trade.

They indeed trafficked in gold pans, and began selling their wares to those that did intend to move up into the mountains and find the elusive gold. Some of those intrepid men were quite successful and found their fortune, others returned back east broken and disenchanted. But one thing we know for sure is that the men that ran the stores did well and prospered as they expanded into other types of com



Ore Cart circa 1900

Continued page 3

Old Colorado City Historical Society
 1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

WEST WORD

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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:

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	Joanne Karlson	719-475-2574
Treasurer	David Hughes	719-636-2040
	Kay Atteberry	719-599-3187
	Arlene Casey	719-634-2356
	Bob Heinich	719-448-9001
	Betty Magnine	719-633-8150
	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
November 12, 2004
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 - June)

TUES—SAT 11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Closed Sunday & Monday

Visit our web site for even more history!

<http://history.oldcolo.com>

- stories
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- interviews
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e-mail us at: history@oldcolo.com

merce also unavailable in the mountains.

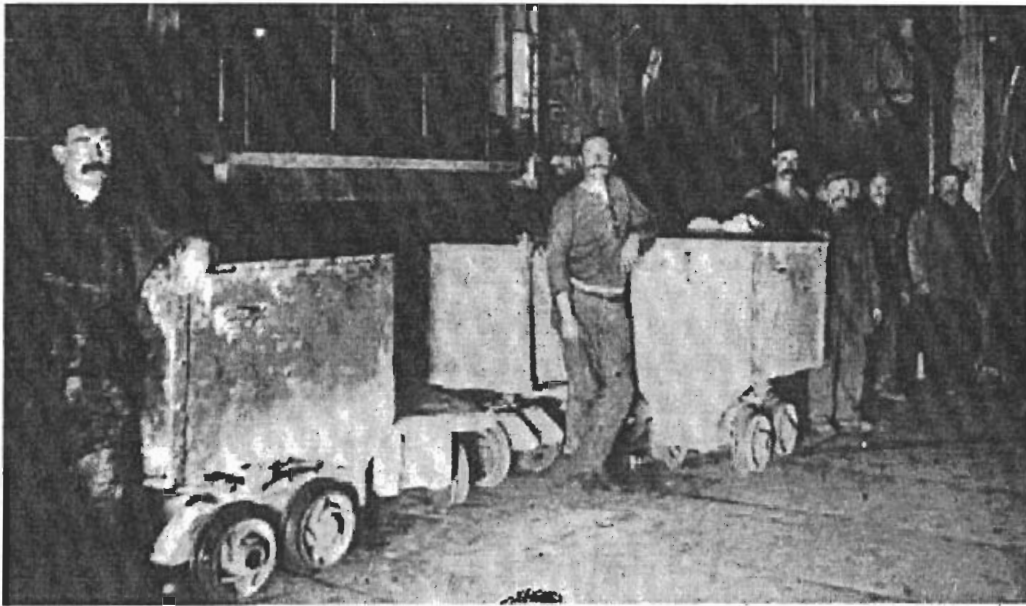
The rush to the Rockies in those days was triggered by gold being found in

South Park around what became Buckskin Joes, Fairplay and the Tarryall area. This was quite a distance from the front range

and Colorado City, but the cost and hardship of moving the supplies into the mountains outweighed the convenience of building a town at the foot of the mountains. Colorado City also functioned as a winter quarters for the miners, a place for R&R from the rigors of the search which typically went on during the summer months.

Things didn't go as well as expected as other supply areas were founded and then over the next few years the depression of the 60's then the Civil War and the building of the transcontinental railroad focused the attention of the country away from the gold fields of Colorado. Then in the mid 1880's a little skullduggery took place and interest in the area was rekindled for a short time when "Chicken Bill" Bradley, a shady character from Leadville, Colorado, was accused of "salting" some of the area around the hips of Pikes Peak, but again interest faded. What is odd about his deception is that he missed the real gold field by ten miles or so. Had Chicken Bill been a little more astute he might have himself found the volcanic stock that has produced billions of dollars in gold and silver.

Then in 1890 a cowboy on the Broken Box ranch named Bob Womack tried to convince the miners that there was gold in a great depression on the southwest flanks of America's Mountain, Pikes Peak. Bob was known to indulge in hard spirits, and from time to time spin tall tales, so for quite some time no one



Gold Miners with Ore Carts at the turn of the Century

paid much attention to this wild cowboy.

A cagey carpenter/miner named Winfield Scott Stratton decided to go up to the area and have a look around. Indeed he found gold in the rock formations and staked his claim. Soon other miners

came along and founded Cripple Creek and Victor and the boom was rekindled. Mine heads were established and such colorful names as the Independence, Molly Kathleen and the American Eagle soon came into vogue. The area was named "The Worlds Greatest Gold Camp", and soon became a thriving metropolis with such amenities as a zoo.

At an altitude of 11,000 feet creating a mine was no easy task. In the era before the turn of the century mining was a hard, dangerous proposition to say the least. One of the biggest problems after they extracted the gold ore was processing it. The availability of materials to run a crushing operation were in very short supply and to freight them to the area was too expensive. The gold and silver from the Cripple Creek/Victor area is not generally free gold but is bound with Tellurium and required a very sophisticated method to extract the precious metals. But soon this problem was solved as several railroads snaked their way up into the mountains. The Midland RR went up Ute Pass to Divide then south to Cripple Creek and was but one railroad into the area and had its terminus in Colorado City. The roundhouse for the Midland is now the Van Briggles Pottery plant and showroom. Another line was the Short Line RR that went up Cheyenne Canyon. Mills to process the ore were established in and around Colorado City and of course Colorado Springs by the Golden Cycle Corporation and others.

continued page 5

September 2004 Treasurer's Report

Going into the last quarter of 2004 we can see where we should end up, financially by the end of the year. Our projected income and costs against the budget the Board approved last January, as reflected on the computerized spread sheet I provide to the Board every month, is pretty much on track. Unless something major changes we will, in spite of the continuing national economic malaise end with a slight surplus, and hold steady going into 2005 with nearly \$20,000 in the bank. Here's hoping our Bed and Breakfast Tours in December, Christmas book sales (now remember, history books, and our 'Commemorative Cabin Logs' make good gifts!) pushes us over the top.

Our Endowment fund, which includes \$450 in three Lifetime memberships added to it this year, as well as accumulated interest should end the year over \$69,000. Hopefully interest rates will climb back up by 2005. 4% interest on a 2 year CD would get us at least \$2,600 a year income, which would cover one third of our annual hard History Center costs - \$8,000. But it still takes 4 year CD commitment to get even 4%

Our bookstore sales are still flat. We don't expect more than \$1,000 transferred to our general fund from the bookstore account at the end of the year, down from \$2,000 projected. But thanks to the industry Gordon Gray and Bette Baker have put in getting renewal membership letters out, and with some increases in new memberships coming out of our evening programs we will be ahead by at least \$1000 in membership income over last year. We have effective this month 239 members of which 12 are lifetime (already paid) and 80 are family (\$25 a month). Our annual 'costs' of a membership - largely our 10 times a year printed (by volunteers on our copier) and mailed newsletter is around \$6 a year. So we get at least \$14 a year from individual and \$19 a year from family memberships into our general fund which supports our center/museum.

At last the State sent us the reimbursement check they owed us for \$6,850 for the bills we paid on behalf of the City for the Cabin Restoration. So that project is over and done with. When we closed the 'Cabin Restoration' separate bank account, managed for us precisely, with reports to State standards by volunteer Rebecca Clark, our books show that the only true cost to the Society for playing financial midwife between the City, the State, and the Contractors, during the over \$92,000 Restoration project, was \$105.46 in bank charges over 2 years it cost us to keep open a checking account for the project. Pretty cheap price for saving the City nearly \$62,000 in their parks budget had they been the direct

Coming Events

November Program (11-12-04) Mary Jane Rust will present one of her historical programs.

December the Bed and Breakfast tour featuring some of Old Colorado City, Colorado Springs and Ute Pass finest Victorian houses

beneficiary of the State grant and been forced, under the Tabor Amendment to reduce their budget by that amount.

So September's General Fund bank account rose to \$23,820 as of October 1st. \$6,000 of that is in the unspent, so far, Digitization fund grants from members. We may also be getting proceeds from the lease of photos an agency found on our Web Site for decorating a government owned Lowery Field Apartment complex.

The only cloud on the horizon for 2005, besides generally higher costs for everything from Utilities to Insurance is that the City is raising its 'Park Use' fees dramatically next year. Which will affect our small, and one time events in Historic Bancroft Park as fund raisers. It wants \$200 a day, plus \$50 Vendor fees, plus \$1,000,000 Liability Insurance Policy for most events, and \$15 an hour for 'lesser' uses. Looks like the 'Free Public Park' and Cabin isn't very free any more. Which I thought our member's city taxes went for. Guess not.

All things considered we should end the year with at least \$17,000 in unrestricted funds in our bank account, and \$4,400 more from the interest earnings from our Endowment, if we need it. Which it does not look like we will, even in 2005. So one way or another it will continue to earn interest.

All we really need are more members, more book sales, and a few more fund raising events to keep our historical society fund-blood flowing.

Dave Hughes
Treasurer

One interesting aspect to the free gold was the Cresson vug, a vug being a void in the earth that has formed into a room much like the void in a geode. The Cresson vug was found in 1914 and produced some 60,000 ounces of gold that was literally picked off of the walls of the void.

W. S. Stratton sold his interest in the Independence mine in 1898 for 11 million dollars, a lot of money today and a vast fortune at the turn of the century. Winfield became a really low key philanthropist in the Springs and his many philanthropic endeavors included such things as buying bicycles for the ladies that delivered washing and the building of the Mining Exchange building. He is also the founder of the Myron Stratton Home that he named after his father.

The mining in the Cripple Creek-Victor area continued until the start of

the Second World War but production faded as the mines were punched deeper and deeper and flooding of the mines from ground water became a problem. Over the years several tunnels were drilled to drain the water the last, the 6 mile Carlton tunnel, was finished at the 7000 foot level in just over two years. A remarkable engineering and drilling feat.

World War II brought a secession of mining in the area as war materials such as copper and lead were deemed more important than gold and silver. Cripple Creek and Victor fell into a malaise and the buildings deteriorated. The post war era saw the cost of extracting the gold costing more then the \$35 an ounce it would bring, the price being fixed by the U.S. Government.



The Portland Gold Mine Cripple Creek Colorado

Then in 1993 the Cripple Creek & Victor Mining Company (CC&V) commenced operating the Cresson mine again. Rather than mine in tunnels following the high grade ore veins as was done for the first eighty or so years previously they obtained permits from the State of Colorado to extract the ore in a surface operation. The permits require a very complicated process of showing where the mining will take place, how the mining is to be done and most importantly how the operation will recover the land once the mining is finished. This recovery is backed up by a large bond taken out by the mining company and absolutely guarantees that the land will be properly recovered.

This surface operation is what the ten of us viewed - to at least my amazement. We toured the entire facility and saw the gigantic equipment that is used in this operation where they extract the ore not by the ton but by the tens of tons. We saw the crushers and the extraction beds and witnessed some of the site that is being recovered.

Before the ore is extracted the overburden or top soil, such as it is, at 11,000 feet is removed and stockpiled for later use in the recovery phase. They have trucks that haul the loosened ore to the crushers that hold 300 tons at a time, and loader buckets that fill these mammoth trucks do so in six or seven scoops. The area to be mined is surveyed and analyzed using the latest technology, GPS receivers and ground penetrating radar that tells the operators where the rock has the highest potential for extractable gold and silver ore. The ground is then "loosened" with explosives and the ore is moved to a crushing operation that reduces the rock to approximately three quarters of an inch. The process is repeated and the hole goes deeper into the earth until it is now some 600 feet deep and going deeper every day.

Continued page 6

This process moves approximately 3000 tons per hour or 60 million tons per year. Once the "pit" is as deep as it will go the processed ore is then backfilled into the hole and the land recovery process is started.

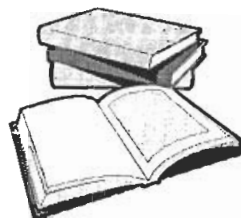
The extraction process is one that is universally used in the mining of this type of ore. It utilizes a sodium cyanide process that leaches the precious metals from the ore. This is accomplished by using a agricultural-type of drip tube irrigation system, much like that used in hydroponics farming. The fluid containing the metals captured at the bottom of the sloped beds is then run through columns of activated charcoal which ex-



Now that's a big truck!!
 One of the CC&V haulers
 Photo courtesy of CC&V

tract the metals from the solution. The solution is then reactivated with the sodium cyanide and pumped back to the top of the leach field in a completely closed process. When the extraction process is complete the ore now minus the gold and silver is cleaned of the residue cyanide by exposure to the air and put back into the ground for the recovery process to begin. This process recovers about 70% of the gold-silver contained in the ore. In 2003 over 17 million tons of ore were process in this manner and almost three hundred thousand troy ounces of gold were recovered. It is easy

continued page 7



From the Bookstore

By Agnes Johnson

Leland Feitz has a new book! It is "Growing up in the San Luis Valley, A Depression Era Memoir".

The book is dedicated to his late wife of 19 years, Evelyn. He states that all the stories are true though some names have been changed.

He was brought up on a San Luis farm and his first recollection concerns the REA 's wiring. Finally electricity was coming to rural Colorado and thanks to the Rural Electrification Association; the Colman lanterns were replaced by electric light.

His "Number Please" chapter mentions that his apartment has an elevator which upon any malfunction is reported by a call phone that is answered in Stamford, Connecticut. Marvin answered his calls in La Jara. Most numbers were on a six-party line. Very often everyone would pick up and add to the conversation. If the person wasn't home, Marvin knew where they were and what they were doing. The charge was \$3.00 a month.

Do you remember prize night at the Tompkins Theater on Nevada? The "Picture Show," will bring back some of those memories.

If ever there was a happy ending for Milt Morrison, you'll be amazed how it occurred in "A Thanksgiving Miracle".

"A View From the Back Pew" was written when the demise of his boyhood friend, Ted Shawcraft, caused him to write to his daughter of their time together in their youth while attending La Jara's small brick Presbyterian Church. My, they were naughty!

"Alamosa, 70Years Ago", tells of his walk on Main Street, looking for all the stores, movie houses, restaurants, etc. that were there during the '30's and '40's. Alas, all are gone. Even the daily train no longer ran.

A walk on Tejon Street in Colorado Springs would bring the same results. Gone also were the clerks who were knowledgeable, pleasant and gave personal attention. How it's press one, etc. or "can you hold." Have you timed how long you've waited?

His dislike of cows is apply described in, "The Cow Barn."

Read about the doctor who made house calls. His bedside manner and way of dispensing medicine makes for good reading.

You'll find out why Leland never wore a hat with tassels again after attending the "Farm Bureau Picnic".

continued page 8

to see that a lot of rocks have to be extracted to recover one ounce of gold.

I observed several things during our tour that were very interesting to me. The first of course was the huge holes in the ground. The second was the size of the equipment used and how efficiently the operation is run. But the most fascinating thing of all was looking at the "high wall", that portion of the wall that is exposed for several hundred vertical feet, and seeing no less than fourteen places on the wall where old tunnels were exposed scattered across the various levels along the wall. These holes were just big enough for a man to stand in, that is to say, they were some seven feet in diame-



Loading 300 tons

Photo courtesy of CC&V

ter and it brought into focus for me just how grueling it must have been a hundred years ago to go down into the bowels of the earth and following a vein of ore as it twisted and turned through the rock to hack it out rock by rock, load it into a small little cart and then hoist it to the surface.

Indeed the times they are a changing, Old Colorado City is now an Historical District catering mostly to the westsiders and tourist, its colorful past for the most part forgotten by the average citizen. I doubt that one could buy a pick or a gold pan anywhere along Colorado Avenue or for that

continued page 8

The Annual Bed and Breakfast Tour

will take place on Sunday December 5th from 2-6 p.m. buy your tickets early at the individual locations or the Old Colorado City History Center.

This year we will be privileged to have on the tour:

Cascade:

**Eastholme in the Rockies B&B
Rocky Mountain Lodge and Cabins**

Manitou Springs:

**Blue Skies Inn
Gray's Avenue Hotel
Red Crags Bed and Breakfast
Rockledge Country Inn
Victoria's Keep Bed & Breakfast**

Colorado Springs:

**Andy and Pat's Our Hearts Inn
Cheyenne Canon Inn
The Hearthstone Inn
Holden House—1902 Bed and Breakfast Inn**

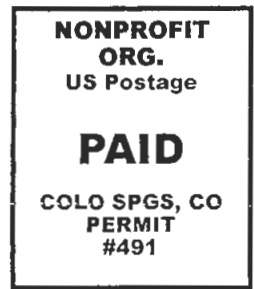
And

Old Colorado City History Center

As is the custom a map of all locations will be furnished with the paid ticket and when you are finished touring all the B&B's you wish to see you are cordially invited back to the History Center for coffee, tea and other refreshments.

Door prizes will be again a part of our annual celebration

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



From page 8

matter needs to find such things. Cripple Creek is now a glitzy town where gambling has destroyed the old historic buildings and replaced them with modern structures filled with card tables and one armed bandits. Victor is struggling to stay alive its colorful past also just a fleeting memory for the few tourist that wander off the beaten path. But then again it was founded as a mining town and it still is.

For information about free group tours through the mine contact:

Jane Mannon
PO Box 191
100 N. 3rd Street
Victor, CO 80860
719-689-4044

From the book store cnt'd

If he sees a penny on the sidewalk, he picks it up and reminisces on what a penny could buy in, "Penny Candy".

You'll really chuckle at the members of the Ladies Circle at the First Presbyterian Church when they thought they had solved the dilemma of Mrs. Perkins and her five boys when they gathered for the monthly potluck suppers at the church.

Bud Thurman, tired of finding his outhouse turned over again, had a surprise for the boys in, "Bud Thurman's Outhouse".

There are many other tales but you should buy the book! The last story is a compilation of his and Evelyn's activities during the 19 years of their marriage. He admonishes everyone to record their remembrances in some way before they are lost. His writing this book was therapy for him during Evelyn's illness.