



## OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 4

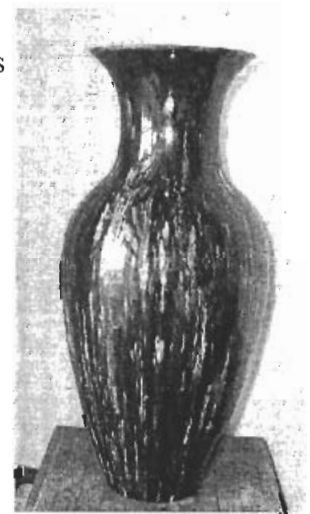
April 2005

# VAN BRIGGLE

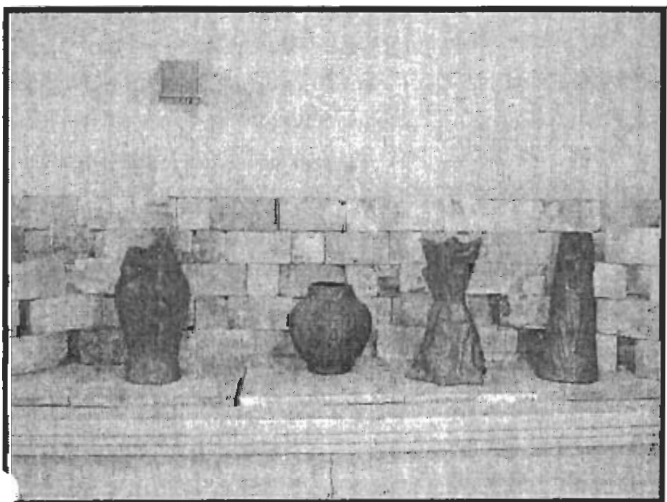
When I was five or six years old I wondered every year, at Christmas, what I could get for my mother that would bring a smile to her face, something beautiful, something to be cherished, something unique in all the world, something that would make me her favorite.

That was quite a task in the early nineteen forties in Colorado Springs. Those were what I like to think of as my pre-VB days, as I hadn't as yet discovered the treasures to be found hidden away under the Uintah hill at the Van Briggles pottery store. Indeed there were nice things to be had at Hibbards, J.C. Pennys and a book store or two, even Sears Robuck and Company, but that was a last ditch option for me. When all else failed I knew there was always a box of candy from Barthel's. My mother loved their toffee, and as a

matter-of-fact so did I. Since Barthel's went out of business I now go to Michelle's, but that's another story. While not necessarily unique it was something she liked, but was nothing but a memory by New Year's eve. So my dad who actually did the paying would take me to that candy store and I would get a pound or so, the or so was for me to nibble on while I carefully wrapped the pound. The point here is that a pound of toffee probably cost a buck, and what was to come later probably cost ten or twenty, a lot of money in 1943 especially for a kid with a dime a week allowance. I had no concept of money, according to my wife the concept for me is still somewhat vague, and anyway like I said I had no concept of money.



It was around this time that some out of town friends of my parents came and I took my first, of many, trips down the steep Uintah hill just west of Wood Ave. to the Van Briggles Art pottery factory and show room and saw the most beautiful vases I had ever seen. So when Christmas rolled around again I talked my father into taking me down the hill. For the next ten years or so I always bought a piece of Van Briggles for my mother. I was so enamored with those beautiful objects that I even threw in an occasional birthday or two. By the time I was in High



In the showroom on south 21st street

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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  
 Or Merv Casey—thequill@adelphia.net

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	Beverley 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
	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**  
**April 8, 2005**  
**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.

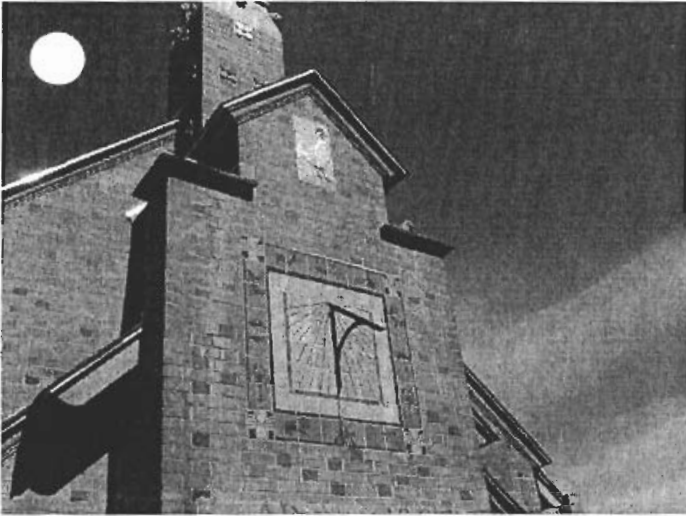
Closed Sunday & Monday

*Visit our web site for even more history!*

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e-mail us at: [history@oldcolo.com](mailto:history@oldcolo.com)



Sun dial clock at high noon  
South facing wall Glenn Street

School I had been to that squat sprawling building many times and to me it was a marvelous place. Gargoyle water spouts, flower tiles on the walls and those most beautiful decorated chimneys. I always liked the sun dial clock and still do to this day. I had no idea who Van Briggles was, or for that matter where the things I was buying held in the world of art pottery. But they were lovely, the colors were magnificent, muted, something that was found in nature but only in the soft coloring of the sky and occasionally in the afternoon clouds. The pieces themselves were graceful and somehow serene. My mother looked forward to getting one every year. I know because many years later she told me so.

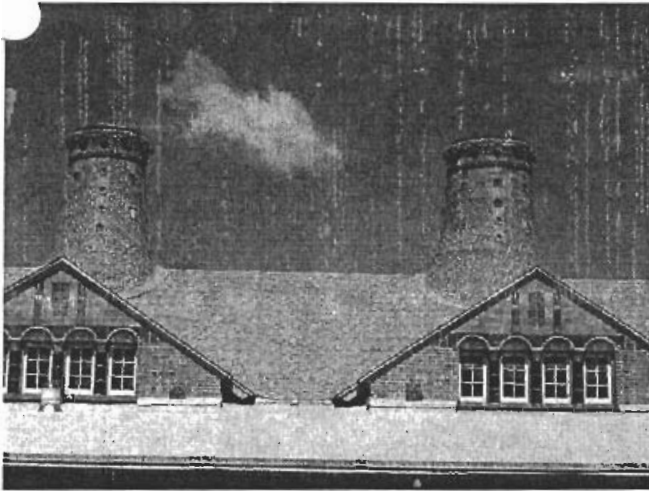
Artus Van Briggles was the son of a Dutch immigrant born in Ohio in 1869. At an early age Artus was recognized as a gifted artist. Just how he became interested in art pottery is somewhat vague but art in its many forms was very big in this Victorian era, and pottery was no exception. Artus graduated from the Academy of Arts of Cincinnati, and at seventeen went to work for Karl Langenbeck at Avon Pottery. During this period he also painted the faces on China Dolls for the Arnold Fairland Doll Store. A year later found him at Rookwood pottery, a relationship that would continue for many years and advance his knowledge greatly. By 1893 Artus with the help of Maria Longworth Nichols (Storer), founder of Rookwood, had migrated to Europe, first Paris then Italy, studying art, glazing techniques, molding and sculp-

ture. While traveling and studying in Europe he met and became engaged to his future wife, Anne Lawrence Gregory, another art student. Then he returned home in 1896 and went back to Rookwood. Fascinated with the matte glazes he did many experiments and by 1898 had perfected the glazes that his pottery was to become famous for. The glaze known as dead glaze was found on Chinese Ming vases. As many people of the time Artus was tubercular and his doctors recommended that he move to a higher, drier climate and so just before the turn of the century Artus and his future wife-to-be moved to Colorado Springs. Artus set up shop at 617 North Nevada, an address that no longer exists, and commenced with the help of Ms. Storer, to produce the beautiful pottery, sculptures and tiles that he became known for. It was around this time that the still used double A logo was developed by Anne. By 1902 with Artus' health failing Anne quit her high school teaching position and became an active participant in the running of the Van Briggles pottery business. From 1900 until his death in 1904 Van Briggles was awarded many metals and won many prizes internationally for his elegant work. Influenced by his studies in Europe he soon turned his talent to creating brilliant pieces in the Art Nouveau style that at the time was pervasive across America.

From Artus' death in the summer of 1904 Anne took control of the company and changed the name to The Van Briggles Company. With the able assistance



Gargoyle down spout



Those magnificent chimneys

of men like T.J. Fisher and A. Sutton, the company survived. In 1908 the location of the company moved to the building, 1125 Glenn, down the Uintah hill. Whether this rather out of the way location, inept management or other factors led to the downfall in 1912 Anne Van Briggles-Ritter declared bankruptcy and withdrew from the business.

The Poke City Directory for 1912 indicates that one E.deF Curtis was the Lessee of the Van Briggles Pottery building and the Pottery Company with Anne as President was located at the 501 Mining Exchange Building. Sometime around the end of the First World was no less a personage than W. Irving Halbert became Vice President of the Van Briggles Tile and Pottery Co. In 1921 I.F. Lewis was president, A.E. Lewis was Vice President and J.H. Lewis was secretary/treasurer. While many other buildings did not survive the devastating flood of 1935 the Glenn building did although it was severely damaged and production was halted while the building was repaired. The Lewis' remained in charge of Van Briggles pottery company through my sojourns down the hill to ponder, compare and finally select the individual pieces I purchased for my mother.

The move to the present location of Van Briggles at 600 S. 21<sup>st</sup> Street occurred sometime in the late 50's although it was used as a manufacturing site for several years before the under the hill site

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### Treasurer's Report

February started slowly, although we were the recipient of a \$499 unsolicited Grant from the 8th Street Wal-Mart. Costs were pretty much normal except for the stinger of \$347 for Utilities. With reimbursements due us and normal costs, we ended the month with \$19,566 in our General Account, \$322 in the Bookstore Account. And of course with our \$70,000 endowment fund - \$67,000 of which is now drawing 3% interest - we are pretty much on financial even keel.

Changes in the way we handle our Bookstore and General Accounts took place in February. For the past few years all Credit Cards payments passed through our General Account, even though the majority of credit card purchases were for book and gift purchases. That required lots of reconciliation between Betsy, operating the Society Book Store with a separate bank account because Sales Tax has to be collected and tracked, with myself managing the General Account.

Because we were about to embark on a new way for people to be able to buy from our bookstore, pay for events, buy or license our photos, and pay for either new or their renewal subscriptions, we have shifted the entire credit card collection system to the Book Store. For also in March we launched an exiting new way to do Society 'business' -

### Pay Pal

Increasingly adults (and probably too many college-age children) pay for their purchases by Credit Cards instead of by check or cash. With the explosive growth of the Internet, millions now 'shop online' - including from a very successful online-only Bookstores like Amazon Books. One can buy books not in local bookstores, and even now, find and buy some out-of print books. And have them shipped. So why shouldn't the Old Colorado City Historical Society offer an online credit card purchase service centered on its own bookstore, 99% of whose sales are by walk in traffic? Maybe we can increase our bookstore sales by persons even outside Colorado Springs. In any case we can offer a new shopping convenience - which is at the successful heart of marketing. So we are trying it with Pay Pal.

Pay Pal is now quite reliable, and secure. It is a way for very small businesses and organizations to offer their products or services online at a total cost of only 2.9% of the transaction. There are no other fees, up front costs, or even software costs. I have been monitoring this service for several years. Once I was satisfied it works as advertised, I installed it as a service on our Web site - <http://history.oldcolo.com>

This is how it works. The Society has opened a

*Continued page 6*

Pay Pal Merchant Account. Pay Pal rigorously checked out that we were real as a Colorado 'corporation', we had a Bank Account into which secure electronic fund deposits could be made, and we had a legitimate and DNS registered Web Site, as well as a secure email address.

Then, using Pay Pal's own 'merchant' software, we listed - at first - 10 popular books we would like to sell online, their price, their shipping cost, and the sales tax to be charged. Pay Pal sent pieces of web code to insert into our web site next to where the books are displayed, described, and priced. When installed, each book shows a small icon 'Add to Shopping Cart' below it.

When potential customers go onto our web site, and into the Bookstore' section they can browse. If they like a book's cover, title, and description, then they merely click on the Add to the Shopping Cart icon. Then when done, Pay Pal queries them for their name, address, shipping address, credit card information, calculates the bill, the shipping cost, the sales tax, verifies that the credit card is immediately good for that amount. Unless the browser cancels it, the card is charged - he gets an email telling him what he bought with tracking numbers.

Then the record of the transaction is sent to the History Society immediately by email along with shipping instructions, if any, for Betsy. And the total amount, less 2.9% is transferred electronically into our bank's Bookstore account. I simply give Betsy a printout of the email, she ships the product and our account is increased at the bank. We never see the credit card numbers, - that is handled by Pay Pal but we sure see the money. And we are in email contact with the buyer.

When I asked two of our members to 'test' the system, it worked flawlessly, and the actual charge to us by Pay Pal for a \$21.97 sale was only \$.91. Perfectly reasonable cost for all that service.

We can also add event ticket sales, memberships or renewals, brick donations, commemorative log purchases, or licenses for the use of any of our 1,500 historical photos online, or accept donations!

Advertising for this service will reach all Westsiders before the end of March via OWN's Westside Story newsletter, which goes into all Westside mailboxes of 20,000. We will spread the announcement to other media as we go. Your Society is now in the Financial big time!

Dave Hughes — Treasurer

## *You are invited to the Old Colorado City Historical Society's*

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Victorian Tea & Fashion Show**  
**Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005. 2 to 4 p.m.**  
**Tickets \$18.00 – Advance Sale Only**

Join us for this special fundraising event at the History Center! Enjoy a delicious afternoon tea menu that includes finger sandwiches, great dessert items, and special teas. If you wish, wear a "fashionable" hat...any color, including red and purple! There will be table favors, many door prizes, and special entertainment to add to a fun-filled afternoon. **Doris McGraw** will be our Mistress of Ceremonies and she has a few surprises for us!

A Victorian "**History of American Ladies' and Men's Fashions**" will be presented by Rita Wilhelm and her Victorian models (plus some male OCCHS members) as they feature attire from yesteryear. Relive memories of "genteel" times with these historically accurate costumes – from day gowns to formal evening wear. We look forward to Rita's choice of fashions for this year's Tea.

Mark your calendars and purchase tickets early...our previous teas were sell-out events. Tickets can be purchased at the History Center. Credit card purchases may be made at the History Center or on line before April 26. Seating is limited. Go to [history.oldcolo.com](http://history.oldcolo.com) Join us for Fun, Food, Fashion, and TEA

**WANTED! VOLUNTEERS & CRAFTERS**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Annual Garden Fair & Crafts in the Park**  
 Fundraiser for the History Center

Saturday, June 11, 2005 at Bancroft Park, 8 a.m. til 4 p.m.

June 11 is opening day of the Farmer's Market. OCCHS will be renting spaces in the park for crafters as well as groups selling plants, garden decoratives, and other related items. OCCHS will also have a booth to sell plants (to add to our profit!). No bake sale for this event. Come help make this fundraiser a success!

Please contact Joanne Karlson at 475-2574 or Bev Disch at 634-5023 if you are available to help.

If you are member of a group who would like to rent a space, application forms will be at the History Center or contact Joanne.

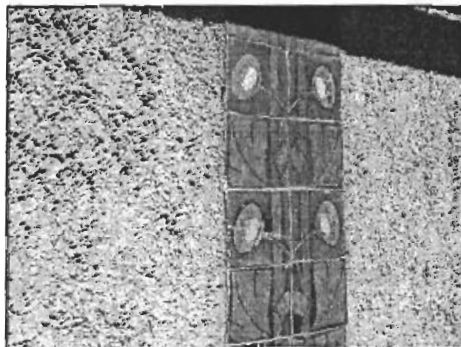


Flower wall tiles on the Glenn Street Building

was transferred to Colorado College. This site also has great historic significance to the West Side as it was the roundhouse for the Midland Rail Road which is another story.

— In October of 2002 a hand thrown piece that Van Briggles pottery designed and sent to the 1904 World Fair in Saint Louis was once again in the hands of the Pioneer Museum collection after a long odyssey and an obscure absence. Created specifically for the World Fair and shipped with other pieces it was the center piece of their display. Partially financed by El Paso County Commissioners from funds they subscribed from the citizens of the area the Van Briggles collection was shown at the fair in their own pavilion. Sometime in the early 70's the piece vanished from the museum to resurface in the late 90's when Dianne Swaim brought the vase to the museum to get some background on it from Katie Gardner, the curator. After some delicate negotiations Ms Swaim returned the vase to the museum to take its place again as the centerpiece of the museums unsurpassed collection of Van Briggles art.

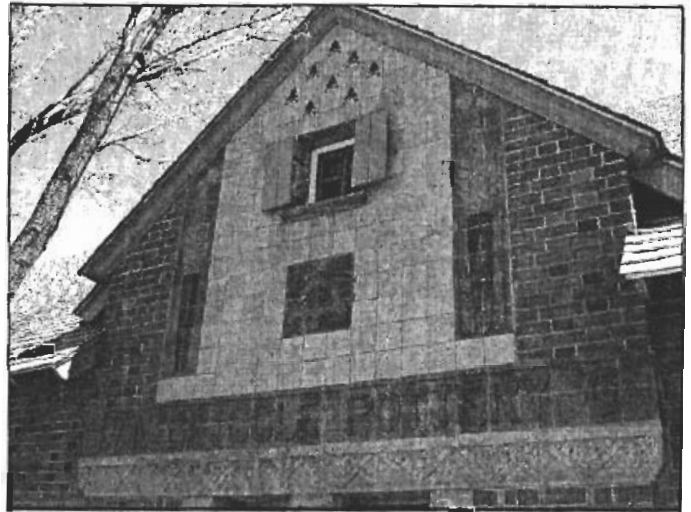
By Merv Casey



Flower wall tiles



The double A logo from wall below



The west facing wall with the double A logo just beneath the window

All photos by Victoria Pacheco

**V**AN BRIGGLE FIRE-PLACES and HEARTHIS lead their soft, rich tones readily to the room, and cast over their surroundings a gently cheerful and home-like effect, always fresh and clean, always appealing to guests and home-keepers, remaining imperishably sound in color and body.

Van Briggles Art is the modern high standard of home decoration.

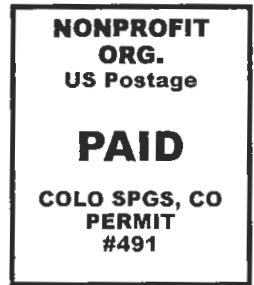
Mantels complete or facings, flat and designed tiles in all sizes, friezes, capitals, panels, cornice, window sills, gargoyles, etc., in any desired color effect.

A visit to The Van Briggles Pottery will be time well spent on the part of any builder, architect or decorator. Samples sent upon request and estimates submitted.

**The Van Briggles Pottery Co.**  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

From the 1908 Polk Directory

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



***COMING EVENTS***  
**AT THE HISTORY CENTER**

**Friday April 8**

Dave Hughes will present the program. His topic will be "Colorado, Colorado City, and the Civil War". As a historian in all three areas, his perspective will give insight to the local events seldom discussed about this time period.

**Saturday April 30**

Annual Victorian Tea and Style Show at the History Center advance tickets now on sale.

**Friday May 13**

General Meeting

**Week end of May 28,29,30**

Territory Days the Society will again have the cabin open and hopefully a booth on the Avenue

**April 3**

Don't forget to Spring Ahead—yes it's that time of year again when we set our clocks forward for daylight savings time