



## OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 6

June-July 2005

# The Life and Times of Doctor James Garvin

The Itinerant Doctor Garvin,  
His Cabin and Colorado City

By Dave Hughes

Once again the Old Colorado City Historical Society Web site has garnered more history of some of the very earliest Pioneers and events of Colorado City. The great-granddaughter of Dr. James Paul Garvin whom we knew to be the owner of one of the first Cabins built in Colorado City, now in Bancroft Park, found our web site. – Judy Garvin Yarbrough saw when she read our information that there was no picture for Dr. Garvin in our very brief online sketch of him. We didn't have one. But she sure did!

And to her surprise she encountered in our online book store our ad for Commemorative Log Slices from the 1859 Cabin her great grandfather had built. She promptly bought via our online credit card Paypal system numbered log slice Number 27. It was shipped to her home in Alabama.

More significantly she generously agreed to donate to the Society pictures, papers, and

newspaper clippings about Dr. Garvin and his life, both before, during, and after his years in Colorado Territory.

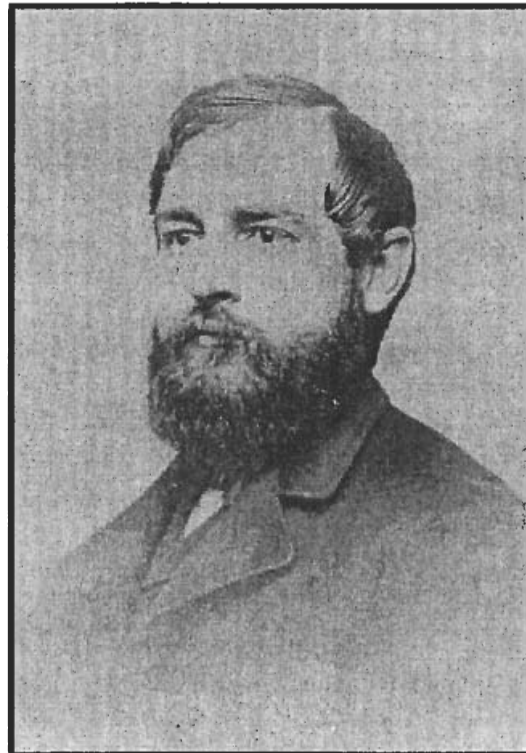
Her contributions, besides the fragmentary historical information we had, helped us put the dots together to compile a more complete picture of the life of a young 27 year old pioneer of Colorado City - the first doctor in the Pikes Peak region.

### Early Life

James Paul Garvin was born in 1832, the son of Captain John James Garvin and Sarah Eldridge, whose lineage traces back to their seafaring history and the Revolutionary War.

He graduated from Pennsylvania Medical University in 1855, first opening up a medical practice in Falmouth, Massachusetts. After his father died in 1858 young doctor Garvin decided to go west and join the Colorado Gold Rush.

He arrived in Colorado City in 1859, coming across the plains from Lawrence, Kansas after having practiced medicine there too. He and pioneer Melancthon Beach, who had driven the first stake for Colorado City, built the Cabin that now stands in Bancroft Park, just east from its original



James Garvin

stands in Bancroft Park, just east from its original

*Continued page 3*

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

**WEST WORD**

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 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	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
	Leland Feitz	719-
	Tom Hendrix	719-633-7392
	Mel McFarland	719-

**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**  
**September 9, 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

Summer Hours  
 (June – September)

TUES – SAT 11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Closed Sunday & Monday

Visit our web site for even more history!

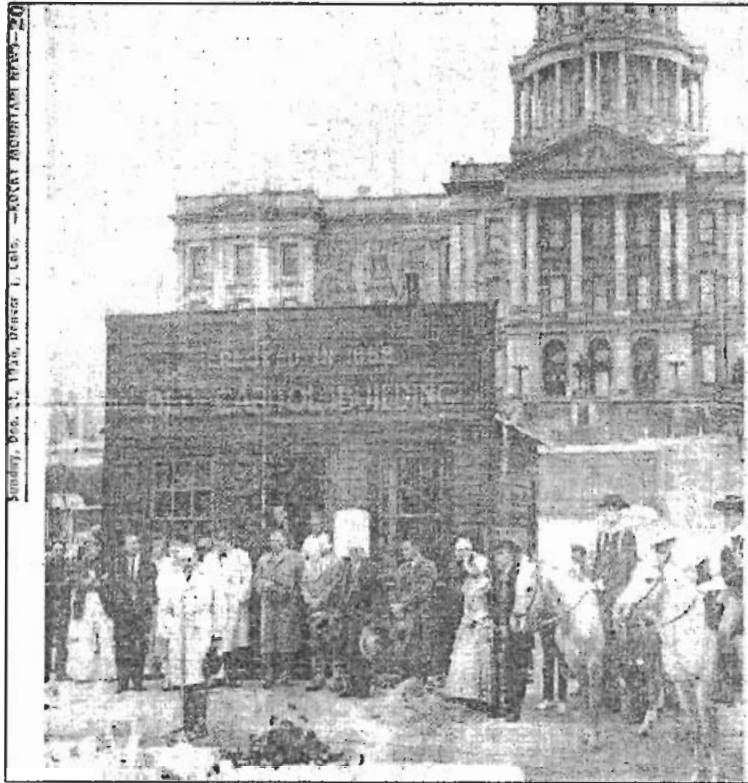
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location in the 2600 block of West Colorado Avenue. They cut and hauled their Douglas fir and Ponderosa Pine logs from the slopes of Cheyenne Mountain.

Dr. Garvin lived in the cabin himself. He set up a drug store, and commenced to practice medicine right on the main street – Colorado Avenue - of the frontier town, which was the gateway through which hundreds of wagons poured up Ute Pass to gold country.



The Cabin at the State of Colorado Capitol Dedication 1959

#### Claim Club President

The earliest form of organized law and order in brand new Colorado City which was staked out two miles long and a mile wide on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1859 – involved Dr. James Garvin from the earliest months. With no government on the Colorado frontier - which was still unclaimed Indian Territory as part of Kansas Territory, extra-legal Claim Clubs sprung up. The El Paso Claim Club – named after the pass - was the very first such organization in the territory. Proof of Dr. Garvin's role comes from a surviving fragment of 'Record Book A' of the Claim Club where both Melancthon (M.S.) Beach and James Garvin are noted as having 'witnessed' the recorded claim of another man, on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1859.

M.S. Beach was known to have been the Claim Club's first President – 1859 to 1860. But in a later Record Book entry it was stated that 'James Garvin's term as President' expired in 1861. So Dr. Garvin, half owner of the Cabin with Beach, had become President of the El Paso Claim Club a year before, around August, 1860. He became a civic leader as well as a pioneer.

The Claim Club kept law and order, re-

ording the first deeds for the Colorado City Land Company and other claims, and settled disputes. In one case it conducted a trial for the murder of Pat Devlin by James McLaughlin in a street shootout. The Club acting as Judge, appointed a prosecutor and defense, let the 'people' standing by be the jury – and in a 20 minute trial found McLaughlin not guilty. That was two weeks before Devlin died! The Club also took vigilante actions when needed, hanging horse thieves among other things.

There are no stories of the good doctor Garvin

having gotten into some of the more violent vigilante actions that happened in Colorado City from time to time. His term of office appears to have been peaceful. He may have presided over that street trial, carrying out all the elements of an American trial by jury, even on the rough and ready frontier. And he probably tended dying Devlin!

During those first years of Colorado City's existence, the family story was that Dr. Garvin traveled to tend the sick beyond Colorado City. That was pretty much confirmed by an entry I found in my personal copy of the very rare November 28<sup>th</sup>, 1861 edition of the Colorado City Journal. In the same 'Announcements' section that tells of the arrival of the Reverend William Howbert and family from Buckskin Joe (one of whose children was City throughout. He obviously did not know that the first 'Secretary' of the Claim Club in 1859 who also was a Director of the Colorado City Land Company was W.B. McClure who turned out to be such a strong secessionist that he was killed in 1863 along with 18 other Confederate uniformed men by Osage Indi-

## Presidents Message

We had our fourth annual Victorian Tea Saturday afternoon, April 30<sup>th</sup>. It was very elegant with lovely table settings, Bernidean's fruit tea, and a beautiful fashion show. We had so many compliments from the ladies who enjoyed the tea and got to wear their colorful hats. Planning the event was Joanne Karlson, Arlene Casey, Kay Atteberry, Betty Baker, Eloise Wynne, Pat Fejedelem. Helping serve the tea were Gloria Chapman, Marge Knorr, and Muriel Dunkley. I want to thank them all for helping with this successful fund raiser.

We had our annual meeting May 12<sup>th</sup> and reelected Kay Atteberry and Dave Hughes to the board and two new members, Leland Feitz and Mel McFarland were welcomed. Matt Mayberry gave an excellent presentation about the Pike Expedition and a preview of what the Pioneer Museum will show for the Zebulon Pike Bi-centennial in 2006. Our center will have an exhibit about the Pike Expedition as well.

We again participated in the Territory Days, May 28, 29, 30 with a booth, bake sale in the cabin, and having our book store open. This took twenty-one of our members to man all these places for three days. Plus, many of our bakers baked not once but twice to keep the cabin full of yummy treats. It always is such a good money maker for us. Thank you one and all; it's our volunteers that make all this possible.

We are trying something new with a Garden Fair in the park Saturday, June 11. The response has been very good. Joanne Karlson has developed this into an event that promises to be an annual one for us. Helping her out were Pat Fejedelem, Arlene Casey, Marge Knorr, Nancy Miceli and Betsy Evans.

Up coming in July will be come interesting Tuesday nights with entertaining speakers. So even with our regular monthly meetings stopped for the summer, we are busy with many things going on. Also, planning for the Founders' Day, August 13<sup>th</sup>, and our annual Cemetery Crawl at Fairview Cemetery will begin. Come check us out; things are always going on here at our Center. Do have a pleasant summer.

Bev Disch, President

## The Liberty Bell

Tradition tells of a chime that changed the world on July 8, 1776, with the Liberty Bell ringing out from the tower of Independence Hall summoning citizens to hear the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon.

The Pennsylvania Assembly ordered the Bell in 1751 to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of William Penn's 1701 Charter of Privileges.

Penn's charter, Pennsylvania's original Constitution, speaks of the rights and freedoms valued by people the world over. Particularly forward thinking were Penn's ideas on religious freedom, his liberal stance on Native American rights, and his inclusion of citizens in enacting laws.

As it was to commemorate the Charter's golden anniversary, the quotation "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," from Leviticus 25:10, was particularly apt. For the line in the Bible immediately preceding "proclaim liberty" is, "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year." What better way to pay homage to Penn and hallow the 50th year than with a bell proclaiming liberty?



Also inscribed on the Bell is the quotation, "By Order of the Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania for the State House in Philada." Note that the spelling of "Pennsylvania" was not at that time universally adopted. In fact, in the original Constitution, the name of the state is also spelled

"Pensylvania." If you get a chance to visit the second floor of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, take a moment to look at the original maps on the wall. They, too, have the state name spelled "Pensylvania" (and the Atlantic Ocean called by the name of that day, "The Western Ocean"). The choice of the quotation was made by Quaker Isaac Norris, speaker of the Assembly.

Centered on the front of the Bell are the words, "Pass and Stow / Philada / MDCCLIII."

ans in Missouri when they tried to get to Richmond and raise a Confederate Regiment to come back and seize Colorado gold for the Confederacy after Jefferson Davis failed young Irving Howbert, later the Clerk and Recorder of El Paso County who used that same cabin as the county seat, it mentions 'Dr. Garvin' coming down from French Gulch to 'spend the winter in our romantic young city.'

French Gulch, near today's Breckinridge, some 90 miles

from Colorado City was one of the many mining camps where prospectors toiled away seeking their fortune. Some obviously became sick. They couldn't very well travel to a doctor, days or weeks away – in Denver City or Colorado City. Doctors, like preachers – had to visit them in their rough camps. The record seems to show that young James Garvin was an 'Itinerant Doctor' just as the well known Father Dyer was known in the same area, as the 'Itinerant Snow Shoe Preacher.' It was not at all unusual for those who went into those camps during the summer weather, either prospecting or providing a service, or both – (which I suspect young James Garvin did, looking for gold himself) retreated back to the foothills and plains, such as to Colorado City, for the winter, at least. Thus the notice of his re-'arrival' in Colorado City in 1861.

Dr. Garvin, by his own later statements

to his children ended up owning many 'deeds' to property across Colorado Territory and the Pikes Peak region. They quite possibly had been in payment of his doctor bills by impecunious prospectors who had staked claims and got deeds to the land – mostly worthless patches of promise – but often used

as tender in the place of scarce money. He later told his sons if he had held on to his holdings he would have had title to lots of land that was later became Colorado Springs. He also told them he had to 'trade' some of his 'land' for teams of wagons and mules to get around the mountains on his doctor rounds those years. By all accounts he traveled



*The El Paso Claim Club recorded deeds, lobbied in Congress, and hung horse thieves in Colorado City in 1860*

a lot from his base cabin in Colorado City. He shows up in records in Georgetown, west of Denver City, and Idaho Springs, where he apparently served for a time as Coroner and Sheriff, as well as in the mining camps west of Colorado City.

Dr. Garvin stayed in Colorado Territory according to his own account, throughout the Civil War – 1861 to 1865. He apparently was not caught up in it, saying it didn't mean much, even though Colorado City was a stopping over point for Union troops – like the 1<sup>st</sup> Colorado Infantry – and there were disputes and arrests of Secessionist 'guerillas' near Colorado at La Glorieta Pass in 1862. But if he had spent much time in the mountains both practicing medicine and prospecting, not much Civil War-ringing would have occurred there in the mining camps. Both Southerners and Unionist were too busy trying to find their fortune, together as well as apart. The search for gold united as well as divided men.

*Continued on page 6*

Dr. Garvin finally departed Colorado City and the Territory for good after the Civil War – about 1866 - and went back to Illinois, where he continued his studies and practice of medicine, marrying Cedelia Ann in 1875, having been all but a confirmed bachelor until he was 42. They had three children. He was a civic leader in Illinois. He died May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1902.

Benjamin Franklin Garvin, a grandson, visited Colorado Springs in 1952 looking for more information about his Dr. Garvin, relating some of the family history handed down he had to Miss Dorothy Smith, then Curator of the Pioneer Museum. They visited the Cabin which was then on the Broadmoor Golf Course, having been saved in 1927 by the Spencer Penrose's and C. L. Tutt from being torn down on Colorado Avenue.

### Garvin's Famous Cabin

Dr. Garvin and M.S. Beach's Cabin has become the landmark symbol for the original, exiting, Colorado City and the frontier from its earliest days. In 1958 it was even moved to Colorado State's Capitol grounds for Colorado's 'Rush to the Rockies' Centennial. With great fanfare, including Governor McNichols getting the keys to the Cabin – in the accompanying Rocky Mountain News picture - and opening the 42d General Assembly inside it January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1959, it was the toast of Denver for two years.

Returned to Colorado Springs in 1962, with the volunteer physical help of local Labor Unions, given to the City, Dr. Garvin's Cabin still stands with its stout logs, only a few of which had deteriorated so much over 145 years from water damage they had to be removed in recent years. But a certified slice of those removed logs is now back in the possession of his direct descendents. And in turn our society has gained valuable new information of those earliest days of Colorado City, and of the life of one of its noted Pioneers –Dr. James Paul Garvin, the builder and owner of our priceless cabin.

### May 2004-2005 Annual Treasurer's Report

This report is from May 2004 to May 2005. During 2004, our Society successfully balanced an \$18,000 budget. We ended 2004 with a \$1,422 surplus over our original forecast of no profit at all.

This budget was apart from our handling, for the City, a \$91,290 State Historical Fund Grant for the rehabilitation of the Bancroft Park Cabin. We rescued the City from having to lower its own Park budget by \$68,450 had it gotten the state grant itself because of the Tabor Amendment. So we volunteered to become the grant applicant and administrator. We took the fiduciary risks; we did the contracting with member Sandy Knox supervising the work, and with meticulous, state audit-able accounting by member Rebecca Clark. In the end the 1859 Cabin has been made to last another 100 years, our society once again saved the deteriorating cabin, bailed out the city, and your society showed its sound financial and management skills.

While we still suffer from the down economy, gaining only \$800 for 2004 Book Store Revenues we were helped this last year by a series of unanticipated grants totaling over \$7,000 with more than \$900 donated in Memorials for Jean Christopher, which went into our fixed Endowment fund.

We started the year, 2005 with a projected budget of \$20,000 for the calendar year 2005. Our membership income may rise above \$4,000 of that as we have gained new members from attendees at the Special Programs Joanne Karlson has put on.

We grew our Endowment somewhat with \$67,000 of it is drawing - at last - 3.5% interest in a variable rate CD in the Pikes Peak Bank. We have another \$3,000 in an interest bearing savings account which the Board is authorized to draw on if necessary for general or special expenses.

\$5,000 was donated to us by long time Westside businesswoman Shirley Bonds for the first part of an ambitious Digitization Program. This is intended to help digitize all the holdings of this so-

ciety – books, papers, photos, video and audio tapes, make 3 dimensional images of our artifacts. And we will soon be adding a valuable collection of 4,000 digital photographs of the front of every Westside home. All will eventually be ‘online.’

Our very successful Web site, besides displaying early Colorado Territorial history, having gotten us the donation of rare manuscripts, photographs, and biographies from distant relatives who discovered us online, it has also gained us some income from the licensing or sale of our historical photographs. Even book publisher McGraw Hill has paid us to use pictures in their school books. We now have the ability even to sell our books, photos and Event tickets, online by Credit Card and secure Paypal. Your society is higher tech than many people realize.

As of May 2005 - the end of our membership Year - we have liquid assets of \$19,000 in the bank, and \$70,000 in our Endowment Fund earning Interest, not counting the \$5,000 Digitization Grant. Our insured building and equipment is worth more than \$400,000 (at cost) not including any dollar value of our collections. So your Society's tangible assets are worth at least a half million real dollars. But as the television ad for one credit card company says – the history of Colorado City is “priceless.”

With this year's income from memberships, book store sales, small cash donations, event income like the Victorian Tea and the Cemetery Crawl, tours, our rental of our main room on occasion, our earned interest, and occasional larger donations out of the blue – with our real costs of about \$1,000 a month to keep the Center's doors open entirely with volunteers, and with your Board of Directors scrutinizing our financial records every month, we are fiscally in pretty good shape.

Dave Hughes  
Treasurer

## 2005 Calendar

### OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORY CENTER & MUSEUM

1 South 24<sup>th</sup> Street

*The Old Colorado City Historical Society is a non-profit volunteer organization formed to keep memories of Colorado City alive (1859-1917) and to encourage research, preserve photographs and celebrate the unique spirit of this city.*

Tuesday Nights in July – 7 pm.  
Every Tuesday night we will host a speaker about Colorado history. Free admission – Donations welcome.

August 13 – Annual Old Colorado City Founder's Day Celebration in Bancroft Park. 8 am to 4 pm.

Arts & Crafts sale, activities, entertainment, and music.

August 13 & 14 – Annual Cemetery Crawl at Fairview Cemetery. Tickets are \$5 in advance, \$7 at entrance. About 10 impersonators in period costumes will regale visitors with historic anecdotes.

September 9 – 11 am. Conversations with Westside "Old Timers"! Several members will share their experiences and memories of yesteryear. Free admission – Donations welcome.

October 14 - 11 am. Jan Pettit, Author and Ute Indian historian, will present the program. Free admission – Donations welcome.

November 11 - 11 am. Program with speaker. Free admission - Donations welcome.

November - Book signing and reception for local authors. Books available for sale.

December – 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Bed & Breakfast Tour – Local Bed & Breakfast inns open their doors for a holiday tour of their facilities. Tickets sold in advance and at the door.

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

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

**TUESDAY NIGHTS IN JULY**

Come and enjoy colorful stories about the Pikes Peak region each Tuesday night in July at the Old Colorado City History Center & Museum.

**July 5 – “Buffalo Soldiers and The West”. Speaker: George Peyton**

**July 12 – “Women in the West”. Speaker: Kathy Herrin**

**July 19 – “History Along The Hogbacks”. Speaker: Don Ellis**

**July 26 – “Brothels, Bordellos, & Bad Girls”. Author: Jan MacKell**

**History Center opens at 6:30 p.m. Programs begin at 7 p.m. Free admission. Donations welcome.**