

WEST WORD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 8

October 2005

THE CABIN

Bancroft Cabin Was High Tech?

Dave Hughes

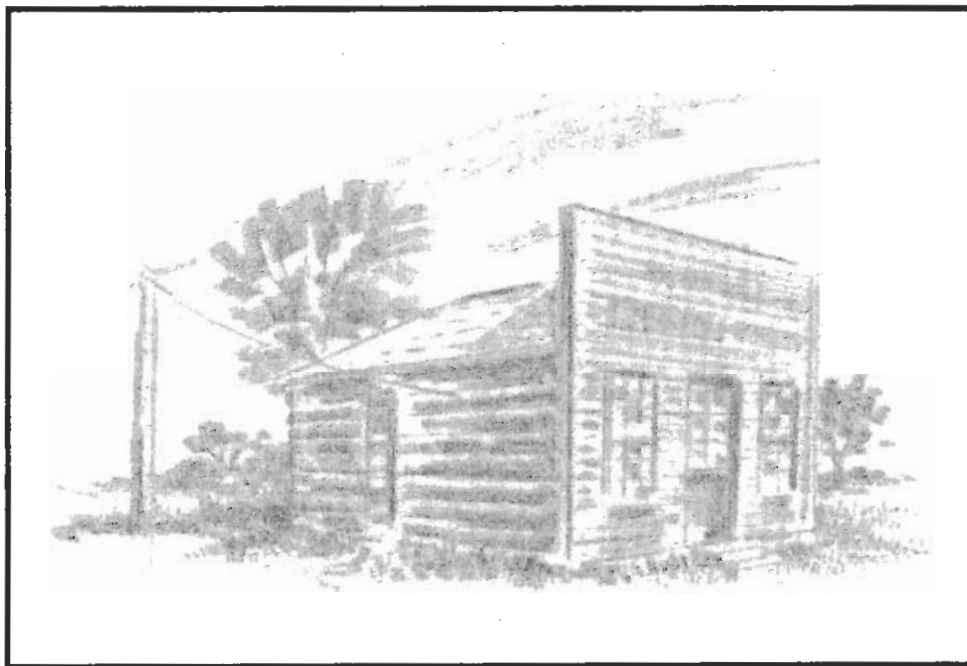
30 years ago just one paragraph in a fat biography intrigued me. It was buried in "Memories of a Lifetime in the Pikes Peak Region" by Colorado City Pioneer Irving Howbert which he published in 1925.

That paragraph, whose subject I have never seen mentioned anywhere else in all my 30 years' research about early Colorado City, stated that the Bancroft Park Cabin, when it became the El Paso County seat in 1869, also became a Telegraph Office. First one south of Denver City. The complicated

pieces of a very early Telegraph system were installed in the cabin and young Irving was taught how to use it – sort of. Our beloved log Cabin far out in the wild west was High Tech even then! Only a few years after Samuel Morse invented the first telegraphy.

Here is that paragraph from Howbert, verbatim:

"Two or three years previously, a telegraph line had been constructed from Denver to Pueblo, and, I think, on to Santa Fe. It was a cheaply built affair, but answered fairly well for the limited amount of use required of it. Although this line ran through El Paso County, no telegraph office had been established within its boundaries until I was elected Clerk. However soon after I moved into the log building,



the manager of the line installed a set of instruments and taught me sufficient telegraphy to enable me to answer calls and test the line. He also installed a mechanical arrangement for receiving telegrams consisting of

a series of cog wheels and weights which, after it was wound up and set in motion, recorded on a slip of soft paper the dots and dashes that made the message. Knowing the Morse alphabet, I was in that way able to receive and interpret messages, but with all his teaching, I never became proficient enough to send them. General Palmer, on his visits here before

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

WEST WORD

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LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIFACTS AND STORIES CAN BE DELIVERED
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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
	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
 October 14, 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

July, August Treasurers Report

Except for the rainstorm that knocked out one day of our August Cemetery Crawl, dropping our expectations from \$1,000 to \$451 for the Society, our summer events did quite well.

The most recent one was Founder's Day the 13th of August, which included lots of activities – a children's contest for making a model of the 1859 Cabin, with prizes, and broom races, a Craft Fair, live music, and a successful repeat of our Bake Sale held at our front door during the Farmer's Market.

With only the December B&B Tour left as a special fund raising event this year, we have netted the following profits from our events so far:

Victorian Tea	\$626
Territory Days	\$667
Garden Fair	\$870
Founders Day	\$722
Cemetery Crawl	\$451

Or, on event income of \$4,711 we gained \$3,346 to pay our History Center bills.

We have had some setbacks too. An August summer lightning strike hit close to the Center and destroyed our Credit Card machine, our Telephone answering machine, sneaking in via both telephone and outside wiring, not even tripping our circuit breakers, but zapping both of them, and it fried our security alarm system. Since the alarm system is owned by Action Security, not us, to whom we pay \$42 a month, they replaced everything at their expense, not ours. But the rest was up to us. With \$250 deductible on our Insurance, Alliance Insurance paid us \$150. We bought a new, smaller, easier-to-use Credit Card machine which cost us \$340, and is now is behind the Bookstore Counter, and can be used by our volunteers not just experienced officers. So the real cost was \$190 out of our funds. Mother Nature's way of reminding us who's boss around the Pikes Peak Region.

Now for Higher Finance.

As the national interest rates have been creeping up we decided to really maximize what we can get out of our endowment, accumulated interest, saving and checking account funds. Picking the brains of bank officers at Pikes Peak Bank who now hold our variable rate 1 year Certificate of Deposit for \$67,000 of our fixed Endowment, which is up to 4.07% APY we laid out several alternatives for the Board's consideration, which includes buying into Federal T-Bills rather than stay with the miserable 1.5% saving account interest, while keeping over \$15,000 in our checking account which earns nothing.

T-Bills have the advantage of higher than savings

interest rates, while lower than CD interest, the ability to deposit more anytime, or withdraw funds 3 times a month without penalty, and only requires an annual \$82 fee.

So your Board studied the alternative strategies, risks, and projections and selected the following.

1. We will let the \$67,000 Variable Rate 1 year CD ride until its April, 2006 Maturity date, by which time it should have earned \$2,600 interest over the year.
2. Put all our \$3,000 so-far separately accumulated Endowment interest, plus the \$5,000 Shirley Bonds grant (until it must be expended for digitization) add to it \$17,000 of our operational checking account funds into a single \$25,000 Federal T-Bill which is earning 3.08% interest and would gain us another \$554.19 by April 1st.
3. Keep only \$3,000 in our checking account to operate on month to month. (Betsy was able to transfer \$800 from the Bookstore earnings to our general account to keep it above \$3,000) Our hard costs average about \$700 a month.
4. On April 1st, when the variable rate CD Matures, launch another 1 Year Variable Rate CD with the \$69,600 from the last year's CD with its 4% interest, plus the \$25,554 which will be there by then in the T-Bill with its 3% interest, making a total of at least \$95,000 which can earn at least \$3,800 in interest over the next year at current rates (even though it could go up another percentage point as general interest rates rise). But have the interest earned monthly in the CD credited to the still-alive T-Bill account (with no new fees) getting its interest which is only 1% lower than the T-Bill. And keep only \$3,000 or less to operate with, but with the ability to withdraw T-Bill funds without penalty if needed.

The first step was taken on September 1st, with a \$25,000 T-Bill at the Pikes Peak Bank started that is now earning 3.08% interest.

Of course this will require that your Treasurer keep detailed track of which bneket every dime belongs to in our holdings. But that's what computers do nicely.

Meanwhile our money is Federally guaranteed safe, (even if the interest rates are not) we are beginning to earn reasonably from it, and we can creep toward the day when the interest from our investments permit a part time employee to be hired. Who can help us keep the doors open 7 days a week.

Dave Hughes Treasurer

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!

The History Center was buzzing this summer with visitors...and all the activities going on! Our participation in community events, fund-raising, and July evening programs depended on our loyal OCCHS members. A BIG THANKS to everyone who helped!

Our apologies if we omitted your name...please, let us know!

Alma Moser	Marge & Joe Knorr
Arlene & Merv Casey	Jo & Dan Cervone
Becky & Gordon Gray	Betty Baker
Betty Grout	Eloise Wynne
Betty Magninie	Doris McCraw
Christine & Bob Heinich	Sandy Knox
Cyndy Estes	Muriel Dunkley
Don Ellis	Bev Patterson
Don Kallaus	Marty Walker
Doris & Tom Hendrix	Armour Ratcliffe
Dorothy Vidmar	Pat & Dave Hughes
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Merell Folsom	Bev Disch
Nadine Gilman	Deanna Bean
Nancy & Philip Miceli	Gloria Chapman
Pat & Andy Fejedelem	Patricia & La Rue Ebersole
Virginia Rogers	Britney Furlong
Rod Cooley	Jennifer Clark
	Pikes Peak National Bank

Own a Piece of History

Wouldn't it be wonderful to own a piece of history that dates from the earliest days of Colorado City? Well, your Society is doing something that will make a piece of history available to you. The historic log cabin, now located in Bancroft Park, is the oldest structure from the Colorado City days. It dates back to 1859 and your Society has finished renovating the building with the help of a grant from the State Historical Society. During this renovation, and previous renovations, original logs from the building have been removed. We have taken two of these logs and sliced them into one-inch thick pieces. Each log cut is engraved with the following:

"This crosscut, removed during repairs, came from an original log of the historic cabin erected in Colorado City in 1859, now in Bancroft Park.

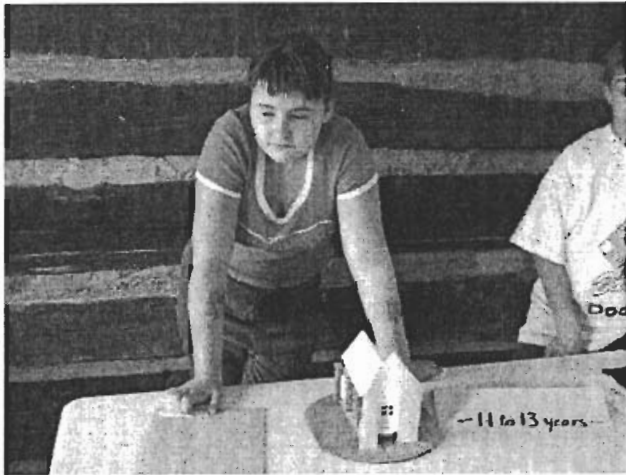
Certified True - Old Colorado City
Historical Society, June 2003"

These log mementos are offered as a limited edition to members of the Society and other historians. The logs are numbered and will be issued in a limited set of 100. With each log, the purchaser will receive a parchment Certificate of Authenticity, signed by the President of the Old Colorado City Historical Society.

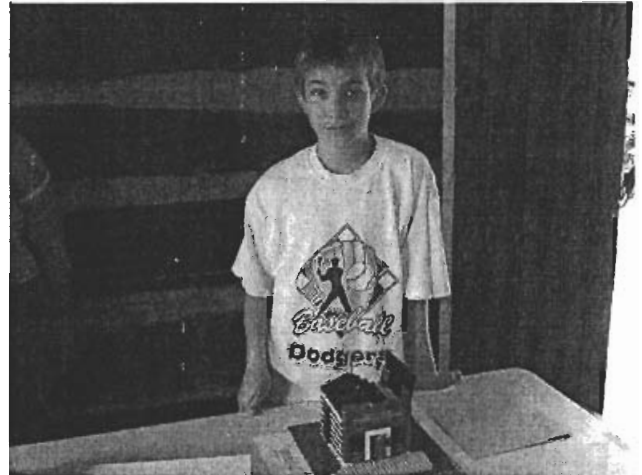
We are currently taking orders for the logs. The cost for each log is \$25 (no discounts), plus \$5, if the log is to be mailed.



Founders Day Cabin Building Contest



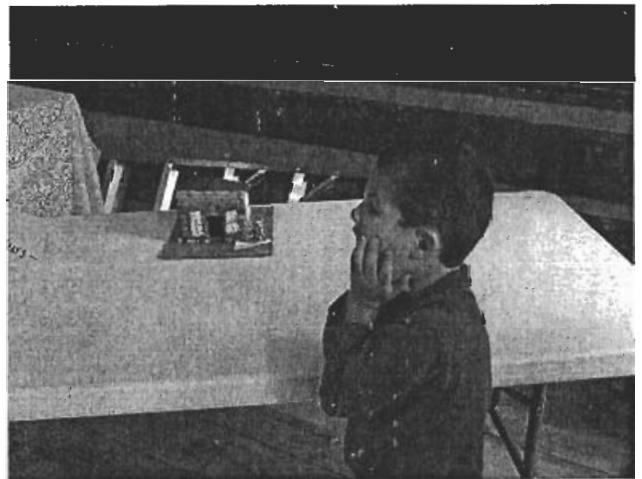
Jessica Burrett— building is hard work



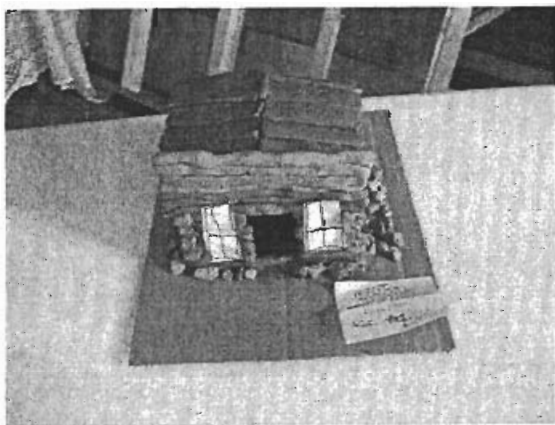
Rioux Jordan— It was just a lot of fun, Really!



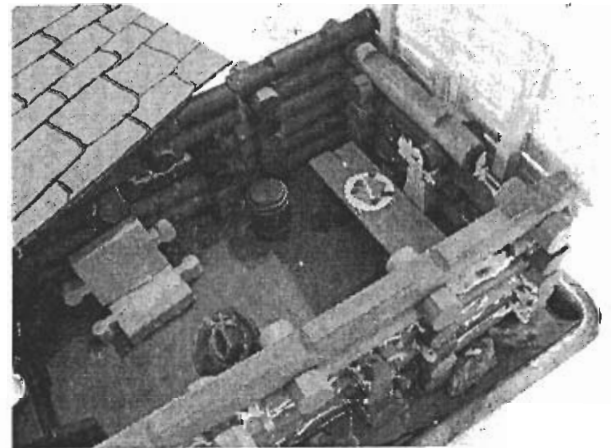
David & Chris Weber—we did it together



Weston Miller—is he excited or what?



Clay seems to make a great log.



Lincoln Logs seem to work just fine

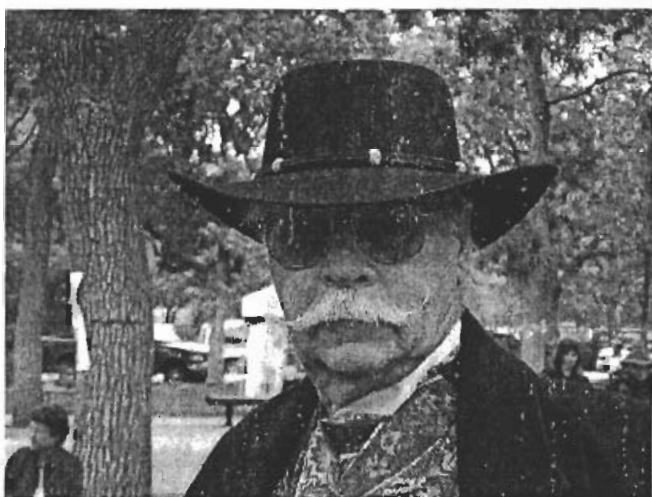
Founders Day Fun, games, shoot-um-up and food



The Ladies



The Troop of Reinactors



The Gentlemen



The Shootout



Broom and Sack Racing



The Society Ladies running the Games
Eloise Wynne, Arlene Casey & Marge Knorr

The People



Muriel Dunkley and Eloise Wynne—Tour Guides



Jo Cervone as a Tour Guide



Our hard working President—Bev Disch



Dottie Spann as Amanda Robinson

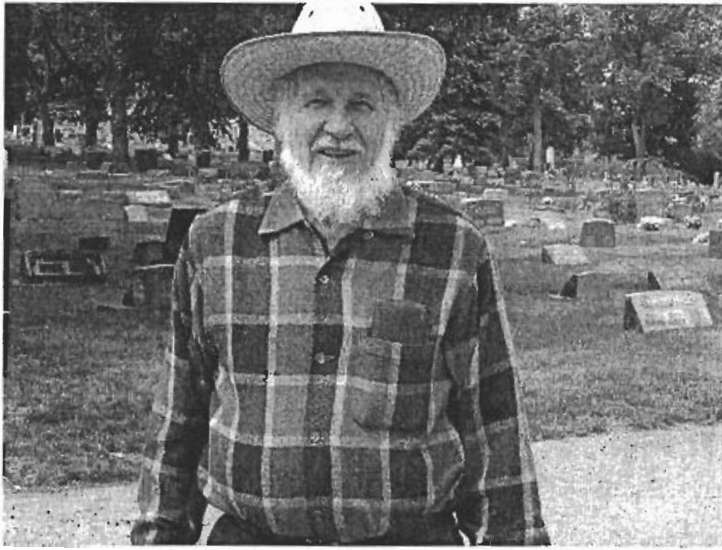


Bettyann Henderson as Hattie Hedges Trout



Kay Atteberry a faithful tour guide

The Cemetery Crawl



Don Ellis as Martin Luther McKnight



Dave Hughes as Anthony Bott



Jennifer Clark as Laura Bell McDaniel



LaRue Ebersole as His Father



Ed Hughes and Doris McCraw as
Duncan and Katherine Lamont



Rev David Clark as Q.M. Sgt. John Ingersoll

send them. General Palmer, on his visits here before Colorado Springs was laid out, usually brought an operator with him to send his messages.”

Now this is a clear statement of fact right from pioneer Irving Howbert who came to Colorado City in 1861 had been elected Clerk and Recorder of El Paso County in 1868. He had first tried to perform his clerk duties in a poorly constructed building a few doors away on Colorado Avenue. But it had paper thin walls and got so cold that ink froze in his inkwells. He persuaded the Commissioners to rent a nearby Cabin - the surviving one in Bancroft Park today - with its thick insulating log walls and a cozy fireplace.

As one who is quite familiar with the nearly invisible introduction in Colorado Springs in 1977 of the technology of personal computers, pre-Internet networks, and their future significance, I observed that most local citizens didn't know or care about them for nearly another 20 years. Now they are the buzz. Likewise, Telegraphy in Colorado Territory was so new in the 1860s that nobody but Howbert seem to notice the then novel communications technology, and then mentioned it only briefly in his biography written 60 years later!

I been pursuing answers to a series of questions about that telegraph system. Exactly what kind of instruments would have been installed in that cabin then? Where did they get electricity to drive the system? What did the instruments look like? How did they operate? Where did the 'lines' go? Where did the poles come from? And if we are true to Colorado City's history, how can we find replicas of such instruments for our artifact collection?

Samuel Morse had only demonstrated how to communicate over wires in 1844, only 15 years before Colorado City was founded. But such a means of communications became so obviously valuable, when it took months, or weeks by Pony Express, to get a message across the vast United States, that it was adopted pretty early in Colorado Territory. After all, Colorado City was a two day horse ride from Denver. And both were a very long way from

Washington DC.

I discovered that many ham radio operators - which I never was - have become avid collectors of rare early telegraphic devices, some of which have become quite valuable. There are even a number of Museums dedicated just to early Telegraphy, whose devices were manufactured just as the United States began to become an industrial society.

I knew that the Civil War later stimulated the development of telegraphy. They were valuable in wartime. But out west for general use? Putting up poles on which to hang wires took lots of effort. Poles and single wires with an insulator were sometimes torn down by Indians in their fruitless effort to slow the westward expansion. But even before the war got very advanced, Denver City first got linked eastward in 1863.

A ten word telegram to the east coast cost \$9.10 - a large sum. Then a line was extended, as Howbert notes, to Pueblo, and perhaps further to Santa Fe. Howbert's mentioning of the 'manager' of the branch line to Colorado City indicates that telegraphy was a profitable private business in the West from the beginning. The need for rapid communications across the vast spaces of the West created demand. Already eastern railroads had telegraph lines next to them. Many a railroad was named 'Blah Blah Railroad and Telegraph' company. A perfect fit.

But there was no railroad close to Colorado City in 1869. It was not until General Palmer built the Denver and Rio Grande railroad in the 1870s, and extended it on today's Cucharras Street to Manitou Springs, that there was a right-of-way through Colorado City on which to place poles and a Telegraph Line. So where did the line go? Up Camp Creek - today's 28th Street - the shortest route to Denver?

It is fascinating to contemplate just what that infernal mechanical rig looked like in the one-room pioneer log cabin as cowboys, gold seekers, homesteaders, and others coming in to deal with the one man El Paso County government in 1869. But it was hardly a surprise that eastern businessman Gen Palmer, in 1870 busy trying to organize Colorado Springs and his Denver and Rio Grande Railroad needed to communicate with business associates back east from far off Colorado Territory. So he had to keep a trained Telegraph operator with his

Continued on page 6

Colorado City when he first visited here.

Dr. Tom Perera, with whom I have been corresponding owns one of the technology museums “Telegraph Museum” (<http://w1tp.com/>). He is an accomplished collector and ham radio operator of over 50 years, and an expert in the field. He describes how Howbert’s instrument would have looked and worked according to the description in that one paragraph.

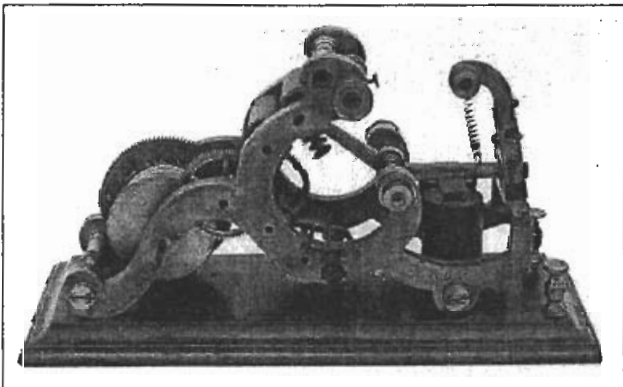
“The device being described is called a weight-driven register. A heavy weight pulled down on a cord wrapped around the drum in the photo and drove the mechanism that pulled a paper tape past a lever that could mark the tape with either dots or dashes. The lever was activated by the coils seen in the photos.”

Only some early telegraph instruments could ‘print’ in ink. This was not one of them, according to Howbert’s description. So a tape with punched dots and dashes was the product. Which Howbert could decode and then write down the message in plain English for the recipient.

Dr. Perera has given us permission to reproduce photos from his collection. While we cannot be sure of the exact manufacturer or model that ‘Telegraph Manager’ installed in our Cabin, there were only a few makes that were available in the marketplace at the time, and fit Howbert’s description.

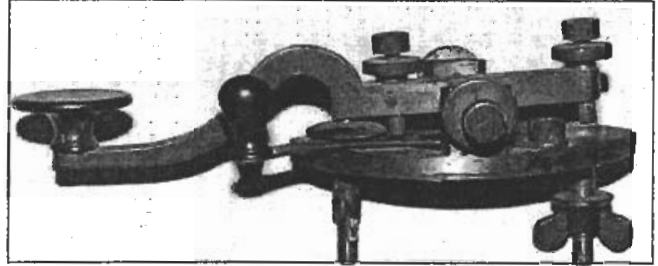
Telegraph Register

Below is an 1855 model ‘weight-driver’ register made by Chester & Company of New York. It would have been made and distributed widely enough to get to and be used in Colorado Territory.



Telegraph Key

Dr. Perera also owns several keys which would have been available and used then. This was a popular ‘Phelps’ Camelback key built early enough also



to have been in the Cabin.

Electrical Power

The electricity needed to go over the single wire, often used in the earliest networks, using the ground as electrical ground return, would have to have been generated by awkward chemical battery. This one which would have worked used copper sulphate. It too had to be put somewhere in the cabin as this picture below. No power generating ‘Utility Department’ in Colorado City those days!

So the system in the Cabin would have included a Register, Key, and a Battery with wires going out to the closest pole. No evidence of a hole for the wire still exists.



Local retired commercial artist Newt Heisley sketched the Telegraph Line coming out of the cabin. (page 1)

Its also fascinating to contemplate just what the Telegraph Pole system from the Cabin to the place it tied into the Denver-Pueblo line, about 3 miles to the east must have looked like. In all probability the earlier line from Denver to Pueblo would have run north and south to and through Monument, then Fountain Creek to the Arkansas. So the tie in from Colorado City would have been near the confluence

of Fountain Creek and Monument Creek. But I know of no mention, or picture, or drawing of the most direct 'road' – Colorado Avenue – which was laid out east west in 1859 - of telegraph poles beside it. They would have been between 30 and 40 feet apart, and up to 30 feet high. It is possible that Calvin Husted, who built the Husted House in Colorado City in the 1880s, having come to the Pikes Peak region in 1860 and opened a sawmill in the Black Forest could have provided the poles. They cost from \$.80 to \$1.50 each – for treated ones. The wires obviously had to get here by wagon.

Acquiring Telegraph Artifacts for our Society.

Would our Colorado City History be complete if we didn't acquire at least a replica of this early communications technology which was used right in our Cabin in 1869? That may seem odd to those who romanticize about the non-industrial pioneer west.

But the vast west would not have been mastered – without progressive technology.

However the above very early instruments are a little beyond our museum acquisition budget – the Chester 1855 era Register commands \$8 to \$10,000 from collectors, and an original Phelps Camelback key would cost at least \$5,000.

So we have a choice of raising that princely sum, and display it in the Cabin during some of our Historical Events. Or put it only among our displays in our Center. Or pay someone to build a replica from drawings and descriptions Tom Perera has drawn. Or finally, just blow up good pictures and make a display, with the true story about the high tech telegraphy in our old low tech cabin! What do you think?



Happy Halloween

Old Colorado City Historical Center Fall Meetings

October 14 - 11 am **Jan Pettit**, author and Ute Indian historian, will return to present a new program about the Ute Indians. This is a special membership meeting ... details in next West Word.

November 11 - 11 am "Music tells the History" with **Tom O'Boyle** Come hear this talented local musician ... always a treat

Special Events

November 6 - book signing and reception for local authors Books available for sale check for time.

December 11th Annual Bed and Breakfast Tour—Local Bed & Breakfast Inns open their door for a holiday tour of their facilities. Tickets sold in advance and at the door. Help support this major fundraiser.

Jan 28, 2006 - 1pm "*Railroads of Cripple Creek*", presented by **Mel McFarland**, local railroad historian and author.

"I Don't Do Windows!"

... a unique program about the Ute Indians!

Friday, October 14, 2005 –

Program 11 a.m. at the History Center

Open at 10 a.m. for coffee

and visiting the museum & bookstore.

Jan Pettit, a noted Ute Pass and Pikes Peak area author and historian, will give a historical approach to understanding the everyday life of the Ute Indians, specifically the many roles of the women. Her talk will include illustrations and photographs. Jan is the author of the popular "The Utes: The Mountain People", has published many articles, and is one of the founders of the Ute Pass Historical Society.

A special membership drive will "kick off" at this meeting.

Read the "*Letter from the President*" article in this issue to learn more.

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

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are starting off our new fall season with the lengthening of the days and a crisp tang in the air. We have had a busy, productive summer with our new, successful Garden Fair on Saturday, June 11. Joanne Karlson ran that well with our volunteers as well as our annual Founders' Day on Saturday, August 13. We had good bake sales with these two events with many tasty bake items provided by our many member bakers. We also had our annual Cemetery Crawl at Fairview Cemetery the following weekend Saturday and Sunday, August 20 & 21. Although we were rained out on Saturday, the weather held on Sunday and we had a lot of people attend who were very impressed with the people who portrayed our nine pioneers. My thanks to one and all who helped make these events a success. We just couldn't do it without our dedicated volunteers.

We started off our fall season with our general meeting on Friday, September 9 with the memories of one

of our members, Alma Moser. The lively 91 year old lady regaled us with her memories of being a pastor's wife in Oklahoma and then right here in Old Colorado City in our historical building where her husband was the pastor of the then Baptist Church. She even lived in the parsonage across the street from the church on Pikes Peak Avenue.

We are to be given some of the receipts from the Taste of Old Colorado City event on Saturday, September 24 put on by the Old Colorado City Associates which is very generous of them. So we are off to a flying start. Things are moving along and we'll be working on our annual Bed and Breakfast on Sunday, December 4. Welcome back, come see what's going on at our History Center.

Bev Disch,

President