



## Old Colorado City Historical Society

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 2

February 2006

# Remembering Jim

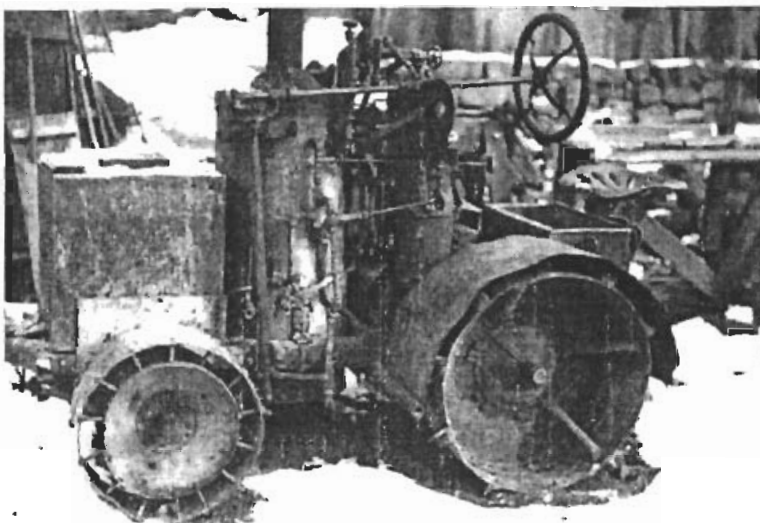
Jim Wood

by Ira Current

Jim Wood was our Sunday school teacher at what had been Colorado City Congregational Church at the corner of West Pikes Peak Avenue and Thirtieth Street in Colorado Springs. He lived nearby in our Red Rock Canon with his father and mother. We occasionally saw his father, James C. Wood, who had been in charge of the quarries there for many years before serving as caretaker before he died in February.



The steam tractor that Jim constructed



Jim at the wheel of his home constructed steam tractor

1931. We never knew Jim's two brothers, William and Raymond.

Jim was a track worker for the Midland Terminal Railroad as a member of the Colorado City Track Gang from 1920 to 1939. He was able to take advantage of some shop facilities to construct a small locomotive and other rolling stock that ran on a 15-inch gauge track he laid out on the side of the hill behind his home in the canon. The locomotive had a normal configuration with what appeared to be a horizontal boiler, but the steam was generated by a vertical one inside the cab fired by coal or

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

## WEST WORD

PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH BY  
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
	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  
February 10, 2006 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

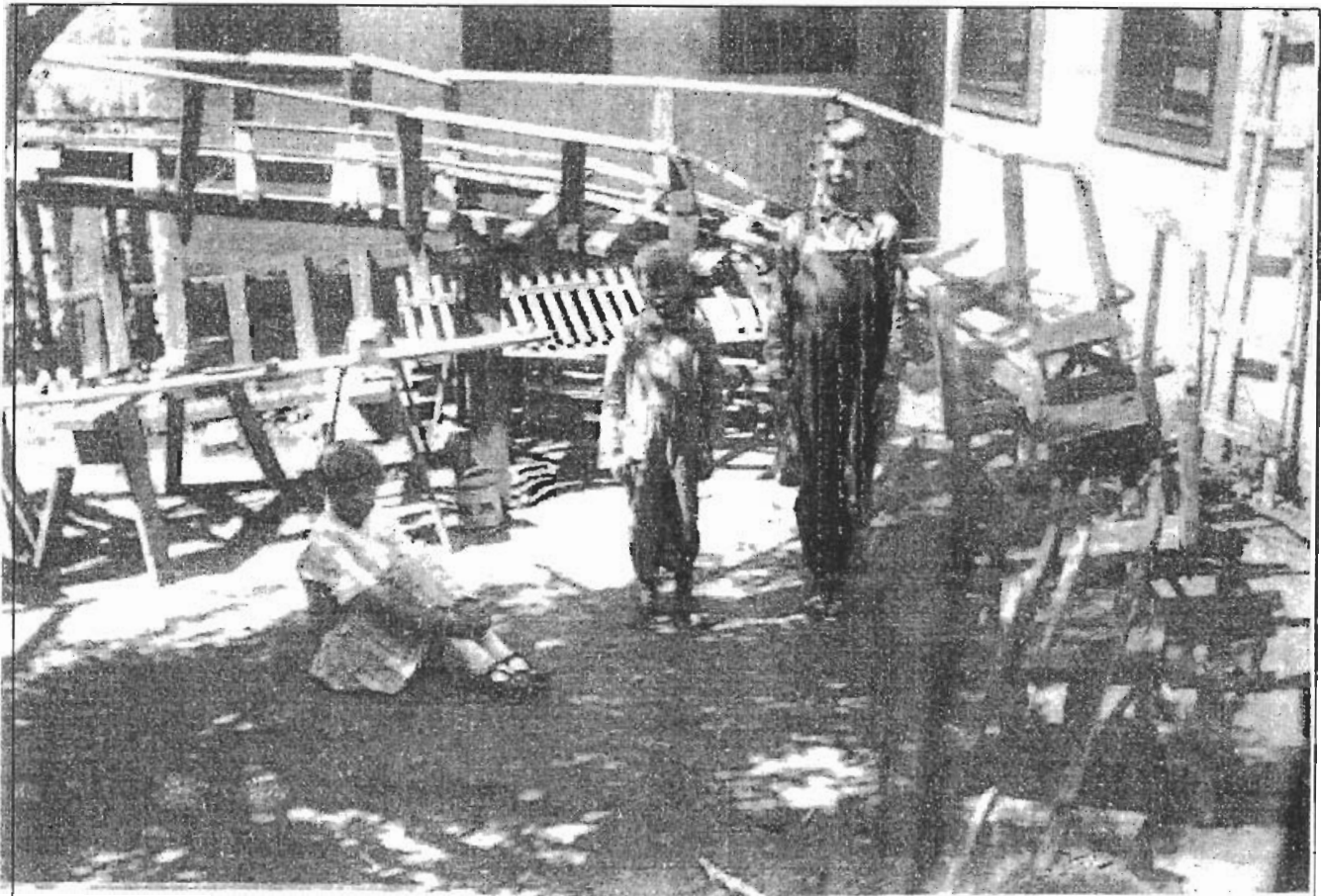
(June – September)

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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**The roller coaster we constructed in our back yard. The vehicle constructed by Jim Wood is at the far right**

wood. The cylinders and rods that appeared to drive the wheels were cosmetic; the actual power was produced by an engine from a Stanley Steamer automobile located inside the frame. We were given rides on the railroad, but Jim was always concerned with safety. One boy who had fallen between the ties on a small trestle was injured when the train could not be stopped quickly enough. I've always regretted we never made photographs of Jim's railroad.

His other adventures with power from Stanley Steamer engines included the building of a steam tractor, and a well-drilling rig. Wheels were made from discarded tanks and boilers. The hubs were fabricated from boiler ends, and the rims from sections cut from larger tanks with long bolts forming the spokes.

Jim got into an enterprise making small models

like one of the Statue of Liberty cast from lead alloy. Using a mold that went together in several parts, molten metal was poured into the assembly, then the melted metal poured out, leaving a portion that had solidified. Removing the mold presented an impression of the mold with a hollow core. We all became involved in the enterprise which consumed large amounts of zinc and lead. We were paid for all we could find of these two metals. Home canners suddenly found all their fruit jar lids had disappeared, and discarded lead plumbing no longer existed.

To bring fruition to our plan for a roller coaster in our back yard Jim constructed a vehicle just large enough for a seat. Its wheels were casters on large nails for axles, with reinforcing metal struts, and guidance consisted of additional casters underneath the cart that rolled against the sides of the wooden rails. The structure for the track was made from our carpenter dad's accumulation of lumber short ends and other pieces. The system worked fine, was

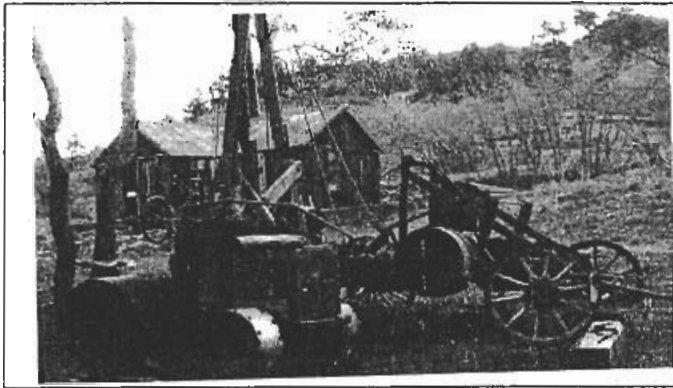
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thrilling, but did not last long. We were admonished to restore the wood to its amorphous pile.

College days and a working position in the "far east", Binghamton, New York ended our association with Jim.

We felt that Jim carried the torch for "Donna" Norris, a kind of horse-woman who lived at the entrance to Red Rock Canon. She married someone more into horses. I knew who Jim later married, but I understand he had two children; one of them a victim of polio.

**The Wood home across from the second quarry. Jim's drilling rig in the foreground.**



**The quarry with the Wood house  
in the canyon.**

Photo's from the Ira Current collection with his permission.

## 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:

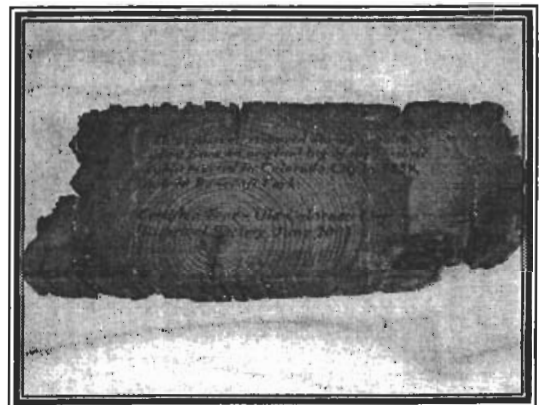
"This crosscut, removed during repairs, came from an original log of the historic cabin erected in Colorado City in 1859, now in Bancroft Park.

Certified True – Old Colorado City

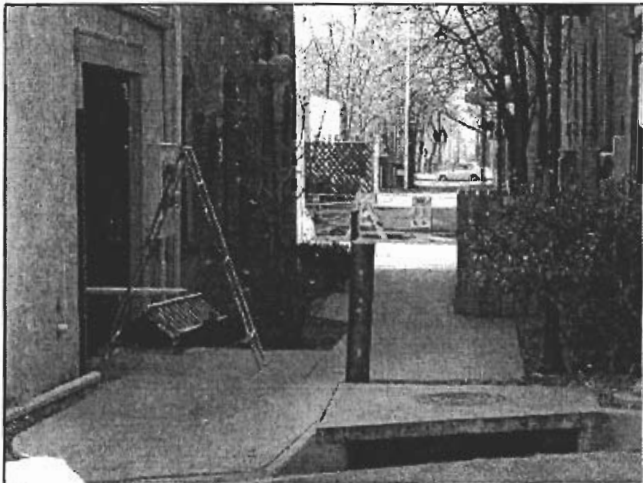
Historical Society, June 2003"

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.



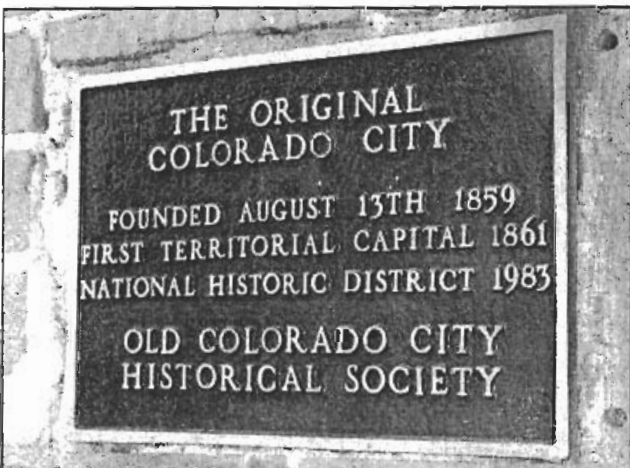
## A Unique Phenomenon



*horse alley from the parking lot in the 25 hundred block of Colorado Ave.*

When Pike first saw the Peak that was named after him the area of the west was pretty much unknown to the fledgling Americans that huddled along the east coast and major rivers. It was a vast wilderness known only to the Spanish, French and Native Americans. It would be another fifty years before the lands purchased by Thomas Jefferson would be fully explored and then settled.

The towns like Old Colorado City were unique in their development. One of the more interesting things about these towns, as the population burgeoned with ladies of refinement, and what had started out as



*A plaque dedicated by our society at the street end of the alley*

mere camps turned into cities. The ladies, wives with children brought this refinement, of sorts, to the rough and ready men that populated the area. One of



*An alley put to good use.*

these refinements was the insistence that the horses, mules and other live stock that were used be obliged to be parked behind the building rather than along the streets. The reasoning here was obvious. It was not only for sanitary reasons but also because of the affront to the olfactory senses.

Thus we see today building along Colorado Avenue that seem rather odd. Narrow and long these building were once the means for conveying the livestock



*Colorful but really narrow and long.*

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## OCCHS TO HOST "WELCOME TO COLORADO SPRINGS" FOR THE PIKE FAMILY

The Board of OCCHS will be hosting a buffet/reception for the Pike Family on **Thursday, July 13th at the History Center**. The Pike family members will be registering for their reunion on this day at the Academy Hotel and the reception and buffet will be the first time the family will gather as a group for their reunion activities. The Pike planning committee for this event consists of Gordon Gray, Lucille Cunningham, Betty Baker, and Mike Olsen.

The committee is planning activities each month leading up to the July 13 reception. This will include exhibits in the History Center and presentations on Pike at the monthly OCCHS meetings. Gordon Gray stated that the reception and buffet will be for members of the Pike family, the Board of OCCHS and invited guests. Following the buffet, there will be a reception on the patio at the History Center for members of OCCHS and guests. Please mark your calendars now for this event at 7:00 p.m. and plan to be a part of this historic evening.

The Society is excited about this event and expresses gratitude to Roy Pike (who is a member of OCCHS) and the Pike planning committee for scheduling this event on their reunion calendar.

The planning is well underway but there will be a need for volunteers to assist in many ways. If you are interested in volunteering, please give Gordon a call 719-630-8238 or by email [ggray01@aol.com](mailto:ggray01@aol.com). The committee will welcome anyone who wants to help and there will be many ways to be of assistance.

## 2006 Calendar of OCCHS Programs & Events

### Saturday, Jan. 28 - 1 p.m. "Railroads of Cripple Creek"

Don't miss this presentation by Mel McFarland, local railroad historian, author, and OCCHS member! Bring your family and friends. Come early for a seat!

### Friday, Feb. 10 - 11 a.m. "The El Paso Canal - Then & Now"

presented by Gary Bostrom, Colorado Springs Utilities Dept. Come learn more about the history of this Westside landmark, the water rights, and how the land is used today.

History Center opens at 10 a.m. for coffee.

## GARDEN FAIR FUNDRAISER COMING

### JUNE 10

"CRAFTY PEOPLE" AND SUPPLIES NEEDED!

Homemade art and crafts sell well at this fundraising event. Crafters and people who sew are needed to help make a variety of projects for our booth. Contact Nancy Miceli at 227-0714.

Supplies needed are:

- Garden pots & saucers (clay, pottery, plastic)
- Fabric remnants (prints, solid color, taffeta, satin, net, lace)
- Fabric paint
- Brushes (1-inch or smaller)
- Picture frames (smaller sizes)
- Buttons (including unusual shapes)
- Silk flowers (good condition)
- Fabric Ribbons
- Potpourri
- Tissue paper (all colors)

And, of course, your extra bulbs, herbs, succulents, house plants, honeysuckle starts, etc. you wish to donate. Set them aside for us...more details later.

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

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PERMIT  
#491

from the street to the back of the buildings. They were called horse alleys and as horses were turned in for Model T's their usefulness disappeared.

One such alley has survived and extends from the north side of Colorado Avenue to the large parking lot behind the buildings.

Merv Casey

*Horse alleys are useful when the street parking is unavailable and you want to save your change.*

