



## Old Colorado City Historical Society

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 3

March 2006

# *A Man for all Seasons*

### PRAIRIE DOG O'BYRNS

By Dave Hughes

A few rip roaring stories from the 1890s have come down to us about 'Prairie Dog O'Byrne. The man with a carriage pulled around Colorado City by two antlered Elk.

But who was he? And other than his infamous rides into snooty Colorado Springs with Laura Belle, Queen of the Red Light District sitting beside him, what else did he do? There are no eye witnesses still around from the days 21 Saloons kept things hopping on West Colorado Avenue at the turn of the century, but I have managed to fill in lots of dots about this memorable



Thunder and Buttons and Prairie Dog 1889

Irishman. And I have at least one photograph of he and his elk. The picture is pretty dull and tame, as many photographs were in those days, but it proves he existed and indeed, had the improbable pair pull his carriage.

Prairie Dog got his name from his having, at one

time, a wheel at the back of his carriage in which a prairie dog ran endlessly. We had such a wheel on our ranch and I remember as a boy watching it endlessly as the hapless animal never got anywhere. That was Prairie Dog, who seems to have as many different jobs and visited as many places as his prairie dog had spins of the wheel.

John O'Bryan was born in 1862 in still unsettled Ohio, born of Irish Catholic

**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
	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**  
March 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

(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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generously given the Society his rights to the book. But the Society will have to pay for the printing of 1,000 copies soon, which will cost \$4,670. It will then sell for \$7.95. It will take over 3 years to recoup the cost, then make the \$3,280 overall profit over maybe 3 more years.

We also have to do some needed building repairs that we estimate will cost \$1,000 or more.

So altogether we project in the approved 2006 budget a deficit of \$7,846 in operations over this next year. Good luck, new fund raising ideas, generous donors, more members, more promotion of our events, more museum foot traffic could offset that projected loss.

Offsetting projected losses in another way, is the progress we have been making managing our interest bearing investments. The Board, taking into account the interest we earned last year, interest carryover from 2004, and its ability to tap into our T-1 account balance, decided to renew the \$67,000 Endowment CD when it matures on March 1<sup>st</sup>. In view of rising interest rates, it boldly agreed to raise the fixed and 'untouchable' Endowment fund to \$80,000, up from \$67,000 all in a CD earning right now 5% interest. Which may go a quarter point higher.

Thus, over the year we expect to earn a minimum of \$4,300 in interest between our Endowment CD, and interest from the 4.5% Fed T-1 variable rate operating account we have at Pikes Peak Bank.

At this point, unless we gain more outside revenue, we will have to spend, over the year, at least \$7,000 of earned interest, current year and accumulated from last two years, if we are to break even overall by December. The Bylaws of our Society permit the Board to spend, for general purposes, the earned interest from its fixed Endowment. At this point it looks like we will have to. Overall we are in sound fiscal shape.

Dave Hughes

Treasurer

## *2006 Calendar of OCCHS Programs & Events*

### **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

**NONPROFIT  
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COLO SPGS,  
CO  
PERMIT  
#491**

There are harbingers or signs of spring coming up. Daffodils are peaking out, robins are coming back, and the fifth annual Victorian Tea is coming on a Saturday at the end of April or the first of May.

Jo Cervone is heading the committee planning the tea. Helping her are Eloise Wynne, Betty Baker, Arlene Casey, Pat Fedejalem, Kay Atterberry and Sharon Swint. They are working on a new and different program this time.

It is a lovely event that everybody looks forward to each year. The tables will be decorated with spring flowers. Do plan to attend because it is one of our fund raisers which help keep out museum running and open free to the public.

Bev Disch, President