



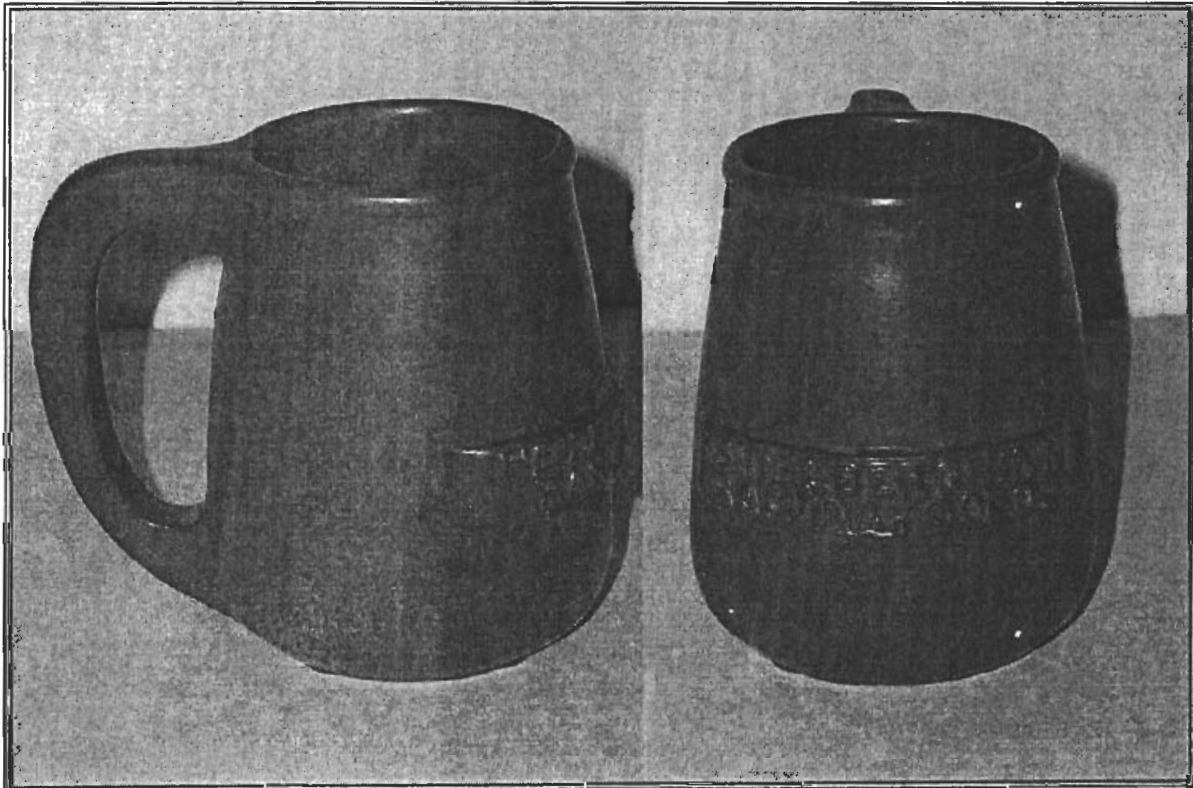
# SIN CITY

## BARS AND BRASS RAILS -- RAMONA, COLORADO

by Sharon Swint

Little known, even among the residents of the west side, was a town founded for one purpose—alcohol. Ramona, Colorado, was a town that sprang to life over night and disappeared almost as fast. Colorado Springs began dry, however Colorado City, just west of Colorado Springs, was as wet as

they came. But a combination of greed, politics, prohibitionists, and feuds eventually caused Colorado City to go dry. Colorado City had two factions, one run by Byron Hames and the other by Jim Lacey. Hames, proprietor of the Hotel Hoffman, wanted to just run an honest business selling drinks in the hotel saloon. Lacey, a saloon operator organized a group of citizens opposing the liquor filled streets of drunks and whores, all the while still wanting to sell liquor, SECRETLY. Lacey's plan was to get alcohol abolished in Colorado City so that he could control the



1914 Heidelberg Inn Mug

**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:

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 Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319  
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SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 15th OF EACH MONTH

**MISSION**  
 Revised April 2004

The Old Colorado City Historical Society was founded as a volunteer organization to recognize the historical significance and unique culture of original Old Colorado City and early El Paso County. This spirit is perpetuated through the preservation of artifacts and archival materials, encouragement of research, education of the children and the community, through the membership and the operation of the History Center at 1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

**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	Tom Hendrix	719-633-7392
Secretary	Arlene Casey	719-634-2356
Treasurer	David Hughes	719-636-2040
	Kay Atteberry	719-599-3187
	Eloise Wynn	719-633-9137
	Mel McFarland	719-533-1311
	Leland Feritz	719-229-8066
	Joanne Karlson	719-475-2574

**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 12, 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

*Summer Hours*  
 (June – September)

TUES – SAT 11 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Closed Sunday & Monday

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bootlegging industry within the city. Under Lacey's direction, prohibitionists gathered support and called an election to vote on whether to go dry or stay wet. In reality two elections were held. *"Local option came in, and those in Colorado City who favored prohibition managed to get an election called. The prohibitionists in Colorado City turned out to be unexpectedly numerous, and when the ballots were cast Colorado City remained wet by one vote. But the handwriting on the wall was seen. Another election was called and prohibition carried the day."* (Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph, sec. B, pg. 1 Col. 1 & 2, December 19, 1954)

With

Colorado City voting to go dry on April 4, 1911, the "wets" contested the election and appealed the vote in district court. With the uncertainty of becoming dry, city townspeople not in support of the measure began to organize. Two men, Frank L. Wolff and Clarence Kinsman, hatched an idea to start another

town; a wet town based on a court ruling on February 10, 1913, that essentially put the debate to rest in favor of the "dries." Armed with land owned by Mr. Wolff and \$20,000, plans were put into motion to start the new town, but before the town could become official there had to be enough residents to incorporate. Wolff and Kinsman set out to put together a town by starting a petition that would justify incorporation. Forty-nine people signed the petition as residents of the new town. The Old Colorado City History Center has a copy of the petition to incorporate dated July 17, 1913 listing all 49 residents. More legal disputes followed but on August 21, 1913, the town of Ramona came into existence. A

small 360-acre tract of land just six blocks north of Colorado City became the town. The first order of business conducted was an ordinance authorizing the sale of liquor... *"saloon buildings were hastily moved there or constructed. Bars and brass rails were toted over to the place and there a new oasis was established."* (Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph, December 19, 1954)

Ramona was for drinking. The residents knew it and advertised it as such. *"Ramona, the new booze annex to Colorado City, opened Monday night in a blaze of glory, and according to the papers, 'carriages met the cars at Fourth Street to carry patrons.' But were the carriages*



**Ramona Street with Heidelberg Inn**

*on hand to haul them home after the festivities ended?"* (Colorado City Iris, November 21, 1913)

Ramona consisted of a town mayor, marshal, town council, jail, athletic club, dairy and a handful of other businesses besides saloons. The town even built a small arena for boxing and wrestling matches. Despite Ramona's attempt to act and look conventional, Colorado City and Colorado Springs were sickened with the new town. In early 1914, Colorado Springs refused water permits for Ramona businesses calling the town "a moral cesspool." Outraged, Ramona took the city to court to force the issue. Colorado Springs argued that if Ramona could sell

*Continued on page 5*

## THE OLD CABOODLE – Chapter 1 OF 4

Well, the Old Caboodle has to be somewhere. Around the opening of this historic center it arrived in all manner of ways. There was the great gift of Luther McKnight first. He lived just a couple of blocks from the History Center. It was a church at that time. Luther decided, with the help of his younger friend, Ralph Conner to give the entire contents of his parents and his home to the young, "Old Colorado City Historic Society". It was gathered up by Ralph Conner and early volunteer members, and stored in a rental store just off 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The Center was being renovated at this time, with no place to put the McKnight Collection.

Other things came in different ways. In the early days of the Center when we arrived, there would be paper bags and boxes full of wonderful echoes of the past. Sometimes there would be scraps of paper from the donor with histories of the contents. Sometimes not a clue to their history or the donor was given.

We had things come by mail or by a moving van. Some we could use and they were accepted. Others were returned after seeing them. Each item was analyzed to the best of our research and questioning and need. Each item was also recorded by a member.

Sometimes large offerings from early business companies, no longer operating, came. There were maps and data from the railroads that used to be in this area. Real estate companies sent old maps and surveys. Another time the memorabilia of a fraternal club, "The

Knights of Pythias" was given. The training and operating material of the early Militia, came to our Center too.

There were private collections such as Dave Hughes' that were donated or loaned. Some of these contained diaries, journals, early legal papers of the era. There were school maps, radios, electric light bulbs, projectors and transparencies. A few Indian rugs and artifacts were contributed. The farm equipment and horse equipment also was offered and accepted.

Great pieces of furniture came. A newspaper's type, letters and symbols divided cabinet, was one of these. Then a beautiful cabinet desk and later a huge unit that had been used to decorate an old mansion, arrived. With space a factor, that was the end of huge pieces for the Center.

The clothes that were donated were just great! Some really old gowns had been made by hand with tiny stitches, bones and bustles to satisfy Madame, so that she fit into the fashion of the day. Children's clothes included underwear, flannel slips, booties and caps. In came wedding finery, garden frocks and every day dresses. Men's shirts, stiff collars and fancy cuff links arrived. Oh! the hats that were donated. It was a glorious age, those 1800's.

Well, you say, where are they? The artifacts or three dimensional items, are in drawers which one of our members has fitted into metal racks. Or they are on shelves covered with cloths.

Then there are the two dimensional items, the archival material such as, diaries, pamphlets, books and maps. These are in acid free boxes housed on

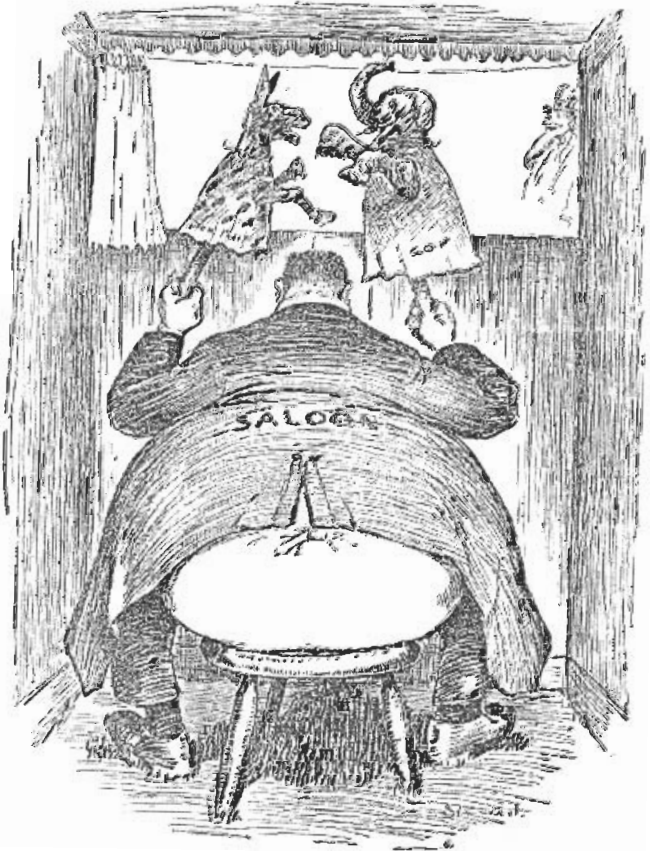
liquor how and to whom they wanted why could they not do the same with their water? Ramona eventually lost the court battle and in February all water was cut off to businesses in the township. In an effort to bypass the ruling, the town marshal, Lennie Moats, began wheeling a water tank down to Colorado City each evening and would fill the tank from the street fire hydrants.

The largest saloon, known as the Heidelberg Inn, was owned by George and Rose Geiger. They ran the Inn until prohibition took effect statewide in 1916. George, one of the few reputed upstanding citizens in Ramona, was also the town mayor from 1914 until 1916. The Colorado City Iris newspaper carried a story in January of 1916 telling of a farewell turkey dinner at the Heidelberg Inn prepared by Mrs. Geiger and served by George for former employees and a number of friends. The Geiger's took pride in their establishment with fine decorating, quality service and upscale serving ware. They even incorporated Van Briggles pottery items into their business. The artists at Van Briggles designed a Heidelberg Inn mug, based on a mug from the pottery's regular line, design #28B. It is not known how many of these mugs they made, or even how many survived the short existence of the Heidelberg Inn, but they are extremely rare.

In 1916 statewide prohibition passed and what started as a grand idea was over with the stroke of a pen. Frank Burnett and Bill O'Neal leased the Heidelberg Inn for a short time from George Geiger and tried to keep the business open as a restaurant holding periodic fights and boxing contests. Ramona attempted to continue as a legitimate town, but since the majority of its revenue was based on saloons, it soon faded away. The Colorado City Iris newspaper dramatically stated, "*No more will the musician sit before the piano at Ramona and tickle the ivories while men line up before the bar and keep time with the clink of glasses. No more will Colorado City officials be required to spend most of their time at the corner of Fourth and Colorado Avenue to act as a steering committee to pass the booze soaked hides, on down the line to Colorado Springs.....*" In January, 1919 the United States ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution essentially putting the final nail in the coffin for the town of Ramona. Fourth Street became 24<sup>th</sup> Street and Thorndale Park now

located at Uintah and 24<sup>th</sup> Street was laid out making the former "wild side" a more traditional neighborhood. On April 1, 1947, residents of the town of Ramona voted to disincorporate, ending a little known piece of Colorado history with a vote of 46 to 4.

For more information on Ramona and other interesting Colorado history tales, see [The Story Behind The Clay](#) by OCCHC member Sharon Hester Swint and her son, David Swint. Artifacts from the town of Ramona are archived at the OCCHC.



*Punch and Judy Up-to-date:  
THE CAMPAIGN SHOW IS NOW IN FULL SWING.*

This cartoon comes from *Prohibition Cartoons* published in the early twentieth century on behalf of candidates in New Jersey in 1904. The book was published in New York by The Defender Publishing Company.

*Editors note: Today, like then, the players behind the scene try and hoodwink the voters. With elections coming in a month or so it probably behooves us all to look behind the curtain to see just who is pulling the strings*

### Kudos from a westsider

Fantastic! I lived at 2326 W Pikes Peak in 1968. I remember the church services on Weds and Sunday nights in your building. I moved from there to the 1200 block of Pikes Peak, where I lived until 1975.

I loved the story about Thunder & Buttons. My husband's band played there in the early 80s.

Here's to roller skating in Bancroft Park, Empire Grocery Stores, painted turtles at the 5 & 10 and of course Roger's (may it rest in peace),

Thanks for a wonderful trip down memory lane.

Charmaine François-Griffith

### Pike Family Reception

OCCHS hosted the Pike Family Reception on Thursday, July 13. The total attendance was 190, of which over 100 were members of the Pike Family. For the reception committee, we want to thank all of the OCCHS volunteers who helped with this historic event. It could not have been done without your help, and it was greatly appreciated.

Pike Reception Committee

Betty Baker, Lucille Cunningham, Gordon Gray

### In Memory of Barbara P. Keller,

a long time Colorado resident and a life member, who passed away July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006

She truly loved Colorado and Pikes Peak. So when she was asked about moving to Kansas to be closer to her family, she always said she'd only move if she could bring the Peak with her. We have received several donations in her name to add to our endowment fund.

metal racks, or in filing cabinets (all donated). Both rooms containing the artifacts and archives, are below ground under the Center's Book Shop and the very large meeting room.

Finally, we have a very large collection of photographs and art work. Some of these are Luther McKnight's snap shots, taken over his life span. There also are pictures of early life on farms, in mines, the railroad, and general stores on Colorado Avenue. There is an archival photo collection of the 1859 - 1874 era. We have a fine set of photos of the, "Add-A-Man" yearly walk up Pikes Peak for the New Year's celebration.

In addition, the picture collection contains; Indian pictures, scenes of Colorado City done in water color, and oil paintings of historic sites.

So you think, why do we not see all of this? Well, as an all volunteer organization that must support itself, we wait to find volunteers interested in the old stuff below ground, where we operate. Today we are three volunteers in the artifact section, whereas before this year there was one with occasional helpers. With three of us it will be much easier to show you what we have. In the archive section we have two volunteers.

Chapter 2 will be information on how we handle the paper work, so that researchers will also know what we have, plus as much history of the material that we have. Members who are interested in the history of the early Colorado years, can add one more jigsaw piece to the puzzle of the Old West.

Liz Geiss

## Treasurers Report

August 2006

Much to catch up on when we don't publish our Newsletter every month during the summer.

Our Victorian Tea in April netted us \$678.77. Territory Days weekend we did better than ever with our Bake Sale in the Cabin! The goodies made by the ladies sold for \$907!

The Second Annual Garden fair was quite successful although plant sales at the Farmer's Market competed with us. And we had some non returnable plants left over. So Nancy Miceli, with her green thumb, made a great flowering display around our History Center. All in all we profited \$787.65 for that event and some nice flowers at our building. We also netted \$487.15 on our Patio Sales!

Endowment Contributions totaling over \$700 have been made so far for three Memorials – for LaRue Ebersole, Barbara Keller, and Jeff Disch all of whom passed on since our last newsletter.

In July, as was well advertised, over 140 people, including 108 from the Zebulon Pike Family were hosted by your Society in the Center. The lively affair spilled out onto Patio which was put to use. The Committee of Gordon Gray, Lucille Cunningham, and Bette Baker raised over \$1,200 to defray the costs of the Reception, which included a fine catered buffet. Together with the Society's planned contribution of \$1,000, the event cost \$2,249.84

Three memorial bricks purchased at \$100 each by members, as well as a 'Zebulon Pike Family' brick donated by the Society with a ceremony have now been added to our patio brickyard.

500 Copies of our reprint of the Dorothy Aldridge's History of Colorado City came in. They cost \$2,716.30. We are beginning to benefit from our in-house publication of 'Little Books' using our own copier. Betsy Evans was able to transfer \$800 Book Store profits to our general account in early August.

Finally, we are earning a robust 5.9% interest on our variable rate \$80,000 Endowment CD, and 4.47% for our –currently - \$12,830 variable rate Federal T-Bill. Our last Checking account balance for current expenses stands at \$7, 538. Or we have just about \$100,000 in total liquid assets. Projections through the end of 2006 show, however, we will end 2006 with about \$2,500 less than we will take in for the year. It will have been a rather expensive year.

Dave Hughes  
Treasurer

Dave didn't mention that some of the men also bake cookies for the bake sales. So as one of the bakers I wish to thank them also. The editor

**GENERAL PALMER & THE MELLEN/  
CLARKE CONNECTION**

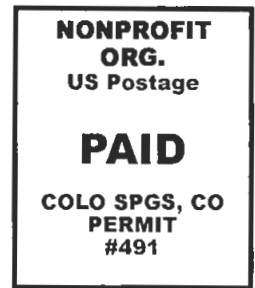
Presented by Delores Gustafson,  
Rock Ledge Ranch volunteer

**Friday, September 8 ~ Program at 11 a.m.**  
**History Center opens at 10:15 for coffee and  
museum visitation**

Much has been written about General Palmer, the founding of Colorado Springs, and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Less has been written about his personal life, his wife and her family. There is much misinformation and speculation about this topic. Ms. Gustafson's research has led to a better understanding of General Palmer, his wife, Queen, and her family...the Mellen/Clarke connection. Through photos, a family tree and family letters, you will gain a better understanding of Queen Palmer and her family.

Delores Gustafson began her research into the Mellen/Clarke family in 1982 while a volunteer at Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site. She has done extensive archival research in Colorado, Minnesota, Ohio, Kentucky, Washington D.C., plus South Africa, Scotland, and England.

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



### LaRue Ebersole

LaRue Ebersole passed away on July 3, 2006 many of the members have fond memories of LaRue and will miss him.

LaRue was very active in the society; he was vice-president of the Board of Directors for several terms and worked in the bookstore every Friday.

LaRue was the caretaker of the grounds seeing to its watering and upkeep. In addition he helped, every month, to getting out the news letter. He was one of the few members that was a native of the West Side where he grew up and helped his father run one of the very early news papers. The Society has received many donations in his name that will be placed in our endowment fund.

LaRue was a true gentleman and a good friend, He will be missed.