



Old Colorado City Historical Society

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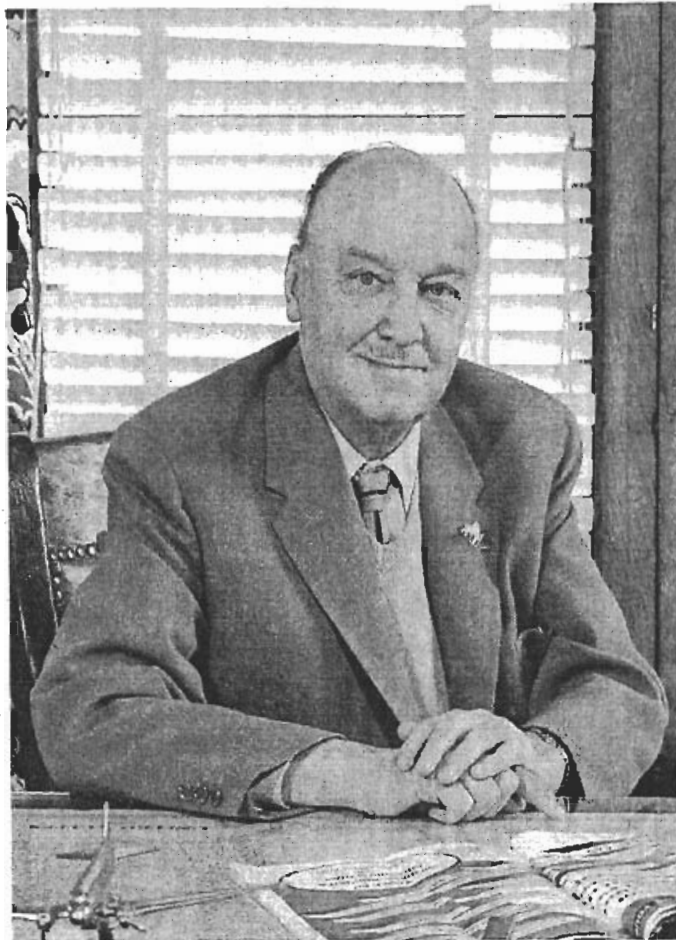
A BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Alexander Film Company

During the middle part of the last century, the Alexander Film Company was the largest employer in Colorado Springs. More than 600 people worked for the company at its giant studio-city at 3200 North Nevada. Another 135 men sold the company's services through out the United States. There were sales offices in San Francisco Dallas, Chicago, Detroit and New York City. Alexander International had sales offices in Mexico City and San Juan, Puerto Rico. It was also affiliated with like organizations in London and Paris.

Its 26 acre studio was the largest and most complete commercial motion picture production facility in the world. Ford, Chevrolet, Buick, Pontiac,

Maytag, Frigidaire, Philco, Keepsake were a few of more than 50 national advertisers who came to Alexander for their theatre and television commercials.



This Photo of J. Don Alexander the president of Alexander Film Company was taken just a few days before his untimely death in 1955.

During the 1950's and before, when theatre screen advertising was especially popular in smaller towns more than 10,000 movie houses were screening Alexander commercials. It was estimated that over 50,000,000 people saw Alexander movie ads every week.

Each day, some 150,000 feet of advertising film was shipped to theatres across the United States from the company's 4-winged Service Department. More than 100 men and women worked there. Walter White who lived on Pikes Peak Avenue across the street from Bancroft Park was the manager.

The Jim Riley family who lived at 502

Continued page 3

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 - westsider1@comcast.net

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
	Phil McDonald	
	Mel McFarland	719-533-1311
	Joanne Karlson	719-475-2574
	Dick Eustice	

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 14, 2007
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

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**The Alexander Film Company at 3200 North Nevada Avenue.
The four-winged building housed the Service Department managed by
westsider Walter White**

North 24th Street were also important members of the "film family". Jim was one of the Directors working with actors such as Don Ameche on commercials for 7-Up, a long-time Alexander client. Eva worked her way up through the Sales Department to become Secretary to the President. Their son, Mike, appeared in many movie ads calling to a little boy.

Reita and Lillian Summers and their brother M.E. worked in the Service Department with Mr. White. His sisters were shorthand wizards and served the company through its secretarial pool.

There were other Westsiders on the Alexander payroll. The ones named are those best remembered by the writer who spent 18 years with Alexander in Colorado Springs and in its sales office in Chicago and New York.

Members of the national sales force were paid very well. The home office staff was not too well compensated. But, their fringe benefits were many!

There were bonuses sometimes twice a year. There was a generous company paid retirement plan. There was a full time nurse in the company clinic and daily visits with doctors from the Colorado Springs Medical Center. Twice a year, the company hosted gala dance parties at either the Broadmoor or Antlers Hotels. At Christmas, all members were given a turkey. At Easter, it was a ham.

When a circus came to town, President, J. Don Alexander bought tickets for all employees. He remembered everyone's birthday with a personal note. He brought roses to Sales Department ladies from his Wood Avenue garden. He made frequent

trips through all buildings greeting members and complimenting them on jobs well done. He knew most of the people who worked for him by name.

Under the management of the Alexander family, the company had an outstanding national reputation. Locally, it was highly respected. Employees were proud and loyal.

Editors note: When I was in High School (Colorado Springs High School) my geology teacher was none other than Bob Smith. Mr. Smith was both a radio and television personality and a great weatherman. In the latter years of the Alexander Film Co. he was also one of the most popular on screen and voice over people at Alexander Film Company. For those of us that grew up here in Colorado Springs in the fifties Bob Smith is an icon of that era.

While most of us remember Alexander Film Co as the producer of the shorts and adds that we saw at the drive-in movies in the early years they started out in Spokane Washington in 1919 as an airplane manufacturer. I can still remember seeing airplanes parked in front of the building on North Nevada and having to wait for a few minutes when they were moving the planes from the west side of the street to the east side where an airport existed at that time. It sat where the power plant now exists stretching from roughly the south end of the dog track parking lot to the end of the Alexander property .



The Alexander Film Corporate Logo. Yellow background, red camera and black lettering.



1885—1955
A more dapper J. Don Alexander
In August of 1927 when their main product was
airplanes.

SAFETY FIRST AIRPLANES
DENVER, COLORADO

Office of
THE PRESIDENT

The corporate Logo of the Alexander Aircraft company.

The main product was the Eaglerock airplane. It was built on a wooden structure and was made primarily of Spruce wood.

POPULAR SPEAKER SERIES BEGINS ITS 4TH YEAR!

TUESDAY NIGHTS IN JULY

at Old Colorado City History Center, 7 p.m. - Open to the public, free of charge

July 17th - "Tales from the Saturday Nights" Frank Tucker and friends will share adventures and little-known stories from past decades of this local men's hiking group - and they are still hiking together!

July 24th - "Early Industries Along the Palmer Divide: Lumber, Ranching, & Surveying" Popular speaker, Don Ellis, will offer glimpses into the history of the Palmer Divide area drawing partly on the experiences of his grandfather, Charles A. Matthews, who came to the Pikes Peak area in 1874 with his parents.

July 31st - "Edwin Over: Prospecting & Collecting Minerals" This little known local resident was a charter member of the Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society, and later became known worldwide for his expertise. Ray Berry will illustrate Over's accomplishments with historical photos.

Sponsored by Old Colorado City Historical Society
For further information, call the History Center at 636-1225.

Plans are underway for our 10th Annual Cemetery Tour at Fairview Cemetery which will be held in conjunction with Founders' Day in August.

We need: (1) a man to portray a Civil War Union vet who established his home in Colorado City. Some knowledge of the war and military customs would be helpful (2) a young man to portray a drug overdose victim. All biographical scripts will be provided.

For more information contact Kay Atteberry, 599-3187 or Jo Cervone, 266-9096.

Victorian Lawn Party (Potluck)
July 14, 2007
11:00 am to Whenever
Rockledge Ranch Historic Park

This is an event sponsored by the Victorian Society of Colorado Springs. Stroll the grounds, enjoy croquet, Victorian dancing and get to know people who have like interests as our own Historical Society. This will be a casual potluck affair, bring your own beverages and a dish to share. Dress is Victorian casual - but don't let clothing restrictions keep you from attending!

We appreciate that a member of this Society has volunteered to portray Mayor Ingraham for our upcoming Fairview Cemetery Crawl.

RSVP to Jo Cervone, 266-9096, by July 1st, if you wish to attend or have questions.

SUMMER READING

New books on the History Center bookshelves!

"Amazing Traveler Isabella Bird" written by a Colorado author "A wonderful new biography of a small (Victorian) Englishwoman with a bad back who lived one heck of a life. Author Evelyn Kaye tells Bird's story with enthusiasm, wonder, and delight." *Old West Traveler*

"The Boys of Winter"
Author Charles J. Sanders, an avid skier and Tenth Mountain Division descendant, writes a poignant true story of these young Depression era ski champions and their brutal, heroic, and ultimately tragic life and death in the U.S. Ski Troops during the Second World War, and their transformation from athletes to infantrymen.

"A Bumpy Ride" - A history of stagecoaching in Colorado by Marrill Lee Burke

"Great Stagecoach Robberies of the Old West" by R. Michael Wilson

"Sites & Signs, Yesterday & Today in Cripple Creek Colorado"

Local author, Kathy MacIver, presents Cripple Creek history from 1892 to 2005 with photos illustrating a variety of historical information into the present.

AND the OCCHS recent printing of Irving Howbert's book, "Memories of a Lifetime in the Pikes Peak Region" reviewed in the last issue of Westword.

OCCHS SUMMER CALENDAR

June 23.....Arts & Crafts Fair in Bancroft Park, benefit for OCCHS, 8 am til 4 pm

Tuesday Nights in July (July 10, 17, 24, 31).... Lecture Series, 7 p.m., free

August 11Founders Day Celebration in Bancroft Park

August 12.....Cemetery Crawl Fundraiser at Fairview Cemetery, S. 26th St.

**One hundred years ago.
What a difference a century makes!
Here are some of the U.S. Statistics for the
Year 1907:**

The average life expectancy in the U.S. Was
47 years old.

Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S.
Had a bathtub.

Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.

A three-minute call from Denver to New
York City
cost eleven dollars.

There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S. , and
only 144 miles of paved roads.

The maximum speed limit in most cities was
10 mph.

Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa, and Tennessee
were each more
heavily populated than California

With a mere 1.4 million people, California
was only the 21st most populous state in the
Union

The tallest structure in the world was the Eif-
fel Tower !

The average wage in the US was 22 cents per
hour.

The average U.S. Worker made between
\$200 and \$400 per year

A competent accountant could expect to earn
\$2000 per year.

A dentist made \$2,500 per year.

A veterinarian \$1,500 per year.

And a mechanical engineer about \$5,000 per
year.

More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S.
Took place at HOME.

Ninety percent of all U.S. Doctors had **NO**
COLLEGE EDUCATION!

Instead, they attended so-called medical
schools, many of which

were condemned in the press AND the gov-
ernment as "substandard."

Sugar cost **four** cents a pound.
Eggs were **fourteen** cents a dozen.
Coffee was **fifteen** cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair **once** a
month, and used
Borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law that prohibited poor-
people from
entering into their country for any reason.

Five leading causes of death in the U.S.
Were:

1. Pneumonia and influenza
2. Tuberculosis
3. **Diarrhea**
4. Heart disease
5. Stroke

The American flag had 45 stars.
Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii,
and
Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union
yet.

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was
only 30

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and ice tea
hadn't been invented yet.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

Two out of every 10 U.S. Adults couldn't
read or write.

Only 6 percent of all Americans had gradu-
ated from high school!

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all
available over
the counter at the local corner drugstores.
Back then pharmacists
said, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives
buoyancy to the mind
regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in
fact, a perfect guardian of health."

There were about **230** reported Murders in
the **ENTIRE U.S.A.!**

This message was sent to me and to others
all over the United States,
Possibly the world, in a matter of just Sec-
onds !!!

Just Try to imagine...
What it may be like...
In another 100 years !!!

"A WALK THROUGH VICTORIAN TIMES"...

was the theme of the Sixth Annual Victorian Tea held on Saturday afternoon, May 12th. Over 90 ladies and a gentleman enjoyed delicious Victorian refreshments catered by the Westside business and major donor, **Garden of the Gods Gourmet**. With two seatings this year, **Margie Desormeaux** was a great trouper presenting her entertaining program about Victorian life, homes, and fashions - not once, but twice!

And the major donors truly added to the \$900+ profit. **Bernideen's** gave OCCHS traditional china teapots we can use another year and also donated a beautiful tray of tea goodies as a grand door prize, the tea we served, and table accessories. **Goodwill Industries** loaned us tables and **Sno-White Linen** provided the table cloths. **Swint Realty Co., LLC** donated table favors and a Michael Garman piece for another grand door prize. Additional door prizes were donated by **Cucuru Gallery Cafe**, Linda Martinez at the **Manitou Hair Emporium**, **Garden of the Gods Gourmet**, **High Rise Coffee Roasters**, **Patsy's Candies**, **OCCHS Bookstore** and numerous OCCHS members.

This fundraiser required much creative planning by the committee and the help of all the wonderful volunteers. So many members were involved! Special thanks to the following. **Servers**: Darlene Aspedon, Kay Atteberry, Barbara Barbaro, Lorena Bymaster, Arlene Casey, Jo Cervone, Pat Ebersole, Merle Ellis, Sandy Hanzlian, Marge Knorr, Kathy McBride, Marty Walker, and with Eloise Wynne, chair, and Muriel Dunkley organizing the kitchen. **Table Decorations & Set-up**: Barbara Barbaro, Nancy Micelli, and Marge Knorr plus David Swint and Werner Karlson helping with clean up. **Publicity & Tickets**: Betsy Evans, Kay Atteberry, and Don Ellis. **Hostesses**: Bev Disch, Pat Ebersole, Christine Heinich, Verna Nelson, Anita Schimmel, and Evelyn Tulloss. Additional support came from Dick Eustice and Betty Magninie.

Even while working, we had a good time. Don't miss this event next year. Yes, men will be invited! And, please share any suggestions with us. Joanne Karlson and Sharon Swint, co-chairmen

President's Message

We did something different for Territory Days which were held Memorial Weekend, May 26-28. The cabin was filled with old-time furniture and historic pictures. Our booth was a new tent beside the cabin where we sold both baked goods and our books.

Dave and Edward Hughes brought the tent and tables for the booth. Tom Hendrix and Andy Fejedelem helped put it up. Dick Eustice brought all our artifacts over to the cabin. Pat Fejedelem took our letter to merchants for pop and water and she got posters and t-shirts to sell for the associates (businesses on the Avenue.)

Thirty people baked for our three day bake sale. They were Merv Casey, Jo Cervone, Betsy Evans, Sharon Swint, Marge Knorr, Muriel Dunkley, Barbara Barbaro, Pat Fejedelem, Doris Hendricks, Jan Knoxs, Betty Grout, Eunice Quinn, Doris Morland, Betty Magnine, Pat Ebersole, Anita Schimmel, Evelyn Julloss, Pat Hughes, Becky Gray, Elinor Messeisahmidt, Maloa Reed, Kathy McBride, Linda Day, Martha Lee, Marty Walker, Carol Stoady, Carol (Nice & Naughty), Gloria Chapman, Bev Disch, and Nancy Micelli.

Pat Ebersol, Sandy Hazlain, Nancy Micelli, Leslie Beraprom, and Kathy McBride were dressed in costume and handed out many of our brochures in the cabin to crowds of people and sent them on to our History Center where Muriel Dunkley, Lynn Wiseman and Jan Knox had big crowds, too.

Martha Miller, Jackie Acker, Barbara Barbaro, Phil McDonald, Sharon Swint and Dave Swint worked out tent booth selling the baked goods, books, t-shirts, pop and water. Our home baked goods went like hot cakes and because we had so many of our bakers bake, the goodies lasted three days. We made over \$600 on the baked goods and around \$600 on the books.

Kudos to Betsy Evens who provided the banks and worked everyday getting ready for our booth, counting the money and paying our taxes to the associates.

This was our most successful Territory Days and it was made possible by all our dedicated volunteers. A hearty thank you to all for helping with this event.

Bev Disch,
President

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COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80904-3319

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Treasurer's Report

Much good has happened since our April Newsletter.

As some members predicted, a reprint of the Irving Howbert 'Memories of a Lifetime in the Pike's Peak' region would be a winner.

330 copies of this 300 page classic arrived just before our last newsletter. True to his word 91 year old grandson Irving Howbert showed up on April 28th, made remarks and stayed to autograph over 50 copies purchased on the spot! With such a sendoff how could we miss?

As of this writing, June 18th, 182 of the 330 copies delivered have, already been sold. That is \$3,280 income from sales at the book signing, in the Book Store later, over the Internet, and at Territory Days. We have already recovered our \$2,137 original publishing cost. We can now hold about \$1,300 in 'reserve' for reprinting 200 at a time as they sell over the next year or two. The rest of the sales will be profit. Old-young Irving was very pleased by the look and feel of the book. He is now a Member! And he wants to take one of our planned History Tours out to the Sand Creek Battlefield.

April saw our most successful Victorian Tea ever – with two seatings instead of one and 89 paying atten-

dees. We netted almost a thousand dollars - \$907.96 - to be exact. Next year we can handle at least 20 more without crowding. We benefited by several generous donors.

Territory Days also was successful, with perfect weather for 120,000 people. Our bake sale netted \$605, and sales under our tent next to the cabin, - including 11 \$20 Howbert books - was over \$602, for a calculated net profit of \$886 for the weekend.

At the very moment your new Board of Directors was meeting, word was received that we have entirely paid off our Leased Copier which was costing us \$145 every month, plus supplies. We now own it free and clear. We will save \$1,160 through the end of the year if we just keep our faithful copier running.

Now to the only downside news. We need to paint our entire building. That will cost up to \$15,000. We could pay for it now from our cash reserves, but the board wanted us to make one attempt at getting a grant for at least 75% of that cost. So we are seeking that now.

Dave Hughes—Treasurer