



Old Colorado City Historical Society

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 7

September 2007

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

The Half Way House Along the Cog Road

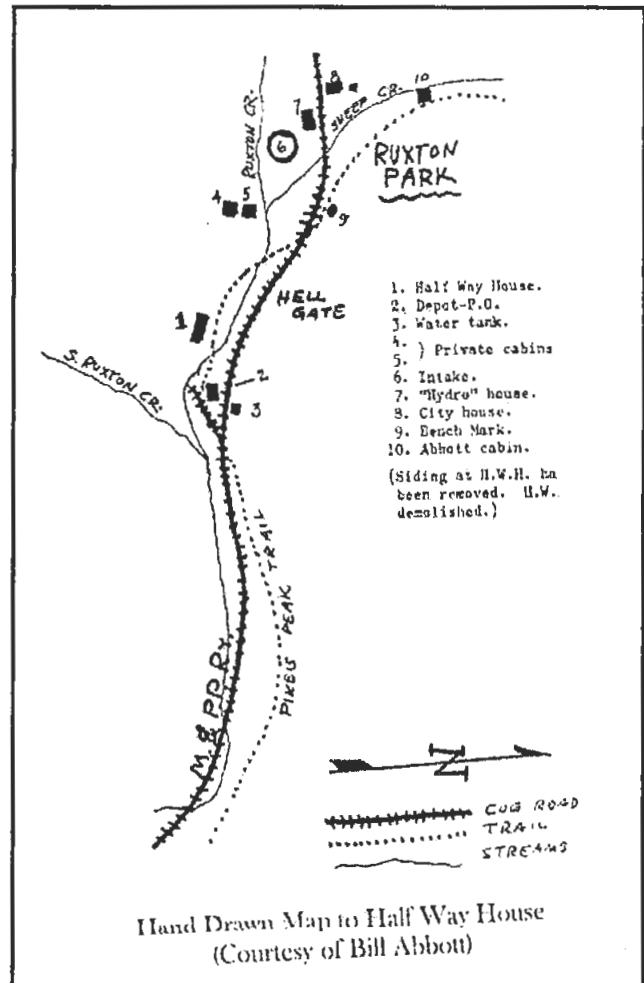
by

Sharon Hester Swint

One of the most attractive, interesting and rare specialty pieces of pottery produced by Van Briggie Pottery over the years is a 1914 Half Way House / Sigma Chi mug. This tall blue mug with the Sigma Chi crest on the front and the Half Way House name/1914 on the side provides much mystery for Van Briggie collectors and historians alike.

In 1878, Edward and Manville Booth acquired 430 acres of land through the Homestead Act of 1862 in a small canyon near the junction of Ruxton and South Ruxton creeks along the present-day Pikes Peak Cog Railway. Following the land acquisition, the Booth brothers built a one-room cabin on the property some time prior to 1882. The brothers ran cattle in the summer months. In August of 1883, the brothers sold the property to a William A. Richards who owned it for only a year primarily, because his wife refused to live in such an austere and remote location.

In the spring of 1884, Thomas T. Palsgrove signed a contract to pack supplies for the construction of a new army signal station at the summit of Pikes Peak. Palsgrove led a caravan of twelve burros loaded with supplies once a day to the top of the mountain until the job was complete. While making the journey, Palsgrove frequently passed by an abandoned cabin in a small valley surrounded by hills on three sides near a beautiful wa-



terfall. He instantly fell in love with the setting and after much discussion with his wife, Nettie; they agreed to purchase the property. Richards was eager to sell the property and so with little investment Palsgrove set the stage for his next profession—innkeeper. Immediately, he began to improve the

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

WEST WORD

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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
	Phil McDonald	
	Mel McFarland	719-533-1311
	Joanne Karlson	719-475-2574
	Dick Eustice	
	Barb Barbaro	719-748-3483

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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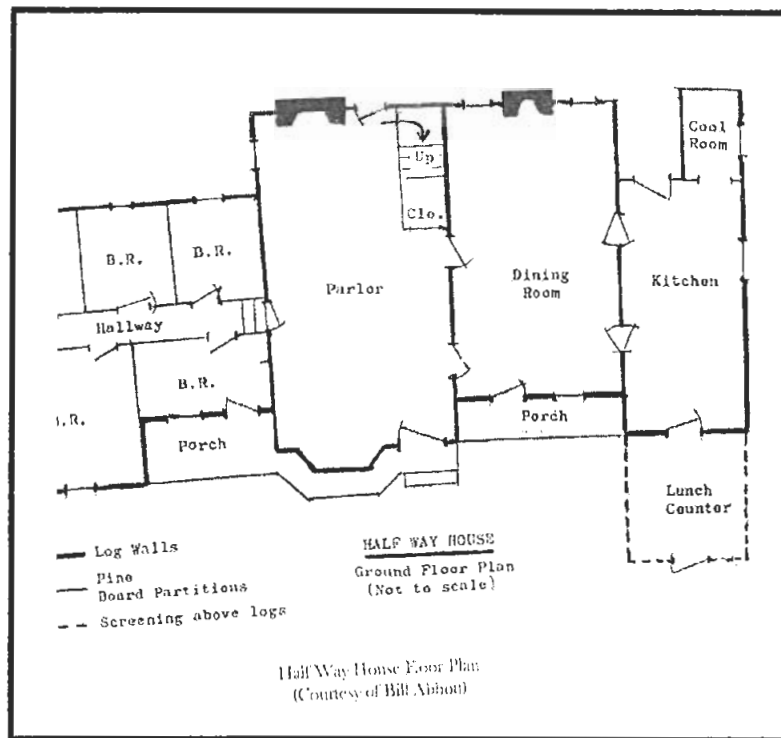
property and found himself playing host to climbers and transients moving through the area, so he decided to run a bunkhouse/inn. Originally he called the business the *Pikes Peak Trail House*, but later changed it to *Half Way House*. According to Morris Abbott's book *The Pikes Peak Cog Road*, "Palsgrove's place was only a quarter of the way from Manitou, but he

could hardly have been expected to call it the Quarter Way House." Continued improvements expanded the inn allowing in excess of fifteen rooms for rent that seemed to consistently stay leased with some guests reserving rooms for the entire summer.

In the late 1880s, the Manitou and Pikes Peak Railway was constructed, and on the 16th of August 1890 the first train reached the Half Way House. The Palsgroves enjoyed some privileges they had negotiated when granting a right of way through their property. They were given free cog railway transit for life to all family members, and the addition of a U.S. Post Office on their property.

With the ease of movement into and out of the Half Way House, the Palsgroves saw an influx of business. Burros were available to take guests on local excursions. A depot for the train and a gift shop were built. Tourists and guests who bought postcards could have them postmarked at the Half Way House Post Office and taken by mule down to Manitou. Mail delivery ran every day except Sunday. There was even an exclusive Half Way Colorado mail cancellation stamp.

An Omaha investment group purchased a majority stake in the property from Tom and Nettie Palsgrove and they moved away leaving Tom's brother John and his wife, Jennie to manage the Half



Way House. John and Jennie Palsgrove eventually bought the property back. Over the years, however, they began to drift apart, possibly from the stresses associated with living such a rustic life. They were divorced in 1906 and Jennie retained control of the property. A half sister and brother-in-law, Frank and Katie Gunn helped her run the inn. Unfortunately one year later

Mrs. Palsgrove was dead. Conflicting accounts recorded the accident: one listed her as having been struck by lightning and the other recounting her incident as electrocution when she attempted to shut off a single light bulb in the laundry room of the inn. Regardless, she died instantly and the event left a permanent mark on the inn. Morris Abbott relates, "A special train came up from Manitou for her body...the spectacle of that little engine, throwing sparks high into the air, as it came puffing up the hill to the Half Way House depot."

Around 1910, a family from Missouri leased the property for \$800 per year. William H. Harris and his family renovated the inn with many needed improvements and began to try and rebuild the reputation of the once popular establishment. The entire family worked hard to ensure the success with Mr. and Mrs. Harris' children doing a great deal of the chores and extracurricular activities associated with the inn.

Successes of the Bruin Inn in Cheyenne Canon were highly publicized because of their willingness to cater to the students of Colorado College, so the Harris family, recognizing the market, attempted to solicit the college's business also. They hosted special events but never to the magnitude that the Bruin Inn achieved. Perhaps the Half

Way House was just too far for frequent parties. On the 24th of April 1915, the Contemporary Society at Colorado College held its annual function at the Half Way House. The Colorado College Tiger newspaper states, "It was"...*a unique outing which took the form of a hike from the top of Mt Manitou and an elaborate dinner party at the Half Way house. The members and guests went to the Manitou in a special car and from there were conveyed by the incline to the top of Mt. Manitou.*"

The Half Way House might have in some way sponsored other events along with fraternities from Colorado College as evidenced by the lovely blue mug that has come to light. There must have been a special relationship between the inn and fraternity members during 1914. Nevertheless, the mug is extremely rare. There are only two known examples to exist. The mystery of the connection remains.

In an attempt to control its watershed, the city of Colorado Springs purchased the Half Way House and surrounding property on October 20, 1916. The Harris family could still lease the property and continued to operate the inn until 1921. In November, the Half Way House closed its doors for the final time. In January of 1922, hikers using the abandoned cabins started a fire in the living room fireplace. A log rolled out of the fireplace and accidentally caught the living room floor on fire, however only minor damage occurred. Following the fire, the structure remained empty until 1926 when the inn was finally dismantled and the wood used to build a workers' construction camp at Big Tooth Reservoir. Today only small trees, shrubs, and a rock foundation remain of the site where the Half Way House once stood closing the chapter on a hidden gem along the cog railway.

The Pikes Peak Cog Road by Morris W. Abbott and *The Story Behind the Clay* by David and Sharon Swint are both available at the Old Colorado City History Center bookstore.

Treasurer's Report

Summertime is always a good time for the bank account of your Society. Many fund raising events, more visitors to our History Center who patronize our Book Store, and more outright donations by pleased visitors. Even the organizer of the Farmer's Market, a good neighbor of ours bought a \$100 Brick for our Patio in the name of his wife and himself.

Since June's newsletter we have had three fund raising events - the Craft Fair, Founder's Day, and the Cemetery Crawl.

At the Craft Fair the ladies bake sale garnered \$162 clear profit, we took in \$760 for booth rentals, our outdoor book booth brought in \$160. After expenses we netted \$775.

With lots of great publicity for Founders Day and the Cemetery Crawl, with booth sales again and programs inside the Garvin Cabin that stimulated book sales, plus the Pikes Peak Bank \$500 grant for our musical entertainment, we netted \$845 for just that one Saturday in Bancroft Park. Then on Sunday there were over 120 tickets sold for \$854 for the Fairview Cemetery Crawl. The weather was good, with many more Westsiders than usual showing up, we netted \$654. For the three summer events your Society gained \$2,274 over expenses, not counting Betsy Evan's inside and out and Internet Book sales. A good summer indeed. Our general summer overhead costs remain a low \$400 a month. So we are doing fine, overall.

Our Endowment CD and T-Bill savings account continue to earn interest for us, though with the national housing loan crunch we may see those rates go down.

Dave Hughes
Treasurer

In Memory of Kenneth Kolstad

Ken, a long time member of the OCCHS was an active member of the Son's of Norway, a noted Civil Engineer and author of Engineering text books and an active member of the genealogical society. Ken passed away this summer.

Friday, September 14 11 a.m.
‘Remembering the Tenth Mountain Division’...the Soldiers on Skis!



Photo's courtesy of Don Kallaus



U.S. Ski Troops during World War II were trained at SkiCooper, then Camp Hale in Colorado.
 — Veterans from Denver and Colorado Springs will give an illustrated presentation of some of inspiring

their history...a compelling story. In early August, they had their last reunion in Denver...the numbers are dwindling. Invite your friends and other veterans to this special event! Daughters and sons will also be attending.

OCCHS is planning a light lunch and social for them after the program. If you can help with serving, set up, extra card tables, or serving as a host, please inform Joanne Karlson (475-2574), or Sharon Swint (630-8384) or call the Bookstore (636-1225). Cash donations will be welcome to help defray expenses.

Historic Museums Merge With New Management

The Cripple Creek District Museum is pleased to announce a lease agreement with the Wild Horse Casino, owners of the historic Old Homestead Parlour House Museum. "We are extremely pleased that the Homestead is open for business again," said CCDM Director Jan MacKell. "It was very important to us, but also the Wild Horse, that the Homestead remain available to the public."

Opened in 1896 by the notorious Madam Pearl De Vere, the Homestead offered only the finest in women, liquor and entertainment. After closing in the 1930's, the house was privately owned for a short time before being opened as a museum in 1958. Today, the historic brothel is the only museum of its kind in Colorado and one of only three in the United States. "In fact, one of those three, the Dumas Brothel in Butte, Montana, is currently closed due to its dilapidated condition," noted MacKell. "That makes the Homestead even more important."

Wild Horse General Manager Bob Jeffries first contacted the CCDM in early February about leasing or managing the Homestead. The two entities worked for several months before coming up with a viable solution in time for Donkey Derby Days. "I am thrilled and happy, and I'm looking forward to creating a stronger heritage attraction for Cripple Creek," said Jeffries. "We want to demonstrate that this is a viable entity, and we're looking forward to building a strong relationship between the Wild Horse and the Cripple Creek District Museum."

CCDM President of the Board Bonnie Mackin expressed similar feelings. "We appreciate the Wild Horse's cooperation and patience with us while we figured this out," she said, "and we are so glad the Homestead is open once more for people to enjoy. We are so grateful to all the owners and especially Bob Jeffries for giving us this opportunity. And I really want to thank fellow board member Ike Hern and Jan MacKell, who were integral in getting this deal put together." Familiar faces at the Old Homestead include Lodi Hern, who owned the museum from 1967 to 1995 and has conducted tours there for forty years. "I'm glad to be the madam again," said Hern. "And I'm just happy the house is back open. It is a landmark not just in Cripple Creek, but all of Colorado."

During the four month term of the lease, the Homestead will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. through September and on weekends in October. For more information or to schedule a tour, call the Cripple Creek District Museum at 719-689-2634 or access the Museum website at www.cripple-creek.org.

Cripple Creek District Museum
 P.O. Box 1210, 5th & Bennett Avenue
 Cripple Creek, Colorado 80813
 719-689-2634 ~ 719-689-9540

The Klan!

By Olivia J. Blase

Age 15

I wrote this story based on the real experience of Alma Butler. Alma is ninety-four years old, and this is only one of her many fascinating stories. I wanted to write down one of her stories for all to enjoy. This story is true, but the dialog and some events were added in where needed.

It was the summer of 1925. At the age of thirteen, I was restless for adventure. Little did I know that this summer, I would experience all the adventure I wanted in one night. Every Saturday night, Daddy drove us up to Manitou Springs for the evening. Most nights the sun took its time setting. The air would be warm and we would enjoy a milkshake at Soda Springs Park. It was on nights like these that I felt safe and content. Most times my desire for adventure would disappear.

One night we were all sitting on the porch, Daddy reading his newspaper and Mama darning some socks. I was cutting paper dolls out of an old magazine, arranging them from tallest to shortest. I heard Daddy's newspaper crinkle as he turned the page, but the crinkling stopped and he laid it on his lap.

"Alma, go inside," Daddy had said. I looked up from my dolls. I had expected him to be staring at his newspaper, perhaps reading an article he wanted to talk to Mama about. But Daddy's newspaper was laying in his lap and his eyes were fixed on the mountains behind me.

Mama followed his gaze. She hastily put her darning aside. "Come on, honey," she said as she nearly pulled me off the floor. "Come inside."

"But why?" I asked. I wriggled and tried turning to see what Daddy was looking at. But Mama's grip was firm. I was able to turn my head, though, and I caught a glance of fire in the foothills below Pikes Peak. In the few moments I saw the sight I could tell it was not a wild fire.

Mama led me to my room and told me to dress for bed then she left. I heard the screen door swing as shut she returned to the porch. After I had dressed into my night gown and washed my face, I crept through the kitchen to the front room.

"The Klan's got their hold on the government here," Daddy was saying. "They controlled the South, why did they have to come up here to Colorado, too?"

"Shh, don't raise your voice," Mama said.

Daddy's voice was softer when he said: "It's beyond me how those men can have so much hate for anyone different from them. What have the Negras done to

them? Or the Jews or Catholics? Hate, hate, hate."

Mama did not say anything, but I could imagine her casting a disapproving glance at Daddy.

The wrinkling of Daddy's newspaper broke the silence, and I knew I should go back to bed. But first, I crept to the front window. I peered through the lace curtain and squinted my eyes. There, on the foothills, were crosses. Burning crosses.

The next day we were getting ready for our drive to Manitou. I remember wearing my new hat, decked up with artificial pansies and a yellow ribbon. As we pulled away from the house, I was nearly bouncing in my seat. How fun it would be to walk the streets of Manitou in a new hat!

We set off through town, Daddy weaving between other auto cars on the streets. We passed through the old part of town, which today, eighty years later, is known as Old Colorado City. Funny how a few decades changes one thing. As we passed through the old buildings, I looked curiously at a brick corner building. I had heard from playmates at school that the Klu Klux Klan held meetings in that building. I looked hard at the windows but saw only blackness.

As we neared Manitou Springs, the traffic began to grow heavier.

"What are all these people here for?" Daddy asked. "It isn't like this every night."

"I'm sure it will be less crowded in Manitou," Mama said. But that was not the case. The traffic thickened as we pulled onto the main street. The pace was slow and every few seconds, the line would come to a stop.

"What--" Daddy tried to get a look over the other cars. "What is this?"

The line moved on and we neared the center of town. I leaned back in my seat and looked out the window, but I froze in fright. There in the road, directing traffic was a man dressed in a white robe and a strange, hideous hood type thing that covered his head. Mama saw him too, and I heard her gasp.

"Leonard," she said as she gripped his arm. I was still frozen to my seat, my back pressing up against it harder and harder. As we crept past him, I saw a sight that made me even more frightened than the man at my window. The park that I had played in so many times, with its new green grass and pretty flowers, was filled with people in the robes and masks.

The Klan! I thought. I had seen a picture of a Klu Klux Klan member in a newspaper before but now I was seeing a whole group of them! My terror was indescribable. The crowd was riled and unruly, cheering and yelling. I was afraid that one of them would see me, come over, and take me away.

We were all silent as we drove to the town clock and

turned around. This feat alone took ten minutes. It was about twenty minutes later before we had finally weaved through all the automobiles, past the park full of frightening men, and the Klansman directing traffic. I was till pressed up against my seat, but Mother was slouched down in hers, sighing with relief. Daddy would grip the steering wheel hard, his hands loosening over time, then tightening again.

We made it home and all silently got ready for bed. Only when I crawled into my bed did I hear Mother and Daddy's hushed sounds of the conversation from their room. But I was too tired and shaken to listen.

The Klu Klux Klan had their few years of glory in Colorado. However, when Governor Clarence Morley (a leading Klan member) was arrested for mail fraud, the Klan began to decline. They seemed to filter out of Colorado just as easily as they'd filtered in, and by 1926 Klan members were few to be had. The frightening experience I had that warm summer evening happened so many years ago but I still remember it so clearly. I also remember those burning crosses in the foothills. Hate is hard to forget.

Olivia Blasé, 15, is a native to Colorado. She was born here in 1992, and has lived in Colorado Springs ever since. A just recently discovered talent, Olivia has put her writing skills to use. She has won an online contest, but this is her first publication of a piece. Olivia enjoys history more than any other subject, reading, art, writing, and a good, strong cup of tea.

Olivia is enrolled in an online school called COVA (Colorado Virtual Academy) and is going into the ninth grade. Her particular interests are Victorian/Civil War history, the Great Depression, WWII, and the Titanic era

As readers of West Word know we seldom use narrative pieces, I thought this story so intriguing that I have included it. Since I received this story Olivia tells me that Alma Butler passed at the age of 95, may she rest in peace. editor WW

Photo from news paper add Free-mont County Daily News Circa 1920's



President's Message

We had a glorious warm, sunny August for our annual Founders Day in Bancroft Park on Saturday August 11, and we had our tenth annual Cemetery Crawl in Fairview Cemetery on Sunday. We have been having these two events together for the last couple of years and this has been very successful for us.

Kay Atteberry and Jo Cervone got the volunteers to portray eight colorful character from the original Colorado City of the late 1800's and early 1900's. These characters were portrayed by Jennifer Clark, Dave Hughes, Kathy McBride, Phil McDonald, Larry Blasgen, Susan Swint, Sharron Swint and Ken Markus. Kay Attenberry arranged the walking tours, took water to our portrayers and gave the volunteers a thank you of fresh peaches for the help. Betsy and I ran the ticket table selling books, tickets, water, and greeting people. Eoise Wynn, Lyan Wiseman, Murial Dunkley, Jan de Chardendes, Joanne Karlson, Sandy Hazlian, and Jo Cervone led guided groups of people on the tour. About fifty tickets were sold in advance and we sold 121 tickets altogether. This was a really successful fundraiser taking in about 900 dollars and we appreciate everybody who made this such a good event.

Bev Disch, President

Visitors

Since January 1 we have had visitors from 26 different states and 6 foreign countries.

- Japan
- Ireland
- Canada
- Australia
- Germany
- Mexico

Submitted by Leland Feitz

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Founder's Day 2007 was an incredible success! The perfect weather drew a crowd of 400 to Bancroft Park. The Old Colorado City Historical Society can be proud of another outstanding event.

The Farmers' Market was an excellent addition and drew vendors selling food, flowers, and produce. Those attendees drawn by the market moved on to the craft vendors and stayed for a full day of entertainment.

Every space available for arts and crafts was filled. Jewelry, paintings, cosmetics, Indian symbols, and even Denver Bronco collectibles were on sale. Jo Cervone and Joanne Karlson did an outstanding job of selling the spaces and finding notable crafters to appeal to Westside shoppers.

Set-up in advance of the crowds was done by Art Crawford, Phil McDonald, Jo Cervone, Joanne and Werner Karlson. Betsy Evans put together the cabin-side bookstore.

Publicity for the event was headed by Joanne Karlson, Jo Cervone, and Kay Atteberry. Flyers were distributed to all businesses in Old Colorado City, libraries, and popular locations on the West Side. Advertising appeared in the *Westside Pioneer*, *The Gazette*, and both *The Woodmen and Cheyenne Editions*.

The day was filled with entertainment. Musical groups provided historic sounds to match the Founder's Day theme. The Serendipity Peak Dulcimer Club, Shadow Mountain String Band, and Gary Morse entertained shoppers and visitors. Not one of the musical groups could have performed without the efforts of Jo Cervone who manned the sound equipment. Historic vignettes were acted at the cabin by our own Sharon Swint and the unofficial mayor of Old Colorado City Dave Hughes.

Sharon talked about her book *The Story of the Clay* and Dave presented the Battle of Glorieta Pass. Liz Duckworth reprised her role of Polly Pry and Nadine Keaney presented Julia Holmes.

The Victorian Society of Colorado Springs danced every hour on the hour, played croquet, and picnicked in a traditional style. The Gunfighters of the Resurrection were also a highlight of the day. They held the attention of the crowd with a performance that included a lynching.

Dick Eustus provided the artwork for the sign that showed the schedule of events for the day.

The cabin-side bookstore was manned by Betsy Evans. She was assisted in her efforts by Muriel Dunkley, Leland Feitz, Dee Breitenfeld, Sandy Hanzlian, Bev Disch, and Jan de Chadenedes.

The cabin is always a highlight of the Founder's Day celebration. Attendees always say how excited they are to find that the cabin is open. Leslie Bergstrom, Martha Lee, and Eloise Wynne escorted visitors through the cabin and told the story of Doctor Garvin and answered visitor's questions.

After the main event, Art Crawford and Phil McDonald returned chairs and artifacts to the Center. The final clean-up was headed by Jo Cervone and Joanne Karlson.

All in all, this was a memorable day for the Old Colorado City Historical Society.