



Old Colorado City Historical Society

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 4

April 2008

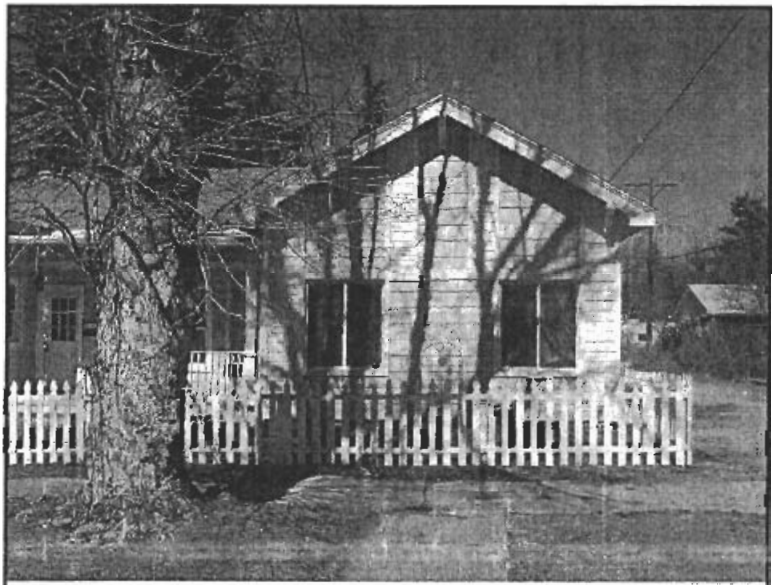
The Past - as I remember it

Neighborhood Stores and miscellaneous thoughts

I grew up in the Springs in the late 1930's. Well actually I stuck around until the mid 50's so I could graduate from Colorado Springs High School (now Palmer HS) and then the wander lust grabbed me and I left America's Mountain to seek my fortune in a strange and exotic place; Southern California. I returned in the early 70's, homesick, wanting to enjoy a little peace and quiet, and so I could look at that mountain every-day.

Things that were common, everyday, when I was growing up no longer exist and haven't for many years. These are some of the things I remember from my childhood some even extended into my teen years before they faded away.

As I grew up it seemed quite normal for me to stroll down the alley behind our house checking out everybody's back yard and enter the back-door of Britt Grocery Store - a block and a half south of our house. I was allowed to do this at a very young age because my mother would send our Chow dog, Mitzi, along as my chaperone and while I went in to the store Mitzi would pay a visit to her Chow friend that the Britt's owned. I would get whatever item my mother had sent me to acquire and then Mitzi and I would wander back up the alley to the house. Everybody up and down the alley had two things that do not even exist today. The first was a garbage pail, once a week the garbage was collected by Babcock who owned a pig farm out in back of the Printers



Britt's Grocery Store today—unfortunately I do not have a picture as it was back in the day. The door to the store was between the two windows. The Britt's lived in the attached house to the left although there was no connecting door between the two sections. The house has been recently refurbished, a modern kitchen has been installed and where the old store was is now two bedrooms and a bathroom.

Home. This was the era pre InSinkErator®. Babcock had a rather unusual deal with the City. He would pick up the garbage to feed to his pigs at no cost to either the city or the citizens. As time wore on this must have irritated the city council that here Babcock was getting free food for his pigs, and the citizens were not paying any tax on the service so eventually they wanted to start charging Babcock to pick up the garbage. Babcock wasn't very fond of the idea so he closed his pig growing operation and quit picking up

Continued page 3

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:

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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
	Phil McDonald	719-532-0881
	Mel McFarland	719-533-1311
	Joanne Karlson	719-475-2574
	Sharon Swint	719-630-8384
	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
 April 11, 2008
 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!

<http://history.oldcolo.com>

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the garbage. Everybody thereafter had to pay to have the garbage hauled or invest in a new gadget called a garbage disposal. And of course pay sales tax for same. The second bygone era object in the back yards was an ash pit – we burned our trash back in them olden days and then hauled the ashes to the dump, or for a small fee there was a guy that would take care of that little job. My dad wanted me to learn that each member of the family had certain responsibilities so cleaning out the ash pit was my job. It probably took a half hour or so, but my recollection is it took all day and was a most disagreeable job. In the ensuing years I learned what a *real* disagreeable job was.

Back to the grocery store saga: I suspect when I was



Knowle's 847 E. Cache La Poudre - now a home, in the day I got my bubble gum fix here. You would knock three times on the counter and say Joe sent me.

very young my mother called ahead to give Mr. Britt a heads-up about what I was sent to get. Even then my memory seemed to have a hole or two in it. I didn't need any money because Mr. Britt would let selected people run a tab. I rather suspect that many of the people in the neighborhood ran tabs as the country was just coming out of the great depression and money was scarce. Mr. Britt had a rather unique way of keeping track of who owed him and how much. A small safe, as I remember it, sans a door that sat under the small counter with a myriad of

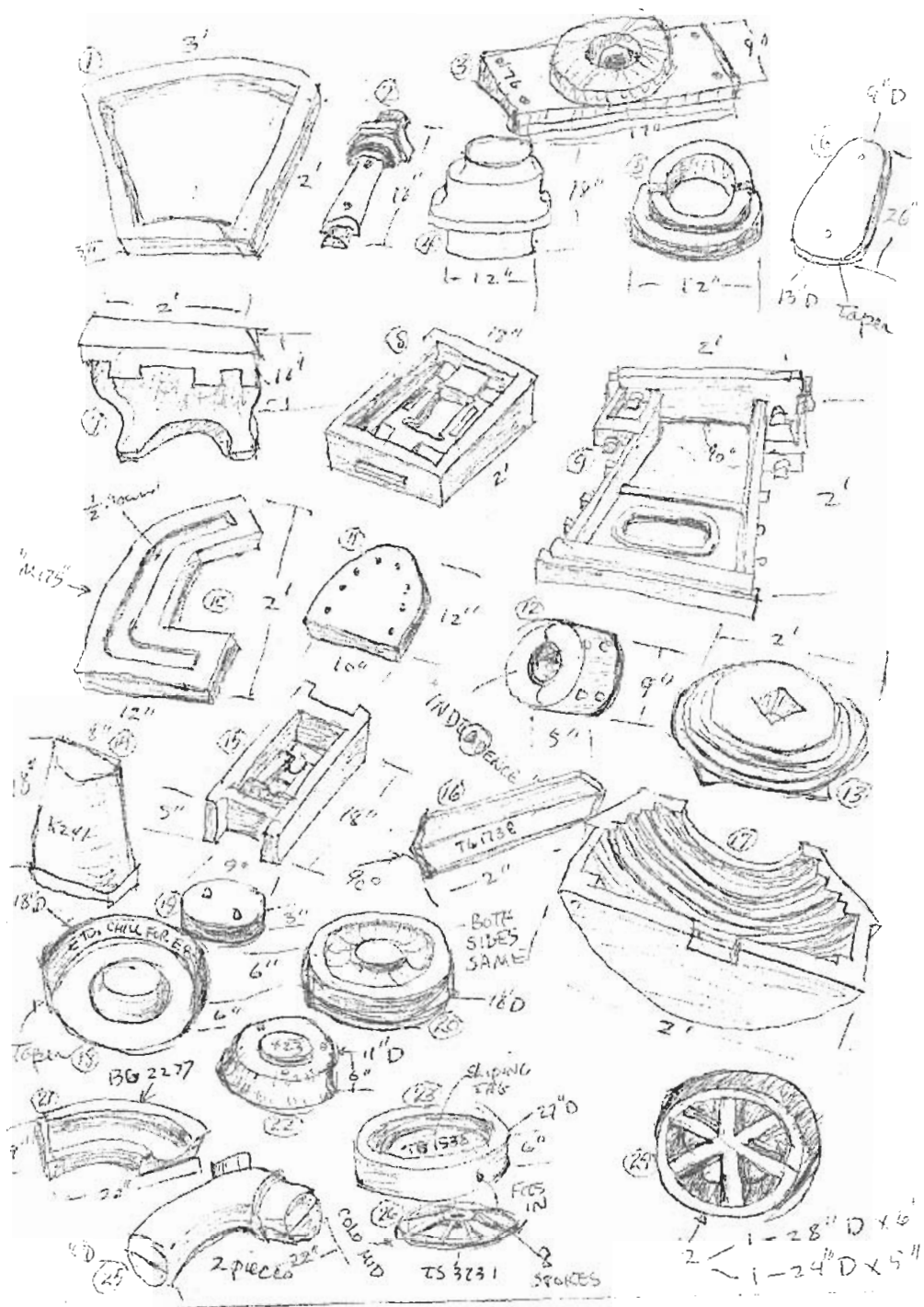


930 N. Cedar Nelsons Grocery— a business today a grocery in the past— a block and a half north of where I lived. I always came up here through the alley. I liked the alley there was always something interesting going on.

small cubby holes each containing a receipt book. Each book represented a different account. Mr. Britt would note the purchase by writing down the item and cost and put the carbon copy in the sack for me to take home to my mother. I remember once Mr. Britt smiling at me and saying that it had been some time since “a settling up” had happened or at least words to that effect. It was a time of innocence for both me and America in general.

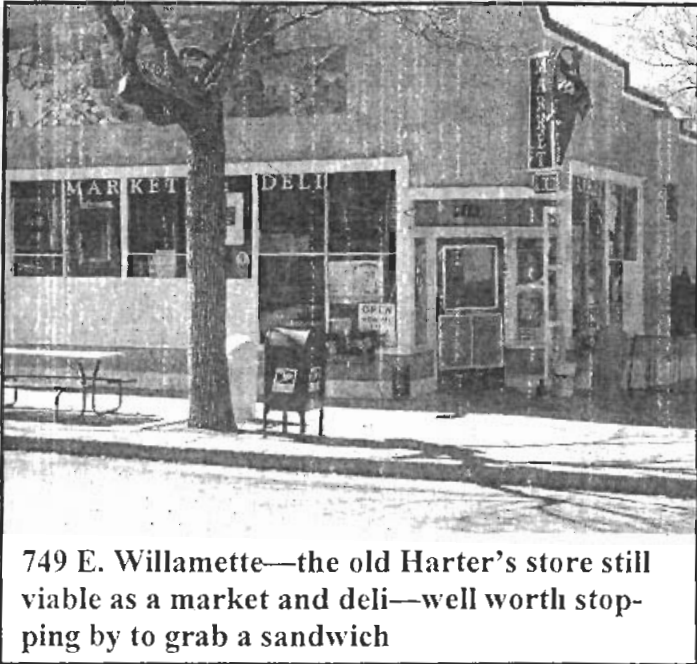
I guess my parents were loyal to Britt's grocery because there were no less than five such neighborhood stores within three blocks of our house and I have no memory of going to any of them to get groceries. I do however have a memory of rushing to Knowles grocery store when the rumor circulated that somehow Knowles had acquired a box of bubble gum. One piece to a customer if you please! During the war bubble gum was a scarce commodity and of course being so was highly prized by kids.

According to Polk's City of Colorado Springs Directory in 1938 no less than 148 stores not considering the 6 Safeway stores were scattered around



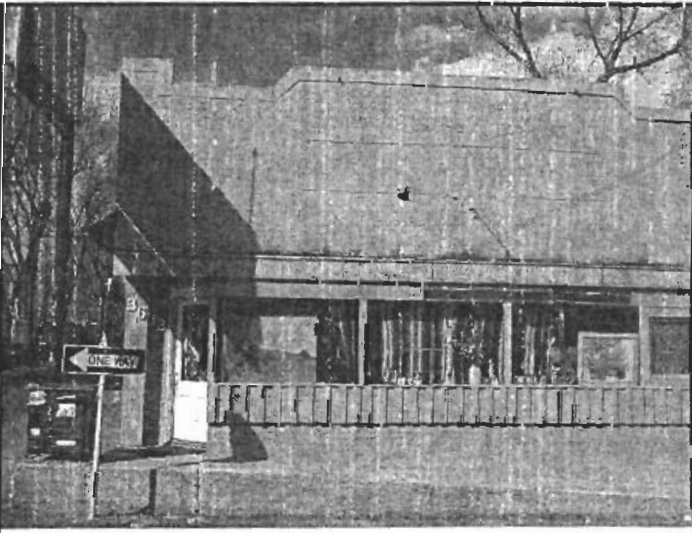
This drawing by artist Dick Eustice is of pieces of wood that we have stored in the Artifact area. They were here in the early years of our History Center. The information of who the donor was, is missing. The information of what they had been used for and information of what each unit was called, is unknown. The only thing known was that they had been on a heap in the area of the Midland RR terminal. Someone recognizing their worth as historic pieces brought them to the center. Our search for information has not found the answers.

Dick has done the drawings and numbers have been added identifying each unit. Hopefully someone will know what these are and step forward and assist us with identifying these things. Contact the History Center or Liz Geiss



749 E. Willamette—the old Harter's store still viable as a market and deli—well worth stopping by to grab a sandwich

the then young and growing town. Back in those olden days the town ended on the East at Union Blvd and the West at Manitou. There seemed to be an elegant sufficiency of neighborhood grocery stores along Colorado Avenue. I counted them, 24 from downtown to Adams Crossing which is now Columbia Road or the equivalent of 36th Street. Twenty-four stores in thirty-six blocks. Amazing simply amazing. Many of the buildings still exist only now they are used for many other things. The next time you drive around in the old part of the west side or



3632 W. Colorado—Adams Crossing grocery and market. Just in the last 35 years this location has been at least a dozen things and I think now it is being used as a single family dwelling.

for that matter any place in Colorado Springs see if you can identify any of these places that were once a grocery store. Some are quite easily identified some very difficult.

Where possible I have driven by many of the stores that are still standing. Many or probably most of the buildings have been converted to single family dwellings and the only one that I found that was still open as a grocery store was found at Harter's Grocery 749 E. Willamette. It is now a grocery/deli/organic store – I highly recommend their sandwiches. There were several that had been converted to small businesses, realtor offices, and one dentist office. In that same stretch from downtown to Manitou there is just one grocery store today, the Safeway in the Red Rocks shopping center and of course it didn't exist back then. There are, however, numerous liquor stores along the avenue. I'm not sure what this signifies, but I rather imagine it does have some significance.

These neighborhood stores were small most having less than 1200 square feet. I would imagine that they were a bit smaller than the size of today's 7-Eleven stores, which by the way have an entirely different function than did the neighborhood stores. A big difference is the 7-Eleven's are located along major thoroughfares not in the neighborhoods and while they sell milk and bread the major shelf space is taken up with items for immediate consumption.

While it is fun to look back I sure wouldn't want to actually go back to the conditions of the past. I would rather imagine that on any given aisle at any of the major supermarkets there are more individual item than were in the whole of the neighborhood stores of the past. We live in a world of abundance, or maybe over abundance. We can purchase fish that were in the oceans of the world the day before, get exotic fruits and vegetables and even fresh cut flowers any day of the year. I for one kinda like it.

I do however remember with nostalgia the by gone past.

Merv Casey

March Treasurers Report

At the February 18th Board Meeting the 2008 Budget was finally approved. After Board members recommended various adjustments, the \$23,000 Budget is optimistically projected to net \$2000 over costs by January 2009. But things might get tight. Our two insurance policies cost \$2,220. We had to replace the drum on our copier for \$320. And we had to pay out \$385 for an upgrade to our electrical circuits, raising its amperage so the big guest coffee pots don't throw the circuit breakers. Other costs are going up.

With the Federal Interest Rates still falling, the Board has agreed to put our \$85,000 fixed Endowment fund CD which matured 6 March, add to it \$5,000 from the interest earned last year, bringing the fixed Endowment to \$90,000, and add the balance in our now closed T-Bill fund, into a new Pikes Peak Bank Business Savings Account for with the bank guarantees 4.25% Interest through 31 July 2008. It may be adjusted downward then. We might earn \$4,000 in interest over the year, rather than the less than \$2,000 we were facing with dropping Federal rates. But it is getting hard to earn acceptable rate secure interest income in this economy.

The Board also approved the best bid, \$11,800, from A M Painting for painting the exterior of the History Center this spring. The work will start around May 1st. \$5,000 will come from an El Pomar Grant, \$6,800 will have to come from our accumulated earned interest from our past CDs. The job should be done by June 15th.

In February the Society was the recipient of a \$1,000 grant from Barbara Barbaro to pay for both new Acquisitions (\$750) and Archive materials (\$250) over the coming year. Thanks Barbara!

The Digitization of the Society's holdings has started. Don Kallaus has begun under a \$2,500 contract from the Digitization Fund, scanning in all the Society Newsletters we published since 1985. And as of this writing, both the History Center publicly accessible first floor rooms, and the archive and artifact storage basement rooms are fully connected, wirelessly, to the Internet. The Society has commenced paying \$50 a month for Internet service.

Your Society's total unencumbered liquid assets are over \$110,000 now.

Dave Hughes, Treasurer

This will boggle your mind, I know it did mine!
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 Eiffel Tower!

The average wage in the U.S. 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 government 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.

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.

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 graduated from high school

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores.

Just Try to imagine..... What it may be likeIn another 100 years ! IT STAGGERS THE MIND

2008 NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee of Sharon Swint, Betsy Evans, and Elinor Messerschmidt presented the following slate of Board of Director nominees for a two-year term. The Board has accepted their report. The election will be held at the next annual business meeting which is Friday, May 9, 2008. A light brunch will be served at 10:15 with the meeting actually beginning at 10:30 a.m. There are five (5) nominees for five (5) Board of Directors positions. The nominees are:

Barbara Barbaro—incumbent board member; OCCHC volunteer in the bookstore, in the archives; and, various fundraising committees; Vision Steering Committee chairperson; retired from major corporation.

Art Crawford—retired railroad dispatcher; bookstore and archives volunteer; 3rd generation El Paso County resident.

Jan de Chadenedes—local realtor specializing in property management; OCCHC volunteer; has family member involved in museum administration.

Beverley Disch—incumbent board member; current President of the Board of Directors.

Joanne Karlson—incumbent board member; OCCHC volunteer; Chairperson for Victorian Tea and various other committees; retired from local corporation.



April Showers bring May flowers

~COMING EVENTS~

Doors open at 10:15 a.m. for refreshments and museum visitation.

Friday, April 11th

"History of 'Merchant Tokens' in Colorado"

11 a.m.

Bob DeWitt will share his fascination with these coin-like discs, commonly called merchant or "trade" tokens. He is the owner of DeWitt Enterprises, a local book seller specializing in books on Colorado history. His varied hobbies include metal detecting, digging bottles, and Colorado history. One of his research books will be available for purchase.

Saturday, April 26th

7th Annual Victorian Tea Fundraiser

12:30 and 3 p.m. Tickets \$20, reservation required. Door prizes and Victorian program.

Friday, May 9th

Annual Business Meeting & Program NEW TIME!

10:15 a.m. Light brunch followed by business meeting at **10:45 a.m.**

11:15 a.m. Program: **"Working Women of the Pikes Peak Region in the 1920s"**

Michael and Patricia Olsen will look at this first decade of the modern personal, political, and economic emancipation of women relating to our local area. Some raised Persian cats, others wrapped candies, many went to business school or a university. The illustrated program will include historical photos.

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

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*The Old Colorado City Historical Society & Friends of Red Rock Canyon present:
Spring, 2008*

Red Rock Canyon Educational Series



*Bret Tennis from the Garden of the Gods
Visitor Center talks about:*

Red Rock Canyon Wildlife

*Tuesday, April 8, 7:00 - 8:00 PM
at the Old Colorado City History Center*

Wildlife walk in Red Rock Canyon

*Saturday, April 12, 8:00 AM
(sign up at the Tuesday talk)*

Future Programs:

Tuesday, May 13

Professor John H. Lewis talks about:

Red Rock Canyon Geology

(with vignettes about John Bock)

Tuesday, June 10

George Cameron talks about:

How to Identify

Wildflowers

There will be an educational walk in Red Rock Canyon the Saturday following each talk