

WESTWORD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

Volume 23, Number 10

December, 2008 - January, 2009

ANOTHER 150 YEARS!

We hear about "back in the good old days", but do you think the founders of Colorado City in 1859 envisioned what life would be like in 150 years?

Thousands were coming to the region during the 1858 Pikes Peak or Gold Rush hoping to find gold in the foothills and mountains south of Denver's Cherry Creek gold strike. M. S. Beach and Rufus Cable thought the convergence of Camp Creek into Fountain Creek near the entrance to today's Ute Pass was a good location to create a town with business and government opportunities and to service miners going into the mountains. On August 12, 1859, they organized the town ... 150 years ago! The town was platted and lots were sold. Irving Howbert's book, *Memories of a Lifetime in the Pikes Peak Region*, gives a first-hand account of what Colorado City was like when he and his father arrived in late summer of 1860.

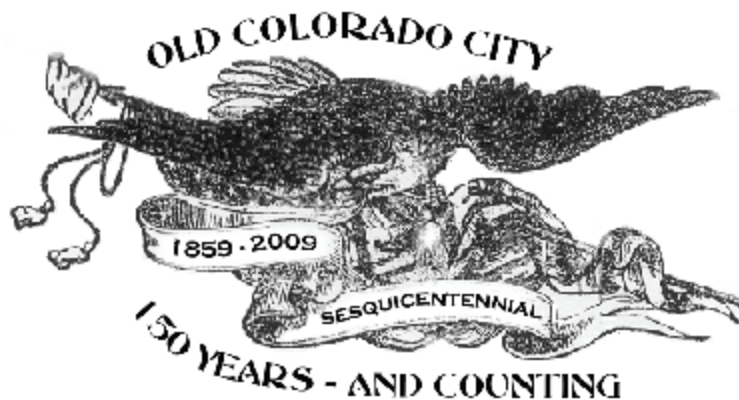
Today, thousands of tourists come to the region looking for an interesting exciting mountain experience. In Old Colorado City, they find the charm of a friendly historic neighborhood as well as shops, restaurants, and, hopefully, our History Center and Museum!

Our members and the Board of Directors want to be certain that 2009 will be a year of celebration and time for remembering and sharing Colorado City's past, present and future. Many programs and events during the year will be centered at the our History Center and Bancroft Park, but we will also be partnering with local newspapers, area businesses and organizations, and the Westside neighbors. Dave Hughes and his committee are planning to keep us informed and entertained during this Sesquicentennial year!

"Meet the Pioneers of Colorado City", a lively portrayal of these early days by our members in costume, will kick off the regular second Friday morning programs on Friday, January 9th, at 11 a.m. There will be a workshop this spring about researching your home's history. Look for an old-fashioned ice cream social, coming articles in Westword, the dedication of a monument in Bancroft Park commemorating eras of Colorado City history, Territory Days on Memorial Day weekend, and an expanded Founders' Day celebration in mid-August along with museum exhibits and programs throughout the year.

2009 will be a great time to visit Old Colorado City, to bring friends and relatives, to visit the History Center, and to share the continuing history of this neighborhood! Stay in touch! And, needless to say, there will be many opportunities for volunteering...on any level, including short periods of your time. Stay in touch for more information.

Joanne Karlson



Preliminary sesquicentennial logo design
- based on the masthead of the
Colorado City Journal, from 1861

Old Colorado City Historical Society

1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

WEST WORD

PUBLISHED TEN TIMES A YEAR

The Old Colorado City Historical Society

A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

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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 Don Ellis - spiderwort@pcisys.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:

Student	\$15	Lifetime	\$150
Individual	\$20	Business	\$50
Family	\$25	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	Joanne Karlson	475-2574
Vice President	Phil McDonald	532-0881
Secretary	Janice deChadenades	598-7183
Treasurer	David Hughes	636-2040
	Art Crawford	578-1158
	Beverley Disch	634-5023
	Tom Hendrix	633-7392
	Mel McFarland	533-1311
	Sharon Swint	630-8384

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.

BUY YOUR LAST MINUTE

CHRISTMAS BOOKS

AT OUR NEW WEB STORE.

<http://history.oldcolo.com>

AND SELECT

THE "PURCHASE ANY..." LINK

210 BOOKS TO CHOOSE FROM

WELCOME TO OCCHS!

~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Carol Bach
 Leslie Bergstrom
 Canon Inn LLC
 Fred Clark
 Eugene Current
 Michael Lloyd Davies
 Pat Ebersole
 Jack Ekstrom
 Marjorie Evans
 Shirley Fallis
 Pat Fejedelem
 Merell Folsom
 Diana Francese
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 Wil & Delores Green
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 Barry & Ellen Johnson
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 Jon & Patty Lovekin
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 Mary McKnight
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 Mary Menz
 Ron & Joannie Mitchell
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 Mike Olsen
 Marjorie Phillips
 Shirley & John Sampson
 Barbara Sweet
 David & Sharon Swint
 Margaret Williams
 Clark & Margaret Yowell

Volunteer Spotlight – meet Muriel Dunkley

By Barbara Barbaro

Although born and raised in Suffolk, England, Muriel Dunkley is clearly comfortable and secure with her surroundings here in Colorado. Muriel came to America on the *Mauritania* the day after Labor Day in 1957 and has been here ever since. A school friend of hers in England married an American serviceman and not long after they moved to the United States, she followed.

She stayed briefly with them in Las Animas and eventually all three moved to Colorado Springs. Then, for about 5-1/2 years she taught school in Dodge City, Kansas, during which time she met her husband-to-be. They married in 1961 and moved to Chipeta Park, Colorado. She stayed at home for 12 years while raising their son, then returned to teaching in District 12, where she taught for 20 years. Later, she and her husband moved to Colorado Springs where she still resides.

Muriel learned about the Old Colorado City Historical Society through a friend, Jim Travis, a lawyer and father of one of her first graders. Jim was also involved with the Historical Society. Like many other Society's members, she started attending the Friday morning programs and then got recruited as a volunteer by Bev Disch in 2001.

She works primarily in the History Center bookstore, but has been involved in other events such as the Victorian Tea and the annual Bed & Breakfast tour. When asked which event is her favorite, she says she absolutely loves working the Cemetery Crawl because of its physical beauty and serenity. She adds that one of the side benefits of working here is that she has made many close friends, many of whom are also retired educators.

One valuable lesson she's learned since being involved with the History Center is the importance of taping those endearing stories from older family members and friends. She tells of her 80 year old neighbor who lived on the West Side for most of his life. She once had asked him if she could tape him as he recalled his favorite days gone by, but never followed through. She regrets letting that golden chance slip by, because he is no longer living.

In addition to her volunteer work at the History Center, Muriel also keeps busy volunteering at her church and at Westside Cares, an organization that helps people in need. She also has an intense love and passion for tutoring persons of all ages, especially the children.

One of her favorite ways of relaxing is serving afternoon tea using her 100 year old tea service to her friends. "It's like having an old fashioned tea party", she says with a smile. She muses that even the young girls who attend her teas come dressed up and almost automatically begin to act in a grown-up, lady-like manner.

To Muriel, Old Colorado City has its own charm, including an intriguing history and a feeling of independence. "There's a sense of security in a small town, a sense of permanence and stability, especially on the West Side". The idea of going back in time to the exciting days of Old Colorado City doesn't interest her in the least, neither does moving back to England, at least for now. Her immediate family is here, and like she says, that sense of security is what's most important.



CHANGES ON WEST COLORADO AVENUE

Walking today along the 2400 block of West Colorado Avenue, you will see that a longtime business is leaving and another is returning!

A RETURNING BUSINESS is the Simpich family new business located at 2411 and 2413 W. Colorado Avenue.

Two years ago, the Bob Simpich family closed their Simpich Character Dolls business to retire, but did not sell the building or their unique designs to be copied in China or elsewhere!

Youngest son, David, and his wife have great plans for the building and its use. The upstairs has been sold and is being renovated into four loft condos. The downstairs at street level is returning as the "Simpich Showcase" which is being converted into a museum displaying their vast Simpich doll collection, an art gallery, and a marionette theater featuring David's talent as a professional puppeteer. What a charming combination at this site for all ages and interests!

During this process of renovation and remodeling, the issues of many permits, building firewalls, and up-grading to current building codes have delayed the project completion. In fact, a business had to move out

temporarily and store their merchandise while the dust settled! Even the pigeons moved! Kathy Read's Needleworks by Holly Berry is again open for business.

In October, David Simpich presented an entertaining program, "A Westside Family Business: Then and Now" at the History Center. He talked about the ups-and-downs of a family business outgrowing their home in Manitou Springs and growing up among paints, dolls in varying stages of construction, customers coming to their home, and chores. Much laughter was shared with his parents, Bob and Jan Simpich, who were in the audience. As a child, David had a special interest in their doll display showcase and later urged his parents to open a retail shop. The Simpich's bought their Old Colorado City building in the late 1970s. Their business grew and they kept expanding into other locations for manufacturing and shipping. When their closing after 50 years of business was announced in the local Gazette newspaper, the next morning there were over 300 people lined up outside waiting to come in and place orders and purchase existing inventory!



You Are Invited to Attend

A Reception & Book Signing for Leland Feitz

Saturday, December 13th

1 p.m. until 3 p.m. at the Old Colorado City History Center

Discussion of his newest publication: *Pictorial History of Pueblo* and his many other historical books. Books will be available for purchase

Former director of the Cripple Creek District Museum, longtime Old Colorado City Historical Society member and volunteer, retired from Alexander Film Company, member of Saturday Knights hiking club

&

A Reception Celebrating the Fifth Anniversary of the local

Westside Pioneer

weekly newspaper

Honoring Kenyon and Therese Jordan

Sunday, January 11th from 2 p.m. until 3:30 p.m.

at Old Colorado City History Center, 1 S. 24th Street

Hosted by Old Colorado City History Center

and the Old Colorado City Carnegie Library

No gifts. There will be a basket for cards and notes.

Their publication has been a "heartbeat" of the Westside and nearby neighborhoods recording local history, reporting on many civic issues, sharing stories of residents, and drawing attention to current views and concerns.

David demonstrated several marionettes illustrating their construction, personalities, and versatility for use in additional roles. The audience was delighted as David used his unique talent in theater art while telling a story as well as his childlike magic in creating a scene to stimulate our imagination. Thank you, David! We are looking forward to seeing Scrooge and the sassy duckling again!

A BUSINESS CLOSING is the Michael Garman Gallery at 2418 W. Colorado Avenue across the street from Bancroft Park.

Due to illness, Michael Garman, local artist and sculptor, is retiring and closing his retail display gallery in Old Colorado City as well as his production facility. Production of his sculptures continued through November 1, and the remaining stock is being sold into next year.

Plans have not been revealed for possibly relocating his popular "Magic Town", a well-known tourist attraction, or future use of the building which is for sale.

Garman had scheduled a "sculpture signing" event on Saturday, November 22, but this had to be rescheduled when a portion of the upper story brick façade collapsed suddenly onto the sidewalk the afternoon before! When the dust settled, there was great relief that no one had been injured! A historic restoration company has been hired to repair the roof and brick façade. The cause of this problem has not been totally determined, but the roof had been undergoing some repairs. However, the gallery is open again for business...at least for a limited time.

Their presence on "the Avenue" will be missed by many customers.

New Acquisitions at the History Center

Within the past few months we've been fortunate to acquire some wonderful artifacts and archives through the thoughtfulness of many people. Many of the items have already been slated for inclusion in upcoming exhibits. Listed below are the articles donated and the persons/organizations who donated them.

- * Eight hymnals dating from 1876 to 1919 from the First Christian Church in Colorado Springs
- * A 1913 Coca Cola perpetual baseball scorekeeper and an antique "sad" iron from OCCHS member Betty Baker
- * A copy of the book, "Bayou Salado: The Story of South Park" from Diane Melody, Florissant
- * 12 mining artifacts from Amber Stevens, Colorado Springs
- * A wooden ironing board from Earl & Lois Ward, Colorado Springs
- * A photo of an entry in the Infantry Parade held in Colorado Springs on September 24, 1900 from Mr. & Mrs. Billy Sumner, Nashville, TN
- * A Western Electric Company beaker from the late 1800s and two antique ceramic canning crocks from Janet Howbert, Colorado Springs
- * A photo of the Stockbridge family taken in England when Charles Stockbridge of Colorado City visited there around 1900, from the Stockbridge family, Herts, England
- * Five black and white photos of the Pikes Peak Cog Railway taken between 1946 and 1947 from Belva Roberson-Benavidez, Lakeport, CA
- * An original Colorado "Governor Peabody" medal presented to persons who were instrumental in helping break the miners' strike in Colorado City, Cripple Creek, Telluride, and Trinidad in 1903-1904, from OCCHS member Dave Hughes

Our thanks to everyone who so graciously parted with these treasured items. It is through the generosity of people and organizations such as those above that enables the museum to continue telling the story of life as it was during the days of Old Colorado City and early El Paso County.

COME SEE OUR NEWEST EXHIBIT

If you're captivated and fascinated by books and documents dating back to the late 1800s and early 1900s, then you need to see our new Archives exhibit.

The exhibit showcases prized items from various aspects of everyday life in the days of Colorado City, including business and commerce, social and cultural, academia and literary works.

As an example, come gaze upon an 1894 stock certificate for shares in the Isabella Gold Mining Company and a tax receipt dated 1896 from the El Paso County Treasurer's Office. Take a look at Gen. W. J. Palmer's 1901 rail pass and imagine him leafing through the detailed, informative 1902 Colorado Midland Railway schedule as he picks out routes for his next business trip.

There's a printed program from a delightful play entitled "Carnival of Commerce" put on by the Ladies Town Improvement Society and held at the Waycott Opera House in 1906. For those of you ladies interested in fashions, feast your eyes on a pattern magazine, printed in color, depicting gorgeous dress fashions one can sew "for the promenade".

There are numerous other items on display, from a thick, fat 1889 Webster's dictionary to a tiny booklet with black and white photos and written text entitled, "Colorado City - The Gem of the Foothills".

The exhibit is located in the corner to the far left as you enter the museum area.

WANTED:

The Historical Society is looking for Plains Indians and Ute Indian artifacts to add to its collection.

If you have any of these items that you'd like to donate to the Society, please contact us at 636-1225 or feel free to bring them to the History Center.

From the President's Desk-

Holiday Greetings to All!

With the end of one year and looking to the next, your OCCHS Board of Directors is prudently reviewing our yearly budget as we plan for exciting 2009 Sesquicentennial events and maintain our many free programs and free museum admission, still keeping the budget balanced and the doors open to the community with regular business hours. A growing membership and paying your dues are measures of our success. We thank you! Many members are working and miss Friday morning programs so we hope you can attend weekend and evening events, bring others with you, and visit our website.

Several BIG projects are coming together – the annual Bed & Breakfast Holiday Tour Fundraiser, the Bookstore going on-line, and plans for the 2009 Sesquicentennial Celebration of Colorado City!

The annual B&B Holiday Tour major fundraiser is this weekend. Bev Disch and her committee have been busy with the final details and selling tickets. Check the OCCHS December Calendar information about hot cider in the Bookstore on Saturdays and the reception and book signing for our historical author, Leland Feltz, on December 13th.

Our History Center Bookstore is going "on-line"! The Technology Committee has spent many hours creating this capability to purchase books on-line and capture some sales from those who don't actually visit the History Center during business hours. The committee is asking for your feedback as you make your purchases so they can eliminate any problems with your purchase. In other words, please be our test market for this new program. Setting up this program is all a portion of the money grant from Dave Hughes.

And excitement is building for the 2009 Sesquicentennial! The kick-off is the "Meet the Pioneers of Colorado City" program on Friday, January 16th. Who can resist seeing some of our members in costume portraying these early residents? This will be a lively program!

One of my personal goals for 2009 and 2009 is to increase the documented research of Colorado City and early El Paso County for our members, our visitors and the Westside community. This is needed for programs, Westword articles, exhibits, oral history and special projects. Please contact me if you are interested or have questions.

A special "thanks" to each person who has contributed to the History Center this past year! You have truly made a difference.

Best regards for the coming year...

Joanne Karlson

November Treasurer's Report

As we approach the end of 2008 which as low-income (only \$22,000 projected) and high-cost (painting building - \$6,800 - and furnace replacement - \$2,700), and no-more-interest-on-our-savings, your Board took a hard look at what is coming up in 2009.

Now 2009 is our Sesquicentennial Year! We want to celebrate it properly, culminating in quite a celebration around August 12th, 2009 – which is the actual 150 year Anniversary of the founding of Colorado City.

So the Board agreed, for planning purposes before the 2009 Budget is finally approved by January,

To allocate \$5,000 out of our Savings for a Special Sesquicentennial Activities Budget beyond our normal operating budget. That will cover such things as the creation of a special Logo, for an artist's fee for designing a monument, costs to distribute widely in numerous publications – the Hub, possibly the OWN Newsletter, the Westside Pioneer, a special '150 Years of History' insert, and incidental costs for activities such as a Parade, an Annual Dinner.

We have been quoted by Wilhelm Monuments \$11,500 cost to create a 6 foot etched red granite monument memorializing 150 Years of Early El Paso County, the original Colorado City, and the Westside's History to be placed on the concrete slab next to the Bancroft Park. That slab was erected there 37 years ago when the Park was redesigned and the Cabin renovated, just waiting for the appropriate, and only, memorial for Colorado City's long history.

By December 20th, after the Park Board approves our plan, we are pursuing a Grant for the bulk of the total cost. We expect to conduct a fund raising across the Westside, including the opportunity for school children to contribute to 'their' neighborhood monument.

So we face a year of fiscal challenges. But then one is 150 Years old, only once!

Dave Hughes
Treasurer

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

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DECEMBER - JANUARY CALENDAR

2008

- December Saturdays** Hot Cider in Bookstore, free
12 noon til 3 p.m.
- Sunday, Dec. 7** **Annual Bed & Breakfast Tour**
2 til 6 p.m. \$10 tickets in advance, \$15 at door
\$8 with military discount & I.D.
- Saturday, Dec. 13** **"Meet OCCHS Author - Leland Feltz"**
1 til 3 p.m. reception & book signing
- Dec. 24, 25, 31** **History Center & Museum closed**

2009

- Friday, Jan. 9** **"Meet the Pioneers of Colorado City"**
11 a.m. Kick-off sesquicentennial program
with members in costume. Invite friends.
- Sunday, Jan. 11** Reception honoring 5th anniversary of
2 to 3:30 p.m. Westside Pioneer publication. All welcome.
Hosted by OCCHS & OCC Carnegie Library.

For more information, call (719) 636-1225 or email history@oldcolo.com