



Old Colorado City Historical Society

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 2

March
February 2008

Labor vs Management

The Colorado City Strike by Paul Shepard

What was it like living in Colorado City in March of 1903? Armed troops set up camps in various parts of the town to protect the citizens from danger and keep the peace. Was the town being invaded by outsiders determined to change the social order? Didn't the town have its own law enforcement officials sworn to protect the public? Why was the National Guard in Colorado City?

The Mill and Smelter workers Union No. 125 of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) had gone on strike at three gold processing mills which were all located south of Highway 24 near one or more of the railroad tracks; the Standard at 31st street, the Telluride at the site of the Golden Cycle smokestack, and the Portland near the present day rodeo grounds. The workers were demanding \$2.25 for an eight-hour day, an increase from \$1.80 for twelve hours. This seemed like a reasonable request considering the same union had won \$3 a day for eight hours in 1894 for the miners in Cripple Creek. Also, during the elections of 1902 the people had voted to authorize the legislature to enact \$3 for the eight-hour day in the mines and processing plants. However, the General Assembly ignored the wishes of the voters and never passed the necessary legislation.

Many historians have written about the violence of the strike in the Cripple Creek mining district

in 1903-1904. These historians have documented an important part of the labor history in the United States but usually just mentioned a strike occurred in Colorado City. While there was no blood-bath in the local strike, it did play an important role in the labor wars in the mining areas of the West. One historian, George G. Suggs, Jr., wrote a detailed account of the strike in the 1967 Summer edition of the Colorado Magazine entitled "Prelude to the Industrial Warfare: The Colorado City Strike." Later, in 1972, he published a book called Colorado's War on Militant Unionism, which includes a chapter on Colorado City. These are the main sources for this article.

What made the strike in Colorado City so important that it required the National Guard when there were only a little over 500 workers at the three mills and not all of them went on strike? Of these employees only about 60% walked out. In other parts of Colorado, the WFM had successfully organized the mill workers in 1902 and wanted to represent the workers of Colorado City. This union had been successful during the 1893-1894 strike in Cripple Creek in a different political environment. In 1892, Colorado voters chose the Populist candidates for President, Governor and two US Representatives. With Davis Waite in the Governor's office, the unions had an ally. When the violence broke out in 1893 in Cripple Creek, the Governor sent in troops to protect strikers. The Populists also supported many policies that differed from the Democrats and Republicans, particularly those that benefited unions. As an example of the political climate, it was during this time that women won the right to vote in Colorado almost three decades before a constitutional amendment was

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
 A NONPROFIT CORPORATION
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LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIFACTS AND STORIES CAN BE DELIVERED
 TO THE OCCHS CENTER OR MAILED TO:

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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

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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
February 8, 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

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passed giving all females in the United States the right to vote. By 1903, the political power of the Populists and their social welfare programs had faded. Instead, the business wing of the Republican Party had regained power in Colorado. In the election of 1902, James Peabody, a respected businessman from Canon City, won the Governor's race and he disliked unions.

Peabody believed the most important thing he could do as Governor was make Colorado an attractive place for capital investment. Strikes made Colorado seem unstable and not a place that would attract investors. Also, like many other business leaders in the state, he thought strikers were criminals. When they struck they were violating property rights and depriving a man of the right to do what he wanted with his own property. In addition he thought the Colorado Constitution, which spelled out the rights of property owners in its Bill of Rights, meant no strikes. Furthermore, the WFM had a history of violence, and Peabody saw the members of the union as insurrectionists, socialists and anarchists. Most of the mill and mine owners felt the same way.

On February 14th, when members of the union submitted their proposal to the management of the three mills, they got mixed responses. Both Frank Peck, Secretary-Treasurer of the Portland Mining Company and Hugh W. Fullerton, General Manager of the Telluride Reduction Company, told the union officials they would consider the demands and get back to them. However, Charles M. MacNeill, President and General Manager of the United States Reduction and Refining Company (USRRC), refused to talk to the union members nor read their proposal. The union struck the Standard Mill and that night seventy-six mill workers walked out. The USRRC was the largest and oldest of these corporations. It had seven plants located in Colorado with stockholders from various parts of the country and influential officers, Spencer Penrose and Charles Tutt. These men, who lived in Colorado Springs rather than Colorado City, were not going to be intimidated by this militant union. MacNeill asked the El Paso County Sheriff, W.R. Gilbert, for protection. It was readily given and MacNeill and Penrose were depu-

tized. The salaries of other deputies were paid by the USRRC until the county could raise enough funds to reimburse the company. Two weeks later Peck and Fullerton formally rejected the union proposal which expanded the strike to include all of the mills in Colorado City. Gilbert had 250 deputies to help keep peace at the Standard, so when the other two mills requested deputies, the Sheriff called on the Governor for help. He sent an official petition asking the state to send in the National Guard. On March 3rd, the Governor met with the representatives of the mills to hear their concerns. He, however, did not meet with representatives of the union. Gilbert claimed the town was on the brink of disaster, facing possible riots. Conditions sounded drastic and the Governor became concerned but did not know if he had the legal right to send in troops. He called on Attorney General, Nathan C. Miller, for a ruling. Miller not only ruled that Peabody had the right to get involved but also had a legal obligation to protect endangered citizens of the state. Without consulting the union officials nor the elected town officials, he ordered Adjutant General Sherman M. Bell, a former Rough Rider with President Teddy Roosevelt, to mobilize the troops and go to Colorado City.

Many citizens of the town were unhappy with the Governor. The next day 125 residents signed a petition denying the need for help. Unlike the Sheriff, city officials sympathized with the concerns of the strikers so the chief of police, city attorney and the mayor sent a telegram to the Governor saying that no serious threat existed and local law enforcement could take care of fist fights and other incidents. Charles H. Moyer, President of the WFM, was furious and urged the Governor to withdraw the troops. However, industrial leaders throughout the state and nation sent telegrams praising the Governor for his bold action. When an investigation of the strike was held at a later date, Sheriff Gilbert admitted under oath that no riots took place but that he was afraid one night. The Governor implemented a preemptive action just to play it safe, which city officials and the union saw as an abuse of power.

MARCH PROGRAM

"Three Generations Living & Working in El Paso County"

Friday, March 14th, 2008 - Program begins at 11 a.m.

Art Crawford, a retired railroad man and OCCHS member, will share his interesting family history going back to 1859 when his grandfather first visited the Pikes Peak region. Each generation earned their living working in some aspect of rail transportation - the Midland Railway, the trolley system, and today's railroads. Come hear his oral history which gives historians an opportunity to capture personal stories and unique information frequently not recorded in any other way.

History Center opens at 10:30 a.m. for coffee and museum visitation. Free. Bring your friends.

Saturday March 29th 9 a.m. until about 4 p.m. Victorian Hat making Workshop

A historical clothing specialist, Denise Winters, will conduct the workshop. Reservations are required. limit 12 participants. \$48 plus cost of some supplies. Basic sewing skills required, for information contact Jo Cervone at 266-9096 or email jocervone@comcast.net

Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Master Plan

Commenting on the Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Master Plan at last Thursday's Parks Board meeting, I stated a need for an interpretive center to enhance the Interpretive Plan and presented a request that the Parks Board amend the Red Rock Canyon Master Plan to accommodate reuse of the Bock Bomb Shelter as an interpretive center. I also presented graphics showing how the building might look adapted for that use.

The Parks Board agreed to consider whether they will consider amending the Red Rock Canyon Master Plan. They will have 2 informational presenta-

tions on the bomb shelter, one from each side of the issue, at their March meeting. After the presentations and public input, the Parks Board will decide whether they will consider an amendment to the Red Rock Canyon Master Plan at their April meeting. If they decide not to consider an amendment, that would be a decision to go ahead with demolition. (Presumably, there could still be a chance to take it to City Council.) If they decide to consider amending the Red Rock Canyon Master Plan, they will then make a decision on amending the plan at their April meeting.

The Department has sent out RFPs for the pavilion project and plans to let the pavilion contract in 2 to 2-1/2 months. That will be when demolition of the bomb shelter would begin if the Parks Board does not decide to amend the Red Rock Canyon Master Plan.

It will be important for anyone who can make it to go to the next Parks Board to support preservation of the bomb shelter.

The meeting will be March 13 at 7:30 AM in the Parks & Recreation building, 1401 Recreation Way. If you can't make the meeting, a letter to the Parks Board would also help:

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
ATTN: Jim Schwerin, Chair
1401 Recreation Way
Colorado Springs, CO 80905

Currently, I am thinking that my presentation may include a comparison of 3 plans, A) preservation and adaptive reuse of the entire building, B) preservation and adaptive reuse of only the bomb shelter and office, with the garage / shop part of the building being removed, and C) preservation of only the rear wall as a retaining wall. Matt Mayberry said at the Parks Board meeting that Plan C was what he would like to see "from a cultural services perspective."

I would very much appreciate your suggestions as to how we can be most effective.

... And, I hope that you will encourage other people who are concerned with preservation to attend the next Parks Board meeting.

Regards,
Don Ellis

It seemed the strikers were doomed if the mills remained open which was likely to be the case now that the Sheriff's deputies and the National Guard were there to protect the plants. There was no shortage of labor as new immigrants were moving west to Colorado. In addition to these new arrivals, workers who had been employed in the former silver mining camps needed jobs. It would not be hard to find replacement workers. However, one weapon the union did have was the miners in Cripple Creek. If there was no ore, the mills would not be able to stay open. The leaders of the WFM knew this and threatened to strike any mine that shipped gold to these mills; over 80% of the miners in the Cripple Creek District were members of the union. Plus, problems created by the strike of a decade earlier were still fresh in the minds of the residents. The mayor of Victor and business leaders became concerned and urged compromise. In addition, political leaders throughout the state became nervous and on March 9, 1903, the legislature passed a resolution calling for arbitration. As far as MacNeill was concerned, there was no need for arbitration and he saw compromise as a sign of weakness that would just encourage more insurrection. Besides, he asserted that all of his employees were satisfied and it was outsiders who were stirring up the conflict. Significantly, Peck and Fullerton broke their agreement with MacNeill and were then willing to submit to arbitration. The President of the Portland Mining Company, James Burns, had a good working relationship with the union and wanted to keep it that way. The Telluride could not afford a prolonged strike. Getting different information from his constituents, Governor Peabody decided he needed to see for himself if the troops should remain, so he visited Colorado City. After talking with employees of the Standard Mill, company officials, and local leaders, he concluded the militia should stay. He did not meet with any of the strikers during his fact-finding trip nor did he at anytime during the conflict rely on any information provided by those on strike.

When Moyers and William D. Hayward, secretary-treasurer of the WFM, heard of Peabody's decision, they reiterated their threat of expanding the strike. The fear of conflict in Cripple Creek motivated the

General

Assembly to officially ask the State Board of Arbitration to see what could be done. Hence, Peabody responded by inviting Moyers, representatives of the mills, the Adjutant General, the Attorney General and representatives of the legislature to meet with him. By attending, no one was required to make any commitments or change any positions. Besides, Attorney General Miller had advised the Governor that compulsory arbitration was unconstitutional.

After the meeting, the Portland and Telluride management and the union reached an agreement which included an eight-hour day, no discrimination, reinstatement of strikers and a pledge for future discussions of wages. Both mills became fully unionized. MacNeil left the meeting, but later returned at the Governor's request, and then agreed to some of the recommendations but refused to replace strikebreakers with union workers, recognize the union or discuss wages. Consequently, the strike continued at the Standard Mill. After a threatened lawsuit by the WFM against the Sheriff and officers of the National Guard, the troops withdrew from town on March 19th. Once again Colorado City was under the control of locally elected officials.

When MacNeill and the union could not agree, the WFM asked the mines to stop shipment to all mills owned by the USRRC. Responding to a possible strike, Mayor Nelson Franklin of Victor led a delegation to Colorado Springs to meet with MacNeill, urging the manager of the Standard to realize he needed to compromise. About the same time the Governor appointed an advisory board to investigate. MacNeill finally made some concessions which did not include recognition while Moyers gave up several demands. This compromise led to a temporary truce.

One issue agreed to by both sides was to rehire the former strikers. MacNeill interpreted this to mean he would give those who had walked out jobs as they became available. The union thought these former employees should get the same jobs they

had before the strike even if that meant the replacements had to be fired. The WFM appealed to the Governor's advisory committee, saying MacNeill had acted in bad faith and broken the terms of the agreement. The advisory committee sided with the corporation. Therefore, on July 3rd, the truce ended and the strike resumed.

By August there was still no settlement. When the union attempted to meet with MacNeill, he once again said, in effect, no discussions were necessary because his employees were satisfied and did not want a union. In response, the WFM called a strike in the Cripple Creek mining district. Instead of stopping shipment of ore, the Mine Owners Association responded by saying they would hire permanent replacements. The WFM had much more power in the mining district, and a prolonged strike took place. The strike in Colorado City was overshadowed by events in Cripple Creek. When the miners lost the strike, the fate of Colorado City was sealed.

What might have happened had the USRRC and the WFM reached an agreement? How much violence could have been prevented? The failure to settle the Colorado City Strike led to the bloody Cripple Creek labor wars of 1903 and 1904. Eventually, the union lost. When violence broke out in Cripple Creek, the Governor declared martial law, sent in troops, removed local officials, jailed union members, suspended habeas corpus, deported union members, and broke the union. There were casualties on both sides. Bitterness, particularly against the union, began and lasted for years. One of the most powerful unions in the West, the WFM, would no longer be a force in Colorado and would soon disband. Some remaining active members of the WFM would join the Industrial Workers of the World. Governmental interference in labor management conflict had been legitimized. Also, breaking the union in El Paso County affected political power for decades as Republican Presidential candidates won every election after the strike except in 1936. When the strike faded away, the owners of the Standard Mill built a social club for their employees located in the building that now houses the number 5 fire station and set a prece-

dent for labor and management different from collective bargaining. Penrose, Tutt and their families created one of the most philanthropic organizations in the state as well as making many contributions to the county. Unions in the area were ineffective for decades. This strike definitely influenced the history of the Pikes Peak Region as well as the labor movement in the entire United States.

Omitted from the treasurer's report in the February 2008 West Word is the fact that the Book and Gift Shop was able to transfer an additional amount of \$2000 to the Historical Society in 2007, which represented the profit from sales of gifts items and books (other than the Howbert book).

As the treasurer's report indicated \$3520 was a transfer in December of 2007 as the retail sales of the Howbert book published by the society. The total transfer of funds during 2007 by the Book and Gift shop to the Historical Society was \$5,520. A great deal of gratitude and thanks go to the many volunteers who daily open the museum doors and hope to make a couple of sales. Their efforts really do make a difference!

Betsy Evans



March 17

In Memory of William Leslie Atkins

The Old Colorado City Historical Society lost one of its greatest benefactors when William Leslie Atkins died August 15, 2007, in Waxahachie, Texas at age 98. Leslie Atkins was the channel through which a priceless collection of Old Colorado City memorabilia passed to our History Center.

Mr. Atkins was injured in a fall while visiting in Colorado Springs last summer, and was treated at Penrose Hospital for a number of complications. He returned home with a daughter shortly before his death in Waxahachie.

As personal representative, Mr. Atkins settled the estate of his cousin, Luther McKnight, after McKnight dies May 7, 1986. McKnight left a house he had lived in for 85 years filled with historic items from Colorado City, which were packed away in every nook and cranny, attic to crawl space. Mr. Atkins searched out these items and passed them on for storage to Luther's friend, Ralph Conner.

Mr. Conner had rented space at 1672 South 21st in 1985 to store historic items until OCCHS had a building in which to keep them. Besides McKnight's artifacts the building temporarily housed items from the Ellis and Rymer families, among others. Liliane Ross, Joyce Johns, Dorothy McGlasson and Virginia Cox began the formidable job of accessioning.

Before his death Mr. McKnight had arranged for the Old Colorado City Historical Society to benefit from more than \$100,000 he had accumulated during his lifetime. In a variety of jobs, and with a myriad of interests, Mr. McKnight had collected everything from photographs to street-car transfers which were passed on from his estate.

In his conscientious salvage efforts, and his cooperation in finances, Leslie Atkins helped make possible the present day museum. An important part of our Colorado City history has been preserved, thanks to Luther McKnight and his late cousin, Leslie Atkins.

From Ralph Conner

Just who was St. Patrick?

The person who was to become St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales about AD 385. His given name was Maewyn, and he almost didn't get the job of bishop of Ireland because he lacked the required scholarship.

Far from being a saint, until he was 16, he considered himself a pagan. At that age, he was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders that raided his village. During his captivity, he became closer to God.

He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in the monastery under St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre for a period of twelve years. During his training he became aware that his calling was to convert the pagans to Christianity.

His wishes were to return to Ireland, to convert the native pagans to Christianity. But his superiors instead appointed St. Palladius. But two years later, Palladius transferred to Scotland. Patrick, having adopted that Christian name earlier, was then appointed as second bishop to Ireland.

Patrick was quite successful at winning converts. And this fact upset the Celtic Druids. Patrick was arrested several times, but escaped each time. He traveled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the country. He also set up schools and churches which would aid him in his conversion of the Irish country to Christianity.

His mission in Ireland lasted for thirty years. After that time, Patrick retired to County Down. He died on March 17 in AD 461. That day has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since.

Much Irish folklore surrounds St. Patrick's Day. Not much of it is actually substantiated.

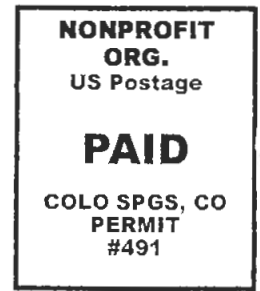
Some of this lore includes the belief that Patrick raised people from the dead. He also is said to have given a sermon from a hilltop that drove all the snakes from Ireland. Of course, no snakes were ever native to Ireland, and some people think this is a metaphor for the conversion of the pagans. Though originally a Catholic holy day, St. Patrick's Day has evolved into more of a secular holiday.

One traditional icon of the day is the shamrock. And this stems from a more bona fide Irish tale that tells how Patrick used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the Trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.

The St. Patrick's Day custom came to America in 1737. That was the first year St. Patrick's Day was publicly celebrated in this country, in Boston.

Today, people celebrate the day with parades, wearing of the green, and drinking beer. One reason St. Patrick's Day might have become so popular is that it takes place just a few days before the first day of spring. One might say it has become the first green of spring.

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



Several months ago the OCCHS Board formed a volunteer "Committee for the Future of the Old Colorado City Historical Society" to look into the future and report back to the membership and the Board. The purpose of the committee was to consider how the Society might better operate even more soundly in the future by developing a much needed ten year visionary/strategic plan.

A cross section of the members of the Society were asked to join the committee in this exciting endeavor. Several brainstorming sessions led by Barbara Barbaro were held at which sixty activities, some specific goals, and eleven categories were developed plus some sub-committees were formed.

In February the Vision Steering Committee met and were asked to draft their vision statement which will be revised at the next meeting to come up with a final vision statement. The Research, Internal Appearance and Technical/Digitization Sub-Committee gave their reports. Other sub-committees like Education, Physical Facilities, Volunteer and Membership will be formed.

Members will be asked to join these sub-committees. If any of you would be interested in being on these sub-committees, let the Vision Steering Committee know. There will be monthly meetings of the Vision Steering Committee at which the sub-committees will make brief reports. With this Vision Steering Committee and all the sub-committees, we can look forward to the next decade of keeping the history of Old Colorado City and the Westside alive.

Bev Disch
President