

WEST WOOD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

Volume 24, Number 3

April, 2009

PIONEER PALEONTOLOGIST

by Dave Hughes

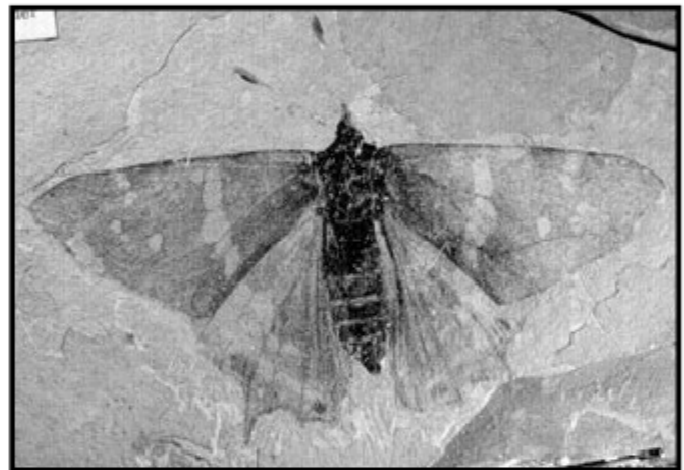
One would think a young woman who married at 13 years old in the earliest days of Colorado City - 1863 - just 3 years after the frontier town was founded, and bore 7 children, 1 of whom died in infancy, two others later, would not have had much time for being anything more than a homemaker for her carpenter husband Adam Hill and her family. They lived continuously in Colorado City into the early 1870s, then were back in the 1880s into the 90s.

But Charlotte Hill was an amazing woman whose 160th Birthday was just observed - February 15th, 2009 - in the small community of Florissant, Colorado, some 40 miles west of 'Old' Colorado City'

For Charlotte Hill is now, belatedly, being recognized and honored as the prime mover in getting the rich Florissant Fossil Beds recognized and studied, leading to it being eventually designated a National Monument in 1969. For Charlotte was a budding, self taught amateur paleontologist from Colorado City of all places!

Instead of just looking for crystals and semi-precious stones that many rockhounds and geologists seek in the mountains, she looked for and found fossilized million year old plants, insects, and other ancient critters. She is given credit in scientific literature for some of her findings with entries like this:

'1878-Charlotte Hill collects a well-preserved fossil butterfly, later named *Prodryas persephone*, from the Florissant Formation in Colorado. The fossil is about 35 million years old'



Prodryas persephone

And at least three specimens (most others are at the Smithsonian, Yale, and Harvard) have her name attached - *Uluus Hilliae*, an elm, *Rhush Hilliae*, a sumac, and the best one of all *Rosa Hilliae*, a rose - all millions of years old.

I am told by Dr. Herb Meyer the Fossil Beds Paleontologist- who has spent years creating a data base including all her known specimens, that there are at least 169 in formal collections.

Now how did the Old Colorado City Historical Society get involved with - or even learn about - her story? Much less help her Hill and Coplan (Charlotte's family name) decedents figure out just where she, her husband, and other relatives lived in or around Colorado City before they took advantage of the 1862 Homestead Act and homesteaded near Florissant in 1869. And, moved there in the early 1870s.

Continued page 4

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 Karson	475-2574
Vice President	Phil McDonald	532-0881
Secretary	Janice deChadenades	598-7183
Treasurer	David Hughes	636-2040
	Art Crawford	578-1158
	Beverly Dlsch	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.

WELCOME TO OCCHS! ~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Joe Barrara
Dorothy C. Boyd
Chris Buehben
Catherine Conrad
Ethel Even
D.H. Farthing
Leland Feitz
John & Chrys Fontenos
Samuel Foster Hall
Bob & Christine Heinich
Barbara S. Hill
Edie C. Hires
Jean Hughes
Billy Kilman
Gene & Mary Martin
Willard E. Mason
Steve Murtagh family
Jack & Bev Patterson
Elaine Radney
Don Sanborn
Bob & Patty Shepherd
Linda Lou Smith
Elaine R. Sommers
John & Sue Spengler
Eloise Wynne

*Have you
contributed to
the Monument
for Bancroft Park?*

*We need about \$2500
to meet our goal.*

*We accept check, cash,
credit card, and/or
online donations at
<http://history.oldcolo.com>*

Thank you.

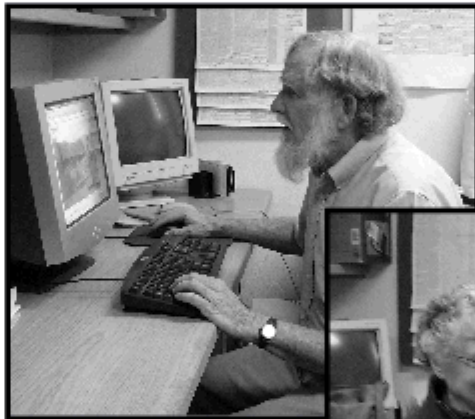
Volunteer Spotlight – meet The West Word Newsletter Team

- Don Ellis, Bev Disch, Muriel Dunkley, Kay Alleberry, and Eloise Wynne

By Barbara Barbaro

Have you ever wondered just what goes on behind the scenes to get our West Word newsletter published and finally, into our hands? Well, here's a quick overview, step by step of those behind-the-scenes activities.

First, our editor, Don Ellis, prepares the upcoming edition by using the previous month's master. He works from the master, adding new articles and deleting the old ones, so that he never has to start completely from scratch. There might be some minor editing and formatting to make the articles fit in the allotted space, but for the most part, he tries to keep the articles intact, as they were turned into him. It takes about one full day, spread out over many hours throughout the month, for Don to pull each issue together.



About six months ago the decision was made to stop running off the copies

from our copying machine. Now, once "camera ready", the disk on which the master is saved is simply taken to a copy shop to have about 350 copies made. The process is completely digitized now, which makes for clearer and sharper photos and text. And, an added benefit is that it saves wear and tear on the copying machine.

Once the copies are run off and brought back to the History Center, it's Muriel, Kay, and Eloise's turn to stuff the newsletters (if any inserts needed to be added), fold, and then tape shut the sides to each newsletter to prepare them for mailing. In total, it takes about one and one-half hours for the three of them to complete this step.

As the newsletters are finished being folded and taped, Bev sticks a mailing label on to each one, and then puts them in the appropriate postal trays, sorted by zip codes, to be taken to the post office. Mind you, however, it can't be just any post office, but the one located on Fountain and Academy, which handles bulk mailings. And, she can't just drop them off and leave; a postal worker must first examine one of the newsletters to ensure that there is no paid advertising within it. Finally, once Bev turns in the required form to the postal representative, the newsletters are off and on their way to our mail boxes.

The finished product is our professionally done, informative, and much awaited West Word newsletter, thanks to the dedicated members of our West Word newsletter team!

As a side note, OCCHS member Don Kallaus has just finished digitizing every newsletter printed by the Historical Society, going back to 1985. Soon, those newsletters will be available on

the Historical Society's website. The viewer will not only be able to read the articles, but will also be able to run searches for various topics to find associated articles.



Paleontologist *(continued from page 1)*

Well, in anticipation of the entire Hill, Coplan, Nickell families - 13 of them - traveling to Colorado from as diverse places as California and Mexico, to attend the

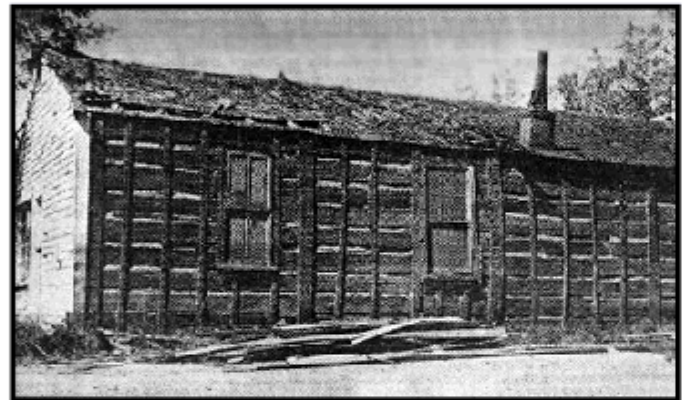


Charlotte Coplen Hill

celebration in Florissant, one family member, Patty Shepherd, found our web site because, of course, when she put the reference 'Colorado City' from family records into a Google search, she discovered our Historical Society web site. And we, being always responsive to helping people find locations in or around early El Paso County (and Teller County, for Florissant was part of El Paso County way back then), tracked down where Charlotte and Adam lived, where they had a 'rooming house' for a time, where Adam Hill worked in a 'lab' of some sort on Robinson Street in the Midland Area, and even where the great great grandfather of the Nickell branch of the family had a Colorado City Hotel (Mather House) and purportedly a Saloon!

But the real zinger is that the address they had where they operated a rooming house corresponded perfectly with the long 1859 Gerish and Cobb log building which was at 710 Colorado Avenue - 2700 block today. And which log building was razed in 1959 to make room for a modern building but Lorene Englert, the only Colorado City historian before our Society got involved in 1975, saved the logs, and had them on her Salda property. I rescued several of them in 1976. We have three of them - guaranteed to be from 1859 and that log building - in the basement of the History Society!

So when 8 of the 13 family members came to our History Center the day before the Florissant all day Celebration, while I showed them on large maps and early city



Girten 1859 Cabin

photographs where their kin had been long ago - I also photographed them as a group standing in front of one of those 150 year old logs that came out of the building in which their amazing Charlotte Hill lived.

I also discovered something that none of the family or the National Park Service researchers knew. The family obviously had done extensive genealogical work before coming, and had visited our History Center many months before looking for addresses and locations. And the NPS staff spent almost a year preparing for the February Tribute.

Intrigued by the story of this previously unknown Colorado City pioneer I found in a tiny Colorado City 'Business Directory' for 1884, ten years before her name surfaces in an 1894 directory the following unmistakable line "Hill, Charlotte - Museum." Colorado City only had 250 inhabitants in 1884, there were



Coplen Family and Log

only 14 'Businesses' listed - four of them Saloons, and yet Charlotte Hill had a Museum there! I'll wager it displayed specimens she brought down from the Fossil Beds, 40 miles away on horseback or by carriage. There were no trains to or through Florissant for 4 more years! Amazing. One would have thought Colorado City was too small to have a Museum. But perhaps she thought the educated and moneyed Easterners who rode carriages up Colorado Avenue from Colorado Springs to the Resort of Manitou Springs might stop by to see and perhaps purchase some of these rare, often beautiful, fossils. Of course in the breezy early 'directories' you seldom found addresses, so we don't know what building it was in, exactly. It must have just been between, by that time, four Old Town saloons, one hotel and a blacksmith shop. In 30 years of my researching every nook and cranny of Colorado City I had never run across any mention of such a museum. Only that one entry in our online 'Business Directory' of 1884.

Charlotte Hill was a real Colorado City Pioneer. She needs to be recognized as such. Laura Moncrief, historian of Florissant's historic cemetery thinks that Charlotte probably buried her first born in the 'Mesa Cemetery' - now Pioneer Park, though her name is not among the 45 names on a much later Monument erected there - as are not many others of the nearly 250 pioneers who were buried there before Fairview Cemetery opened in 1895.

Continued page 6

JOHN COPLEN AT SAND CREEK

In a rare discovery while I was researching Charlotte Coplen Hill's family I encountered a statement made by her brother John Coplen, who fought at Sand Creek beside 18 other Colorado City men. NO Sand Creek historian has ever seen what he wrote, below, in 1884. For it was in a privately printed family genealogy. He was as outspoken and credible an eye witness as Irving Howbert defending that operation!

"In justice to myself and comrades, I must brand that charge of massacre a stupendous falsehood, conceived in jealousy and envy, as a few of the facts will amply attest. Our forces numbering 500, after an all night's ride from Fort Lyon, at sunrise on the 29th Nov. 1864, encountered the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, numbering 1000 or more at their camp. Although surprised at the discovery of our approach, the Indians advanced to meet us, and by firing upon us engaged us in a conflict that lasted until late in the afternoon. Eleven of our comrades were killed and forty wounded, some of whom subsequently died of their wounds. The Indians had extensive fortifications, fresh made, consisting of long deep cuts in the sand, and under the then dry Sand Creek. Scalps of men, women and children, recently taken from our white neighbors, were recovered. The number of Indians killed was not definitely known, but the majority of them retreated and made good their escape. As to the killing of squaws and papposes, only a few were killed, and that mainly the result of accident; the squaws fighting as desperately as the males, and in a dress and equipage scarcely distinguishable from that of the men. Thus the battle was calumniously christened "a massacre," not truth-fully but falsely and enviously by military and political aspirants for influence, office and commanding power on the general frontier."

John Coplen quote from Balou family history

Paleontologist *(continued from page 5)*

From all reports there was a grand time held by all up the pass at Florissant Sunday, February 15th, 2009 honoring an accomplished lady from 160 years ago. This was program they attended:

"Homesteaders, Fossils, and Scientists"

A Tribute to Charlotte Hill on Her 160th Birthday. Sponsored by -National Park Service, The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds, the Pikes Peak Historical Society and the Florissant Scientific Society

Introductory remarks were made by:

- Superintendent, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument (Keith Payne)
- President, Pikes Peak Historical Society (Celinda Kaelin)
- Representative for the Florissant Scientific Society (Tim Brown)
- Vice President, The Friends of the Florissant Fossil Beds (Sally Maertens)

Then Dr. Herb Meyer, the chief Paleontologist at the National Monument spoke about her collections.

Steven Veatch spoke about Charlotte Hill, the homesteaders role in unveiling Florissant's place into world fame

David Atkins spoke about the Princeton Scientific Expedition of 1877

Dr. Beth Simmons told about her influence on later famous paleontologist Samuel H. Scudder

The Passing the heritage onto brother John Copen with The Copen Petrified Forest was described.

They then took Field Trip to overlook the site of the Hill Homestead.

A lot of researchers, such as Dr. Beth Simmons, did a lot of work researching, not only the work that Charlotte did at the Fossil Beds, but also the family lineages of the Copen's - back into the 1700s. All in preparation for the Celebration, but also for the continuation of the historical and scientific record.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT - 2009

The nominating committee composed of Tom Hendrix, Kay Atteberry and Sandy Hanzlian 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 meeting which is Friday, May 8, 2009 at 11 a.m. Those Board member whose terms are expiring are: Dave Hughes, Phil McDonald, Mel McFarland and Sharon Swint.

The nominees are:

Dave Hughes - incumbent Board member, current Treasurer- Old Colorado City historian-wireless technology expert-author-retired military.

Phil McDonald - incumbent Board member - bookstore volunteer-Cemetery Crawl character portrayal-local Pillar instructor-speaker to local groups on a variety of subjects-retired high school history teacher and college instructor.

Paul Shepard - native of the West Side, Masters Degree in history-taught high school social studies for 32 years-sometimes works in the bookstore, but his favorite job is in the Archives Department - wrote an article which appeared in the February 2008 issue of the WEST WORD on the labor wars of Colorado City.

Sharon Swint - has served on the Board as a replacement member for 1.5 years - organized the bookstore volunteer training and created the manual - Cemetery Crawl character portrayal-actively worked on the Victoria Tea and our annual dinner-published local author of books on local historical topics.

At the History Center

Tuesday, April 7, 2009 - 7:00 PM

Jon Barker, Professional Geologist
will present:

RED ROCK QUARRIES

-HOW & WHY

*(including a display and demonstration
of historic quarrying tools)*

Sponsored by Friends of Red Rock Canyon

From the President's Desk-

Please check your calendar for these events and program additions.

Many Colorado Avenue merchants are sponsoring a **fundraiser for nonprofits** on March 28 and 29. An OCCHS member, Deb's Coffee House at 2 South 25th St., is donating a percentage of her sales that week to the History Center. Her location is the old Templeton house on the corner and serves breakfast, lunch, and afternoon tea!

Every dollar collected helps towards our commitment to the **Monument in Bancroft Park**. The ribbon cutting will be on Founders Day, August 8th. With 269 OCCHS members, we are asking everyone to make a donation, in any amount, for this community gift celebrating 150 years of Colorado City history. Won't you please help?

The April 10th morning **program features original research** from the western edges of the original El Paso County, now Teller County.

The "**members only**" tour on April 19th will feature small groups touring work areas within the History Center...perhaps places you have not explored. You can see what is happening in 1) archives and collections, 2) the research library and recent acquisitions, 3) our revised website plus digitization projects, and 4) bookstore additions. You may choose one or all areas to visit so please call the History Center to make a reservation and let us know your preferences. Also enjoy a social hour with light refreshments.

And looking forward into May, Sharon Swint's **book signing** has been rescheduled for May 2.

The **May 8th Annual Business Meeting** will begin at 10:30 a.m. followed by the program at 11 a.m. Visitors are welcome to attend the meeting or join us in time for the program.

And, with tight purse strings, the OCCHS Board is actively managing our 2009 budget as we celebrate our 150 years, bringing our history alive and sharing it with our community. We appreciate the assistance of our members and volunteers!

—Joanne Karlson

Treasurer's Report March, 2009

We seem to be truckin' along alright through February and half of March.

The biggest Financial Issue is, of course, raising at least the \$11,500 that our Memorial Sesquicentennial Monument will cost. I can report good news, that the Ackerman Fund - created by long time Colorado Springs banker and rancher Jasper Ackerman and administered now by the El Pomar board of trustees - awarded the Society \$5,000 on March 12th for the Monument. Then we raised, in part by those of you Society members who wrote checks totaling \$1,583 in February, and so far in March - \$2,525 more, we have a total as of March 16th, together with the grant, of \$9,118, or nearly 80% of the way!

Now we still need at least \$2,382 more to reach our \$11,500 goal. I have to write Wilhelm Monuments a check for \$5,750 this week, 50% of the monument cost. The balance, either \$5,750 or up to \$1,000 more if his cost for the unanticipated text engraving the city wanted us to do, for it will be due on delivery and installation by August 8th, in time for the unveiling. We have time to raise the money. Just send in a check, or log onto our <http://history.oldcolo.com> website and contribute by credit card or paypal. Its tax exempt! Donations have ranged from \$5 to \$1,000, with several \$500, and many \$50 donations by supportive members. To that end we held the Sesquicentennial Kickoff Sunday March 15th at the History center. And by the day before Saturday March 14th all 8,500 westside residents and businesses, will have received the same Colorado City Journal you did, piggybacked on the mailed out Springs 'Westside Story' neighborhood organization newsletter. Our Journal contained its rich stories of our 150 years of history, the plan for the monument, and an appeal for westsider funds - even school kids Pennies for Pioneers, for this monument celebrates their history too. The design, printing and mailing of that two sided souvenir Journal cost us \$1,200. Besides its help with our fund raising it sure has been educating 20,000 westsiders and their children details of Westside, early El Paso County and Colorado City history they never knew! It was worth it for that alone.

With selling in the bookstore, new members signing on, bills being paid we still have \$13,780 in our ready reserves, \$90,470 in our fixed Endowment and with us seemingly on course toward a 'balanced 2009 budget' - which is more than the City of Colorado Springs, or El Paso County government can claim!

Dave Hughes
Treasurer

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80904-3319

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COMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| Friday, April 10
11 a.m. | Program: "The Stories Behind the Tombstones"
as told by Laura Lee Moncrief featuring her research solving mysteries of Florissant Cemetery pioneers (early El Paso County history). |
| Sunday, April 19
2 to 4 p.m. | Members Only Tour (see President's Letter)
Reservations, please. |
| Saturday, May 2
3 to 5 p.m.
reception | Remarks & Book Signing with Sharon Swint and her newest book, " Pictorial Photos of Colorado Springs ".
Books available for purchase. |
| Friday, May 8
10:30 a.m.
11 a.m. | Light refreshments at 10 a.m.
Annual Business Meeting Elections
Program, open to public as well as members |

Programs are free and open to the public, however donations are welcome.
Doors will be open by 10:15 a.m. for the Friday morning programs.
Come early for coffee and to visit the Museum exhibits or browse the Bookstore.

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