

WEST WOOD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

Volume 25, Number 7

September, 2010

Great Aunt Lu and the Midland School

By Elaine McFarland Radney

One of the small pleasures of being back home after years away is looking out my front window and seeing the old Midland School in the distance. The evening I moved in, it began to snow - a good omen as far as I was concerned. There was just enough light to illuminate the old school building in the distance, and all the modern cars and satellite dishes just faded out of sight. It felt like stepping back in time. Less visible was the house next door to the school, where my mother lived briefly with her Aunt Lu before she met and married my father. I never attended the Midland School, but it holds an interesting place in our family's history. Aunt Lu was the custodian of the school from 1926 until 1942.



Edward and Lulu McArthur Lagergren in Oregon ca 1908

Aunt Lu never intended to have a career as a "janitress." Her early life followed the conventional road of daughter, then wife, then mother of five children. Lulu Etta McArthur was born to William Henry [W.H.] and Rose Harding McArthur on January 25, 1884 in Marion, Kansas, the third and last surviving child. Her mother was from the same Harding family that produced our 29th President of the United States, Warren G. Harding.

Lu, as she preferred to be called, was ten years old when her family traveled from central Kansas to Monument, Colorado, by wagon in 1894. By the time the family moved down to Colorado Springs a few years later, her older sister, Grace, had married, been widowed, and had a small daughter to support. W. H. was a stone mason and carpenter, skills he passed along to his only son, Judson Edward - my grandfather. Some of the stone foundations they build can still be found around Old Colorado City and along Cheyenne Blvd. The house W.H. built for his family on Center Street is now gone. In fact, that whole block is gone. Interstate-25 passes right over where my grandparents lived when they first met. In fact, the extension of that same highway now passes over the property my parents bought in the 1950's. I-25 has not been kind to our family, but that is a story for another time.

Aunt Lu met and married Edward [Edd] Lagergren not long after the McArthurs moved into the Center Street house. Edward Lagergren first appears in the 1900 Colorado Springs City Directory. He is listed as living and working at the Alamo Hotel, located at the corner of Cucharas and Tejon. We do not know much about his history, nor do we know how he met my great-aunt, but we know they married in Colorado

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Old Colorado City Historical Society

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

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The Old Colorado City Historical Society

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LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARTIFACTS AND STORIES CAN BE
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WEST WORD Editor c/o OCCHS

1 South 24th Street

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

or Don Ellis - splderwort@pcsys.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	\$25	Business	\$50
Family	\$30	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	Phil McDonald	532-0881
Vice President	Janice deChadenades	598-7183
Secretary	Sharon Swint	630-8384
Treasurer	Johnie Jackson	550-0999
	Beverly Dlsch	634-5023
	Tom Hendrix	633-7392
	Dave Murray	527-6778
	Suzanne Schorsch	488-0256
	Paul Shepard	633-8090

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

Betty Baker

Dr. & Mrs. Raymond Best

Betty Jo Cardona

Sallie Clark

Tom & Carol Daniels

Barbara Downs &

Mike Medvar

Charles Garvin

Richard & Ely Jamison

Lea & Mike Knudson

Jeanne Marsh

Sandra L. Moncada

Mary Jeanne Owen

Ann Parker

Steve Shepard

Jack & Betsy Shoup

Margaret Smith

John Stody

Dorothy Vidmar



Great Aunt Lu continued from page 1

Springs in 1902. According to Mother, who wrote down some of our favorite family stories, the newlyweds spent a lot of time with my courting grandparents. The four of them took the streetcar to Manitou Springs to fill up jugs of mineral water. My great grandfather, Samuel Silver, was advised by his Missouri doctor to move to Colorado to "take the water cure" for his stomach problems.

Sometimes the two couples rode or biked to one of the Cheyenne Canyons for picnics. At some point in those early days, Edd Lagergren managed to get a speeding ticket on what Mother referred to as the Colorado Avenue viaduct. We have always loved that story, especially the part where we were told that he must have been going all of 20 miles per hour. I wonder if it was downhill.

Judson married Anna Silver in 1904, and the couple move with the now-healthy Samuel Silver and Anna's mother, Piaetta, back to their home in Missouri. Lu's older sister, Grace, remarried and moved to California. In 1905, W.H. and Rose decided to try homesteading in Oregon, but Edd and Lu stayed in Colorado Springs. Edd began his career as school custodian in 1904 at Steele School¹ and two years later was working at Columbia School², where the young family took up residence in the basement of the large, brick school. In those days, custodians were housed either in the basement of a school or in a cottage on the school grounds. Edd and Lu had two small children, so a job that included free accommodations, as well as utilities, must have been appealing.

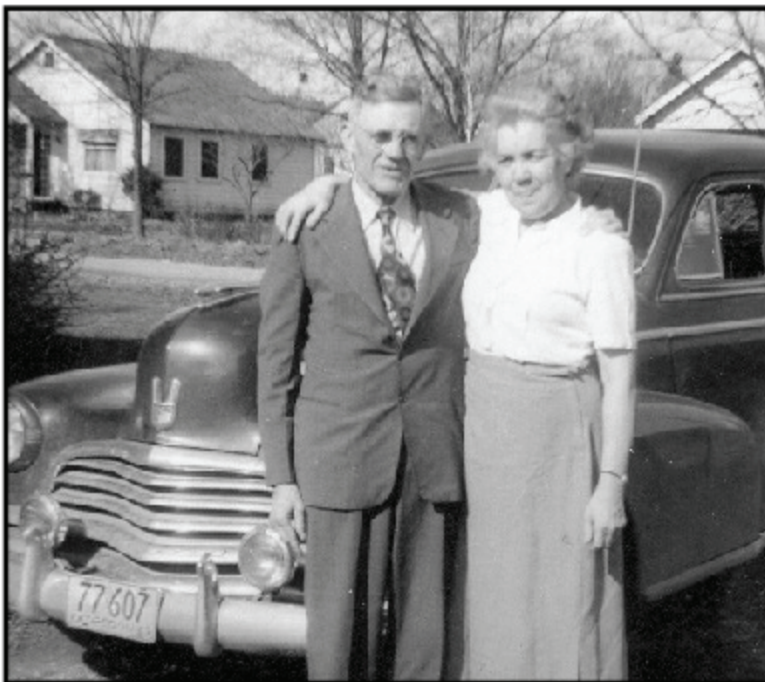
In 1908, Aunt Lu's mother died of food poisoning while the McArthur's were homesteading in Oregon, and about this same time Edd and Lu moved to Grants Pass, Oregon. Little is known of their years in Grants Pass except that three more children were born there. By 1918, Colorado Springs City Directories show that Edd Lagergren was once again janitor at Columbia School, and the family was once again living there, presumably back in the basement. It is difficult to imagine keeping five small children happy in the basement of a school building, but they certainly had plenty of playmates.

When the schools closed for the summer each year, the custodians were kept occupied by painting and making repairs to their own and other schools in the district. Four years after Aunt Lu's

return to the basement of Columbia School, her life was forever changed. On Monday morning, July 10, 1922, two janitors were "calcimining"³ the ceiling of the High School auditorium⁴ when the scaffolding they were working from fell 35 feet to the floor. One janitor died at the scene and a second died twelve hours later at St. Francis hospital.⁵ Edd Lagergren was the second janitor.

Newspaper reports of the accident are chilling. The pair remained in sitting position as they fell, and "their feet were described by attending surgeons as crushed almost to powder"⁶. Both sustained a variety of injuries, including other broken bones and unnamed internal injuries. Perhaps the most interesting non-medical detail is that these deaths were the first "coming under the jurisdiction of the school board" and "officials expressed ignorance of the provision of the law for survivors"⁷. Both men had life insurance and funeral benefits, a good start, but what about the widows and their families beyond that? Women did not generally work outside of the home in those days if they had children and a husband to support them all. What now? What was to become of my Aunt Lu and her five children?

The district's answer was evidently to make sure Aunt Lu had a job. I have no knowledge of what was done to help the other widow. In 1923, Lu is listed in the City Directory as a teacher at Roosevelt School⁸, but the next year she is listed



*Lu with her brother, my
grandfather, Judson
McArthur, 1949*

Continued on page 5

2010 ANNUAL DINNER
OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COLORADO'S MOST FAMOUS LOVE TRIANGLE COMES TO LIFE

September 23, 2010

The love triangle feud still rages involving Horace Tabor, Silver King of Leadville; Elizabeth (Baby) Doe and Augusta Tabor, first wife of Horace. The Old Colorado City Historical Society will present Mary Jane Bradbury as Augusta Tabor at their annual dinner, September 23, 2010.

From classrooms to boardrooms, audiences of all ages delight in the magic of living history – storytelling that connects the present with the past to inspire listeners for a better future. Storyteller and portrayalist Mary Jane Bradbury brings history to life through the lives of outstanding women who made a difference – Jeannette, Rankin, Martha Maxwell, Molly Brown, and now Augusta Tabor, Colorado pioneer and scomed wife in one of the 19th century most prominent scandals.

Augusta Tabor was a singular pioneering businesswoman with a heart of gold and a generosity that is legend. Journey with Augusta as she describes crossing the prairie with the Pike's Peak gold rush and life in the boom camps. Hear this courageous wife and mother talk about one of the 19th century's most enduring scandals!

Mary Jane Bradbury, M.A. Speech Communication, has been an actress, speaker, educator, and author in Colorado for over 20 years. She is a Chautauqua speaker and Young Chautauqua coach for Colorado Humanities and a performance artist for Think360, formerly Young Audiences of Colorado. She is an historic enactor for the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, bringing historic characters to life for temporary exhibits Ben Franklin: In Search of a Better World, and Titanic: The Artifact Exhibit, and currently is an enactor in the permanent exhibits and diorama halls.

Mary Jane has written and produced heritage event programs for Four Mile Historic Park in Denver, and takes her programs to elementary through high school classrooms across the state.

Call The Old Colorado City Historical Center, 719-636-1225 for reservations.



Mary Jane Bradbury as Augusta Tabor

"AUGUSTA TABOR VISITS COLORADO CITY"

OCCHS ANNUAL DINNER

DATE: Thursday, September 23, 2010

TIME: 6:30 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.

LOCATION: The Mason Jar, 5905 Corporate Drive, Colorado Springs. This is the 2nd location for this long time Westside restaurant, just off I-25.

COST: Order from our special menu with prices \$7.50 to \$13.50 including veggie, salad, rolls plus gratuity. Alcoholic drinks available.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: Call The Old Colorado City Historical Center at 719-636-1225 to reserve your spot. Limited seating due to room size.

DON'T MISS OUT!!

DEADLINE: September 21, Tuesday.



Fall is in the Air.



Starting the first of September, the OCCHS bookstore will be getting ready for fall with new fall gifts and quilts. We will be holding a \$1.00 drawing for fall quilt. New member Kelly Leaf has been making quilts ever since she retired from 40 years of teaching. Originally from California, she and her sister Kay always said they would retire in Colorado. After much searching they picked Colorado Springs to be the nicest spot ... and nothing better than our own Westside. Haven't been to the museum and bookstore for a while?

This is the time to come visit and see what OCCHS will be doing this fall.

Great Aunt Lu continued from page 3

as the janitor. Either she did not like teaching or she preferred custodial duties, and the free accommodations. By 1925, however, she began her many years as janitor or "janitress" of Midland School. In 1926, when she is first listed as living next door to the Midland, at 2408 Howbert, her older children were either married or soon to be married. It is perhaps ironic that once Aunt Lu finally had a separate house for her family, her children were one by one leaving her nest.

Aunt Lu remarried in about 1940, the last year she is listed as "janitress" at Midland School, but she continued to work as a custodian for the school district - at Colorado Springs High School, where her husband was killed. She retired in 1946, the year I was born. She and her second husband, Jesse Stanton, lived in the Victor-Cripple Creek

district for a while, but so far we have not been able to pinpoint exactly when, where, or for how long. We do know that her second marriage ended in divorce. She was single and living on her own by the time I knew her, living once again in Colorado Springs. We often spent time with her and her daughter Beatrice. I remember Great-Aunt Lu as a tall, warm-hearted woman. She was always one of my favorite relatives, even more so after I learned of her history. I have often wondered how many other women in early Colorado Springs had a career like hers; all the custodians I remember from school were men.

Two places in town always remind me of Great-Aunt Lu. One is Myron Stratton Home, where she spent her last years, and the other is Midland School. When the snows fall and I look out my windows at that beautiful old school in distance, I always imagine her there.



Lu and her children on the steps of Columbia School, 1922 - l to r: Lu, Edward Jr., Beatrice, Jean, Muriel, Lois, Josephine in front

i Steele School is at the corner of Del Norte and Weber Streets.

ii Columbia School is at the corner of Boulder and Institute; the building from 1906 is no longer there.

iii Calcimine is defined by The American Heritage Dictionary as "a white or tinted mixture of zinc oxide, water, and glue, used to coat walls and ceilings."

iv The school is now William Jackson Palmer High School, but the auditorium in question is no longer there.

v Accounts of the accident were found on microfilm of the July, 1922 Colorado Springs Gazette

vi Colorado Springs Gazette, 12 Jul 1922

vii *ibid*

viii Roosevelt School was at 1823 North 7th Street; the school and building are no longer there.

OCCHS President's Report

By Phil McDonald

While summer is often experienced as "down time" by many organizations, this has certainly not been the case with the Old Colorado City Historical Society. On July 13, Richard Marold morphed into Nicola Tesla and delivered his rendition of the famous Colorado Springs inventor. Richard's presentation was followed a week later on July 27 when OCCHS members Barbara Barbaro and Paul Shepard presented their program on "Law & Disorder in Old Colorado City and the KKK". Both programs were well attended by appreciative audiences.

At the July 23 meeting of the OCCHS Board of Directors, Dave Hughes introduced a very special guest, Mrs. Shirley Bonds who has been a generous contributor to our ongoing digitalization project. In recognition of and appreciation for her generosity, I presented Mrs. Bonds with a spiral book of digitalized photos that Don Kallous had created. Mrs. Bonds then spoke to the Board about her career as a businesswoman with Peerless Graphics here in Colorado Springs. The Bonds family has longstanding and deep ties to the community. Mrs. Bonds noted that her father was a mason who helped lay the cornerstone of the Colorado Springs City Auditorium. I found Mrs. Bonds to be a delightful personality.

In a letter to Dave Hughes, the Board expressed its gratitude for all that he has done for the society and committed its support for a digitalization program that is commensurate with our status and resources as a local historical society. We are eagerly anticipating a time when our photographs, documents and artifacts will be available for access online.

Please be reminded that our annual dinner is scheduled for September 23, 2010 from 6:30-8:30 PM at the Mason Jar Restaurant on Corporate Drive. This event will feature Mary Jane Bradbury doing her lively impersonation of Augusta Tabor, spurned wife of Colorado silver magnate, Horace Tabor. I have seen Ms Bradbury work before and can testify that you will be entertained and educated. Please make arrangements to attend this important society event.

Also our annual Cemetery Crawl is Sunday, August 29. Some new characters have been integrated into our show, so be sure to come out to Fairview, be entertained and support your Society!

JULY, 2010 FINANCIAL REPORT

What a great month of July! I don't know what the regular month high income has been in the past but we must have been close to a record this month. Our gross income was \$5,467.51. This gives us \$17,324.04 income for the year to date with expenses of \$14,227.70 year to date for a profit of \$3,096.34. Special thanks to Jo Cervone and the Pikes Peak Arts and Crafts and Suzie Schorch and the Bookstore for so much of our profit. It also appears that we will be able to soon receive another from the Bookstore. Thanks again to Suzie and to Bev who finds the volunteers who help in our Bookstore. Our Fixed Endowment Fund continues to grow in spite of the economic conditions of the area and nation. Saturday, August 14, 2010 was our special OCCHS recognition day in Bancroft Park which we sponsor as Founders Day, without any outside help. We did close to breaking even for the event. I hope that all the members understand that this is not a profit scheduled event. It is a day that we recognize and honor Old Colorado City and the Old Colorado City Historical Society. We need to thank Jo Cervone and the other members that contributed time and effort to make this event possible. It is my hope that next year we can improve this event to the point that it becomes one the most special things we do all year. Please get involved in your association. The more support we receive the better chance we will have to grow and improve our relationship with Colorado Springs and Old Colorado City.

TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS

OCCHS Bank Account	\$ 9,094.57
Bookstore Bank Account	\$ 2,724.90
Memorial Hos. Revenue Bond	\$ 50,860.50
Cal. Regents Revenue Bond	\$ 25,944.25
Edwards Jones Bonds (Cash)	\$ 3,639.09
Fixed Endowment Savings	\$ 14,575.34
Total Fixed Endowment Funds	\$ 95,019.18
Earned Income Savings	\$ 11,371.18
Shirley Bond Digital Account	\$ 3,685.20
TOTAL LIQUID ASSEST	\$121,868.03

Johnie E. Jackson, Treasurer
Old Colorado City Historical Society

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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September at the Old Colorado City History Center

1 S. 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904 - 636-1225 - <http://history.oldcolo.com>

Saturdays, Sept 4, 11, 18
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Arts & Crafts on Pikes Peak Avenue & S. 24th St.
Variety of talented vendors including many Westsiders.

Friday, September 10
11 a.m.

Doors open at 10:15
Come early for coffee
and view exhibits.

Program: "Doc at Timberline" presented by storyteller and author, John Starsfield.

Dr. Charles Fox Gardiner's long life captures the essence - and often adventure - of practicing medicine in late 1800's and early 1900's Colorado, including the Pikes Peak region.

Don't miss this beginning of our second Friday program series! Starsfield is a talented Colorado Chautauqua speaker, UCOS faculty member, and winner of the Wilderness Society's 2004 'Environmental Heroes' Award.

Thursday, September 23
6:30 p.m.

Mason Jar (North)
restaurant

Annual OCCHS Dinner & Program: "Augusta Tabor Comes to Colorado City" portrayed by Mary Jane Bradbury.

The lesser known first wife of Horace Tabor, Augusta stands alone as a pioneering businesswoman and one of the first women to come west in the Pike's Peak gold rush. Program costs are courtesy of Colorado Humanities, Inc.

For further information, see announcement on page 5.

Museum Hours: Tues. thru Sat., 11 - 4 Free Admission. ~ Donations greatly appreciated