



Volume 26, Number 6

August, 2011

The Fosdicks Across the Plains in '61

by Dave Hughes

Henry M Fosdick came west to the Arkansas Valley in 1856 after he lost his \$80,000 investment in his Sugar Factory near Boston when it burned down. He was determined to rebuild his fortunes by using his Harvard educated engineering skills on the new western frontier.

He filed a homestead and built a cabin near Boone, Colorado. He started surveying water ditches for farms along the valley. In 1859 he was contacted by the Colorado City Town Company to draft and file a 'Colorado City Plat' for its 1280 acre claim on Fountain Creek. He drew and surveyed the town site and signed the Fosdick Plat on November 1st, 1859. He registered it on December 20th with the 'new' El Paso County, in extralegal "Jefferson Territory" (J.T. on the Plat) which Congress made legal as 'Colorado Territory' in 1861, taking its name from our Colorado City!

Job done, he started back for Boston in the summer of 1860 to fetch his wife Lucy and their four children - Henry Jr, a second Lucy, Sam, and Susan to take them back to live in Colorado City, which he had helped to design. He did something else on that trip. The original Fosdick Plat we just acquired was beautifully Lithographed by the Meisel Brothers Printers of Boston. They are still in business today. Though their name is not printed on the copy we have, Henry obviously took his surveyor's drawings of the plat with his signature, plus the legend information - the title of the plat, the Colorado City Town Company Director's names, a promotional paragraph, and the Tappan map with him back east. He probably laid out the final Fosdick Plat in their offices, in Boston. Then

he returned with, not only his family, but ample copies of the printed Plat to be used by the Town company as promotional advertising for Colorado City as well as containing the vital, recorded, legal description of every block and lot. The 6 Fosdicks, with a man and woman hired on as cook and handyman, travelled first from Boston to Chicago by train, and then to Lawrence, Kansas where Henry outfitted four "prairie schooners" for the coming trip, two of which were pulled by oxen. Years later Lucy Fosdick, who was only 11 when the trip started, vividly remembered and recounted the month long journey. She wrote the celebrated "Across the Plains in '61" story that was published in 1905 in the Cambridge Mass paper, and then in the Fowler, Colorado Tribune. Here are some vivid excerpts.

"I can remember how strange, and at the same time, how delightful the trip seemed...we had heard much said about the Indians, and either for that reason or for purposes of cleanliness, my mother took us children all to the barbers and had our hair cropped close to our heads. We did not understand just what was meant when we heard our elders talk of the Indians scalping anybody, but we found out later. After we reached Colorado, we often saw scalps hanging from an Indian's belt."

"I imagine that the older members of the party got tired of the travel. I don't remember that we children (the oldest, Henry Jr, was just 12) ever wearied of it in the least. We had cards and games and when we stopped for dinner for the night there was always something to do or

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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
 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 - 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	Sharon Swint	630-8384
Vice President	Janice deChadenades	598-7183
Secretary	Phil McDonald	532-0881
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	Tom Hendrix	633-7392
	Dave Munay	527-6778
	Suzanne Schorsch	488-0256

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

Dr. & Mrs. Raymond Best

Dorothy Borst

Betty Jo Cardona

Lois Carr

Welling & Sallie Clark

Art Crawford

Alice Joyce Dilts

Barbara Downs

Cynthia Estes

Patricia Fejedelem

Michael Fellows

Charles Garvin & Family

Ed Hershiser

Pam Hines

Richard Jamison

Jim Jones

Leo & Miki Knudson

Arlene Lanman

Sarah Martinez

Bill and Linda McNally

Ann Parker

Donna Phinizy

Al & Donna Rich

Roberta Robertson

Jack & Betsy Shoup

Margaret Smith

Ray W. Turner

Vera M. Wescott

Donald Yowell

Arts & Crafts

on W. Pikes Peak Avenue

on the

History Center's grounds.

Saturdays

through September.

On May 17, schoolteacher Ann Yenne and about 40 4th grade students from West Elementary School in Old Colorado City visited the History Center. Here is a sample of thank-you letters received from students who attended the tour. What a fun day for everyone!

Dear O.C.C.H.S.,
Thank you for the Historical field trip. I learned how they made orange juice. My favorite part was drinking the orange juice.

Sincerely, Noah R.



Thank you for the wonderful field trip. I learned that cars were slower back then. My favorite part was when I saw whiter back then.

Sincerely,
Jordan

Dear O.C.C.H.S.
Thank you for the Spectacular field trip. I learned that back then people did not use what we use today. My favorite part was when my group and I went down stairs were there were 3 demon final things.

Sincerely,
Jaenah
Cabrera

Dear O.C.C.H.S.,

Thank you for the history filled field trip. I learned how school worked back then. My favorite part was you taught us about school back then.

Sincerely,
Jessica G.

Fosdick continued from page 1

see...We all had to search for firewood and water which was very scarce... We sometimes had to dig down under dry buffalo wallows to find water."

"Sometimes in the afternoon we would see in the distance what appeared to be a large river...but as we approached the vision it would gradually fade and disappear, to our disgust, a mere mirage."

"The road was not always so smooth and level as the word 'plains' would seem to indicate. On coming to a deep and rather narrow gorge, it would be necessary to lock the wheels together with a chain to keep the wagon from going too fast."

"On Sunday, if there happened to be a stream of water nearby, everyone had a bath. Clothes were washed and hung on the bushes. Our food consisted of soda-biscuits, bacon or ham and tea or coffee. Sweets were unknown as were milk and vegetables... our Sunday breakfast was always a treat - baked beans."

"We began to meet government mule trains coming east...we were about the first immigrants going west that spring...They warned us about Indians at certain places. If we were well armed we should get through all right. We felt uneasy and from that time dated my fear and hatred of 'Lo, the poor Indian.'"

"When we had gone half the distance we came across a herd of buffalo crossing in front of us...the nearest ones were so close we could see their eyes, and the furthest away were like waves of the ocean. The men got out their guns and tried to shoot one...but none of the shots took effect...we were disappointed at not getting any fresh meat. But it was a very exciting time for all"

"Twenty miles a day was our ordinary rate. One morning my mother who sometimes walked alone for exercise got far ahead and out of sight of the wagons. All of a sudden she saw in the road a large gray wolf. Although the wolf seemed about to attack her, she determined to try the power of her eye in subduing him"...To her delight, he finally trotted off.

"One night a colt was born in camp. As we children had never before seen such a funny long-legged fellow we found him a source of great interest... for a week or more he was carried safely in one of the wagons. Then late one night we heard a noise among the horses...a wolf was attacking the colt and before they could drive him off the colt was dead. We missed the little fellow for long afterward."

"When we reached Fort Lyon we encountered our first Indians who came up to see our wagons. They greeted us with the salutation of 'How How.' Father made us children keep well inside the cover of our wagon. I was glad we were so near the protection of the Fort."

The Fosdick Family then traveled onward along the Arkansas, first stopping at a ranch overnight where for the first time in over a month they sat down to a table with crockery dishes. They passed Henry's earlier homestead cabin near Boone. Then it was two days more to Colorado City.

Henry took out an advertisement in the very rare (today) Volume 1, Issue 18, of the 'Colorado City Journal, of November 29th, 1861. Figure 1

CARPENTER AND BUILDER,

COLORADO AVENUE.

Constantly on hand BOOKS and Stationery of all sizes, Furniture of every description made to order.

HENRY M. FOSDICK,

CIVIL ENGINEER & SURVEYOR.

Office Colorado Avenue, Colorado City.

CENTRAL HOTEL

COLORADO CITY.

WEST CENTRAL STREET NEAR FIFTH.

MRS. L. A. MAGGARD, having leased the above House, extends a cordial invitation to the public to give it their patronage. The Denver coaches start from this house. The table always well furnished and prices moderate.

Figure 1

Since Henry Sr was paid for his engineering work only in lumber, livestock, and lots for his Plat work, he leased a building that had been an early Colorado City store, that gave them 5 rooms, rather than try to build a home from scratch. That building could well have been the one at Figure 2, the Gerish and Cobb store on Colorado Avenue that opened and closed as Colorado City declined between 1859 and 1861.

Lucy's tale goes on to tell of their life in early Colorado City, where even inside the town Ute Indians were a nuisance, and would use devious ways to distract the settlers and steal or kill

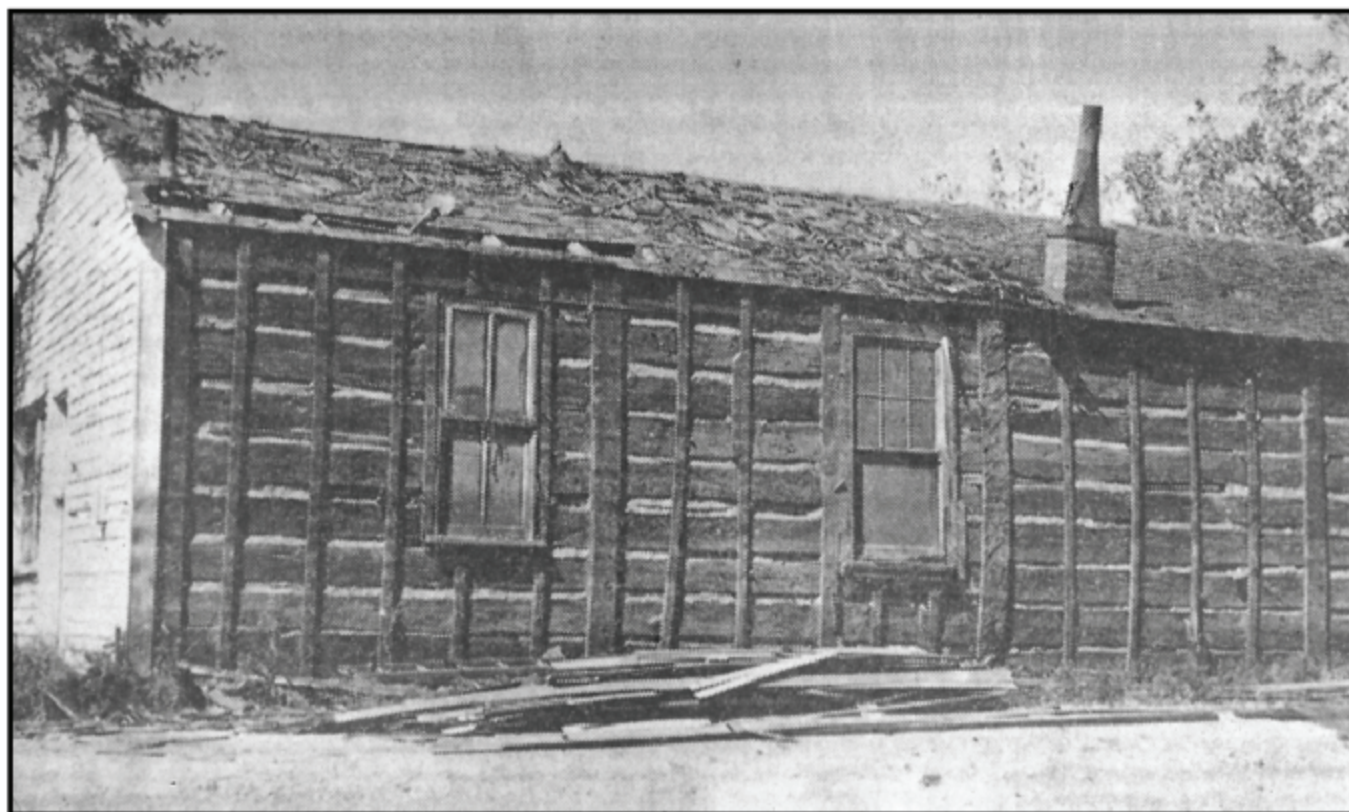


Figure 2

livestock as well as frighteningly intrude into their homes. The children had very few other children to play with in Colorado City which was simply not growing. So they explored the Garden of the Gods, hiked to the mineral springs, and with frontier aplomb killed the many rattlesnakes they encountered. Sometimes with just sticks, and at others the older boys would shoot them. Her mother once told Lucy to hold down a rattler in their home with a broom, while she poured boiling water down its open mouth to kill it.

Life was hard in Colorado City, especially for a Lady who grew up in refined Boston. She wanted Henry to leave and go back to the area she saw when they passed through what he, Henry, had begun to develop close to Boone on the Arkansas River. Since Henry's eye was always on the water-irrigation ditch business needs along the Arkansas he agreed. So early in 1862 the Fosdick family left Colorado City for good for the Arkansas basin. He took the lumber and sold quite a number of lots he had been given, to Lewis Tappan, for \$1.00 each. In its growth days some choice lots had gone for \$500. That is how far Colorado City had declined between 1859 and 1862.

Henry undertook many other engineering

jobs, including a remarkable one - he designed the first 6 miles of ditch in the Arkansas Valley that served the water needs of Indians on their land 'claims'. Those untouchable Indian water rights still exist.

When Henry's wife was pregnant again there were no white midwives around to help in the birth of her fifth child. Her young daughter Susan, who had married - at 12 years old - Albert Boone, great grandson of Daniel Boone, went to the nearest Indian encampment alone and brought back Indian squaws who helped her mother safely deliver baby Frank. Albert Boone, was for a time the Indian agent for the nearby Arapahoe and Cheyenne. He kept peace with them by providing them salt brought in by wagon freighter, for they had none. They gave neither he nor the Fosdicks any trouble.

But all was not peaceful for long. Indian raids, massacres of settlers, and sealing off travel from the east triggered Evans, Governor of Colorado Territory, to order Colonel John Chivington in 1864, to form and march the 3d Colorado Volunteer Cavalry - 18 of whose members were from Colorado City, including Irving Howbert - down to Sand Creek to punish the marauding Indians. Good horses were in

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Fosdick continued from page 5

short supply. If the soldiers encountered any enroute to Fort Lyon, they would have commandeered them. So Sam Fosdick, Henry's second teen son, rounded up all their horses and drove them up the Charles River until Chivington's Army passed by. Henry's wife hid two horses in an abandoned house. Even then, the 3d Colorado was so poorly mounted and equipped when they attacked the Cheyenne and Arapahoe at Sand Creek they suffered 20 killed and 31 wounded in that battle. The Arkansas River settlers, never the less, were very pleased the 3d Colorado had punished the Indians, for their raids, and fears, diminished.

Henry M Fosdick, the rest of his life undertook many surveying tasks, including for growing Denver and mining claims after Cripple Creek gold was discovered in 1891. But he still took the time to fully develop his own irrigated farm, lands, and buildings on the Arkansas. There is still an area called 'Fosdick Flats' today.

His four boys and three daughters became successful adults. Henry Fosdick Jr became a District Judge. Most of their descendents stayed in Colorado and virtually populated Fowler, Colorado, where at least 5 Fosdick families live today. One child, their last, Walter, died from the flu epidemic of 1887.

At Figure 3 are four living Fosdick Descendents who attended my presentation on the Plat on May 13th, and became Society members. They loaned the Society Henry's a surveyors chain which he used to lay out the Plat by the Rod. No GPS in 1859!

Great, great, great grandson Mitchell, great grandson Sam, great granddaughter Louise, and great great grandson Joe - all Fosdicks.

Henry Fosdick who never made a buck on Colorado City died in 1899 at 77 years old, a wealthy man. But he left us a precious historical artifact - the meticulously drafted, illustrated, and lithographed Fosdick Plat. It was the first vision our pioneers had of a promising, elegant, town that was never to be.



Figure 3

President's Letter

WHEW!! What a couple of months this has been! Summer has definitely come to the Old Colorado City Historical Society and Center!

Territory Days were so busy it was hard to walk down the street. When we were able to sell \$300 worth of cookies and water in just one afternoon you know we were busy! The cabin was a magnet for all ages as Johnie Jackson explained how old guns worked, right there on the front porch.

The next weekend we had a parking lot full of race fans to see the Pikes Peak Hill Climb mobile museum and vintage car followed by a presentation by Don Sanborn --a look at the "PPHC-Then and Now". As part of a well known racing family, Don had some VERY interesting inside stories about the Hill Climb.

After a couple of weeks of down time we launched into Tuesday Nights in July on the 5th with an Ice Cream Social. Again we had big crowds. The remainder of the Tuesday Nights saw OCCHC welcoming some new and old speakers, with really interesting topic. So many people pitched in to make these events successful. Consider yourselves thanked in a big way.

August is full, with a presentation on Irving Howbert, an outstanding pioneer, on Friday, August 12. The evening will kick off Old Colorado City's birthday weekend. We are having a wine and cheese party along with the presentation. Members will receive a special price break for the party. Then, Saturday morning at 9 a.m. August 13, Bancroft Park will be filled with Union and Confederation encampments, Victorian dancers, New Horizons Band members, scavenger hunts, archeological digging, food for sale and much more. Founder's Day is FUN-FUN-FUN! Don't miss it.

As I start my tenure as the new President of the Board of Directors of

OCCHS, I have a renewed love affair going with Old Town and am again marveling at how others feel the same. They show it by donating so much of their precious time and their money. THANK YOU!!

Lot of exciting things popping up everywhere at OCCHC--new acquisitions, new donations, a newly painted sign and more. KEEP WATCHING!

Sharon Swint
OCCHS President

June 2011 financial report

Summer is here, with a vengeance it seems, but this is our season at the history center. If you are a member, you are needed, as a visitor, as a volunteer, or just to come by and say hello. Tuesday is the day to catch many of us there. Things are really happening at the center. The ice cream social was a huge success; they sold out of ice cream and cake before 7:30, wonderful crowd and many new people from all over town including some new to our town. The speaker for the next Tuesday filled the house on his talk about the cattle trails through this area. Financially we are increasing our bank accounts, we must to make it through the winter. Somehow squirrels come to mind. Please come out and support your history center. Next month is Founders Day. Help is always welcome, come in costume if you can. Show your love of history.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

OCCHS BANK ACCOUNT	\$ 11,398.68
BOOKSTORE ACCOUNT	\$ 1,470.43
TOTAL FIXED ENDOWMENT	\$ 88,951.77
EDWARD JONES CASH	\$ 8,081.59
EARNED INCOME SAVINGS	\$ 11,116.32
DIGITALIZATION ACCOUNT	\$ 7,168.30

TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS **\$128,187.09**

Johnie E. Jackson, Treasurer
Old Colorado City Historical Society

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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August Calendar

Friday, August 12

6:00 P.M.

Wine and cheese reception

7:00 P.M. Program

Program: Irving Howbert, Outstanding Pioneer

OCCHS Members \$5.00 Non-members \$10.00

Saturday, August 13 Founders Day Celebration in Bancroft Park

9 A.M. - 3 P.M.

FREE family fun

Sunday, August 21 Cemetery Crawl at Fairview Cemetery

11 A.M. - 2 P.M.

Tickets \$8.00 in advance.

\$10.00 the day of the event

Old Colorado City History Center

1 S. 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904 - (719) 636-1225 - <http://www.occhs.org>

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