

## A Short History of the RED PEAK INCLINE RAILWAY COMPANY in Manitou Springs

by Thomas E. Daniels

Around 1910, the Boy Scouts of America were founded, Adm. Robert E. Perry reached the North Pole, the first transcontinental airplane flight from New York to California took place and B.M. Starks, General Manager of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, started taking summer trips to Colorado. He loved the Manitou Springs area. He was befriended by John H. Griffith and his wife Ida who owned a curio shop at 140 Ruxton Avenue (known as the Ingleside House.) Stark hung out in his shop most of the time when he wasn't exploring other parts of Manitou.

Part of their pastime was watching loads of people going up Ruxton Ave. in automobiles, touring cars and trolleys to the Manitou and Pikes Peak Cog Railway and the recently opened Mt. Manitou Incline Ry. They eventually came up with the idea that with so many hills and mountains around Manitou and such a large tourist base seeking entertainment, why not build another incline and cash in on the business themselves. Seeking additional capital to begin their venture, Griffith invited a friend of his D.M. Rupp to join their little partnership. Rupp was the son-in-law of Jerome Wheeler, a wealthy Aspen mine owner who also held stock in the Colorado Midland Railway and owned a good chunk of Macys Department store in New York City.


Red Peak Scenic Incline was chosen for the name even though it would be going up Red Mountain (Peak sounded better than mountain)

and Griffith wanted the lower station to be built across the street from his curio shop. This way all the passengers waiting to ride the incline or returning from a trip would spend some time in

*The Supreme Scenic Trip*

# RED PEAK INCLINE

In the Heart of Manitou  
Wonderful Panoramic View of Entire Region



The Incomparable Trip of the Pikes Peak Region

Rates Reduced  
Round Trip  
*Children Half Fare*

Early poster for the Red Peak Incline 1912

**Old Colorado City Historical Society**

1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319  
<http://www.occhs.org> 636-1225

**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 - [spldrwort@pcsys.net](mailto:spldrwort@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**

|                |                     |          |
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| President      | Phil McDonald       | 532-0881 |
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|                | 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

Allen County Public Library  
 Richard & Margaret Bukowski  
 Jan de Chadendes  
 Rodger & Marje Erickson  
 George and Ernestine Fagan  
 Dorothy Farthing  
 Daniel Gauron  
 Larry Glueckert  
 M.B. Gustafson  
 Robert & Christine Heinich  
 Mary Hickox  
 Irma Current Hilfers  
 Paul & Donna Kahrs  
 Don Kallaus  
 Art and Heidi Lacy  
 Martha Lee  
 Bill & Gretchen Lloyd  
 Patty & Jon Lovekin  
 James Marvin  
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 Gerry Murphy  
 Mary Jean Nelson  
 Frank A Otoupalik  
 Adell Siegel  
 Tom & Lyn Strand  
 Patty Strauch  
 Frank Tucker  
 Stormie Wells  
 Westside Pioneer  
 Jan Zellmer

**Winter Weather Policy**

For the safety of our volunteers, the Board of Directors voted last week on a new winter weather policy.

If School District 11 is closed or on a 2 hour delay due to inclement weather, the History Center will not be open.

# It Starts with a Question

by Susie Schorsch

These days it is hard to find time for a good conversation with our children, grandchildren and loved ones. One OCCHS member, Elaine Radney, has some good advice. Start with a question, end with a story!. Elaine has a love for Genealogy and good family stories. As guest speaker in March, she will share how this love advanced by a question and a story. "How did you meet the love of your life?"

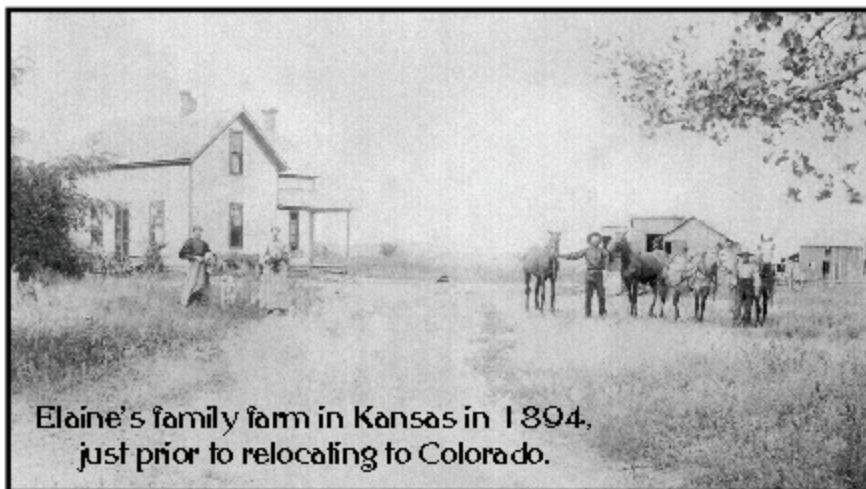
Imagine meeting the love of your life by chance and then courting by trolley car rides up and down Colorado Avenue. Elaine and Mel's maternal grandparents did, and that story so intrigued Elaine that she has spent hours finding out the details of Judson and Anna Silver McArthur's arrival in town in the early 1900s. She has collected maps and old photos, which she is eager to share with her audience.

Elaine calls herself an almost-native of the region. Although her older brother was born here, she was born during the family's brief stay in Maryland after World War II. The family was back on the Westside before Elaine was two, and she has fond memories of her childhood here. She is happy to once again call it home.

Elaine graduated from Palmer High School and earned a BA in Education from the University of Northern Colorado [UNC]. Her first teaching job was in Orangeburg, NY and married in

Washington, D.C., where her three sons were born. She spent the next several years as a stay-at-home mother, and she still considers raising fine sons as her greatest achievement. Her husband's career sent the family in several directions over the years: San Francisco, CA; New York City, NY; Santa Fe, NM; back to Washington, D.C. Once all of her sons were in school, Elaine worked as a travel consultant for 10 years, but after her first return to Colorado and her subsequent divorce, she decided to go back to school. She earned her MA in English from UNC in 2000 [at the age of 53] and has taught English at UNC, PPCC, and Mitchell High School.

Come join us March 11th at 11 o'clock for our program "A Westside Story: Trolley Cars, Manitou Water, and Lemonade" by Elaine Radley.



Elaine's family farm in Kansas in 1894,  
just prior to relocating to Colorado.

## BRISTOL SCHOOL TOUR

**Did you or members of your family attend Bristol Elementary School?**

**Would you like to hear the school's history and see the school as it is today?**

**If you are interested, we could arrange a members only group tour for members on a Friday later in March or April. The group size is limited to ten.**

**The tour leader is one of the wall mural artists.**

**Please call the History Center and leave your name and phone number. Once we have at least eight names, we will schedule a tour and let you know.**

*Incline continued from page 1*

his shop. It would also place the lower station closer to downtown Manitou and all travelers going up Ruxton Ave. would have to pass their incline first. The Mt. Manitou incline people got so worried at first, some of their early advertising brochures carried the message "Be Sure To Get To The Right Incline." In 1911, Stark brought out to Colorado from the L&N RR head office in Louisville, Kentucky, a couple of his civil engineers to plan the route up the northwest face of Red Mountain. Because incline railways basically have to be built in a straight line, there were four obstacles in the way if the line was to be built from Griffith's shop to the summit of Red Mountain. The first two obstacles were two homes on the south side of Ruxton Ave. where the lower station would have to be located. The third obstacle was the Colorado Midland Ry. about three-hundred feet up the first hill that had been there since 1886, and the fourth obstacle was the fact that about an eighth of a mile beyond the C.M. right of way, the land started sloping downhill across a gully before it came to the base of Red Mountain which then started a steep ascent up the northwest side of the mountain. The civil engineers came back with a plan that involved the acquisition of the real estate (the two homes) for the lower station, a two to three hundred foot tunnel under the Colorado Midland tracks and a trestle across the gully to the base of Red Mountain to keep the incline track from sagging in the middle. Griffith, Stark and Rupp all agreed on the plan, after which they hired some real estate agents to acquire the entire right of way.

However, just as Griffith and Stark dreamed up the idea of cashing in on a lucrative business, the real estate agents saw their chance to get their piece of the action as well. The fee for their services would be fifty-one percent of the company stock. Griffith and Stark were so furious, they simply dissolved the three way partnership with Rupp and walked away never to be involved with the project again. Rupp still liked the idea of the competing incline, so he worked out a solution with the real estate men and they continued on. The only part of the civil engineer plan that could not be resolved was the real estate issue. The two homeowners simply would not sell their property. And it was estimated that digging a tunnel under the Colorado Midland Ry. would cost more than anyone in the partnership had.

The next idea they came up with was to build their incline track over the top of tunnel number one on the CM line and by doing that the lower station would end up about two blocks further up Ruxton Ave. where there were no homes and the land was available. They would still have to cross the gully between the top of tunnel one and the base of Red Mountain with a twin track trestle. This was the halfway point of the line and it's where the ascending tram car had to pass the descending car. The final address for the lower station was now listed at 223 Ruxton Ave.

They did encounter one more obstacle when

**Emma Crawford 1863-1891**

Buried on summit of Red Mountain,  
December, 1891

Relocated to east side of Red Mountain  
summit in 1912, by Red Peak Incline  
Railway Company.

Casket and remains washed down Red  
Mountain in heavy rains, circa 1935

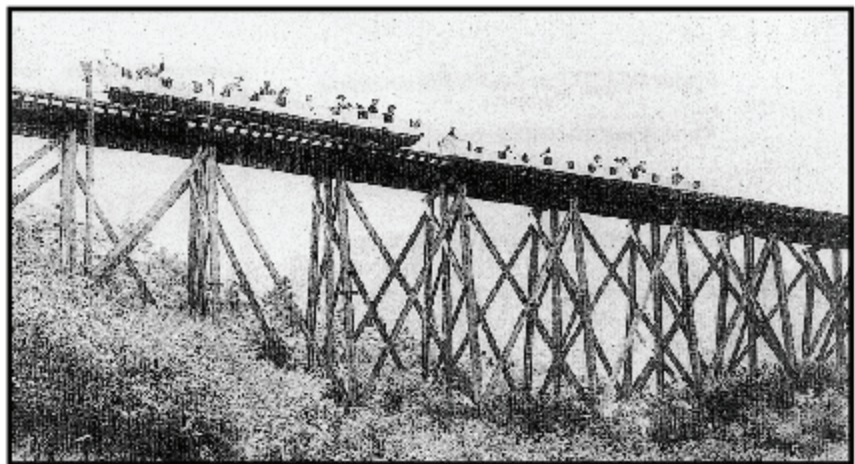
Remains relocated to Crystal Park  
Cemetery. Exact location not known as no  
grave marker was erected.

the final engineering plan was submitted. The bull wheel (a five foot wheel that turns the upcoming cable around to send it back down the grade) and powerhouse had to sit at an exact location at the summit to make the incline work correctly. It just so happened that a young woman from Boston was buried at that spot twenty-one years earlier. Emma Crawford was born in 1863 and was struck down with tuberculosis at the age of seven. Like many people with the same illness, she migrated to Manitou Springs because it was thought that the dry air and healing mineral waters would make a difference. About ten years before the turn of the twentieth century, her illness became so severe she began to prepare for the end. With every breath she could find, she hiked to the top of Red Mountain and tied a red handkerchief to a specific pine tree and told her friends that is where she would like to rest in eternity. She died on December 7, 1891, at the age of twenty-eight. Twelve husky men working in two shifts took all day to get Emma in her coffin up to the summit of Red Mountain. She rested there for twenty-one years until it was decided by the new incline company that she would have to be moved if the incline was going to work. She was moved to a spot just off the summit on the east side of Red Mountain. A concrete slab was placed over the new burial site and her name was inscribed on the slab.

The Red Peak Scenic Incline Railway was finally completed and opened in the summer of 1912. It was somewhat successful at first, but with nothing to do at the summit and the extremely steep grade up the northwest face of Red Mountain, patrons gradually shifted back to the Mt. Manitou Incline which had more to do on their summit and the grades were not as steep except for the short sixty-eight percent grade near the top. Fares on the Red Mountain Incline were dropped from a dollar to fifty cents, but this still didn't persuade new customers. It went into receivership in 1913, and limped along until it was forced out of business in 1914, after only two years of operation. It would sit idle for the next five years in heavy debt from creditors.

It was reorganized in 1919, by A.E. Kenyon and brothers W.F. & P.J.E. Robinson. The three of them invested \$50,000 into the operation and renamed the incline the Red Mountain Scenic Railway Company. Correcting mistakes from the past, they built a dance pavilion and restaurant right next to the powerhouse. They also built picnic grounds and provided burro rides on trails to Cameron Cone and Eagle Mountain. They hired an orchestra and provided free dancing every evening plus Saturday and Sunday afternoons. They installed a new haulage cable that could support forty tons and spruced up the lower and upper loading platforms. All of these improvements were to no avail. Passengers still preferred the "safer" looking incline at the end of Ruxton Ave known as the Mt. Manitou Incline. It should be noted that in all of the years of operation of both inclines, neither one ever had a serious passenger injury.

In 1920, A.E. Kenyon sold the incline company twice. The first deal fell through, but the second attempt allowed Maurice Mandell to purchase the assets for a mere \$20,000. Mandell operated the incline pretty much the same way as the previous owners, but after two years he gave up as well (1922). In all cases, it was just a lack of business that resulted in the failed ventures. In 1925, with no income and expenses still occurring (land taxes, creditors never paid and other debts) a District Judge awarded a



View of two tram cars passing each other on the twin track trestle which was the halfway point on the trip. Trestle had to be constructed to span a gully between the knoll above the Colorado Midland tunnel one and the base of Red Mountain. Tram cars were painted white during the 1910-1922 operation period.

*Continued page 6*

*Incline continued from page 5*

\$25,000 judgement against Mandell's company by creditors. In 1927, sellable parts of the assets were disposed of as scrap to pay creditors. The incline would never operate again.

The absolute final blow to the incline also occurred in 1927, when an unknown (to this day) person or persons climbed to the summit and with a hacksaw sawed the haulage cable in two just behind the upper car which had been sitting idle for three years. The car careened down the steep grade of Red Mountain, across the wooden trestle, left the track just at the top of Colorado Midland tunnel one and landed almost at the bottom of Ruxton Ave. in an unrecognizable pile of metal and wood. For years, stories circulated back east that this event had killed dozens of people who were in the car at the time.

After the entire line had been scrapped, the only recognizable remains were those of the power house and dance pavilion concrete slabs at the summit, the scar of the track grade alignment coming down the mountain and the wall and stairway on Ruxton Ave. leading up to the lower station loading platform. The wall and stairway survived into the 1970's with much of the original billboard paint advertising the attractions one would see or could do once on the summit. The wall was finally torn down and a house now sits in its' place at 223 Ruxton Ave. And if you fly over the summit of Red Mountain or hike to the top, the concrete foundations are still in place. Other than that, a few pictures have survived, and a couple of brochures advertising the trip might be around. Since the last trip ran eighty-eight years ago, you'd have to find someone in their late nineties who might remember a trip on the Red Peak Scenic Incline Railway, if they had enough courage to ride it.

**Incline Specifications:**

Red Peak Incline Railway Company from 1912 to 1914

Red Mountain Scenic Railway Company from 1919 to 1927 (last year incline ran 1922.)

Lower station: 223 Ruxton Ave., Elevation 6,611 feet

Upper station: Summit of Red Mountain. Elevation 7,361 feet (750 foot rise)

Length of Cable: 3,300 feet Cable Strength: 40 tons Length of mountain: 3,500 feet

Estimated minimum grade on face of Red Mountain: 57 degrees

Thomas E. Daniels Colorado Springs  
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## COLD CASE--ONE OF HISTORY'S MYSTERIES

by Sharon Swint

Frozen to death in August, 1911 on Pikes Peak! Are you kidding?? This can't be true! The picture on the post card must be staged!

Tim Blevins spoke at the OCCHS February 11 monthly meeting. He told how his office of archival photos at the Pikes Peak Library District received a donation of an old photo postcard showing a couple lying dead in the snow. It was dated August 21, 1911. Could this be?

What followed was a cold case mystery to rival the television show.

Tim and his group went through a variety of steps to prove or disprove the authenticity of the post card.

- 1- They had to determine if there actually was a death of anyone in August 21, 1911 on Pikes Peak.
- 2- They reviewed newspapers in Colorado Springs and Dallas, Texas (where the couple lived).
- 3- They verified that the postcard was from that time period.
- 4- They checked census records.
- 5- They reviewed crime interviews.
- 6- They checked clothing, news reports and location pictures.

Adding to the fun of the investigation among OCCHS attendees, Tim had us vote at each step of the investigation. In the end, 1/3 of the group felt the post card was phony; 1/3 felt the post card was valid; and, 1/3 needed more information.

This investigation showed us how we could proceed with verifying many different items that are donated to the history center or that we find in our own grandma's attic. As with all history research, in the end we are left with as many questions as answers. Maybe that is part of the FUN OF HISTORY.

Thanks so much to Tim Blevins and the PPLD for the lesson on history investigations and for the fun challenging our logic!

Old Colorado City Historical Society  
President's Report March, 2011

By Phil McDonald

Usually I take this opportunity to communicate with you by addressing a variety of issues and events associated with our society. This message is different. On this occasion, I'd like to direct my comments toward one issue only. That issue is member participation.

This week I appointed a nominations committee consisting of three of our most committed members; Barbara Barbaro, Bev Disch, and Sandy Hanzlian. These three individuals will be charged with the responsibility of recruiting candidates for one at-large Board position, Secretary, Treasurer, and President. Typically this thankless task involves pleading with the incumbent office holders to stay on for another term. Most of our elections are uncontested and involve the same people who do most of the "heavy lifting" for OUR society. It shouldn't be this way. One of our most dedicated and hard working members refused to serve on this committee because of her frustration with this situation. While most of us who are active in the Society enjoy our work and find it fulfilling, even the most dedicated among us will burn out eventually. In short, we need fresh blood.

That is why I'm appealing to you. Become active. Help us fulfill our mission as a Society by volunteering your time to serve on a committee, help in the bookstore, work in archives, plan our programs, and seek one of our Board positions. We would love nothing more than to have healthy, and spirited competition for our offices!

Once again, I'd like to express my gratitude to all of you who have devoted your time and talents to the Society. The OCCHS is stronger and more vibrant because of your efforts. To those of you who have remained on the sidelines, I'm calling on you to enter the arena. Come join us! Your society needs you!

Phil McDonald  
President

TREASURER'S REPORT,  
January 2011

We are starting the year in good financial condition. As you can note in the figures below, we have over \$18,000 in our checking account. With the weather we have been having it is a good thing because Utility bills will be somewhat higher this winter than last year. But we are anticipating a better year for income. The book store did about \$100 more in sales this January than we did last year. I expect this trend to continue for the year. The board is anticipating that we will purchase another investment product for the Fixed Endowment Fund in the next month or so. We have made \$5800 on our present investments last year and we will add enough from savings to make our investment \$15,000. This will bring our invested amount to \$90,000. With the market indicating an upturn we should anticipate a decent return for 2011. Membership renewals seem to have been strong for January and we are receiving a good number for February. Thank you members for your great support of the Society. New volunteers are always needed and welcomed.

LIQUID ASSETS

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| OCCHS BANK ACCOUNT         | \$ 18,191.96         |
| BOOKSTORE ACCOUNT          | \$ 3,221.30          |
| FIXED ENDOWMENT FUND       | \$ 95,925.68         |
| EARNED INCOME SAVINGS      | \$ 11,460.67         |
| DIGITALIZATION ACCOUNT     | \$ 7,758.20          |
| <b>TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS</b> | <b>\$ 136,557.81</b> |

Johnie E. Jackson, Treasurer  
Old Colorado City Historical Society

## Genealogy Group

The Genealogy Group met February 10 with six people present.

The group will meet again on March 9 at 3:00 P.M. and all members are welcome to come.

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

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## Coming up at the History Center

Wednesday, March 9  
3 PM

Genealogy Group .. All OCCHS members welcome

Friday, March 11  
11 AM

Program: "A Westside Story: Trolley Cars, Manitou, and Lemonade" With her interest in genealogy and Westside history, Elaine Radney, will share old family photos and stories of how her two maternal great-grandfathers moved from Kansas and Missouri to early El Paso county. The families became neighbors, traditions began, and Elaine tells her sons, "*that without Manitou water, none of them would be here*"

Friday, April 8  
11 AM

Program: "The Conservation of Historical Art" Victoria Ryan, an art conservator, will present a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the detailed procedures to preserve old art pieces She has recently completed the work on a painting of George Washington by local artist, Charles Craig. This painting has traveled to several Westside schools and was originally hung in Washington Elementary School in 1893. Ms. Ryan will help you understand the difference between "conservation" and "restoration" which you may hear recommended on TV's Antique Roadshow.

### Old Colorado City History Center

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

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