



Volume 26, Number 8

October, 2011

Concetta Forgione

By Juliet Johnson and Don Ellis

"GREWSOME FIND REVEALS ATROCIOUS MURDER"

On Friday, August 4, 1911 J. M. Johnson, Jr. discovered a skull, some other bones, and a few remnants of clothing which had washed out of ravine on South Table Mountain on the J. M. Johnson ranch near Golden. Mr. Johnson took Sheriff Joseph Dennis to the scene where the sheriff uncovered more bones and clothing, including woman's shoes. In the ensuing inquiry, information began to unfold. Relatives and friends of Mrs. Maria La Guardia, who had been missing for nearly a year, positively identified the shoes and clothing as belonging to Mrs. La Guardia.

The discovery of Mrs. La Guardia's remains suggested the possibility that her disappearance might have been related to a series of disappearances and murders in Denver's Italian community. The body of Mrs. Dorinto Cellanti, whose throat had been cut, was found about 2 miles north of Denver on November 2, 1910, about a month after Mrs. La Guardia's disappearance. Mrs. Cellanti had been a business partner of Angilina Garramone until the two women quarreled and dissolved their partnership.

Mrs. Cellanti's husband, Clemento, was among the last people to see Mrs. La Guardia alive. He told Coroner Burton that he had seen his wife's partner, Angilina Garramone, board a car for Golden with Mrs. La Guardia and two other women Concetta Forgione, and her daughter Stella Forgione. And, that was the last he ever saw of Mrs. La Guardia.

At the time Mrs. La Guardia's body was found, Angilina Garramone was serving five to eight years in the state penitentiary for forgery. Sheriff Dennis arrested Concetta and Stella Forgione as possible suspects, along with several other people of interest. On August 13th, Sheriff Dennis took Concetta Forgione and other suspects to the place where the remains had been found. There, Mrs. Forgione related a story which she and Stella had kept secret up to that time:

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Haunted by her great great grandmother's deeds

After learning about the history of her great great grandmother, Consetta Forgione, Juliet Johnson became "haunted" by this part of her family's past and began researching the story. Juliet is a member of the Old Colorado City Historical Society and has contributed a collection of notes and digital images to the society. Although this story took place in the Denver area, the widespread publicity surrounding Concetta's role as an accessory to the murder of Maria Laguardia makes the story of of broader interest; and we are fortunate to be able to offer it.

There are some inconsistencies between the various reports and documents. We have sought to use the dates, names, and sequence of events which seem best supported.

Don Ellis

Old Colorado City Historical Society

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WEST WORD

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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

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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.

WELCOME TO OCCHS! ~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Lou & Barbara Carpenter

Brian Lee Copeland

Muriel F. Dunkley

Jim & Carolyn Engquist

Delores Gustafson

Evelyn Hurr

Joe & Marge Knorr

Jeanne Marsh

Donald McGilchrist

Betty Rapjack

Tim Scanlon

Mark and Anne Schreder

Jeff and Sandy Warner

Stephanie Waters

In Memoriam

Agnes I. Johnson

November 1, 1916 - September 15, 2011

Agnes Johnson was a past president of the Old Colorado City Historical Society and one of the founders of the History Center.

Her family has suggested contributions to the Old Colorado City History Center in her memory.

Our sincerest sympathy to her family.

Fogione continued from page 1

Angilina Garramone had promised to take her godmother, Maria La Guardia, to see her husband who had skipped town over a year earlier because he had gotten in trouble with the law. Mrs. Garramone claimed that Mr. La Guardia was working in a mine near Golden. Since Mrs. Garramone had a four month old son, she invited the two Forgione women to go along to help care for the young boy. Mrs. La Guardia became distrustful as no evidence of her husband was found. She started to run. Mrs. Garramone thrust her infant son into Stella's arms and pursued the aging Mrs. La Guardia. When she caught up with Mrs. La Guardia, she flung her arm around Mrs. La Guardia's neck and exclaimed, "Look at that big worm there on your neck." Then, Mrs. Garramone took the knife which she had brought to prepare lunch and drew it across Mrs. La Guardia's throat. After taking the money which Mrs. La Guardia carried in her dress, Mrs. Garramone shoved the body into a ravine and kicked dirt down to cover it. Then, "brandishing her bloody knife," she swore Concetta and Stella to secrecy. Mrs. Garramone also gave Concetta Forgione \$160 from the money she took from Mrs. La Guardia (variously reported as having been \$700, \$380, or \$320).

Mrs. Garramone had been well known in Denver's Italian community, and was considered the "Cassie Chadwick of Little Italy" because she promoted numerous financial scams in which she lured other members of the Italian community to "invest" in various schemes from which they never received any return. However, until Concetta's revelation about the murder, no one had dared report these unlawful activities because Mrs. Garramone was greatly feared in the community.

Based on the testimony of Concetta and Stella Forgione, Angilina Garramone was found guilty of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison on

December 23, 1911. As accessories after the fact to the murder, Concetta and Stella were each fined \$1 and sentenced to one day in county jail.

While Concetta was being held in jail in Golden, two of her daughters, Mary and Julia were arrested in Denver for shoplifting.

Angilina Garramone was paroled in 1922.

AND, SO, WE WONDER, HOW DID CONCETTA BECOME INVOLVED WITH ANGILINA GARRAMONE

Concetta Forgione was born Concetta Sabatini on February 2, 1863 in Italy, probably in Naples. While still in Italy, she married Michael Capbianca ("Capebianca" or "Cabiannca"). The couple had a son and two daughters, Ina (or Inez) and Conuche. The family emigrated to the United States along with Concetta's father and mother in 1888.

Within a couple years of coming to the United States the whole family had settled in the Denver area. Here Concetta's life began to take unusual and unfortunate turns.

Concetta began seeing another man, Nicola Forgione. Nicola worked at the cemetery, and

GARRAMONE GUILTY OF FIRST DEGREE MURDER; TO PEN FOR LIFE

**Jury Returns Verdict after Second Ballot---Morgan Finds a
21-hour Hole in Alibi of Defense---New Trial
Will be Asked For**



Continued on page 4

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Concetta might have met him when she went to visit her father's grave.

When Consetta's husband Michael found the two together, he and Nicola had a fight in which Nicola Forgione received serious stab wounds. Following the fight, Michael Capiabianca left his wife, Concetta.

Then, in the early months of 1891 Concetta's neighbors found six year old Ina unconscious, hung by her neck from a bedpost. After Ina was cut free, she was found to have been so badly burned that it seemed unlikely that she would survive. When she regained consciousness, Ina told how her mother had burned her on the breast and back with a hot flatiron and tortured her with a burning stick. Remarkably, Ina did survive. Ina's 10 year old brother and her mother Concetta were arrested. At first, the boy said that his mother had been mainly responsible, but later he said that he had committed the crime. The boy was sentenced to three years in the reformatory,

while Concetta was sentenced to only six months in county jail as an accessory.

Because of this incident, Michael Capiabianca divorced Concetta later in 1891. Then, Michael Capiabianca took his two daughters Ina and Canuche to New York where they lived for the rest of their lives.

After Michael's divorce from Concetta, Nicola Forgione and Concetta lived together as husband and wife for two decades before they were officially married. In those years they had eight children, the oldest of whom was Stella, born in 1893.

As you might well imagine, the Italian community around Denver was outraged by the abuse of little Ina Capiabianca; and, as later stories revealed, they actually wanted to hang Concetta for what she had done. However, Angelina Garramone took Concetta under her wing and stuck up for her. And, the community's fear of Mrs. Garramone probably protected Concetta.



Concetta Forgione and the Forgione children in 1906

A PERSONAL LOOK BACK

by
Sharon Swint

My first view of the Air Force Academy was in the winter of 1967. I saw a sleek, futuristic campus. Very soon though, I learned that on that futuristic campus was what we called "indigenous housing." Each of these buildings had been someone's home before the government started buying up land for the newly approved academy that would train future AF officers. Standing in front of the Otis House or Carlton House, the historian in me wondered who these people were who built here and why. The old cabin in Douglass Valley was a play area for my boys. My husband high centered our four wheel drive auto on an old RR track. My sons collected insulators lying around. So much to question about my new home. I had tried from time to time to gather historical information on the area but there was little research that had been done and I had four children to raise.

This week Colonel Jack Anthony presented an amazing history of my old home—the AF Academy property. He had researched the long ago history and put together a presentation using old maps, old photos, railroad sketches and first hand interviews. Jack told us about walking the property with descendants of the original ranchers and homesteaders and attending family reunions of homestead families.

The photos and stories he shared held the attention of about 100 people for a full hour. What a great tale he told and of course, he left us wanting more.

If you missed the entertaining program go to youtube.com and search for

"mightypuffin1." Look for a two part AFA story. Learn about the Edgertons, Teachouts, Burgess', Capps and more. Truly, you will never look at the Air Force Academy in the same way. Thank you, Jack. I loved the look back.



Jack Anthony

THE OCCHS WISH LIST

- * Additional folding chairs from Cosco - white, light weight but sturdy
- * A laptop computer for use with our power point projector
- * A second printer for Collections - nothing fancy
- * New metal shelving for all the artifacts we have accessioned with our new software
- * 4 foot long chair dollies (2) so we don't have to continually haul one or two chairs at a time
- * Good digital camera to photograph artifacts



OCCHS Annual Membership Dinner

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

**Come
casual!**

The Carriage Stop

2700 Robinson—26th St. & Robinson—look for the balloons!

6:00 p.m. Social, 6:45 p.m. Dinner

Catered by

**Elk Chili Dinner
with Salad
and Dessert**



Entertainment by

**GOLD
FEVER
CHRONICLES**



Cost: \$18—Members, \$20—Non-Members

Call OCCHC at 636-1225 for credit card reservations—DEADLINE: October 8, 2011.

*Celebrate
Laura Belle McDaniel's
150th. Birthday*

with a Special Program by Jan MacKell

Jan's illustrated lecture will take us from Laura Belle's humble beginnings in Missouri to her life as a successful madam in Colorado City to her untimely death in a car accident near Castle Rock.

Friday, November 11

Reception & Refreshments - 6:30 P.M.

Program - 7:00 P.M.

Cost - \$3

Old Colorado City History Center 15. 24th Street 636-1225



President's Letter

Dear Members:

Fall has definitely come to Colorado. Warm days and cool nights—I love it! The History Center is finally back to a nice temperature inside after the heat of July and August.

We kicked off our 2nd Friday monthly programs with a packed house (almost 100 people), all anxious to hear Jack Anthony speak on the Looong Ago History of the Air Force Academy property. A very good day.

As I look back on the summer, I am thankful for all the children who came in with their parents; worked on our scavenger hunts; and finally, were able to ring the old church bell. Hopefully, in their young minds, museums will be fun places to visit in the future. The museum walls are full of their completed scavenger hunts. Thanks to Kathy McBride for putting this together.

October is busy with our ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER, October 12, and another interesting program "Dressing Mr. Lincoln." Friday, October 14. Check out the ads in this issue.

I continue to be amazed that so much is donated by so many. Most important is the donation of your TIME. I see it every day. Suzie keeps our bookstore attractive and vital; Bev works the phones finding volunteers for numerous events; bookstore volunteers keep things running and sales up; the Tuesday lunch group of Collections volunteers have fun and work hard, Don gets the West Word out every month, and on and on. With an all-volunteer museum, I could name names all day and still miss someone. We just couldn't keep our doors open without the gift of TIME.

Another gift is RESOURCES—a special thank you goes out this month to Tom and Carol Daniels who were kind enough to pay for the restoration of the original Fosdick Map we acquired this spring. It was professionally preserved by a conservator in Denver. Another surprise gift—thank you! The Current family also surprised us with a memorial gift. Their roots are deep in the Westside. We are truly valued as a museum

and repository of Westside history and although many families have spread out across the U.S., they still remember where they came from and what shaped their young lives.

Please check my WISH LIST in this issue. If you can help, give me a call at 719-630-8384 or at the history center, 719-636-1225. Happy Fall—see you on October 12th

Sharon Swint, President
OCCHS Board of Directors

TREASURER'S REPORT AUGUST 2011

Our financial position in August shows an increase in our bank account by some \$1600. This increase will however be used to cover expenses not yet paid, or at least some of it will. We are in a strong position financially considering that the first five months of the year are weak in fund raising. So with that in mind, I would ask the general membership for some suggestions for fund raising events that the board might consider for next year. All members are in many ways affected by our financial position. So, the board would be open for any suggestions you might have. Hopefully your concerns are greater than just the annual dinner. Which by the way is coming soon on October 12th at 6:00 pm and will be held this year at the Carriage Stop Events Center located at 27th street and Robinson in Old Colorado City. We look forward to seeing you there. Bring your suggestions.

FINANCIAL REPORT

OCCHS BANK ACCOUNT	\$ 13,609.68
BOOK STORE ACCOUNT	\$ 2,316.29
TOTAL FIXED ENDOWMENT	\$ 89,009.02
EDWARD JONES CASH ACC'T	\$ 6,081.59
EARNED INCOME SAVINGS	\$ 11,116.32
DIGITALIZATION ACCOUNT	\$ 6,124.58

TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS \$ 128,257.48

Johnie E. Jackson, Treasurer
Old Colorado City Historical Society

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

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September / October Calendar

Wednesday, October 12 Annual Membership Dinner at the Carriage Stop Event Center
6:00 P.M. - Stop by the Book Store or visit our website for details and to
make reservations.

Friday, October 14 Program: Dressing Mr. Lincoln Lincoln enactor John Voehl and
11:00 A.M. historical clothing specialist Denise Winter will unveil the story
of a president, his clothing, and assassination in April 1865, and
one of the oldest clothing manufacturers in the United States. In
this illustrated program they will share their extensive research
and the reproduction clothing resulting from the research.

Friday, November 11 Celebrating the 150th Birthday of Laura Belle McDaniel
6:30 P.M. Reception: Refreshments including birthday cake
7:00 P.M. Program: Laura Belle McDaniel - Colorado City's Most
Prominent Madam Jan MacKell Collins from the Cripple Creek
Museum has spent over 15 years of researching Colorado
madams. Jan will discuss the life and suspicious death of this
soiled dove.

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.