

WEST WOOD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

proud member of the Coalition of Pikes Peak Historic Museums

Volume 28, Number 4

May, 2013

Alva Weeks - Colorado City Resident and Carver

Below is an excerpt from family records compiled by OCCHS member Catherine Dymkoski the great-grandniece of Nina Schmidt Weeks

Alva B. Weeks was born on April 14, 1863 on a farm near Winterset, Madison County, Iowa. Alva was an enterprising man, first owning a store with his brother Clyde in Iowa. In his early twenties he moved to Colorado to mine. John Thomas, grandson of Nina and Alva, wrote of his grandfather, Alva, "Twenty-one seemed a good age to leave home and Poppa bought a 204 acre farm just one mile from his birthplace. A few years later he moved to Denver, Colorado to work in a soap factory. He became interested in stone carving around the year 1886 at Manitou, Colorado. He liked the

white gypsum rock local to that area. He learned to soak the stone to make it soft enough to whittle. He made delicate carvings, mostly of animals. Family member Patricia Hennessey Weeks further says, "Alva appears to be a 'jack of all trades'. He had many occupations; miner, farmer, carver, baker, store proprietor. In his years in Colorado City, carving and selling souvenirs at the Garden of the Gods held the most interest.

Alva's future wife, Christiane "Nina" Schmidt was born on November 30, 1870, in Heiningen, Germany. She was the sixth of ten children born to Jakob Schmidt (1836 - 1908) and Louise Friederike Dorothea Friz (1838 - 1926). Nina immigrated to the United States in 1890 when she was 19 years old. She brought her younger brother, Rudolph Schmidt, with her and the two went to Colorado City after arriving in the United States. Her oldest brother, Jacob Schmidt, and his wife, Bertha, ran a successful bakery in Colorado City, Colorado.

On November 19, 1892, Nina married Alva B. Weeks in Colorado City. Because Alva was born in the United States then, as an alien wife of a U.S. citizen, Nina became a



*Alva B. Weeks making carvings at his curio stand at the gate to Garden of the Gods, Colorado City, Colorado.
(Photo courtesy of John Thomas, posted on web page for "Descendents of Joseph Weeks of Virginia")*

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Old Colorado City Historical Society

'Preserving the past for the future'

1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319
http://www.occhs.org (719) 636-1225

WEST WORD

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The Old Colorado City Historical Society

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WEST WORD Editor c/o OCCHS

1 South 24th Street

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

or Don Ellis - spiderwort@pcsls.net

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 15th OF EACH MONTH

MISSION

Revised August 2012

The Old Colorado City Historical Society is a nonprofit volunteer organization established to recognize the historical significance and unique culture of original Old Colorado City and early El Paso County which includes the present and future history of today's greater Westside neighborhood.

This organization perpetuates the preservation and display of artifacts and archival materials, encouragement of research, education of the children and the community, through the membership and the operation of the Old Colorado City 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	Business	\$75
Individual	\$25	Lifetime	\$250
Family	\$35	Life plus one	\$300

Funds from a Lifetime membership are placed into an Endowment Fund to be used only for projects 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	Betty Baker	636-1225
Secretary	Brian Copeland	636-1225
Treasurer	Suzanne Schorsch	488-0256
	Janice deChadenades	598-7183
	Bev Disch	636-1225
	Sandy Hanzell	636-1225
	Kathy McBride	636-1225
	Phil McDonald	636-1225

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. Everyone welcome.

WELCOME TO OCCHS! ~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Richard Dailey

Betsy Evans

Ed Hershisier

Clara Louise Meury

Ruth Obee

Maloa Read

Bernard Schriever

Barbara J. Scott

Jack & Betsy Shoup

Eric Swab

Swint Realty Company, LLC

Steven W. Veatch

Stephanie Waters

Shooks Run Research

Glenn Pressman



Weeks continued from page 1

naturalized citizen. After Alva and Nina were married they moved back to Iowa to farm and raise a family. Their first two children, Ila and Albert were born there. Then, in the spring of 1904 the family returned to Colorado with their neighbor (last name of Blohm), who had formed a mining corporation. Alva's grandson, John Thomas writes, "Mr. Blohm owned a grocery store there but most of his income came from the shares he sold in his phony



Alva B Weeks

(Photo courtesy of Patricia Hennessy Weeks, from web page for "Descendents of Joseph Weeks of Virginia")



*Nina and Alva B. Weeks, circa 1892
Photo by Hyder's Art Studio, Winterset, Iowa
(Schmidt family photo album)*

mine to anyone who would buy, including Poppa's (Alva's) brothers and sisters." Alva and Nina's third child, Mary Freda, was born in Westcreek, Colorado in 1904.

When Alva and Nina returned to Colorado City it was already known as a manufacturing center. Businesses included paint, stucco, quarrying of red and gray sandstone, and limestone, as well as hay and grain. Public transportation was available by trolley to Colorado City's business district. The trolley used animal traction until 1890 when electrification of the line was completed. Nina and Alva lived for many years near Barr's Burro stand towards the town of Manitou.

The next family move was in 1911 to Florida and then back to Iowa again. In 1914 after a visit to

Germany Nina gave birth to her last child, Kenneth. Shortly thereafter, Nina became ill. She eventually was diagnosed with stomach cancer, and passed away in Iowa on June 14 1916. In August 1917, Alva married Nina's sister, Pauline Schmidt Kloe, sold the farm, and moved to Seattle, Washington to open a store with Pauline's brother. In 1918 came another move to San Francisco. By 1920, he was divorced. He eventually ended up in Lincoln, Nebraska where he owned a bakery and a wallpaper store. Alva married two more times. Alva B. Weeks passed away at Lincoln, Nebraska on 21 June 1945.



Photo of Alva Weeks (far left) standing in front of Fatty Rice's Curio Shop in the summer of 1892. The shop was located near the Garden of the Gods.

(Photo courtesy of John Thomas, posted on web page for "Descendents of Joseph Weeks of Virginia")

COMING ATTRACTIONS



Last year one of our Tuesday night programs which was well attended by our membership was a showing of a film made in Colorado City, The Incident in 1990 with Walter Matthau.

So we have decided to devote all of our four Tuesdays in July to showing films about Colorado's historical figures, made in Colorado, or about Colorado. We've chosen movies about General William J. Palmer, Lon Chaney, a Perry Mason filmed at the Broadmoor and a tall tale about Cripple Creek.

The events will feature your favorite 1950's candy and popcorn and recreate the feeling of how movies were shown in theaters sixty years ago.

For the comfort of our patrons we will only be able to allow fifty (50) persons to attend each performance. Full details will be in the June newsletter telling you how to reserve a seat at the showing(s).

Plan now to attend one or all of the showings.

"Tuesday Nights in July" Just Around the Corner

MEMBERS TO VOTE ON PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES AT MAY 10th MEETING

The OCCHS Board of Directors is considering several changes to our By-Laws. Since these are important changes which will affect the members of the Society, the Board is seeking an advisory vote of the membership at the May 10th Annual meeting. These changes are:

1. Change the Annual Membership Meeting from May to January.

Article V - Officers Section C. Nominating Committee Appointment: At the ~~February~~ **October** meeting of the Board of Directors, a Nominating Committee of three (3) shall be appointed. The President shall appoint: one (1) member to the committee from the Board of Directors who shall act as the Chairperson, and two (2) persons from members of the Society. It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate candidates for the offices to be filled at the annual ~~May~~ meeting. The Chairperson shall report the slate of candidates to the Board of Directors not later than 30 days before the annual meeting. The Chairperson will present this slate for consideration to the membership at the annual membership meeting ~~in May~~. The Board is responsible for notifying the membership of this slate.

Article VII - Meetings of Members Section B. Members' Annual Meeting: The regular meeting ~~in May~~ **January** shall be the annual meeting.

In references to "members' annual meeting in May" and "annual membership meeting in May" the words "in May" would be omitted.

EXPLANATION - Election of Board members at a January Annual Meeting would better suit the needs of the society, allowing more time for new Board members to become involved in planning for the Society's activities for the coming year.

2. Change Directors and Officers two year terms of office to run from January through December rather than from May through April.

Article IV - Board of Directors Section C. Meetings - The regular annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held immediately following the annual members' meeting ~~in May~~ or as soon as practical. The purpose of this meeting is to elect new officers. See Article V, Section A. ...

Article V - Officers Section A. Officers: The elected officers of the Society shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These officers shall assume office at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors in ~~May~~ **January** and shall serve for a minimum term of two years. ...

EXPLANATION - This goes hand-in-hand with election of Board members in January.

3. Change the number of Directors from 9 to 7.

Article IV - Board of Directors Section B. Number, Tenure and Qualifications - The number of Directors shall be ~~nine (9)~~ **seven (7)**. All terms of Directors beginning with the election in 1981 shall be for two (2) years. All Directors may serve a maximum of two (2) terms, unless the following extenuating circumstance exists: If the Nominating Committee and/or the membership cannot enlist enough members ~~(9)~~ **(7)** to serve on the Board, then the Committee can nominate an existing member of the Board for another 2 year term.

EXPLANATION - for a Society the size of OCCHS a seven (7) Director Board is adequate. A smaller board would still serve the needs of OCCHS and make it easier to find candidates to run for office.

4. Change the objectives of the Society, as stated in the By-Laws, to agree with OCCHS' current Mission Statement.

CHANGE: Article II - Objectives B. To maintain the history and memory of the original old Colorado City (1859-1917).

TO: Article II - Objectives B. To maintain the history and memory of the original old Colorado City (1859-1917) and early El Paso County as well as the history of the Westside and early El Paso County from 1917 to the present.

EXPLANATION - there is a need to keep the history of the Westside of Colorado Springs which is a distinct and culturally separate part of the city.

Sam Abell and the Boy Scouts of Troop 66 -Part of OCCHS

by Suzanne Schorsch

Do you know what you get when you put 10 Boy Scouts under the leadership of a future Eagle Scout in a room with lumber, tools and about 120 BOY SCOUT HOURS?.....OCCHS gets some of the most wonderful benches that convert into picnic tables to be placed on our community patio.

Under the leadership of Sam Abell, finishing his freshman year at Air Academy High School, the Boy Scouts of Troop 66 (chartered by St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs) have spent many hours building convertible picnic table/benches that can be used for many functions for the Old Colorado City Historical Society. The project was completed by 11 Scouts on February 18th and 23rd. These two days were only the assembly stage of the project. Even before a project begins, a scout working toward his Eagle Rank in Boy Scouts puts in so many more hours.

To become an Eagle Scout (less that 5% of scouts ever obtain this rank) you must work your way through the lower ranks of Scouting, you must complete many hours of community service, learn leadership, financial responsibility, budgeting, and time

management just to name a few things. If you work to become an Eagle, you must design and complete a project that benefits your community. Sam Abell definitely has accomplished what it takes to be an Eagle. He designed the project, raised the finances, coordinated the workers, and completed the project better than could ever be imagined by OCCHS. I can remember the first time he came into the history center to see what projects might benefit OCCHS. I always have a list of projects we "dream" of having done. Sam picked out the hardest on the list. We visited another time when he came in with different "ideas" for the bench/picnic tables for our patio and asked what we might like. Really! Any would be fine! I told him "Don't pick on a project that is TOO hard." So, Sam picked the hardest and nicest design. The six benches that convert into three tables with benches will fit 24 to 30 people. And the design makes them SO versatile.

Part of the Scout Oath is "to help other people at all times." Sam has accomplished this. Sam will benefit the West Side Community for a long time. OCCHS hosts local school children in to learn about Colorado History, we have educational programs for the community, we hold fundraising events so that we can continue our Mission Statement and maintain our Museum that is open to the public for free, and NOW we no longer have to haul tables and chairs to our patio! For those of us who are getting up there in age, this is a God Send. Most of our volunteers are retired, and to be able to work with these young Scouts is a true privilege for us.

Make sure you attend our Annual Meeting to learn more about Sam and to look at the completed project. The Old Colorado City Historical Society is very proud that three Boy Scouts have completed their Eagle Project at our center. We love being part of the process of working with these young men and watching them turn into our future leaders.



President's Letter

TECHNOLOGY AT OCCHS

Dear Members:

Today as I was checking my email on my iPad, a little dot popped up telling me that one of my 'apps' had an update. I lazily switched over to my apps and was thrilled to see that the app update was for our Old Colorado City tour which NeoTreks has recently completed. I downloaded it and went in to take a look at what was new and what had been changed. What a joy! It looks so good. Anyone looking for information on Old Colorado City or planning a visit can have a field day looking at buildings and reading the history of our part of town. I can't tell you how informational and interesting the app is. Let's get the word out to the community and to the world of tourist that this info is available. Thanks to Don Kallaus, long time member for his dedication to this project assisted by Joanne Karlson.

Secondly, our NEW web site is about to go live. Again, the new look is updated and attractive as well as informational. It gives visitors a taste of Old Colorado City history and directs them to visit our history center to find more specific information. Again, what a great thing for OCCHS. Thanks to Denise Winter, one of our members for her work.

Per our mission statement, we try to disseminate Colorado City history and this new technology will help us do this very thing, reaching people that will never be able to come into our building for a program! Let's embrace this new technology.

Sharon Swint

Treasurer's Report:

The Unsung Heroes of Old Colorado City Historical Society

Part One

- Suzanne Schorsch

Take a look at the list of people below. They are the unsung heroes of our Historical Society. One fourth of the operating expenses of the historical society are met each year by those people who have sat quietly, day after day, month after month, year after year, in our bookstore. They sit waiting for those people who stop by the center and when they do, they are the docents of our museum, filling our Mission Statement, teaching the public about our history. Below shows just the number of DAYS they worked in our Bookstore last year alone. These same people also are the core people who volunteer at our major fund raising events.

Kathy McBride - 54

Marge Knorr - 45

Norma Stull - 42

Eloise Wynne - 23

Muriel Dunkley - 16

Judy Willey - 13

Art Crawford - 12

All the above people work one or more day a month. Also helping fill in are Sandy Hanzlian, Brian Copeland, Joanne Karlson and Betsy Evans. We truly need to have more volunteers.

Any time you would like to discuss the finances of OCCHS, please feel free to contact Suzanne Schorsch at 719-331-1786. This month, instead of talking "dollars" I want you to focus on why the Society is financially successful.....THANKS to the Unsung Heroes.

The Old Colorado City Historical Society's Board of Directors meets regularly on the third Monday of the month at 1:00 P.M. at the Old Colorado City History Center, unless otherwise announced. Interested visitors are always welcome at the Board meetings. The next Board meeting will be Monday, May 20

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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May - July Calendar

Friday, May 10
10:15 A.M.
Friday, May 10
11:00 A.M.

ANNUAL MEETING - doors open at 9:30

Program: "From Palmer to AMTRAK - Railroads of the Pikes Peak Region" presented by Mel McFarland. Railroading in the Pike's Peak Region was once a significant industry. More than 10 railroads once operated in the Pike's Peak Region, nearly all were small, but others were major operations. From 1871 to 1971, the industry flourished, and then almost died. This presentation will feature information on each of the railroad lines of the region.

OCCHS Members FREE. Non-members \$5.00.

Tuesday nights:
July 9
July 16
July 23
July 30
7:30 P.M.
(Doors open at 7)

Tuesday night movies - recreating the experience of the movie theater of 60 years ago and showing films of interest for their local events, scenes or characters.

Watch for details in the June issue of West Word.

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.