

WEST WOOD



proud member of the Coalition of Pikes Peak Historic Museums

Volume 29, Number 2

March, 2014

Skiing on Pikes Peak before World War II

By The Don Gang (Don Sanborn, Don Kallaus, and Don Ellis)

Early unorganized individual accounts

Early skiing on Pikes Peak generally included youngsters strapping barrel staves to their feet in an attempt at creating their own homemade skis and playing in the snow as conditions permitted. As you will see, any ski efforts on Pikes Peak are highly dependent on the whims of Mother Nature and often run up against a serious lack of snow. Air coming from the west has often lost most of its moisture before arriving at Pikes Peak east of the Continental Divide.

A few, more industrious, skiers cleared hillsides to give themselves a small 'ski area'. One such group included Don Lawrie, John Rollins, John Fowler, Doug Sheafor, Clarence Coil and Ben Hardy. In the early 1920's they cleared a hill at the Fig Leaf Ranch near Midland, Colorado (partway between Divide and Cripple Creek). The ranch belonged to Don Lawrie's parents. The young men used it as their own private ski hill, hiking or side stepping up the hill and skiing down.

AdAmAn member, Carl Blaurock, carried skis on the AdAmAn climb in 1924 and skied from the

summit of Pikes Peak to Manitou on the return trip the morning of January 1st, 1925. He received plenty of ribbing from his climbing companions on the climb up the mountain, but was surely envied the next day when he was able to ski back to Manitou in one hour flat, according to an account by Willis Magee.

Silver Spruce Ski Club (Edlowe, CO)

The earliest organized skiing effort was the Silver Spruce Ski Club. It all started in January 1929 when three local boys, Clarence Coil, Doug Sheafor and John Fowler attended a ski meet at the Genesee course west of Denver. With little experience but much ambition, the three decided to build their own ski jump. The following week a cabin and what seemed an ideal place for a jump was found on the Silver Spruce Ranch near Edlowe, between Woodland Park and Divide. Edlowe had a train siding on the Midland Terminal Railroad which serviced Cripple Creek from Colorado Springs. The boys leased the cabin and land from the ranch's

In Memoriam

Irving Howbert

May 9, 1916 - January 10, 2014

In addition to his extensive career as a local attorney, Irving Howbert served as president of the Boys and Girls Club, director of the First National Bank and president of the Community Chest.

In 2007 he worked with the Old Colorado City Historical Society in republishing his grandfather's 298-page autobiography, Memories of a Lifetime in the Pikes Peak Region.

Both the Old Colorado City Historical Society and the larger community can be grateful for Irving Howbert's contributions.

We offer our deepest sympathy to Mr. Howbert's family and to his many friends.

Continued on Page 3

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

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WEST WORD Editor c/o OCCHS

1 South 24th Street

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

or Don Ellis - spiderwort@pcslsys.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

Co-President	Betty Baker	636-1225
Co-President	Kathy McBride	636-1225
Vice President	Joanne Karlson	475-2574
Secretary	Brian Copeland	954-551-3677
Treasurer	Suzanne Schorsch	331-1786
	Bev Disch	636-1225
	Sandy Hanzlian	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 10:30 A.M. on the day of the meeting for refreshments and visitation. Everyone welcome.

WELCOME TO OCCHS! ~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Allen County Public Library

Darlene Aspedon

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Dorothy Merlo

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Ralph Roscoe

Larry Schaefer

Adell Siegel

Verda Spitz

Thomas Strand

Marion & John Vance

Westside Pioneer

Holly Wiepking

Eloise Wynne

Jan Zellmer

Skiing from Page 1

owner E. J. Merriman and proceeded to clear the hill and construct a jump. They then encouraged their friends to try ski jumping and the new slightly larger group of ski enthusiasts soon had a meeting to form a club and aptly named it the Silver Spruce Ski Club. Dues were paid to keep up the cabin and course.

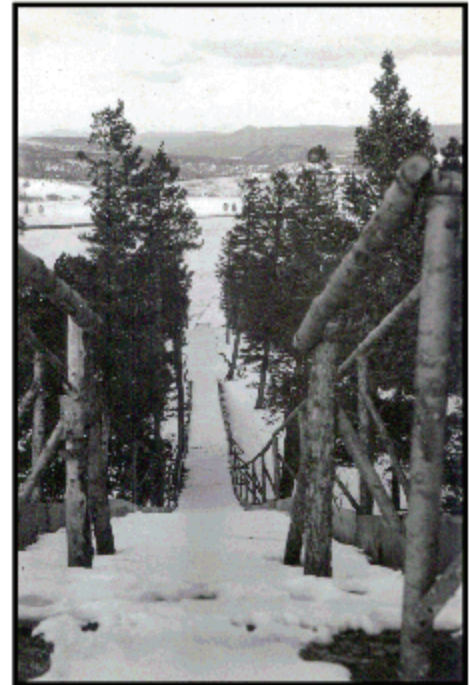
The Club's original ski jump and hill was soon found to be too steep for jumping and was nicknamed 'Suicide Hill'. After that first year of jumping on Suicide Hill, the Club found a more suitable, north facing location "around the corner of the hill" from the original jump. Unfortunately, the new location had a rock outcropping in the middle of the hill. Member, Don Lawrie went to Spencer Penrose and asked if the Club could borrow a bulldozer, drilling equipment and dynamite to help clear the hill. Spencer agreed to provide the needed equipment. A group of club members loaded everything onto a rail car, and it was delivered to the siding at Edlowe where they proceeded to dynamite the rock outcropping and bulldoze the hill to prepare it for the jump.

The Club competed in their first ski jump competition at Genesee the winter of 1929/30 and several of the members took home prizes. The group was quite proud as most of the winners hadn't been on skis until that winter.

After that second season of jumping, having gone from a local practice hill to a group of competitors with a second and better hill, the Club elected new officers, changed their bylaws and attracted the interest of a local sports enthusiast with a proposed plan to incorporate and increase membership. The plan was carried out and the treasury did indeed grow. With the advice of Thor Grosword, a tireless promoter and ski manufacturer who once lived in Colorado Springs and later in Denver, the new funds were used to expand the facilities to include 60, 120, and 170 foot jumps as well as a novice 40 ft jump, a toboggan hill and a new three room cabin. It was written that, "The comfortable headquarters cabin, the main ski course with jumps, pits and all the thrills of a well-equipped course, offers everything that can be desired."



"Suicide Hill"



Top of "Suicide Hill"

The Club quickly grew from those few ski jump enthusiasts to over one hundred members, including student members who were encouraged to try jumping at the cut rate initiation fee of \$2 and annual dues of \$6 as compared to the regular initiation fee of \$10 and annual dues of \$12. Apparently encouraging younger jumpers paid off for the Club when a North Junior High student, Herbert Wilson, 13 years old, won his class in a ski jump competition at Steamboat Springs and came in second in the cross country competition which, for him, was done on an unknown course in a blinding blizzard.

In the fall of 1930, the new facilities were christened before a group of more than 100 members and spectators. Jump No. 1, at 170 feet long, was said to be one of the longest and steepest ski jumps in the country. The first ski jumper to jump on it was John Carlton of Manchester, N.H., a former Dartmouth University ski star. Don Lawrie was the first to jump from the 120 foot ski jump. At the time club officers included: Foster Fritchle, President; Neil Vollmer, Vice President; John Fowler, Treasurer; and Don Lawrie, Secretary.

With the expanded facilities, the Club was able to host tournaments under the auspices of the United States Western and National Ski Associations. Aside from hosting tournaments, club members competed at tournaments in the region

including Denver Ski Club (Genesee), Steamboat Springs, Homewood Park, and Hot Sulfur Springs.

In light of Women's Ski Jumping being added to the 2014 Winter Olympics, it's fitting to mention that the Silver Spruce Ski Club included both men and women. At their second annual tournament on January 25, 1931, the program for the event listed the following women competing on the 120 foot jump: Wilma Brandt (Denver), Sylvia Potter (Denver), Betty Morris (Denver), Alice Throckmorton (Steamboat), Leila Erickson (Homewood), Geneva Sheafor (Silver Spruce), Josephine Hildritch (Silver Spruce), Martha Heinicke (Silver Spruce), Sylvia Potter (Pioneer Club), and Dorothy Firebaugh (Pioneer Club).

For the 1931-32 season club officers included: Foster Fritchle, President; Don Lawrie, Vice President; John Fowler, Treasurer; and Douglas Sheafor, Secretary. The Board of Directors included: Charles L. Tutt, Dorothea Pick, J. Martin Brown, Sylvester Benbow, W.B. Metzler, and Aleck Onufrock.

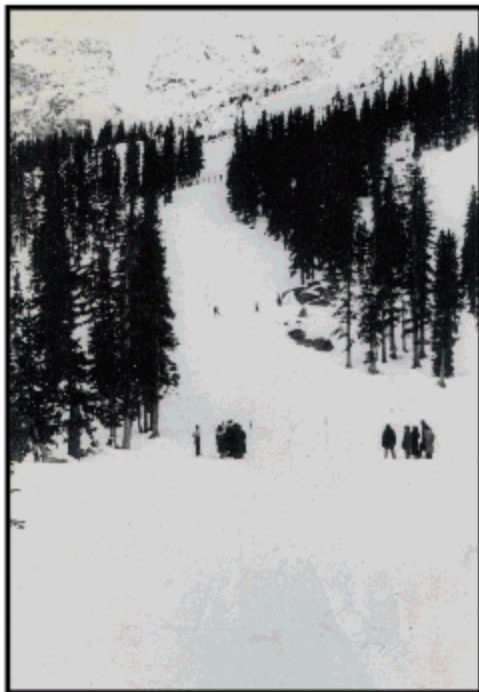
The last year the Club used the ski jump hill the weather had changed and there was a dearth of snow. To hold their annually scheduled tournament, sanctioned by the US Western Ski Association, members had to haul snow in on trucks from wherever they could find it remaining drifts along a snow fence, up near Catamount Reservoir, etc. The trucked-in snow had to then be hauled by hand in bushel baskets up the ski jump. It seems the lack of snow pretty much killed the Club's enthusiasm for their jump hill and its location.

Pikes Peak Ski Club (Glen Cove pre-World War II)

With time, downhill skiing had begun to grow in popularity. It was much more accessible to the average person and one didn't have to be a "Dare Devil" to do it. The old Silver Spruce hill was too short for downhill skiing and lacked snow. So, skiers began looking for a new location. At the same time, Spencer Penrose had decided to discontinue the Pikes Peak Highway lease and allowed the Forest Service permit to expire. In the fall of 1935, and with the highway now un-gated, skiers left the ski jump hill for the higher, more reliably, snow covered slopes of Pikes Peak. Initially they settled into the Glen Cove area and used a slope in the basin immediately to the West of the Cove. The slope had been cleared in 1924 by Thor Grosword and Lars Haugen for a summer ski jumping exhibition.

The new "Pikes Peak Ski Club" was formed; and the Club worked with Civilian Conservation Corps workers to clear the slope further and make it suitable for recreational skiing. They also cleared two new down-mountain runs from Glen Cove. On the steeper run to the west of the Cove, they could walk up the road and ski the hill below the switchback just above the Cove. For others, they had to walk up the hill, or side step, to ski down.

It didn't take long for skiers to tire of walking/side stepping up hill to ski down, so Don Lawrie set



Glen Cove Ski Area

about building a rope tow to carry skiers up hill. Don worked out how to build a rope tow and picked up an old Whippet engine and automobile chassis from the Schneebeck family in Colorado Springs. He and other club members built the tow and had it operational by the first weekend in December, 1936. As it happens, this was the first rope tow built west of the Mississippi. The first chairlift in the world was built by the Union Pacific Railroad at Sun Valley Idaho at the same time and went into operation about a week ahead of the Pikes Peak rope tow. The Whippet engine didn't last long and the Club switched to a Model A Ford engine on the main hill. They later used a Buick engine on a second rope tow that was built for the lower hills in 1940. Members of the Club with some pull in City Council invited Council up to the Ski Area and convinced them that they needed electricity at Glen Cove. Council agreed and had electricity delivered to the area. With electricity available, the Club was able to get some used electric motors from the Holly Sugar Corporation and replaced the gas powered engines on their rope tows.

With the Pikes Peak Highway now being maintained as part of the State of Colorado highway system, the Club could call on the State to plow the road anytime it snowed. With free highway access and the new rope tows, the Club grew quickly.



Mrs. Jim Brummer (center.) and a friend

Treasurer; and Mrs. J. B. Smith, Secretary.

The purpose of the Club was stated to be: "To foster, sponsor, and encourage sports of all types in Colorado and the Pikes Peak Region; to stimulate interest in skiing and other sports there; to acquire, lease, build and maintain club houses, ski courses, ski lodges and means of transportation and roads thereto; to operate a commissary to supply members and others with food, candy, cigarettes, tobacco, beverages and like articles and things at any club or lodge used by the club, or elsewhere; To supply members and others with skiing and other sporting goods and equipment and to operate concessions and refreshment stands for use of the general public and furtherance of any of the other objects of the club. The scope of the activities of the association is to extend to all sports and recreation, and is not to be restricted to skiing or to winter sports alone."

The Club quickly grew to around 300 members and in 1938 the Broadmoor Hotel donated \$300 to the Club to help put the Tweed Cabin at Glen Cove into serviceable condition that included building a fireplace, ski room and bunks; painting the inside; and furnishing the cabin with a cook stove and furniture. In addition, the Club purchased four tons of coal to supplement a supply of coal which had been donated by the Broadmoor Hotel for heating the Tweed Cabin. Members could stay overnight in the cabin at a cost of 25 cents per night.

A \$150 depreciation fund was set aside each year to pay for the replacements needed on the tows. Operation of the tow cost approximately \$119 per year. An All Risk Insurance Policy on the ski tow for \$1000 cost the Club \$20. Club dues were \$2.00 which entitled the payee to membership in "the best ski club in the Rocky Mountain region", free use of the tows on Sundays and use of the new ski lodge, among other things.

Also in 1938, at the urging of Roger Whitney, the Club decided to be affiliated with the National Ski Patrol. Anyone wishing to be a member of the Patrol was required to take a 20 hour Red Cross course. Duties included patrolling the water shed "which is most important in this region", preventing accidents, and aiding anyone who has had an accident.

In that same year Mr. Otis Elliott was appointed by the Club to be the supervisor of the Tweed Cabin and ski tows for the season. He was allowed to run a concession at the cabin from which profits went to the Broadmoor Hotel to be applied towards his salary which in turn was donated back to the Club each month. The ski tows were generally only run during the weekend. However, the Broadmoor Hotel had the privilege of using the tows during the week by supplying the necessary gas and oil to run them.

Utilizing the Ski Club's facilities, Colorado College formed a ski team in 1938. Both CC

The first annual ski tournament of the Pikes Peak Ski Club was held on February 20, 1937. Thirty skiers entered the tournament, which included slalom, downhill and ladies slalom competitions. Colorado College competed, and Bill "Willis" Armstrong tied for first place in his discipline. A large group from Texas came to Colorado Springs especially for the ski tournament, and 800 spectators attended the event.

The new "Pikes Peak Ski Club" was incorporated June 2, 1937 by Don Lawrie, John Armstrong, and John Ferguson Bennett. The initial Board of Directors included: Don Lawrie, Thomas H. Rawles, John Rollins, Beyrl Ritchie, John Armstrong, Gordan Mace, and John Bennett. Officers included: Don Lawrie, President; Dr. Roger Whitney, Vice President; John Armstrong,



Don Lawrie and Bob Potter at Glen Cove

and Fountain Valley School had strong participation in the Club.

In response to a proposed ski party on the South Slope of Pikes Peak, Ed Mosley, City Manager, sent Don Lawrie a letter dated May 13, 1938 stating that the City of Colorado Springs would "prosecute all trespassers on any portion of the slopes of the Peak, the drainage of which is directly into our municipal water supply... We simply cannot take any chances whatever on having our domestic water supply polluted or contaminated if it is within our power to prevent it." It's probably safe to say that the ski party was canceled!

The Club hosted an annual "Ski Ball" at the Broadmoor Hotel as a fundraiser for its activities. Tickets for the dance were fifty six cents per person, tax included. A fashion show was held as part of the event to show the latest in skiing and skating costumes.

The ski area quickly grew in popularity and on May 28, 1939, the *Gazette Telegraph* reported that 18,700 skiers had visited Glen Cove that season. The Glen Cove ski area was second only to Berthoud ski area.

The Colorado State Slalom and Ski Jumping Championships were held at Glen Cove on February 26, 1939. Even though Silver Spruce had been largely abandoned, it should be noted that the jump hill remained in use for ski jumping competitions and the jumping portion of the State championships were held there. Utilizing the Pikes Peak Highway, skiing spread further afield than simply the rope tow served terrain. The downhill competition was held at Milepost 14 (now known as 16 mile) ending at the Glen Cove cabin, providing a mile and a quarter run. In 1940, the Club held ski races every other weekend throughout the season. In the January 28, 1940 *Gazette Telegraph* it was written that "Those interested in long runs can start at the top of the Big Hill above Glen Cove and ski down to Cascade 12 miles (with some slight assistance of the ski sticks)." It was also written that "Later in the spring more advanced skiers go to the summit of Pikes Peak and ski down to Glen Cove (12 miles) a number of club members have done this."

In the April 13, 1941 edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, the call "Pikes Peak or Bust" was stated to now be "the happy call of ski enthusiasts all over America". It was written that "Because of unusually heavy spring snows, skiing conditions on Pikes Peak are suited to a champion's taste." It was suggested that as ski seasons were ending in many other areas of the country, one could enjoy skiing on Pikes Peak late into the spring. Again: "It is perhaps the most scenic ski course on the North American continent. A broad, steep river of glistening white, banked with the deep green-bronze of pine, spruce and fir. Above it and beyond it tower unscalable crags, gray, timeless, their jagged heads thrust high against a cobalt sky." Also: "Difficult to understand, for those who have not lived in the West, is the fact that while skiers are cutting christies and slalom racing on Pikes Peak, 11,000 feet above sea level, down in Colorado Springs a few miles away people are playing golf and tennis in shirt-sleeves, or perhaps sprinkling their lawns!"

2nd Annual Used Book and Treasure Sale is Coming

April 26 & 27

(this year with collectibles)

WE ARE STILL ACCEPTING DONATED BOOKS!

*Please drop off your gently used books at
OCCHS to be used for our book sale.*

COOK BOOKS are a favorite, **CHILDREN'S** books are loved, and **HISTORY BOOKS** are a top seller! And, we will accept anything except Encyclopedia sets.



President's Letter - March

This year, for the first time in OCCHS's history, we have co-presidents. Kathy McBride and Betty Baker both have strengths in different areas, computer skills, organizational skills, etc, so we hope to use the best of both and have two people covering the office of the President. Another thing that is different is with the annual meeting now in January, the new officers have a few months during our quiet time at the center to get this years planning done.

This year our emphasis is on MEMBERSHIP. Joanne Karlson is acting as our Vice President and will be in charge of membership. We have 320 members, but only see about 50 at meetings. One reason is that our meetings are during working hours. This year we plan on experimenting with events on Friday nights and Saturdays so that we can SEE more members.

Brian Copeland continues on as our Secretary, taking notes and making sure everything is filed that needs to be done for our center. He is also our go to person with our sound system.

Suzanne Schorsch continues on as our Treasurer. This month's Treasurer's Report will show you how our Operating Account for OCCHS finished last year. It was a tight year financially, but we ended up in the "Black" and look forward to a better year in 2014.

Our other Board members are Sandy Hanzlian, who is in charge of our monthly programs and Bev Disch who is our top person in gathering volunteers for our many events.

Here is to a good 2014

Respectfully,
Betty and Kathy

Treasurer's Report 2013 Summary

Suzanne Schorsch

EXPENDABLE INCOME	2013 Budget	2013 Actual
General Donations	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,190.35
Docent Donations	\$ 800.00	\$ 1,188.00
Membership	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,240.00
Bookstore	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,750.00
Photo/Archive		\$ 1,339.50
Event -receipts	\$ 6,700.00	\$ 7,553.00
Donations for building repair		\$ 5,356.00
TOTAL	\$20,000.00	\$27,616.85

OPERATING EXPENSES	2013 Budget	2013 Actual
(Utilities, Security, Waste)	\$6,500.00	\$5,804.11
Insurance	\$2,800.00	\$2,926.00
Accounting	\$600.00	\$ 779.96
Telephone	\$1,900.00	\$ 2,090.07
Fees and Memberships	\$500.00	\$705.00
Promotion	\$1,400.00	\$1,087.27
Printing	\$ 3,300.00	\$2,773.95
Office Supplies	\$1,200.00	\$1,159.53
Archives	\$500.00	\$ 208.21
Photo	\$500.00	\$ 186.78
Copy Machine	\$ 800.00	\$ 847.10
Event expenses		\$ 3,061.77
Building repair		\$ 5,508.42
TOTAL	\$20,000.00	\$27,138.17

Net gain from 2013 operations: \$ 478.68

2013 addition to Endowment Fund: \$ 1010.00
(Life memberships and designated gifts)

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, March 17 at 1:00 P.M. at the *Old Colorado City History Center*

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

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March / April Calendar

Friday, March 14
11:00 A.M.

Program: "Jailbirds for Justice", the true story of women suffragettes from Colorado Springs. Presented by Chris Nicholl local history specialist for the Pikes Peak Library District Special Collections. This program is an excellent way to celebrate Women's History month and learn about the suffrage movement in Colorado Springs

OCCHS Members FREE. Non-members \$5.00

Friday, April 11
11:00 A.M.

Program: "Baseball in Colorado Springs" Presented by Roger P. Hadix, author of a book by the same name, baseball historian who plays in the Labor Day Old Tyme Baseball game at Rockledge Ranch each year. The program covers History of Baseball played in Pikes Peak Region 1874 - Present day and includes both non professional and professional baseball.

OCCHS Members FREE. Non-members \$5.00

Saturday, April 26
11:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.
Sunday, April 27
11:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Old Colorado City Historical Society
Used Book and Treasure Sale

Old Colorado City History Center

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

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