

WEST WOOD



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The Bear Creek Toll Road

by Don Ellis

In 1871 P. S. Weaver filed a Declaration of Occupancy for 160 acres of land along Bear Creek which was described with reference to a stake about "300 yards below forks of said creek." This would almost certainly have been in the area which came to be known as Jones Park. And, access to this land would have been by way of a rough, although well defined, informal trail up Bear Creek Canyon.

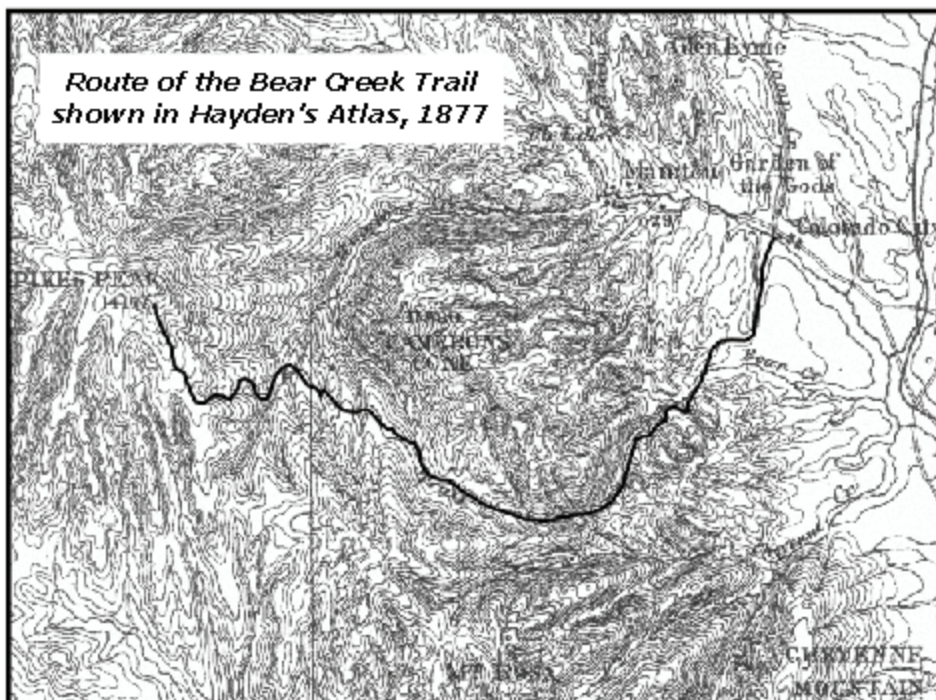
It was not long however, before a much better trail up Bear Creek was constructed. In 1873 Edward Copley, William Allen, and Matt France incorporated the Bear Creek and Pikes Peak Wagon Road Company "to build a trail and wagon road from the town of Colorado Springs

up Bear Creek to its head, thence by the lake at the South branch of the Fountain and thence up the East and South sides of Pikes Peak to the top of the same." This newly constructed trail was to be the route by which men and materials reached the summit for construction of the U. S. Army Signal Service' weather station. The September 13, 1873 *Colorado Springs Gazette & El Paso County News* reported that "Lieut. Henry Jackson, property officer of the U. S. Signal Service, has arrived from Washington, and gone to the summit of the Peak. He will arrange for the immediate construction of the building for the station on the summit."

Besides building the trail, Edward Copley and

Matt France had a contract for a telegraph line from Colorado Springs to the summit weather station. This telegraph line up Bear Creek served the station until 1882 when a new telegraph line was installed along the Pikes Peak Trail which had been built through Engelmann Canyon.

Soon after the Bear Creek trail was built, Edward Copley constructed the Lake House at Mystic Lake (Lake Moraine) as a hotel to accommodate guests who used the trail for a two day trip to the summit. The Lake House, with 9 guest rooms, was opened in August,



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Old Colorado City Historical Society

'Preserving the past for the future'

1 South 24th Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319
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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		

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

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MEETINGS

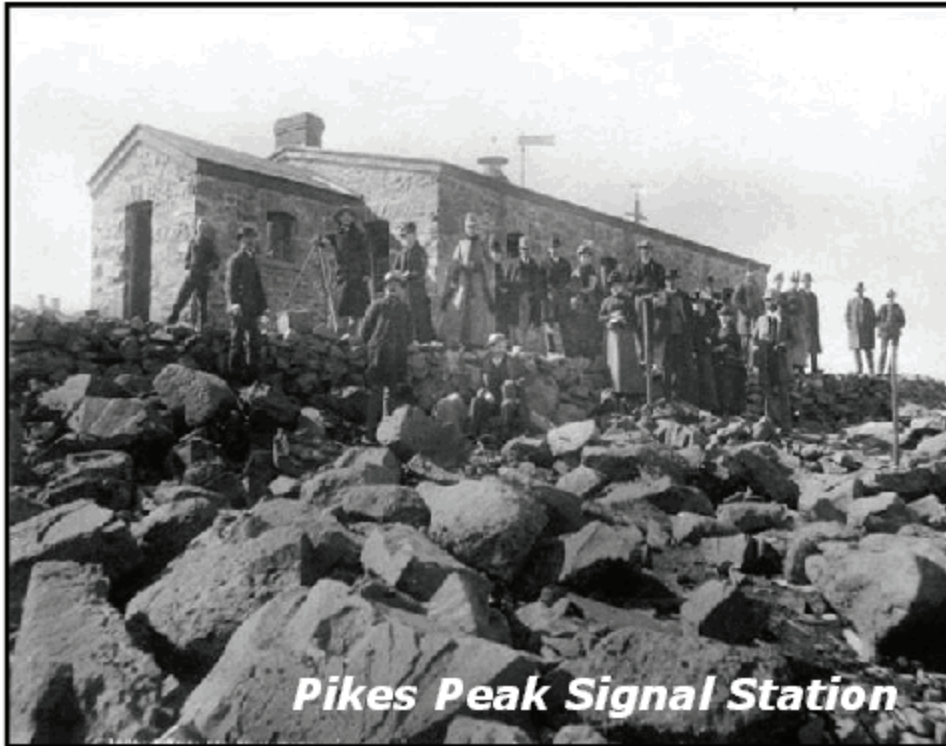
The OCCHS Monthly Meeting & Program is held each month, except June, July, and August. The History Center opens half an hour before the meeting for refreshments and visitation. Everyone welcome.

WELCOME ~ NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS

Anna Ahem
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Pikes Peak Signal Station

1874. An 1875 report stated that the trail was in "excellent condition" and that the entire trip to the summit could be made on horseback.

The Bear Creek trail which was built by the Bear Creek and Pikes Peak Wagon Road Company was, of course, a toll road. However, government men who were associated with the U. S. Army Signal Service were not charged toll. In July of 1878 the El Paso County Commissioners established the toll as "\$1.00 for each horse and rider and 50 cents for each loose or pack animal." (At the same time, the Commissioners set the toll for the recently completed Manitou and Pikes Peak trail up Engelmann Canyon at "50 cents for each horse and rider and 25 cents for each loose or pack animal.")

In 1884, Deputy County Surveyor H. I. Reid completed a survey for a proposed County road up Bear Creek Canyon from "half a mile west of Rio Grande street," extending eleven and a half miles to Lake Moraine. The Bear Creek road report, including Reid's survey plat, was accepted by the El Paso County Commissioners who then declared the road to be a public highway.

The March 10, 1888 *Colorado Springs Weekly Gazette* reported: "Mr. Alvin Stump, of Colorado City, expects to open the Bear Creek trail to the peak and have it ready for use this coming summer. He has sent two men to Mexico to purchase burros to use on the trail, which he

thinks can be made the shortest and most convenient route to the summit." This suggests that the "public highway" may still have been privately maintained and makes no mention of whether or not the "public highway" continued to be a toll road.

In 1891 the Bear Creek Canyon Toll Road Company was formed to improve and operate the road. Herbert I. Reid, who had surveyed the road for the County, was one of the men who formed the company, along with Julius Plumb and Frank Howbert. By May of 1891 the company had let a contract for road improvements; and contractor John Brazelton had 20 men and

10 teams working on the road. The improved road, although narrow, became suitable for carriages. And, in September of 1891 several Colorado Springs officials went to Lake Moraine in four-seated carriages over the "new Bear Creek Toll Road." Toll for the new Bear Creek Toll Road" was less than toll had been for the Bear Creek trail: To Jones Park: 25 cents for each person and no charge for the vehicle; to Seven Lakes: 50 cents for each person and no charge for the vehicle (including the driver), 50 cents for each person on horseback, 10 cents for each head of loose stock or for each pedestrian.

As a route to Lake Moraine and Seven Lakes, the Bear Creek Toll Road was shorter than the Cheyenne Toll Road (Old Stage Road today) which was the other carriage route. However, it was longer than the Pikes Peak Trail through Engelmann Canyon.

By the time the new toll road opened, the Lake House was no longer operating, but there were accommodations at Seven Lakes.

In September, 1891, the first of several surveys for extending the Bear Creek road to the Cripple Creek district was completed. Then, in 1894 a plan was presented for using the Bear Creek route for a railroad to Cripple Creek. The proposed railroad would have employed a cog on steeper sections which would have had grades up to 12.5 percent, and ordinary traction rail on sections with grades up to 3 percent. H. I.

Reid, who had done the 1884 county survey and was one of the men behind the Bear Creek Canyon Toll Road Company, was the engineer who developed this plan. The route was never extended to the Cripple Creek district, either as a road or as a railroad.

The last vestige of hope for a Bear Creek route to Cripple Creek evaporated when the Short Line (Colorado & Cripple Creek District Railway) was built in 1900. However, the Short Line did offer a prospect for easier access to Jones Park since the first few miles of the trip could now be made by train. E. S. Giles sought to capitalize on this when he opened the Bear Creek Inn in 1902. Not long after Giles established the Bear Creek Inn it was leased by Edward Romyn. He stocked two ponds with fish and sought more fish to stock Bear Creek.

The Bear Creek toll gate and toll house may have been constructed around the time the Bear Creek Canyon Toll Road Company's "new" road opened in 1891. The toll gate operated until 1903. Edward Romyn, who had leased the Bear

Creek Inn, circulated a petition calling for the abolition of the toll gate. This was presented to the El Paso County Commissioners sometime early in 1903, accompanied by an agreement under which residents along the Bear Creek road agreed to put the road in good condition for travel. At the time the petition was submitted, tolls for the Bear Creek Toll Road were 25 cents for each pedestrian and \$1.50 for each team.

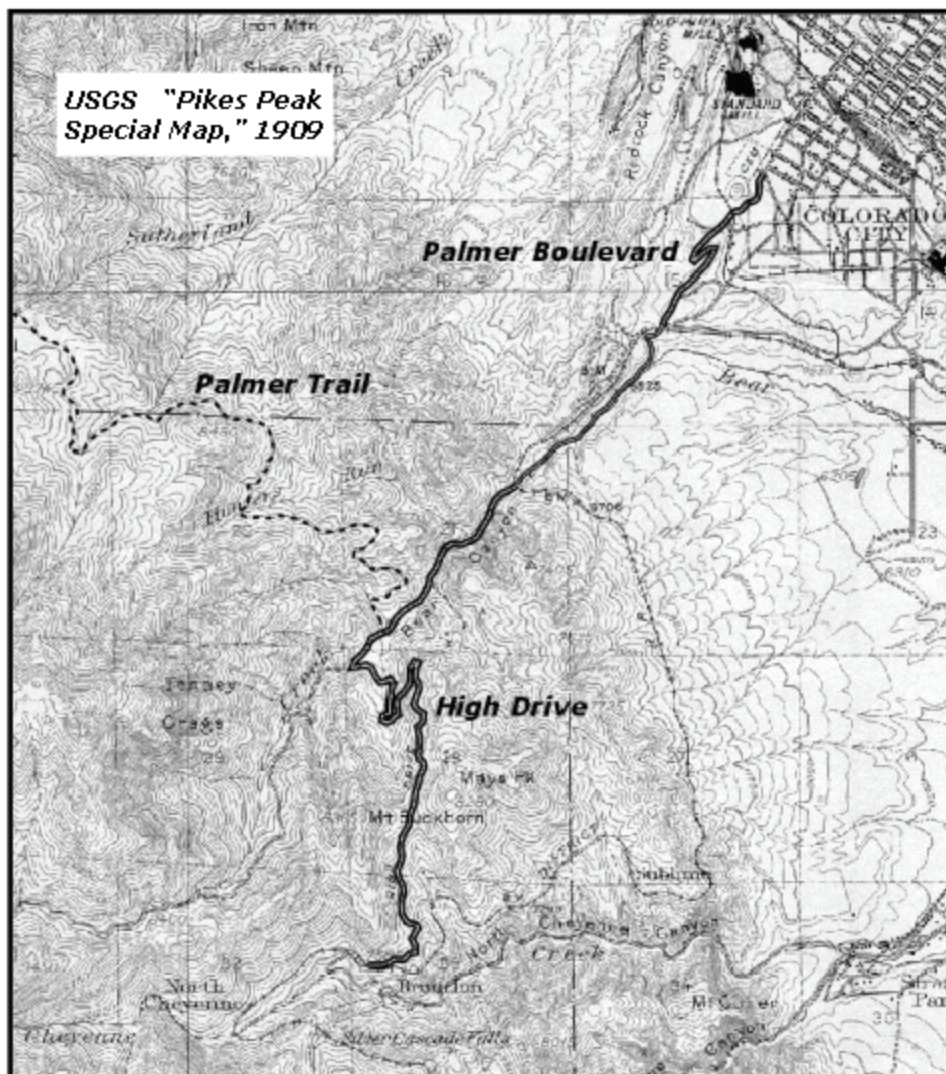
The petition was apparently submitted just a few months before General Palmer built the High Drive linking Bear Creek Canyon to North Cheyenne Canyon. The High Drive followed the route of the Bear Creek Road for a mile and a half south from the toll house before leaving the creek and climbing to the saddle between Mays Peak and Mount Buckhorn. Initially, General Palmer assumed responsibility for maintaining the High Drive while the City of Colorado Springs maintained the road through North Cheyenne Canyon, and the County maintained the connecting roads.

In 1904 General Palmer added two new

connections to his recently built High Drive. One was a bridle path from Bear Creek Canyon to Crystal Park, which is called the Palmer Trail today. The other was "Palmer Boulevard" which linked the north end of the High Drive to Sixth Street in Colorado City. Today, "Palmer Boulevard" is South 26th Street. Over the years, today's South 26th Street has had other names: Palmer Road, Bear Creek Road, and Gold Camp Road.

After the High Drive was built, the old Bear Creek Road beyond the High Drive's lowest switchback continued to serve the cabins and inns in Jones Park as well as Lake Moraine and Seven Lakes.

In 1920 S. V. Cruts sold his 158.20 acres in Jones Park to the City of Colorado Springs. Over the following years Colorado Springs bought additional Bear Creek Canyon property. After the last such transaction in 1952



the city owned all of the formerly private property in Jones Park and around the toll house as part of the city's watershed.

The Bear Creek toll house became a residence for a watershed caretaker. Jones Park continued to be open to public use, at least unofficially; and Forest Service trails provided access to Jones Park from North Cheyenne Canyon and the top of the High Drive. However, except for vehicles on the High Drive, most public use of the mile and a half above the former toll house was actively discouraged by the caretaker, Clarence Longstaff. So, the section of the old Bear Creek road between the High Drive and Jones Park was little used; and where the road had crossed open gravel slopes vestiges of the road became nearly obliterated.

Once the city stopped taking water from Bear Creek, 766 acres of City watershed property extending from half a mile below the Toll House to a mile and a half above became the City's Bear Creek Canyon Park. The old toll house became the park ranger's residence until just a few years ago when the job of Bear Creek Ranger was eliminated and the historic toll house became vacant. With Bear Creek Canyon Park offering unfettered access, the old Bear Creek road from the High Drive to Jones Park gained new life as the relatively popular Forest Service Trail 666.

Following the 2013 flood, the High Drive and all of the trails in and around Jones Park were closed. Although repairs have made the High Drive passable, Colorado Springs' Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services has resisted any suggestion that it be re-opened to motorists. With the help of Representative Doug Lamborn, the officially designated trails in the area have been re-opened.

Very recently Colorado Springs Utilities transferred ownership of its Jones Park property to El Paso County for use as County open space. The County has promised to keep the land open to the public. However, The County has also promised to follow the changes required under the National Environmental Policy Act to protect the threatened population of greenback cutthroat trout which has descended from fish stocked in Jones Park over a century ago. Based on the Forest Service' proposed plan, this could mean that, in the future, all of the historic Bear Creek toll road above Josephine Falls could be closed to the public, along with nearly all of the land in Jones Park, proper.

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Bear Creek Ranger Cabin 2009

THE HONEY-DO LIST

by Sharon Swint

No, not the melon kind you buy at the Farmer's Market! I'm talking about the kind of honey-do that most households have posted somewhere around the house. Generally it is one person in the house requesting the other to find time to get maintenance "things" done. The lists are generally L-O-N-G.

Imagine what kind of a honey-do list there is for a 100 plus year old building with no staff or director.

In years past, long time member, Tom Hendrix, was the person to call for any maintenance problems the history center had, but eventually that just became too much. Then there was no one to go to....

Last fall a group of men were ask to meet together to decide how to handle this problem. That fateful morning I met with Terry Lee, Leo Knudson, Dave Swint and Werner Karlson in the basement. They were chosen because they had some background in construction or remodeling and all were known for being thrifty---a great criteria for a non-profit.

Since that time, these men have faithfully gathered on Thursday mornings to work on our building and plan for the future. Over to the side is a list of their accomplishments completed with a lot of sweat equity and limited funds. There are just not enough words to describe how much we appreciate their efforts, work ethic and faithfulness. BLESS THOSE GUYS!!

There is certainly more that has been done but suffice to say that the honey-do list we gave them was huge. In the last few weeks, they have been given an actual budget for maintenance and Leo Knudson has stepped up as leader of the group. The building is a lot safer and more work friendly.

If you have a maintenance request regarding the building, please leave a note in the maintenance mailbox in the computer room. They will put you on our honey-do list. If you want to help these faithful men AND get a free cup of coffee, drop by on any Thursday morning. You will be welcome.

- 1 Cleaned out the old darkroom in the basement
- 2 Painted and sealed the walls in that area to stop the water leakage
- 3 Pulled up the old wooden floor in the basement that held water and repainted the floor
- 4 Caulked walls outside and added concrete slabs
- 5 Sealed and painted the walls downstairs
- 6 Constructed a work space for exhibits and collections to prepare displays
- 7 Coordinated replacement of the front railing and added entrance cover to basement
- 8 Cleaned up after our homeless visitors for a number of months
- 9 Installed or replaced all exit signs, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers
- 10 Painted and cleaned out the stair area
- 11 Changed out more light bulbs than can be counted
- 12 Pulled up dirty, torn carpet and coordinated the tile replacement in the bathrooms, kitchen and computer room (moving all the furniture that was in the areas)

Please Help

Summer's just a few days away,
 And Museum needs are many:
 Bookstore, Yard, and Building Work
 Require volunteers aplenty.
 So remember OCCHS
 As you make your summer plans!
 Our Center can only prosper and grow
 If there are lots of willing hands.

Presidents' Letter

Our February program was an experiment to see just how an evening program would work and how many members would come. Our inaugural presentation featured re-enactor Dave Wallace as George Washington. By flickering candle light, the Father of Our Country told his audience stories of his life and times. We were spellbound by his performance. The evening was completed with cherry pie served by our volunteers.

Our second experiment in changing the times and dates of our programs was on Saturday, March 14. Tracy Beach showed slides of her research and told the stories of The Tunnels Under Our Feet. We were taken back in time to see the tunnels in Old Colorado City as well as others in Colorado. This program was definitely a success with 80 in attendance. Both the February and March programs had standing room only. This gave our working members a chance to enjoy our presentations.

Next month's presentation will feature museum professional Diane Karlson as our speaker and we'll return to our Friday morning format on April 10. "EUREKA-Surprises from our Collection Department" Wouldn't you like to know about the red lights in Laura Belle's display? How about that Native American headdress? What do the artifacts in our displays represent? Come to the program to find out

If you haven't been into the History Center recently, you'll need to take a look at our newly tiled bathrooms, computer room, and kitchen. We are grateful to Richard Chavez for his generous donation of the tile that made this renovation possible.

Spring is just around the corner. Territory Days is coming in May. It may seem that we are asking too far in advance, but we'll need all of you to volunteer your time and your help to make this event a success. We'll need four hour shifts in both the bookstore and the cabin for all three days. The popular train exhibit will be set up in our museum display area.

Our spring-summer hours will begin on March 31. We'll once again be open from 11-4.

Below you'll find the picture of your new board to serve you for the next year. We're looking forward to a great year.

Betty and Kathy



The Old Colorado City Historical Society's Board of Directors meets regularly the third Monday of each 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 April 20
at 1:00 P.M. at the Old Colorado City History Center**

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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April / May Calendar

Friday, April 10
11:00 A.M.

Program: "EUREKA-Surprises from our Collection Department" presented by Diane Karlson, museum professional and OCCHC volunteer. Diane will provide hidden information about our artifacts including an up close look at an Indian headdress, the red lights from Ms. Laura Belle's display, and various other exhibits from the museum. Participants will play a game from yesteryear.

OCCHS Members FREE, non-members \$5.00

Saturday, May 9
11:00 A.M.

Program: "The Original Frozen Five - the Founding of AdAmAn Club " presented by Steve Morath. Steve Morath remembers fondly the stories of his family and their many adventures. Among them was the first trek AdAmAn up Pikes Peak accomplished by his grandfather Fred P. Morath and Steve's uncle. This group called "The Original Frozen Five" resulted in the creation of the Ad A Man Club. The Morath family are long time residents of Colorado Springs and southern Colorado. Steve will provide a personal "story-time" reflection.

OCCHS Members FREE, non-members \$5.00

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.