

WESTWARD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

proud member of the Coalition of Pikes Peak Historic Museums

Volume 30, Number 5

June/July, 2015

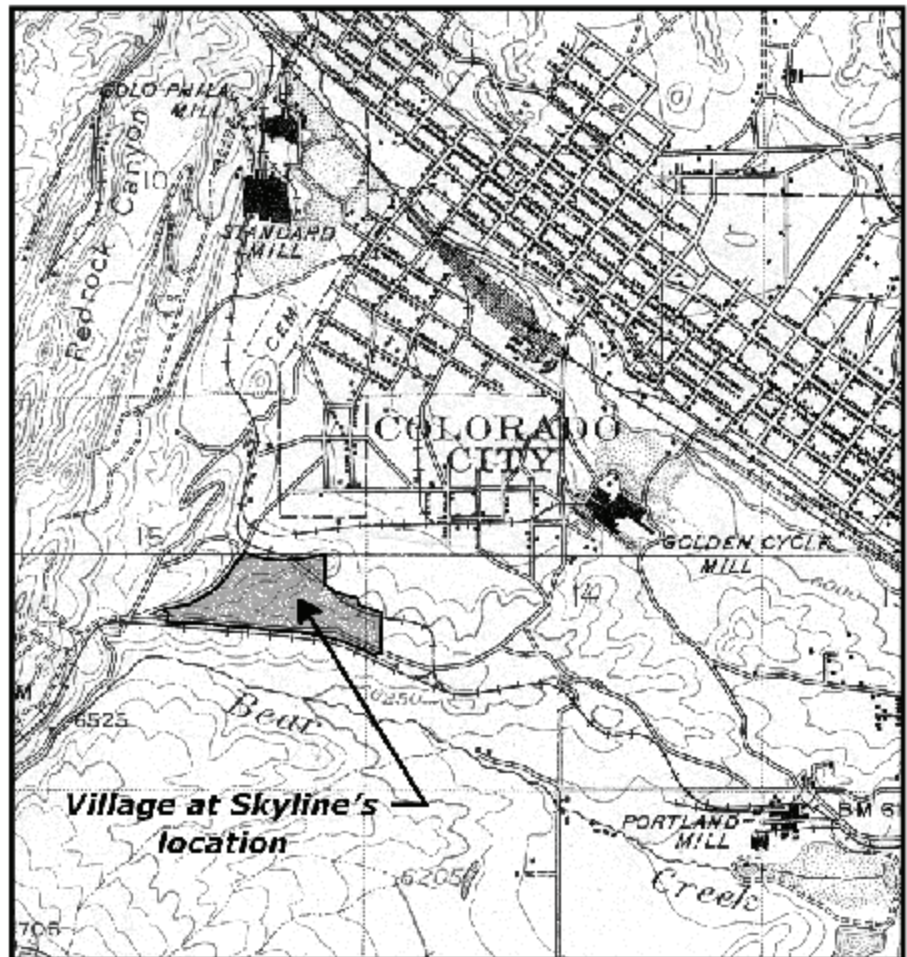
How to Beautify a Gravel Pit

by Martha Putnam Simons

Residents of the fifty-five acres of the Brookdale Village at Skyline campus enjoy a beautifully landscaped and cared for area where it is pleasant and comfortable to live. Wherever the eyes rest, it is a wonderful view, especially in the fall when the mature trees offer a panoply of color that would rival an artist's palette. It is not necessary to travel to New England to enjoy a range of color. It is right here.

Such an attractive sight was not always the case. At the turn of the last century, this was within an industrial zone with railroads on each side which served Colorado City's gold ore reduction mills. It would have been noisy and busy with a polluted atmosphere. After the heyday of the Cripple Creek gold rush, the area was more or less idle until it was purchased by the Rocky Mountain Paving Company which was incorporated in 1947.

Right here at Lower Gold Camp Road is a rich deposit of disintegrated granite which provides the ingredients for creating fine



roads. I had always assumed that it was a moraine left from the Ice Age, but a west side geologist tells me that it may have been created by a huge landslide or a catastrophic flood about a million years ago.

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

WEST WORD

PUBLISHED TEN TIMES A YEAR

The Old Colorado City Historical Society

A NONPROFIT CORPORATION

©2015 OCCHS

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE DELIVERED OR MAILED TO:

WEST WORD Editor c/o OCCHS

1 South 24th Street

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

or Don Ellis - spiderwort@pcsys.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:

Individual	\$ 25	Business	\$ 75
Family	\$ 35	Lifetime	\$250

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 / VP	Betty Baker	636-1225
Co-President / VP	Kathy McBride	636-1225
Secretary	Roberta Hardy	636-1225
Treasurer	Suzanne Schorsch	331-1786
	Bev Disch	636-1225
	Sandy Hanzlian	636-1225
	Marge Knorr	636-1225

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

Junior Achievement
of Southern Colorado

Merell Folsom

Louise Fosdick

Gordon Gray

Patricia J. Hartfiel

Barbara Kafka

Billie T. Kilman

Arlene Lanman

Bill and Jackie Leingang

Donna Phinizy

Margaret Rosielle

Eric Swab



Gravel Pit Continued from Page 1

My husband worked here during the 1960's when the asphalt company was quite active. He worked as a driver for a sub-contractor who had a fleet of 3 semi-trucks which transported hot liquid asphalt from a refinery in Casper, Wyoming in insulated tankers. A crew of six drivers kept the trucks busy. It was an eight hour drive to Casper. ICC regulations required the driver to spend eight hours in Wyoming - this provided sleep time as each tractor was equipped with a bunk. The return trip was another eight hours, after which the second driver made a round trip. The hours of operation were long to take advantage of summer weather as the plant was shut down in the winter. Drivers developed an affection for their rigs and each of the three had a name. They were "Noisy Nick," "A. J. Squirrel," and "Bess" which was a cab-over-engine Kenworth. Off road time included doing some of the maintenance work supervised by the owner.

There was all sorts of equipment on-site: the hot mix plant, a rock crusher, the laydown machines, asphalt tanks, and fuel tanks to keep the burners operating, compactors, front end loaders, and all varieties of dump trucks - belly dumps, end dumps, bob tails used both for hauling crushed rock and also some for the hot mix. Besides the gravel mined on site, rock was hauled from the Castle quarries farther north on the Front Range and from Bock's Canyon. This latter property has been purchased by the city and is now part of Red Rock Canyon Open Space.

The entrance to the Rocky Mountain Paving property at the time was from West End Avenue through the cut in the ridge located behind the present day Village at Skyline Maintenance shop. That street has since been closed. The cut in the ridge was originally made for one of the railways used to transport gold ore. The mailing address for Rocky Mountain Asphalt was Busch Avenue. In addition to all of the equipment, there was a scale shack (everything was sold by weight) and an office

building and a tool shack. There was an additional road plant moved to various locations in the state where the company won contracts. I remember my husband and son worked on contracts at Lamar and at Campo, among others.

When the plant was actively working, this area was noisy, dirty, sometimes dangerous, and extremely busy. The hot mix plant put out black smoke and fumes and the crusher expelled red dust. The residents of Old Town down below often complained so there was a tacit agreement that the plant would not operate until mid-day to give housewives cleaner air to dry laundry on outside clothes lines on Monday. In 1964 both Rocky Mountain Paving and Broderick & Gibbons, the other Westside paving company, announced that they planned to install dust collection equipment to stop producing dust. Harry Zaring, cofounder and general manager of Rocky Mountain Paving said that the dust collector would be in operation by the following spring.

Eventually complaints from local residents and environmental concerns brought about closure of the operation; and the plant was moved across town to the far east side which was undeveloped at the time.

The owner of the three semis acquired the property and for a time continued to haul rock and fill dirt from the gravel pit which had at one time been at the same level as Lower Gold Camp Road.

The property then passed into the hands of a veteran's group who planned a community for military retirees. This explains the street names of Freedom Heights, Veteran's Way, and Patriot Heights. The economy shifted and the veteran's group yielded to another non-profit who planned and built most of the residential facilities. This non-profit eventually met the same financial loss and went bankrupt. Then, Brookdale Corporation became the owner.

This past history as a gravel pit which had been excavated to a considerable depth accounts for some of the idiosyncrasies residents cope with. There is no top soil so it is difficult to sustain blue grass. The many

granite boulders used for retaining walls and landscaping are original to the site. All of the apartment buildings are connected by enclosed, carpeted, climate controlled bridges; but the steep grade means that proceeding from building to building requires some navigating. The resident walking from Building One leaves on first floor but arrives at Building Two on second floor; there is quite a steep ramp from Building Two to Three and the bridge departs Building Three on first floor and arrives in Four at the second floor. Newcomers and visitors understandably have to learn their way as through a maze.

Among retirement communities Brookdale Village at Skyline has nothing to equal it. It sits at 6400 feet elevation with a view to the north up the Front Range including the impressive Gateway Rocks at the Garden of the Gods. The eastern perspective provides the panorama of the city of Colorado Springs which is especially impressive at night and includes the eastern plains beyond the city. Although Pikes Peak is for the most part hidden by nearby mountains, the southern exposure offers The Broadmoor Hotel and Fort Carson along with Cheyenne Mountain.

From the beginning there was a large herd of resident deer who continue to make their home here.

This acreage now accommodates around 600 residents and has approximately 300 employees. There are 150 garden homes, 3 miles of paved streets, 2 large apartment buildings for independent living, an assisted living facility, four floors for skilled care including memory care, and a large community center and dining room. The facility offers full fitness center including a swimming pool and therapy services.

I submit that there is no better plan for improving and beautifying a gravel pit than what has occurred right here on this site.

Disclaimer (This information is primarily as I recall it from conversations and experience. If there are errors in my recollection, please correct me.) Martha Simons, VAS Resident since 1997

Volunteer

Help Wanted

REPRESENTATIVE

The Old Colorado City Historical Society is seeking a member to be the Society's representative to the Coalition of Pikes Peak Historic Museums.

Contact a member of the OCCHS Board to learn about this position.

BOOKSELLER (for a day)

The Old Colorado City Historical Society has leftover inventory from past used book sales. The Society is seeking someone to sell bags of these books at a table on a Saturday during the time when crafters are selling their crafts outside the History Center.

*Contact Susie Schorsch at:
331-1786*

WORK FROM HOME

Our Bookstore is looking for someone to identify distributors and publishers from which the Bookstore can purchase books to maintain its inventory. This may involve Internet research and telephone inquiries

*Contact Susie Schorsch at:
331-1786*

TUNNEL TALES OF OLD COLORADO CITY

- a Self Guided Walking Tour around Old Colorado City

Historic characters at each of 5 locations telling the story of the tunnel, building and area

*Participants receive a booklet with historic information, photos, a map, PLUS discount offers from merchants for participants
Discount offers good until business closes*

Sunday, July 19
1:00 -3:00 PM.

This fundraiser for OCCHS is Sponsored by OCCHS and Shoestring Events, with Participating Sponsor Toby Simpich Photography

"Learn the History, Live the Fun!"

\$25 per person. Tickets available after June 1 by phone to OCCHC, 636-1225 with a credit card or in person at OCCHC, 1 South 24 th St by cash, credit card or check.

Photo by Toby Simpich Photography



Seen at CityWORKS 2.0



PROGRAM

“My Life as a Whore - The Biography of Madam Laura Evans”

Friday, June 26, 2015 6:00 P.M.

Tracy Beach and her daughter India will dress in vintage clothes and present a slide show that will communicate the story of Madam Laura Evans based upon the book. The Book has vintage nudes, but the slide show is “family friendly”. The Program will include Mannequins in vintage clothing representing 1890 - 1949. The clothing will include furs, shoes, and artifacts, while 1920's - 1940's music plays to set the mood. Tracy will have her books available for sale (price is not certain at this time), and Brass Checks (cost \$3.00). Brass Checks were used by the men to purchase a girl.

About the presenter: Tracy Beach recently wrote: *The Tunnels Under Our Feet Colorado's Hollow Sidewalks* which came out July, 2014. Tracy lives in Cañon City with her husband and 3 children. When she isn't researching and writing she is an avid ‘Rock Hound’ and loves Ghost Towns and Museums.

Presidents' Letter

City Works 2.0 was an incredible success due to the tireless efforts of Don Kallaus. Once again the historic local photographs of Glenn Murray were on display at the Pikes Peak Regional Development Center on May 15. The event benefited the Old Colorado City History Center. Thanks to an e-blast from Sharon Swint, many society members were in attendance. Susie Schorsch coordinated the reception. Marge Knorr and Sandy Hanzlian greeted guests at the door, Betty Baker served along with Susie at the table where prints were ordered, and Tom Daniels saw to it that everyone had an opportunity to view the Pikes Peak region in pictures from the 1930's through the 1960's. A highlight of the celebration was Bev Disch's dress that was displayed by the square dance picture.

Our May 9 program of "The Original Frozen Five - the Founding of the AdAmAn Club" drew a crowd of 60. Changing the times and days of our programs has proved to be an unqualified success and brought in several new members. We will continue to try these Saturday and evening options in the future.

We'd like to offer a special thank you to Joanne Karlson for her time-consuming efforts to find grants to help to cover the costs of needed repairs and expenses. She's found bids for roof replacement as well as the aging electrical breaker boxes. We'll need volunteers to help Joanne to continue to find funding for these necessary projects.

Thanks to the organization of Susie Schorsch, we will once again have crafters during the Farmer's Market on Saturdays in Bancroft Park. These crafters will be available during the entire summer. Visit their booths and take home some special items. The History Center does profit from these entrepreneurs.

In July, look for "Tunnel Tales of Old Colorado City: A Self-Guided Walking Tour." Sharon Swint is coordinating this event with the Old Colorado City Merchants Association. We hope that you'll all come to "Learn the history and live the fun!"

August will bring our annual Founder's Day celebration. This year we're looking forward to The Legendary Ladies, a women's historical performance organization. Be ready to come to meet fascinating women whose lives became a part of the lore of the West. Watch for more details to come.

We'd like to wish all of you a wonderful summer. Bring your out-of-town guests to see your Historical Society's museum.

Your co-presidents,
Betty Baker and Kathy McBride

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 June 15
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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT
ORG.

US Postage

PAID

COLO SPGS, CO
PERMIT
#491



June / July Calendar

Friday, June 26
6:00 P.M.

Program: Program "My Life as a Whore - The Biography of Madam Laura Evans" Tracy Beach and her daughter India will dress in vintage clothes and present a slide show that will communicate the story of Madam Laura Evans as described in Tracy's book. 1920's - 1940's music plays to set the mood. Tracy will have her books available for sale, as well as Brass Checks (cost \$3.00) like those used by the men to purchase a girl. OCCHS Members FREE, non-members \$5.00

Sunday, July 19
1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

TUNNEL TALES OF OLD COLORADO CITY -

A Self Guided Walking Tour Around Old Colorado City

- ✓ Historic characters at each of 5 locations telling the story of the tunnel, building and area
- ✓ Booklet with historic information, photos, a map, PLUS discount offers from merchants for participants - Discount offers good until business closes
- ✓ This fundraiser for OCCHS is Sponsored by OCCHS and Shoestring Events, with Participating Sponsor Toby Simpich Photography

\$25 per person. Tickets available after June 1 by phone to OCCHC, 636-1225 with a credit card or in person at OCCHC, 1 South 24 th St by cash, credit card or check.

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.