

# WEST WOOD



proud member of the Coalition of Pikes Peak Historic Museums

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## Peoples Bible College - Part I

by Suzanne Schorsch

Cucharras Street is most noted for being the old "Red Light District" of Colorado City at the turn of the century, but for an even longer period of time than the "District" existed, this area was the home of the Peoples Bible College (PBC).

Ralph G. Finch, born July 17, 1881 in Ohio was called into ministry as a young man. He married Ruth Wood, a school teacher, in 1902. Their family came to Colorado Springs in 1933 to pastor a church. He was founder of the Immanuel Missionary Association, a splinter group from the Pilgrim Holiness Church and School. The Immanuels opened the Immanuel Missionary College on the West Side of Colorado Springs in the 1930s. The congregation was made up of followers of the Methodist

movement.

The Methodist church was founded in the 1700s, following the teachings of John Wesley. Methodists believed Christ died for all. So, preachers took the message to laborers and criminals who tended to be left out of organized religion during Wesley's time. Methodists believed in a systematic approach to "build" a person and church through "building" of universities, orphanages, soup kitchens and hospitals. This movement was instrumental in early prison reform and abolition movements. They believe that through work one can strive toward a state of perfections (purity of heart) but salvation came through the grace of God.

As in most religions, various forms of worship



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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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#### 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
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Treasurer	Suzanne Schorsch	331-1786
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	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

Kristi Alfonso

Kay Atteberry

John Chatfield

Tom and Carol Daniels

Jim & Carolyn Engquist

Susan Frazee

Delores Gustafson

Donald McGilchrist

Betty Rapjack

John and Susan Rowley

Mark Schreder



*Bible College Continued from Page 1*

led to different branches of the church. For example, the "high church" Methodist followers had an emphasis on formality and resistance to modernization, a more "puritan" lifestyle. The Immanuel Missionary Association followed a "high church" form of Methodism.

In the beginning the Immanuel Missionaries rented space for their growing congregation and school. In 1936, the building at 2418 W. Colorado Avenue was listed for sale for \$80,000, but because the Depression had brought real-estate values down, the Immanuel Missionary Association bought the building for \$18,000. The building at the corner of Colorado Avenue and Court gave them four floors of room with an auditorium that held 400 people. Pastor Finch was at Immanuel Missionary College from 1936 to 1942.

The Immanuel Missionary College building which now is home to the Michael Garman Studio, had many other tenants prior to the Immanuel Missionary College, it had been the home of the New National Hotel, First National Bank and later a drug store before falling in disrepair during the Depression. The Immanuel taught that "cleanliness is next to Godliness" and soon the building was clean, repaired and the school was growing. They taught their students to work hard and be modest in appearance, usually in plain, homemade clothing. Their cleanliness and modest clothes set them apart.

Finch was president for 5 years and then left

to start Peoples Bible College in 1941-42. Finch had purchased an abandoned hotel at 2709 W. Cucharas for the ministries expanding needs. Although Finch and his followers were still worshipping in the Immanuel Missionary College building they knew a split was coming due to differing views on the future of the Church. On January 15, 1942 Finch was locked out of Immanuel Missionary College by those who were opposed his view for the future. They had changed the locks. Finch's congregation was not to be stopped; they walked down the street 2.5 blocks in the dark, singing. 250 people packed the old hotel and started a service. The Peoples Bible College was formed and later a two block area on Cucharas Street, 26th to 28th streets, would be campus and church in the heart of the "red light" district.

The Central Hotel, later called Union Hotel and City Hotel, was built around 1888 for modestly priced tourist stays. There were wood stoves and kerosene lanterns in each room. When it was built, it was in a quiet part of town, walking distance from the railroad and run by the Pifer family. But with the discovery of gold in Cripple Creek in 1891, and the Midland Railroad station nearby, and the growth of the "wild west" mentality of Colorado City, its location attracted working men and business men who came from distant places and stay. At the turn of the century Colorado City became a gambling and sporting town since Palmer had outlawed the sale of liquor in Colorado Springs. Cucharas Street,



*Old City Hotel Built in 1888*

then called Washington Street, held the area's brothels. Proper women would never come to this area of Colorado City. Many years later, with prohibition and then later the Great Depression, the area had fallen in disrepair. This was the perfect area for the Peoples Bible Church to set up their campus starting in the old hotel.

One student from Peoples Bible College remembers her teacher Miss Springer telling the students that there was no night in Colorado City, life was a gamble for miners and many lived for the day. There were many suicides and people that had empty lives turned to saloons and brothels to help cope.

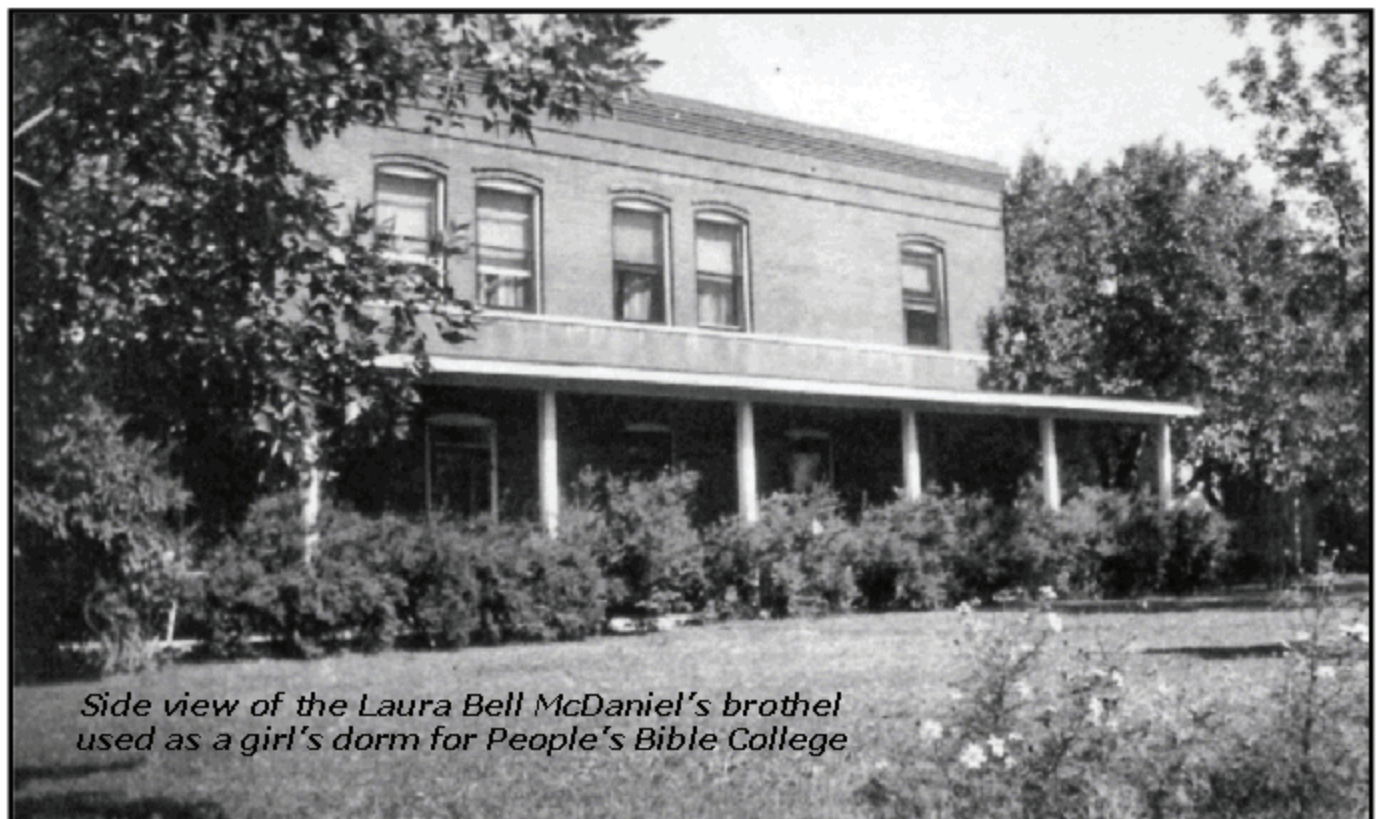
At that first service held in the old hotel, Finch cautioned people not to jump too high as he was afraid they would go through floor to the basement. They used the old hotel building for many years for various needs. Peoples Bible College needed to find a place for students to attend school, so they rented the two top floors above West End Furniture Store at 2431 West Colorado Avenue (Originally the Waycott Opera House built in 1901.) Students climbed 52 steps to get to the 3rd floor school and the 2nd floor was used for church.

By 1943 People's Bible Colleges rented many buildings on the old Westside until their campus was built. Children came from all over to attend school and college; some lived in the area with

their families, many students left their homes and would live in dorms at Peoples Bible College. The girl's dorm for a while was in the buildings that had been Laura Bell McDaniel's brothel, at the corner of 26th and Cucharas in Colorado City. This building would end up as Norton Nursing Home after Peoples Bible College built their girls dorm.

Laura Bell McDaniel was Colorado City's leading Madame and her brick brothel was famous to men who came to the "Red Light District." Mamie Rogers also ran a sporting house in a rambling red brick Foursquare. It was next door to Laura Bell's home. It became the Pleasant View Apartments and many church members rented rooms there. West of the apartments had been two bordellos that had been torn down in the 1900's; and the Peoples Bible College School used the lot as a playground.

*Information in this article was obtained from Peoples Bible College Memoir written by Rachel Thomson which contains written memories from Peoples Bible College students and Grace Tabernacle congregation members. Also used were archival material of OCCHS and research on the Methodist Church from various sources.*



*Side view of the Laura Bell McDaniel's brothel used as a girl's dorm for People's Bible College*

## Poems by Irene Berrian, Colorado City Public Schools 1902

We received, from a gentleman who frequents our lectures, a book that he found around the house. It did not belong to a family member and he felt the History Center might enjoy it. It is a school writing book with "Colorado City Public School" printed on the front. In it a young Irene Berrian wrote poems and thoughts. The hand writing is that cursive writing that only children of our past had to learn. Below are a few of her thoughts on the fall season.

We hope you will enjoy a child's thoughts from Colorado City many years ago.

September 1902

September, dear September  
 We welcome your bright face,  
 For though dear summer's left us,  
 you more than fill her place.  
 How gladly we roam with you,  
 Among early autumn's flowers,  
 While every day that passes  
 Seems made of golden hours,  
 May we like the flowers,  
 Pass our happy hours,  
 Making lives of beauty,  
 Just by doing duty.

October 1902

Hearts, like doors will open with ease,  
 With two very, very little keys.  
 Don't forget that the two of these  
 Are "Thank you sir,"  
 and "If you please."

Do not look for wrong and evil,  
 You will find them if you do.  
 As you measure for your neighbor,  
 He will measure back to you.

Look for goodness, look for gladness,  
 You will meet them all the while.  
 If you bring a smiling visage,  
 To the glass, you meet a smile.

November 1902:

Little deeds of kindness,  
 Little words of love,  
 Make this earth an Eden,  
 Like the heaven above.  
 Politeness is to do and say,  
 The kindest thing in the kindest way.

**OCTOBER PROGRAM:*****First Person Portrayal of a Civil War Soldier  
a Union Family's Story******Saturday, October 10******11:00 A.M. (Doors open at 10:30)******150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War***

*PRESENTER: Benny Nasser, Civil War re-enactor. He is a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War as well as the 21st Michigan Volunteer Infantry and the Second Colorado Volunteer Infantry, a Civil War re-enacting unit. While researching his roots Benny found out that a great number of his ancestors fought in the war.*

*In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War (1865-2015), Benny will provide a close up view of one Civil War soldier - Darius Minier. Darius was one of seven brothers from Ohio that fought in the Civil War. He was wounded twice, was a prisoner of war twice, and survived the sinking of the side-wheeler Sultana as it was returning Union prisoners home from the war. Darius Minier, now 'living' in Denver will tell us about his experiences from 1861 - 1865.*

***Don't miss this chance to meet this Civil War veteran.***

This program is free to members and \$5 to non-members.

Light refreshments will be served.

# Treasurer's Report

September 2015

This month I want to wrap up the end of summer by thanking a member that has put in a lot of miles on behalf of local history, and that member is John Anderson, author of OCCHS's newly published book *Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region*. And when I say miles, I really mean MILES. John's book that launched at the beginning of summer has sold over 400 copies this summer. It is now in libraries throughout the state and has peaked interest in hundreds of people who want to help preserve these wonderful pieces of living history.

John has driven all over Colorado this past summer giving lectures and multiple hikes educating people on the mysterious trees that were modified by the Ute Indians over 150 years ago. From the Air Force Academy and Black Forest in our local area to Beulah and on into Utah, John has driven and hiked miles.

OCCHS is operating fully in the black this year with one more major event our Annual Holiday Tour coming in December. I ask our members to start your Holiday season off by supporting this event. And, for all of your gift giving needs, come into our bookstore and support our members that are authors: Don Ellis, John Anderson, Stephanie Waters, Ruth Obee, David and Sharon Swint, Jan Pettit, Toni Hamill, and the researchers that have contributed to Westword.

If you ever have any questions regarding OCCHS's finances, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Suzanne Schorsch  
Treasurer

Plan ahead - Save the date

## Annual Holiday Tour Sunday, December 6

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 October 19  
at 1:00 P.M. at the Old Colorado City History Center

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## October / November Calendar

**Saturday, October 10**  
11:00 AM.

Program: "First Person Portrayal of a Civil War Soldier" presented by Benny Nasser. Commemorating the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, this program will present Darius Minier's memories of his Civil War experience recounted while he was living in Denver in 1905. Darius was one of seven Ohio brothers who fought in the Civil War. He was wounded twice, a prisoner of war twice, and survived the sinking of the side-wheeler *Sultana* as it returned Union prisoners home after the war.

OCCHS members free, others \$5.00

**Saturday, November 14th**  
11:00 AM.

Program: "World War II Stories: Pearl Harbor and the Doolittle Raid" presented by Ken Valles. Ken has studied the Pacific Theater of WWII as a hobby for over 30 years. This has included trips to Asia. The presentation starts with the attack on Pearl Harbor, and then explains America's first major response known as the Doolittle Raid. There will be video clips and a display that complements the story of a mission that is actually hard to believe. As we celebrate Veterans Day Remembrance on November 11, let us truly revere those valiant efforts of Americans who served in World War II. The program will reveal the courage, innovation, drama and faith of our American warriors.

OCCHS members free, others \$5.00

Sunday, December 6

**Annual Holiday Tour**

### 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.