

# WEST WOOD



proud member of the Coalition of Pikes Peak Historic Museums

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## Pioneers in the Revitalization of "Old" Colorado City

by Dave Hughes

By 1975 the Westside of Colorado Springs was declared - by the City - a Slum and Blighted area. Half of the 100 commercial store-front buildings between 24th and 28th Streets, West Colorado Avenue, were empty - of both business and customers.

1970 Census Data from the residential tracts between Chestnut street on the East and 32d Street on the West showed its population in roughly 4,000 homes had only half the family incomes of the rest of the City.

The City Council through its Community Development Department was prepared to use the same Federal Bloc Grant Funds that it had been awarded by HUD and had been used by designating a 'blighted' Urban Renewal district that encircled Downtown Colorado Springs, to help 'redevelop' its commercial potential.

Obvious to all old timers, that project resulted more in tearing down historical buildings such as the 1890s "Burns Opera House" than attempting to upgrade, preserve or reuse them. "Modernization" was all the rage for fading downtowns in the 1960's.

But 1976 would be the nation's Bicentennial, and Colorado's Centennial Year. Since nobody else would, I had volunteered to head up the dual celebration for all El Paso County.

Two men, Luther McKnight, and Leroy Ellinwood, approached me and asked whether I could do anything for historic "Old Town" - (as the long ago dissolved "Colorado City," now "Westside" Colorado Springs, had been called).

Even though I was a native, I knew little of Old Town's history separate Colorado Springs. I asked them to educate me. They swiftly did just that.

Now I knew, from studying Naisbitt's *Megatrends* that historically times of great change in America are times of bursts of startup small business entrepreneurship. The 60's and early 70's were 'change.' I decided to give that idea a test - coupling historic celebration and preservation of the modest turn-of-the-century buildings of "Old Town" into a new economic beginning.

I needed the help of business expertise, risk taking investors, and bureaucratic knowledge of what Federal Block grants could be used for. I found them through these forgotten 'Pioneers' of the Redevelopment of "Old" Colorado City.

### WES COLBRUNN

Wes had been a banker, and small business - restaurant - owner in St Louis. He had lost his restaurant during the social upheavals there, moved to Colorado Springs, and was working in a bank.

But he was attracted to historical preservation, small business, and knew bank lending practices.

About that time I met with Jake Lance, from the Small Business Administration (SBA) in Denver. There was no SBA office in Colorado Springs. I asked him whether an

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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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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:

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

President	Roberta Hardy	636-1225
Vice President	Don Hansen	636-1225
Secretary	Bev Disch	636-1225
Treasurer	Suzanne Schorsch	331-1786
	Sandy Hanzlian	636-1225
	Carolyn Hatch	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

Allen County Public Library

Catherine Dymkoski

Daniel Gauron

Carla J. Hale

Donald Hansen

Don and Ellen Hanson

Roberta Hardy

Jean Hughes

Schuchardt Jay

Barry & Ellen Johnson-Fay

Westside Pioneer

Don Kallaus

Jerry Keller

William & Gretchen Lloyd

Mel McFarland

Randy and Mary McFee

Marianna McJimsey

Robert G. Nicklaus

Verda Spitz

Patricia Stark-Jacobs

Thomas Strand

Marion & John Vance

Holly Wlepking

Jan Zellmer



*Pioneers Continued from Page 1*

SBA guaranteed bank loan could be coupled with a HUD Block Grant Loan for the same small business venture. He said he knew of none in the US, but he couldn't see anything wrong with that. I communicated that to Wes Colbrunn, handed him the SBA papers for its rules and conditions, we huddled and he said "That will work."

Out of that came the non profit Old Colorado City Development Company, with Wes as its director, which arranged over 35 owner-occupant business and building acquisition loans with the added condition that the new owner had to preserve the historical architecture of his building.

## DON BATES

Don Bates owned a successful Insurance Company. He had a small building in the 2400 Block of Old Town, and owned an historical "Jarret Truck" which had been manufactured in the 2700 block of the original Colorado City.

When I was casting around for a way to get a business association for Old Town started, I asked Don about it. He pointed to a small historic plaque, dated in the 1950's with the name "Westside Commercial Club" on it. He said revive that. It will have some standing "downtown." I remembered the historical fact that the original, 1859 business association - which recorded deeds, hung horse thieves, and promoted business was called the "Colorado City Commercial Club." So I grabbed it, and it became for now the "Old Colorado City Commercial Club." Thanks to Don Bates.

I volunteered to manage OCCCC. By then I owned the first Personal Computer Bulletin Board in the entire city - a Radio Shack Model 1, with a telephone modem attached. With a copy of the first spread sheet 'Visicalc' installed on my Model 1 I tracked every building, asking price, business loan made, number of employees, and total retail sales. And, I used it to promote "Old Colorado City" and its programs nationally.

## GENE BRENT

Gene Brent, one time Hollywood western actor, moved into the area. He first rented and

later bought empty 2516 West Colorado Avenue, turning it into a retail Gun Store.

As a new business owner, in an 1890's building, in the center of what was - in its heyday - a wild west town, he took great interest in the businesses on the street, historic preservation, and public events.

About that time - 1975 - I was able to organize the first "Territory Days" festival, as a parade through "Old Town"

## BOB SPEER

Now it was going to take real investment to fill up the two big, half empty, three-story brick Buildings at the corner of 25th and Colorado Avenue.

Bob Speer, native, was a Commodity Broker. He looked over Old Town's buildings and came up with the \$75,000 needed to buy the largely empty, and run down "Templeton Block" building. He proceeded to rehabilitate it for office spaces.

And, he was one of my first customers when I started up "Colorado City Communications" in one space, and started linking up, wired and wireless, Old Town Businesses and his brokerage to the Internet.

## NORM CLARK

The Norm Clark family already had a series of 'Clark Service Stations' in southern Colorado - the first one having been in the 2700 block of Old Town in the 1920s, getting its gas from a railroad tanker car pulled by the narrow gauge Denver and Rio Grande along West Cucharras Avenue from downtown, and left on a small spur behind the Clark buildings.

Norm, brought a practical businessman's attitudes and skills to the Commercial Club as he also sat on the Board of the Old Colorado City Development Company - which Wes Colbrunn managed, and which made Block Grant loans with SBA Guaranteed Bank Loans to new businesses.

## ED SCHOCK

Ed Shock had built and owned Schock's Hardware store after the end of World War II. He and wife Edna operated it successfully in Old Town even after large Chain stores were

everywhere. His secret was that his store, staffed in the afternoons by Edna, had 'everything.' When westsiders could not find an item in a chain store, he always seemed to have it - or a solution to a homeowner's hardware problem.

Ed was a competent businessman. He rendered good advice, when Gene Brent had one of his wild and woolly ideas at Commercial Club meetings.

#### SHIRLEY BONDS

Shirley Bonds owned "Peerless Graphics" - a long time Print Shop, across three store fronts. Beyond her provision of custom printing services, she added a book store which carried many of the publications about "Old Colorado City" She even printed my book, in 1977, "Historic Old Colorado City" The first one published about the historic town.

#### MARIAN BUSEY

Marian was the first 'artist' to organize in

Old Town, and even financially back, the Arati Artists Gallery. This helped spawn a whole series of art galleries and studios from the Squash Blossom, to Garman's large scale operation. Arati succeeded so well the co-op was able to buy their building.

#### LUCILLE CUNNINGHAM

Lucille, investor in apartment projects near Old Town, and a licensed real estate broker, became the dynamic President of the Old Colorado City Historical Society in the 1990's. She managed the complex acquisition by the Society of the 1889 First Baptist Church Building using a large gift from Luther McKnight, and then through a whole series of grants remodeled the building and grounds, turning it into the History Center valued today at nearly \$500,000.

~

*Above are just some of the pioneering private individuals who helped turn a blighted strip into dynamic "Old Colorado City."*

## Those in City Government Who Supported Old Colorado City Redevelopment

- Bob Isaac - First as a City Councilman, then as Mayor, backed the 1982 application by the Commercial Club for Old Colorado City to become a National Historic District - the first in Colorado Springs. He later used Old Town in his successful bid for Colorado Springs to be named an "All American City"
- Leon Young, Vice Mayor - Sat on the city's Block Grant Loan Program
- Jim Ringe - Ran the City's Community Development Department
- Bob Patoni - Staffed the City's, Old Colorado City Office space
- Bill Eberhardt - Community Development Department Staff
- Eric Swab - Community Development Department Staff
- Tim Scanlon - The City Historic Preservation Staff Specialist

**MARCH PROGRAM:*****Chief Manitou: Outbound Journeys******Friday March 11, 2016******11:00 A.M.******Presented by Bob Cronk***

*This Program will provide a thorough discussion of a Native American named Pedro Cajete, known as Chief Manitou. When Bob and Carolyn Cronk were first exploring Pedro's Cave in Williams Canyon - they asked "Where's Pedro?" The answer was that he was an old Indian who sold trinkets at the Cave of the Winds, which later became called "Pedro's Cave". They were told not much was known about him and there were no photos of him. Bob is not a historian, but coming from a background of teaching and research - his curiosity was fueled and he began searching. His quest led to the revelation of the colorful and best loved character - "Chief Manitou".*

*An excellent PowerPoint presentation, which follows Bob's book, Chief Manitou: Outbound Journeys, reveals many photographs of Pedro, his family and descendants. Tracing Pedro's story from when he arrived in Colorado Springs in 1906 through his years of selling trinkets to tourists. Learn the true story of Pedro Cajete (called Chief Manitou by many natives), his family and descendants. Bob's books will be available for purchase.*

***OCCHS members free, others \$5.00***

**APRIL PROGRAM:**

**Rankin Scott Kelly, 1st Sheriff of El Paso County,  
Colorado Territory (1861-1867)**

**Saturday April 9, 2016  
11:00AM**

Presented by John Anderson

Rankin Scott Kelly was born July 6, 1826 in present day Houlton, Maine. His mother drowned when he was two and his father and older sister Katherine raised him. Kelly ran away from home when he was 14, believing he had killed Katherine's fiancée during a fistfight. Kelly served in Co. B 1st Pennsylvania Infantry from December 15, 1846 to April 4, 1847 during the Mexican-American War. Kelly traveled west with a wagon train on the Santa Fe Trail and arrived in Colorado City on June 5, 1860. At that time Colorado City was still part of the Kansas Territory. Kelly assisted Robert Finley in relocating the first sawmill to the Pikes Peak Region and he delivered the first load of cut lumber to Colorado City. Colorado territory was created on February 28, 1861. Kelly was appointed the first Sheriff of El Paso County and Robert Finley served as the first Treasurer. Sheriff Kelly was involved in a number of skirmishes with hostile Indians during the Cheyenne Wars (1863-1869). After Kelly stepped down as Sheriff he sold his land north of the Garden of the Gods to General Palmer for \$1000 cash and rode west into the sunset. In 1913, at the age of 87, Kelly returned to El Paso County where he lived at the Myron Stratton Home and served as the night watchman until his death on December 30, 1913. Sheriff Kelly is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

OCCHS members free, others \$5.00

## Presidents' Letter

It is my pleasure to introduce each of you to our new OCCHS Board. You'll see two new names on the Board of Directors list: Don Hansen, our new vice-president and Carolyn Hatch a new member. Please make them welcome.

This year's outstanding programs remain under the direction of returning Board member Sandy Hanzlian. You can count on learning something new about Old Colorado City and the Westside at each meeting from January through May and September through December, and your \$25 or \$35 membership quickly pays for itself even if you only use it for meetings. Of course, members also receive the *West Word*, published ten times a year by Don Ellis, and they enjoy 10% off books in the Bookstore.

Special fund-raising events scheduled this year begin in May with Territory Days. In July we're bringing back Tunnel Tales, and Haunted Histories returns in late September or early October. After a year off, the Holiday Tour once again gives members and guests a chance to visit beautifully decorated historic homes and businesses.

A summer picnic/pot luck on the grounds is also in the works, and a special Founders' Day program will honor our "Preserving the Past for the Future" purpose. The Crafters will be back to sell their wares on our corner, and, as always, your Museum is open weekly from 11-2 in the winter and 11-4 in the summer. Here volunteers share their enthusiasm for our exhibits; archivists catalogue and restore donated items; and maintenance staff keep the building repaired.

I invite you to participate in each and every event. Start planning now to join in the fun: Volunteer to bring treats to a meeting, to write a *West Word* article, to don historic garb and play a character, to do a program. Don't hide your talents! You ARE the history we celebrate here. Share your knowledge and help us keep OCCHS going and growing.

Roberta Hardy

### New Election Exhibit

As you step into the voting booth this November or fill out that mail in ballot consider how much things have changed regarding how we pick candidates to run our city, state and country.

A new exhibit has been installed at our history center that reflects the changes. It is a slotted GLASS DOME used in voting during the late 1800's and early 1900's. During the time this glass container was used, Colorado law stated that for transparency sake, glass had to be used for voting. Marilyn Lee, exhibit coordinator, has set up the display complete with ballots from 1913, when Rev. Duncan Lamont was running for office and voting was taking place on whether Colorado City would go dry.

Please stop by and see the new exhibit.

### *In Memoriam*

Pat Ebersole

*This month we have lost another long time member and dedicated volunteer. Patricia (Pat) Ebersole passed away February 6, 2016 at her home. Pat and her late husband, LaRue, helped the Old Colorado City Historical Society whenever asked. Pat generously baked, hosted, and guided tours often at events. She loved people, music, square dancing and travel and made the most of her time until her death. Pat is survived by her son, LaRue and daughter Diann as well as grand and great grandchildren. She will be missed. A Celebration of life service was held on February 22 at Grace and St. Stephan's Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs.*

The Old Colorado City Historical Society's Board of Directors meets regularly the second 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 March 14  
at 1:00 P.M. at the Old Colorado City History Center**

OLD COLORADO CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ONE SOUTH TWENTY-FOURTH STREET  
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## March / April Calendar

**Friday, March 11**

11:00 A.M.

Program: "**Chief Manitou: Outbound Journeys**" presented by Bob Cronk. When Bob and Carolyn Cronk were first exploring Pedro's Cave in Williams Canyon, they asked "Where's Pedro?" They were told that not much was known about him, and there were no photos. Bob's quest led to the revelation of the colorful and best loved character, "Chief Manitou." Bob's presentation traces Pedro Cajete, his family, and descendants from the time he arrived in Colorado Springs in 1906 through his years of selling trinkets to tourists. Bob's book, *Chief Manitou: Outbound Journeys* will be available for purchase.

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### 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 - 2 Free Admission. Donations greatly appreciated.