

The Maturity of the Old Colorado City Historical Society 1997-2010

OCCHS's growth period, both with facilities, programs, projects, and active volunteers, which really started after we had an ample History Center in 1992 and the building was redeveloped, grew steadily until it surpassed 300 dues paying members by 2009.

I took on three vital roles for the Society, which I carried out until I retired from being so active after the successful Sesquicentennial (1859-2009) Celebration of the original Colorado City.

1. I took over being the Treasurer of the Society in 1997 and undertook to put the Society and the History Center on a solid financial footing. We revised the By-laws of the Society, an IRS 501c3 non-profit tax-exempt Colorado corporation, to reflect two important provisions which I insisted upon.

First we formed an Endowment Fund, the expenditure of any of its funds required a vote - eventually in writing - by all members wherever they were. And we specified that all "Lifetime Memberships" - \$150 had to go into the untouchable Endowment Fund. Donors could specify - in such matters as memorials to members who died - whether their bequests went into the Endowment, or operations, or for specific projects.

But I also got inserted that the Interest, from earnings of the Endowment fund could be expended by the Board as its discretion for operating or other purposes.

Since we had built up by 1997 about \$50,000 in the Endowment Fund, and operated with about \$10,000 in our operating fund, and we used Bank and S&L CD's for our 'investments' we had some money added to our operating fund flexibility. But I had in my mind a clear long term goal, which few others in the society had. And that was that we should strive as a financial goal to achieve at least \$450,000, whose Interest at 6%, could support a part or full time employee that would be needed.

At the end of every year, my spread sheets which every board member was walked through at every board meeting (and a copy for member viewing tacked to the office bulletin board), summed up where we were or had been (profit or loss) for all our fund raising events and the profits from our bookstore against my projection of what would be needed at least through the lean winter early spring months. If my projections showed we could make it to summer with our cash on hand, I would transfer to the Endowment Fund the surplus. That tactic built up our Endowment from the original \$50,000 to over \$100,000 by the time I resigned as treasurer. I was proud of that.

And even when, in 2009 CD interest rates plummeted, I got the board to buy tax free bonds yielding from 5 to 6+ %. So our annual income from 'investments' began to exceed our annual operating costs. Many smart members who knew finance complemented me on my wise management of the Society funds.

That was all separate from the grants we had to pursue for repainting the exterior of our large structure, and raising the funds for an \$11,000 Sesquicentennial Monument - gift to the city in Bancroft Park August 2009 the actual month of the 150th anniversary of the founding of

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Written by dave

Hits: 7361

Colorado City.

2. My second task I alone, then later with the help of son David, brought a steady, if not spectacular, flow of income into the society came through its Web Site that I - alone - kept operating and building up. Using the Paypal as a secure means for donations or purchases, or even tickets online, several thousands of dollars came in by that means. It should have, and could have been more, but Board members, none of whom were very computer or Internet savvy just neglected to support the Society's online presence.

3. Finally I became THE most knowledgable historian of the original Colorado City and early El Paso County 1859-1917, and for the "Westside" from 1917 right up to the beginning of the redevelopment of Old Colorado City in 1976.

I wrote frequently historical articles in 25 years worth of the Society 8 page West Word Newsletter that was published 10 times a year, mailed to all members, and extras were available in the Center. I was frequently invited to city-wide Service Clubs, organizations, schools, and libraries to speak on the History of Old Colorado City.

During the sesquecentennial year of 2009 I and arranged for the large Gazette Telegraph newspaper to carry a two page illustrated summary of those 150 years of history - founding, Civil War, decline and growth, the railroad, and Gold Mill era, and the Redevelopment of Colorado City.

[Front Page of Short Colorado City History](#)

[Second Page of Short Colorado City History](#)

I then helped the society raise the \$11,000 required to build, while I designed, the 7 foot monument that now stands next to the Bancroft Park's 1859 Cabin, illustrating and captioning the 8 seperate periods of Colorado City's History that I had concluded were the major events of the original historic town. Johnnie Jackson produced the drawings that were then etched by Wilhelm Monuments into the Rocky Moutain Rose Granite stone work. \$5,000 came from the little known "Ackerman Fund" created by Jasper Ackerman whom I knew from Fort Carson days, the remainder from direct donations, several thousand dollars via the OCCHS Web Site's PayPal payment system.

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This monument sits next to the 1859 Cabin in Bancroft Park, on the Westside of Colorado Springs, right on Colorado Avenue.

I also, just in time for the 150th anniversary, found - with the help of a cousin of mine, Warren Wilson, who lived in the east - Pennsylvania - and was an amateur musician who knew many of the community band publishers, the original 50 page musical score of the once famous (1899-1920) Midland Railroad Band whose piece written just for it had not been heard in over 70 years.



The Band before 1920, when it ended when the Midland Railroad was shut down by the Golden Cycle Mill who owned it in its last days

I persuaded a local community band to rehearse it, and their 70 piece band played for a large crowd on Founders Day 2009, when we also dedicated the Mounument.

And here it is as recorded at the last indoor rehearsal of the New Horizon's Band

Click here for the Midland Band March

[Midland Band March](#)

And as they appeared outside in the historic Park on Founder's Day, 2009.

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The New Horizons Band in Bancroft Park on Founders Day

4. And the last Tour-de-Force historical thing I did - which was far and away more accurate, meaning full, and a solid contribution to local history than what the over promoted Pioneer's Museum with its \$2.3 million city budget ever researched or accomplished (for the Pioneers Museum, while nominally about the entire city of Colorado Springs - of which the Westside and original Colorado City had been for 92 years - in fact only really displayed and honored General Palmer's 'Little London')

~~I found, purchased for the society, and had digitized an ORIGINAL 28-inch 'Fosdick Plat' which~~ laid out every element of the original Colorado City, every of the 302 blocks and 9,255 lots, every street and avenue AND in a series of West Word Articles detailed the Fosdick's themselves (still with descendents in Colorado), the Plat as it was printed in 1861, how the original town design was intended to be - what it actually became, finally the key for anyone with an original Colorado City address, how to find the exact current building or lot where their forebearers had a home or business.

Here are the three Westword Issues of 2011 in PDF format

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[Westword Fosdick 1](#)

[WestwordFosdick 2](#)

[Westword Fosdick 3](#)

Territory Days Celebrations

There were manu Territory Days Celebrations and Reenactments between 1975 and through as least 2012.

Here is one in which Reenactors of 'Dodd's Independent Company' formed in 1862 from Canon City which fought the Texas Confederate Rebels at Valverde

in New Mexico and helped beat them. It is a Video

Click below on

[Dodds Independent Company Reenactors](#)

Last Thoughts about OCCHS

For 36 years, from 1975 through 2011, I helped organize, promoted, served on its Board as both President and Treasurer the last 10 years, donated hundreds of items I collected - and often paid for, totalling over \$10,000, wrote over 37 lead articles in it West Word publication, organized and participates in its fund raising as well as pro bono activities, made scores of speeches in it Center and across the Pikes Peak Region, created its Unique Web site connected to the Internet via an unprecedented National Science Foundation Grant, spent \$20,000 out of my own pocket digitizing its collections, wrote and landed numerous and substantial El Pomar, Ackerman, and State Grants and did everything I could to build its treasury, reputation, and long term potential as I could.

Only when many volunteers aged or got tired and moved on, and new members, most of whom were never from either the Westside and my wife Patsy lay dying in early 2011, did I step out of hands-on guidance and work for the Society

My Lasting Legacy from the Old Colorado City Historical Society

Even the somewhat younger (in their 50s and 60s) members of the society, have chosen NOT

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to pursue my Vision which would result in both a Physical Society and History Center Museum AND a Virtual Society which would exist in Cyberspace and thus be visited from anyone in the world forever via the Internet, I have taken all the Colorado City History I accumulated over 35 years, and, in its original Web Site form, and placed it here reachable via this Legacy Web site, under the original web address which I paid for originally when the Internet was new, and the link that I still own.

Here it is. Just click on it and you will be revisiting the original Old Colorado City History Site. Which, as much as anything else I did for the revitalization and renewal of the original Colorado City and the Westside of Colorado Springs, is my legacy.

<http://history.oldcolo.com>

POSTSCRIPT

HERE, BELOW is an email exchange I had , in 2014, with Ladonna Gunn who helped me build the first Web Site for the Historical Society.

You children may or may not remember Ladonna Gunn from Wetmore, whom I was able to hire for just a limited time from a \$5,000 'Intern' grant on top of my \$15,000 NSF Grant to the Hist Society to connect up the first OCCHS Computer wirelessly to my OCC Communications office and thus out to the Internet. That gave the Society its first Web site in town which, I had guessed, would be found by all these people who used their early connected computers for their genealogical searches for their ancestors who had been in the original Colorado City at one time or another.

It was clear to me by 1980, that people would use their personal computers, connected to the world-wide web, to search for their ancestors. Today, 2014, that has been enshrined in the service "Ancestry.com". But that was an original idea before the 1990s.

I was dead right - that computer got me email queries from many descendants of the earliest OCC pioneers who searched for the term "Colorado City" that no amount of local research OR aimless efforts to find across the US local names would have found. They included the complete families of Dr. Garvin (1859 cabin), Melancothon Beach. Anthony Bott, Lucy Maggard, Stockbridge, Wade (the 12 year old girl who came across the plains and wrote about it), Judge Stone, Waycott, who built the Opera House (Meadow Muffin bldg), Jacob (Beer Hall) Schmidt family, Anway (who ran The Fort), Buzzard, Edwards, Anway - and others including Civil War vet in Fairview. They all FOUND US because I set up and connected the computer - we didn't find them. And of course the Society would NOT have a copy of the Original Fosdick Plat had not a couple in Montana, who had one, contacted me in 2010 via the Society's web.

When I got the \$15,000 NSF grant (which the NSF pushed on me from Washington because they couldn't find any 'museums' to apply for a grant they had ready to award) they also had a \$5,000 stipend that could be used to fund an 'intern' so long as he or she was an UNDERgraduate, to get familiar with what computer scientists do in the hopes they would enter the field.

I took that too, but instead of heading for the Computer Science Department at UCCS, I made a bee line for the History Department, and asked them if they had an undergraduate student, who was into Western History, and who, at least had used a personal computer. They suggested Ladonna Gunn, who as it turned out, was older than most undergrads, trying to get her college degree, from Rifle Colorado, who lived with her husband (who was an engineer working in a plant near Canon

City) and some horses near Wetmore, had to drive the 50 miles to attend classes, and then in between help me get the OCCHS Web site developed. She was a gem, and even knew enough about academic and museum history practices to go down into the basement and show old Liz Guisse (who only worked with the artifacts) the proper way to record them. (but like bull headed Barbaro after her, refused to use the national methods of museums, and wanted to invent her own way)

Ladonna, not only researched, wrote up, help design its Western image look and feel, and put online, OCCs web, stories that she dug out of Penrose Library, and followed up on what I got from remote OCC relatives by email but also, did an evaluation of the tiny Old Colo City Library where I had DONATED a computer, pair of radios, linked it to my internet connection in the Templeton Building, donating the bandwidth to it (AND OCCHS) making it the FIRST Library in the Colorado Springs region to be connected to the net, for patron use.

So Ladonna went on, got her degree, and brought technology to the County Library in Canon City (landing them some substantial grants for technology), then in Grand Junction, and now in Elko Nevada, as she followed her engineer husband's work.

Had not I donated the first OCCHS computer, linked it to the net with the NSF Grant, paying out of my pocket for the T-1 line from my office for some 20 years, to the net downtown, gotten Ladonna to populate and help design the look and feel of the the web site, and supply many OCC stories and brief biographies. the Old Colorado City Historical Society would

never have flourished in its early days. And likely would have folded before now, trying to be a 'traditional' very small physical Museum, in a city with a large tax supported Museum (and which ignored and still does, Colorado City and early El Paso County history.

And it is clear the current regime now running OCCHS STILL does not understand the value and importance of the Internet, to collect and not just disseminate, history. Had they listened to my scheme that would have BOTH a Physical Museum, history center, for locals, with archives, AND a 'Virtual Museum' on top of it with digital replicas of ALL its artifacts and documents, reachable by the net, world wide, it would be prospering by now, rather than struggle to pay its bills with its small and local scale operations and part time - by only volunteers - accessibility.

----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject: Please Forward to Ladonna
Gunn

Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2014 21:53:28
-0700

From: LaDonna Gunn
[<ladonnalgunn@yahoo.com>](mailto:ladonnalgunn@yahoo.com)

Reply-To:

To: Dave Hughes
[<dave@oldcolo.com>](mailto:dave@oldcolo.com)

Hi Dave:

What a treat to hear from you after all of these years! Thank you for your kind thoughts and for the link to your website. I spent just a few minutes browsing it, which certainly brought back great memories. What I learned from you about computer technology and history has

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served me well since working with you on the NSF grant.

My husband, Tracy, and I have been in Elko for two years. We were not thrilled having to leave Colorado, but the life of a mining engineer is . . . well, shall we say, never dull. It is true, I am currently working as the youth librarian, but the television coverage is a regular community information spot. I have not done anything spectacular, but I do enjoy the job. Before we left Colorado, I had finished my master's degree in history and was teaching American history at Mesa State College (now Colorado Mesa University) at the Montrose Campus. I was also working part time with Delta County Libraries as their grants and public relations manager, and involved in the local history in Cedaredge--I was on the board of the historical society, served on the town's culture and recreation board, and helped revitalize the town's historic preservation board. So, my current position as youth librarian with the Elko County Library is quite a stretch for me. Truth be known, I am quietly hoping for an opening in the history department at Great Basin College here in Elko. Just like you, my true passion is history.

Thanks again, Dave, for tracking me down. Your email made my day. I cannot wait to spend a little more time browsing your website and refreshing my memory of Old Colorado City.

Keep in touch.

Sincerely,

LaDonna Gunn

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ladonnalgunn@yahoo.com

P.S. I believe that one of your sons knows John Gavan. John and his wife moved from Colorado Springs to Paonia a few years ago and started working part time with Delta County Libraries as our "IT guy." Before I left Delta County Libraries, John was doing some amazing work for the library district. What a smart man.

-----Original Message-----

From: Dave [mailto:dave@oldcolo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2014 4:55 PM

To: Jeanette Hammons; dave (dave@oldcolo.com); David Hughes (david@oldcolo.com); Rebecca Clark (rebecca@oldcolo.com); Ed at Home (ed@oldcolo.com)

Subject: Please Forward to Ladonna Gunn

Jeanette Hammons, Library Director

jmhammon@clan.lib.nv.us

Would you please forward this note to Ladonna Gunn. I could not spot her email address on your site.

Dear Ladonna

Voice from the past. When that guy who lived in Rifle, Colorado recently won the Lottery, I remembered that it was your home town. And I recently encountered your name on many brief 'Colorado City' History pieces that you researched and we put online when you were doing work for the Old Colo City Historical Society under the National Science Foundation Grant I procured back in 1997. You helped out so much developing the History society's Society's Web site.

A lot of water has passed over the dam since then. The Society, with its History Center and programs I helped start in 1976, still is operating, though I stepped away from being fully active in it after being Treasurer for over 10 years, leaving it in sound financial condition.

But once I left, my successors did not have the computer skills – or understanding the potential value in a growing Web (if for nothing more than genealogical contacts - site we had way back then) and they let the Web Site slide a great deal.

Because of that, I decided to insure that all that history of the original Colorado City and early El Paso County was going to be preserved online, if only on my personal system. My three adult children have helped me do that, as well as record my life's work in a powerful web site that my wife wanted me to continue, after she was gone. (she died three years ago, and I am now 86, but still forging ahead.)

That site was named by them 'Dave Hughes Legacy Site" or <http://davehugheslegacy.net>

If you go to that site, click on the 'Early Colorado City History' link, then you get to the history.oldcolo.com section. Under which if you access the People/Bios, item you will see many of the pieces you did (some which I have added to slightly).

In fact ALL the files, stories, of the original site are there. Even every

Newsletter from 1985 to last month – full of stories of pioneers from their descendants, is in full text and graphics there too.

My son David (just a kid – he has turned 60) remarked that your credits are still there in many, many early files. So you still get credit for work you did 20 years ago! And they will remain there, even after I am gone for I have made arrangements for its perpetuation on a hosting service, that my kids will tend to. By the way, I will be buried in one of the 5 unused burial plots that Anthony Bott – the Colorado City town founder in 1859 – left. Ironical.

When son David looked you up he saw you were in Elko, Nevada, the Youth Services Librarian there, and even have been interviewed by television for your work. Congratulations!

So this is just a note to tell you how much help you gave me in the early days of the Historical Society after it acquired its permanent location.

Dave Hughes

dave@oldcolo.com

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