



Growing up Rich (In Memories) In a Poor Town

By Harry Mayor

Harry Mayor was born in Louisville and spent his early life here. Through his mother, Julia McHugh Mayor, he is part of the McHugh, Jenkins, and Williamson families of Louisville. He graduated from Louisville High School in 1936 and from college in 1940 and accepted a position with General Electric. Harry Mayor remained in Massachusetts after his retirement, but keeps up with Louisville news through his membership in the Louisville Historical Society.

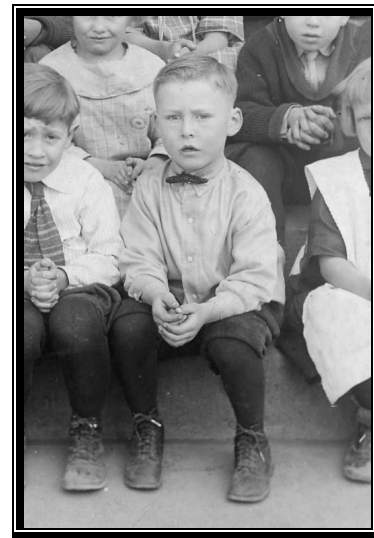
I have thought many times over the years of writing the recollections of my childhood, because to me they represent a lost “Shangri-la” or a childhood “Camelot.” While these events were happening, it seemed that my childhood would last forever, but in retrospect (like all the periods of one’s life) it is over so quickly.

I don’t believe that my children or my grandson ever knew the rich childhood that I enjoyed. Perhaps I am mistaken and maybe they have equally rich memories, but in my mind there can never be the period of innocence and naiveté that we, as children, enjoyed growing up between the two Great Wars. So I want to “put it all down” in my feeble attempt to say: “This is what you missed. This is the way childhood should be.” I know that it can never be because there were so many factors which occurred to allow my childhood to happen. There were close family ties – aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents as a total family unit. There was a spirit of endless optimism even in hard times. There was the Colorado “frontier spirit” and a close knit group of my peers who enjoyed each other as people.

We lived in a poor town, but it never occurred to us that it was so. We had everything necessary to enjoy a full and eventful life, and every day was an adventure. We were not closely supervised in our activities. There was no formal swimming, skating, Little League, or dancing classes. We were turned out after breakfast to find our own pleasure. We had to develop our friendships and activities.

Our parents were too much involved in the struggle to provide a home and food and clothes on our backs to spend much time in being buddies, chauffeuring us, or planning our leisure activities. They were there when we cracked our ribs or ripped open a foot on a broken bottle in the minney ditch or to give us protection and love when we needed it. I was fortunate to be born to loving parents who wanted to raise my sister and me as responsible and contributing people. Honesty, ethical behavior, social responsibility, and family love weren’t discussed; they were lived every day.

As we grew up, the town boasted a population of about 1600 souls. We were a close, friendly town where everybody knew everybody else. If you did something that was not quite right, your parents were told and you paid the price. Of course, my whole tribe lived there so I was under constant review. At one time, all of my mother’s sisters and brothers lived in the town.



Harry Mayor is seen here in his first grade class picture in 1924.

In my mind, I can still see the town as it existed when we were growing up. Main Street was the central artery and was several blocks long. It began on the south at the Acme Mine dump. The dump formed a barrier. It looked to us kids like a major mountain, but it was only about a hundred feet high. You had to take a sharp right or left turn to continue on your way. If you turned right and then left you were on the road to Superior and Eldorado Springs.

The road went through a tunnel which supported the track to the mine dump. This track was used to pull a small car to the top of the dump to deposit all the slate, stone, and poor-grade coal that was dug out of the entries and rooms where the miners were working in the tunnels beneath the town.

All of the streets in town were “red ash.” The mine dumps always caught fire and burned to this end product.

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It was a cinder-like material which powdered into a fine red dust or ash. When wet, it hardened into a firm surface and resulted in a surface that prevented the streets from becoming muddy quagmires in winter storms or spring rains. In the hot, dry summers, however, the surface became terribly dusty. The dust caused housewives to spend countless hours dusting and cleaning to erase the red film which settled on everything. Another problem with the red ash was the fact that as automobiles drove on the surface it became rutted with ripples that went cross wise on the street so that cars would shake and shimmy unmercifully if the roads were left unattended.

Most of the landmarks of my childhood are gone. The Acme Mine and its dump are leveled. Some of the buildings remain, but the businesses are gone. Lewt McCorkle's grocery store is gone. Sandy Biella's picture show is gone along with Charles Zarini's ice cream shop. Carveth Bros. General Merchandise, the Hub Store, Newrock's Drug Store, Mossoni's store, Pellillo's shoe repair shop, Henning Mortuary, Rome Perrella Ford Agency, Woody's Barber Shop, Ostrander's Bakery, and Ralph Grunkemeyer's Drug Store are all gone. The old Town Hall, Dr. Snair's office, Johnny Moffitt's plumbing shop, and Jacoe's Market are no more. Even the house I lived in has been changed so much that if I walked by it, I would not recognize it.

As a kid, I could never understand why the founders of Louisville didn't build the town so that the magnificent mountains were in full view. They elected to build it in a gully so that the mountains were to the west and were hidden from view. As I grew older I appreciated the reason: The first coal mine was in the gully, and it dictated where the town would be located. Grandeur was not the reason why they built the town.

I can recall us kids climbing across the prairie west of town and topping the hills above Thomas' mine, the Fireside. When we were kids, there were no houses, just a few ranches, to the west of town. As you faced the panorama before you, there was a great valley or depression which ended at the foothills and the Flatirons with very few buildings in the total expanse.

As you topped the rise, the panorama of the Rockies came into view and even as a kid the view would bring tears to your eyes. It was breathtaking. Long's Peak dominated the view to the North. Sleeping Indian stood out in all his glory and Indian Peaks with the glaciers continued the march south. The Flatirons thrust up from the Front Range and dominated the view directly in front of us. Then came Devil's Thumb and Eldorado Canyon with the railroad track across the face of the mountains rising from the plain and entering the canyon half way up the face. If the sun was in the right position we could see flashes of light from roofs of houses along the track, or if a train was struggling up the grade a plume of smoke marked its efforts.

To the south, Mount Evans could be seen and to the far south Pikes Peak stood out with a mantle of snow covering its pyramid shape. There were always great clouds above the mountains in a sky of brilliant blue – Colorado Blue. This was truly God's world to a young kid.

Another breathtaking view always occurred when you entered the town from the east. As you passed the cemetery and topped the rise, suddenly the whole panorama of the town came into view. It was as magnificent as the view from the west side of the prairie above the town.



Harry Mayor mentions many of the Main Street businesses that appear in this 1924 photo. Beginning on the corner of Spruce on the left and ending on the corner of Walnut on the right, the following have been identified: Carveth Bros. & Dalby's store (now the State Mercantile Building); Celeste Romano's; unidentified; Rex Theatre; Charles Zarini's ice cream shop; the Rialto or Isis Theatre; the Carlton residence; Lewt McCorkle's grocery store; and Mossoni's store. The right part of this block is now the site of Chase Bank.

Just as Harry Mayor describes it, the Acme Mine dump was indeed very high. This photo was taken from the top of the dump looking north on Main Street. Moving up Main Street, the first cross street shown is Elm, followed by Pine. This photo is believed to date from the 1920s, when Harry Mayor was a youth.



The Skater's Dilemma

By Harry Mayor

In my adopted home town in Massachusetts, an aging industrialist built a beautiful ice rink and presented it to the city. I had visions of going ice skating several times a week, but the rink time filled up rapidly with organized hockey groups so there was no real time for skaters like me. So, I lost interest in ice skating. It has grown to be an ego trip for fathers who are re-living their youthful fantasies through their kids' achievements. Kids have \$200 skates and hockey outfits that cost a fortune so that the average poor kid hasn't got a chance.

When we were kids in Louisville, we started out with a pair of clamp-on skates in which the runner was clamped at the heel and at the toe to the sole of your shoes. After I wrecked a couple of pairs of shoes by pulling the sole from the shoe, my folks came to the conclusion that a pair of hockey skates (shoes included) was essential. An order to Santa Claus was answered with a pair of Gart Bros. skates. To me they were beautiful, but in reality modern day kids wouldn't even stoop to put them on.

They were black split cowhide boots, stiff as boards with painted copper blade supports. The thrill of creeping into the stone cold living room at three a.m. and feeling the cold steel blades and leather shoes under the Christmas tree was only duplicated one other time – when I got my 22 Savage single shot rifle. I crept back into bed, but sleep was impossible. I lay awake waiting for dawn so that I could officially inspect my prize with all the family.

We had no town rink. If you wanted to skate, you walked to one of the several irrigation ponds. Hecla Lake, out beyond Little Italy and Steve Harney's farm, or Fisher's Pond (also known as Harper's Lake) up the

Matchless Mine Road to the west, were the only places to skate. Each was at least a mile walk each way.

There were no trees or bushes around these ponds. They were man made irrigation ponds to supply water for the fields of beets, alfalfa, wheat and corn during the summer. The cold, raw wind blew incessantly from the face of the Front Range, and made the temperature feel as if you were at the North Pole.

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Harper Lake with this view of the Front Range (described so beautifully by Harry Mayor) must have been a spectacular place to play hockey even if one's feet turned to ice. Today, skating is not permitted there for safety reasons.

The skating ritual was always the same. We collected our buddies (the Negri brothers, Art Thompson, Jerry Rosser, Les Rockley and others I can't recall) and decided which place we were going to skate that particular day. Before we started the trek, we had to collect the essentials – skates, hockey stick, matches, paper for the fire, a few pieces of kindling, perhaps an abandoned tire, shovels. The omission of an essential item could ruin the day because the lakes were completely barren. We usually found an old rotted fence post along the irrigation ditch we could burn.

Shovels were of the utmost importance. Before we could skate, we had to clear the ice of snow. The first hour was spent in slave-labor clearing the ice after long discussions on the proper orientation based on the snow drifts and the least number of ice ripples resulting from the wind blowing while the water froze. Great arguments developed over who was not pulling their weight, or who was to do what cleaning. Sometimes freeloaders would show up and very serious arguments would develop about usage of the ice surface we had just cleaned, but no one ever got hurt as a result.

After the ice surface was prepared, we always ended up in a hockey game. These were blood matches and I received some pretty nasty cuts and bruises. I still have a lump on the back of my head that I got when I was skating backward and my skate caught a crack in the ice. I am convinced that I developed a concussion. I had a headache for a week, but I never told my parents. No kid ever told his parents anything – it was the kids' law.

When the sun started to set behind the Front Range, or when the wind got so cold that your face felt like your eye balls were frozen – somebody had to make the break. You prayed that somebody else would break – but sometimes you were the one to give in and break up the "fun."

Even today, many decades later, I can still feel the excruciating pain of pulling my frozen feet from frozen skates. They felt like knobs of painful ice. Then forcing these unmanageable lumps into ice cold shoes which had lain on the frozen ground was pure hell. For the first five minutes of the walk home, no one talked. Each of us was involved in a personal battle to keep from breaking down and crying. After a while of personal struggle, our toes loosened up, feeling returned, and we could maneuver with some control over our progress.

The amazing thing is that none of us lost any toes or fingers from severe frost bite.

The next Saturday, we went through the same ordeal and looked forward to the challenge and the fun of ice skating on frozen ponds on a windswept prairie.

I haven't skated in many years, but when the ice forms on the ponds, I often think of those close buddies who shared in some wonderful days on Hecla and Harper ponds.



More on Photo Identifications

This photo of Louisville students in 1934 with their teacher Violette McKenzie appeared in the last issue of *The Louisville Historian* with a request for more information about the identities of the students. Thank you to Phyllis Nesbit Hawkins and Harry Mayor for responding to our request!

Between the two, the following identifications have been tentatively made:

Top row, left to right: Richard La Salle; Fred Nesbit; Melvin Rockley or possibly Lee Evans; Vincent Damiana; unidentified; and Arnold Biella.

Middle row: Unidentified; Anthony Colacci; Packy Romano; Wilbur Madonna; Mac Kuykendall; and Nestor Soupley.

Bottom row: First three unidentified, then Lois Goodhue; Marjorie Pickett; unidentified; and Blossom Henning.

Interestingly, Melvin Rockley was yet another student from Louisville High School's classes of 1935 and 1936, in addition to those discussed in the last issue, who had a music-related career. Melvin and his wife Mildred founded the music store Rockley Music in 1946 and moved it to its current location in Lakewood in 1955. It is still owned and operated by members of the Rockley family.



Historical Museum Hours and Contact Information

The current hours of the Louisville Historical Museum are Wednesdays, Thursdays, and the first Saturday of the month from 10 to 3. Please call the Museum at 303.665.9048 for the latest information on hours or to schedule a tour.

DiPilla Family Reunion Scheduled

Historical Society member Virginia DiPilla Lane would like to let other members and relatives know of the upcoming DiPilla family reunion, which will be held on June 16 and 17, 2007.

The reunion is being planned for the descendants of Vincenzo DiPilla and Mary DiGiacomo DiPilla. They were married in Louisville in 1905 and had six children, all born in Louisville: Lucille (1906); Magdalena (1907); Pasquale (1908, died young); Paschal (1910); Lawrence (1912); and Anthony (1914).

Virginia Lane asks that if anyone is interested in attending, please call her at 303-776-3171.

Memorial Donations

Donations have been made to the Museum in memory of:

LaJoy Franchini (1932 - 2007)
Marjorie Barday (1922 - 2007)
Jennie Milano (1910 - 2007)
Albert Escobedo (1921 - 2007)
Verna McGrath (1932 - 2007)
Vivian Dhieux (1923 - 2007)
Carol Martella (1949 - 2007)
Pete Madonna (1924 - 2007)
Donald Stevens (1930 - 2007)

Museum Donations

The Louisville Historical Museum has accessioned the following donations during the months of February through April. We sincerely appreciate these recent donations.

Larella Stout – copy of a photo showing her as a child with Mrs. Mossoni at 836 Main Street

Ed Domenico – 1954 Louisville High School “Cargo” yearbook (this item was on the Museum’s Wish List)

Nancy Martinez – copies of photos relating to her family, the Jaramillo family

Charles Robinson – cow dehorner from the area ranch of his great-grandfather, Charles Pruden

Anonymous – photo showing Louisville’s seventh grade class, 1906

How Well Do You Know Louisville?

1. Who was Rene Jacques?
2. Name two buildings in downtown Louisville that have original tin ceilings.
3. Who was Harper Lake named for, and was it made before or after 1900?

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Magnolia’s Splendor Adorns Main Street

As a town that is over 125 years old, Louisville still has not only historic buildings but also some exceptionally old trees. One of these is the saucer magnolia tree (*Magnolia x soulangeana*) in the yard of the Main Street home of Eugene and Virginia Caranci. This year, it emerged from winter with a particularly spectacular showing of blooms.



This saucer magnolia tree, located on Main Street in Louisville, is reported to be the largest in Colorado.

The Carancis’ house was built by Virginia’s uncle, Eliseo Jacoe, in about 1931. The magnolia tree is thought to have been planted soon after, making it about 75 years old. This tree is reported on the Colorado Tree Coalition’s Champion Tree Registry as being the largest saucer magnolia in Colorado.

This year’s display can be attributed to the fact that there were no hard frosts in March that would have killed the buds and flowers, as has happened in some years. Its location on the south side of the house up against the home’s stucco siding undoubtedly helped it get established so many decades ago and continues to keep it warm. Another factor playing into this year’s beauty is that the tree was pruned last fall to keep the growing branches off the roof of the house.

Many thanks to Virginia and to Jean Morgan for their contributions to this piece. As Jean writes, “We have enjoyed the beauty of this magnificent tree and thank the folks who planted it. One more kudo to our wonderful city!”

For more information on Louisville’s horticultural history, see the Spring 2005 issue of The Louisville Historian with the article “Old-Time, Old-Town Gardens” co-written by Susan Spaulding of Louisville’s Horticulture & Forestry Advisory Board and Museum Coordinator Bridget Bacon.

Louisville in Antique Postcards

The Museum has two antique postcards in its collection that say “Greetings from Louisville Colo” and display the early attractions of the town. Just like today, towns wanted to advertise the schools, amenities, work opportunities, and residential and shopping areas of their communities.

These interesting cards are both decorated with images of columbine flowers and state on the reverse that they were printed in Belgium. They are in color, and it is believed that the photos on the postcards were originally black and white and were hand colored before the postcards were printed.

The card postmarked 1908 was sent by Ella Hutchinson in Louisville to her mother, Louisville resident Elizabeth Hutchinson, in the Colorado town of Sopris where she is believed to have been visiting other family members. The message is about Ella’s travel plans. It includes photos of the brick schoolhouse (now the Louisville Center for the Arts), the public school, the Electric Power Plant, and the Rex No. 1 Mine.

The second postcard was postmarked in 1909 and was sent from an identified writer in Louisville to “Jonney Irwing” in Lafayette. The message is about looking at wallpaper samples. It features photos of the public school, the Catholic school, a residential street scene, Main Street looking north, and the Rex Mine No. 2.

If you are aware of similar historic postcards of Louisville, please contact the Museum.



This postcard was mailed from Louisville in 1908.



1909 is the date on the back of this postcard mailed from Louisville.

Happy 125th Birthday to Louisville!

June 2007 marks the 125th anniversary of the incorporation of Louisville, which took place in June 1882. (The exact date in June is unclear as it is described in different records as being on June 3, 5, or 16.) Although Louisville had already been founded four years earlier, in 1878, incorporation was an important step in its development. It now had the ability to govern itself and make laws.

In 1882, Louisville had a population of several hundred and was primarily made up of immigrants from such places as England, Scotland, Austria and Germany, and other parts of the United States who were drawn here to farm and to mine coal. Newcomers from Italy, France, and Eastern European countries would begin to arrive later.



Museum and City Receive Preservation Awards

Historic Boulder, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Boulder area historical, architectural, visual, and environmental heritage, presented awards of merit to the Louisville Historical Museum and the City of Louisville at its awards dinner on February 25, 2007. Representing Louisville and the Museum at the dinner were Historical Commission chairperson Donna Hauswald; Commission member Alice Koerner; Community Facilitator Meredyth Muth; and Museum Coordinator Bridget Bacon. The awards are in recognition of distinguished accomplishment in historic preservation for the conservation and restoration of the Historical Museum’s Jacoe Store, Tomeo House, Jordinelli House, and Summer Kitchen. Thank you to Historic Boulder for this recognition!



Museum Corner

Bridget Bacon, Museum
Coordinator



It is hard to believe, but 2007 marks the 20th anniversary of *The Louisville Historian*! The first issue appeared in April 1987, about six months after the Historical Museum itself was opened. It was produced by volunteers and the first issues featured articles on “The Reign of King Coal,” “The Kite Route,” “Benny Phillips – Louisville Legend” and “Christmas in Louisville.”

Today, the issues of the past twenty years are a wonderful resource for students doing research or anyone interested in our local history. The Historical Museum and the Louisville Public Library both have complete sets of past issues along with an index.

In connection with the last issue of *The Louisville Historian*, which was about music in Louisville, volunteer historical researcher Bill Cohen reminded me that in his research on the families whose fathers died in the Monarch Mine explosion, he learned something about Louisville’s musical history. Tony De Santis was a talented musician who played the trumpet and the mandolin, and every year at Christmas and New Year’s he and other Italians would form a band and walk around town to serenade people at their homes.

Ed Domenico’s donation of the 1954 Louisville High School yearbook means that the Museum now has a complete set of yearbooks for 36 years from 1937 to 1972, when Louisville High School closed. Those from the 1930s and most of the 1940s were printed on pages that were stapled together and they were called annuals. It is not known at the Museum if the High School put out annuals before 1937, but if anyone has any and is willing to donate them or have them copied, please contact the Museum.

In February, the Historical Commission embarked on its first strategic planning for the Commission and the Museum. A productive planning session was held at the Goodhue Farmhouse at Rock Creek Farm. We warmly welcomed a newly appointed member of the Commission, Colleen Vandendriessche. The Historical Commission also elected the following officers: Chairperson – Donna Hauswald; Vice-Chairperson – Don Ross; Secretary – Diane Marino; and Treasurer – Dave Ferguson.

Thank you so much to Mona Doersam, Mary Kay Knorr, Bill Buffo, Gail Wetrogan, Bill Cohen, Jean Morgan, and Duke Damiana for their volunteer work on behalf of the Museum. And thank you so much to Harry Mayor, who gave permission for us to print his articles with their wonderfully vivid descriptions of Louisville. I know that I will never pass Harper Lake again without thinking about long-ago hockey games being played there. His essays should inspire all of us to write down the stories of our own childhood memories.

Be sure to look for the Historical Commission booth at the Taste of Louisville on June 9 and the Fourth of July at Community Park!

Museum Wish List

The Louisville Historical Museum would like to add to its collection the items described below. If you would be willing to donate any of the described items, please call us at 303.665.9048. If you would prefer not to part with an original photo, please contact us about whether it can be scanned on our photo scanner. All donations to the museum, a non-profit institution, are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

- Centaurus High School Yearbooks: 1973 to 2000
- Photographs of Louisville High School’s graduating classes:
 - All classes before 1937 except for 1909, 1915, 1921, 1923, and 1925
 - The classes of 1954, 1955, 1958, 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1964 through 1971
- Copies of the *Louisville Times*, or pages of it, dated before 1942. (The *Louisville Times* was published beginning in 1913, but the paper has past issues going back only to 1942.)
- Coal mine photos and ledgers
- An old wooden bench for use as part of the Summer Kitchen display
- Historic photos of homes and businesses in the old town part of Louisville (with or without people in the photos). Specific buildings need not be identified so long as the photos were taken in Louisville.

Join the Louisville Historical Society

Membership in the Louisville Historical Society is a must for those interested in Louisville’s unique history and cultural character. Members receive the quarterly *Louisville Historian* and an invitation to the annual Historical Society Program.

A yearly membership is only \$15.00 for an individual and \$25.00 for a family. A yearly business sponsorship is \$100.00.

Visit our web site at www.ci.louisville.co.us/museum.htm for a membership form or call the Museum at 303-665-9048. You may also write to us at Louisville Historical Museum, 749 Main Street, Louisville, Colorado, 80027. Please make checks payable to the Louisville Historical Society.

Louisville Historical Commission

Sally Burlingame	Diane Marino
Elle Cabbage	Daniel Mellish
Virginia Caranci	Stuart Pritchard
Robert Enrietto	Donald Ross
David Ferguson	Patricia Seader
Donna Hauswald	Aline Steinbaugh
Alice Koerner	William Unrau
Colleen Vandendriessche	

Answers To How Well Do You Know Louisville?

1. Rene Jacques was one of six coal miners who were killed in the 1927 Columbine Mine Massacre near Erie and the only one from Louisville. He, his parents, and brother emigrated from France when he was two years old. They lived in Frenchtown on the south side of Louisville. He was 26 when he was killed and his funeral at Redmen Hall (now the approximate site of Memory Square Pool) was reportedly attended by 1500 people, with about 500 fitting inside the hall itself. He was buried in the Louisville Cemetery.
2. Two buildings that still have their original tin ceilings are the Historical Museum (the Jacoe Store) at 1001 Main Street and the Huckleberry Restaurant at 700 Main Street. Tin ceilings were a popular type of ceiling in the late 1800s and early 1900s. If you know of others, please call the Museum.
3. It is believed that John J. Harper, a local farmer, made Harper Lake and named it after himself and his family. An 1897 document that Harper recorded with the Boulder County Recorder's Office contains the first known mention of it and it appears to have made the establishment of "Harper Reservoir" official. Many current Louisville homes stand on what once was farm land belonging to the Harper family. The property extended north, northwest, and west of downtown Louisville. It seems likely that other streets in Louisville named Harper were also named after this family. John J. Harper died in 1934.

Fourth of July in Louisville



An exuberant Fourth of July parade is seen in this 1910 photo. It was taken by Frank Jacoe looking north on Main Street from the intersection of Pine and Main. The large building on the left with the bell is the old Town Hall and Fire Station. The State Mercantile Building is visible several buildings up the street.



In this photo believed to date from the late 1800s or early 1900s, a horse and carriage are decorated for a Fourth of July parade. Handwriting on the reverse identifies the two girls on the left as the Hessler girls and the man as Mr. Hessler, and they were photographed on Main Street just south of Pine.





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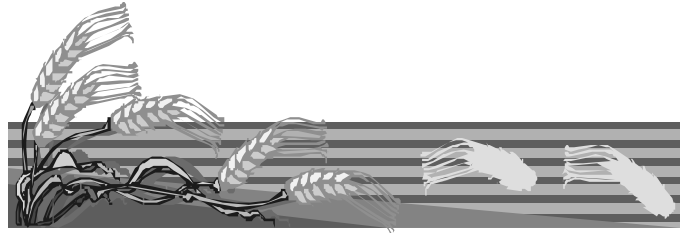
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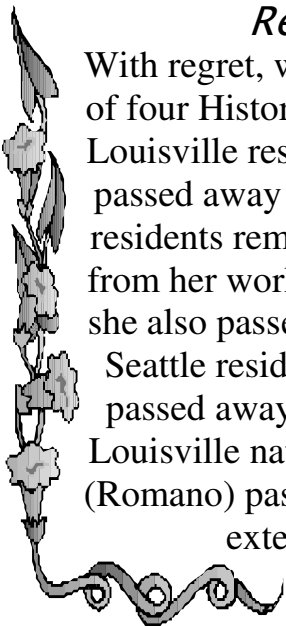
With regret, we note the recent deaths of four Historical Society members. Louisville resident LaJoy Franchini passed away in February. Many residents remember Jennie Milano from her work at the St. Louis Church; she also passed away early in the year. Seattle resident Nelson Magnuson passed away in November, and Louisville native Lewis Romans (Romano) passed away in March. We extend our sincere sympathy to their families.



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749 Main Street
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