



## **Red Ash Rooster Tails**

*By Harry Mayor, Louisville Historical Society Member*

**H**arry Mayor is a 1936 graduate of Louisville High School and he wrote the articles for the Spring 2007 issue entitled “Growing Up Rich (In Memories) In a Poor Town” and “The Skater’s Dilemma.” He keeps up with Louisville news from his home in Massachusetts through his membership in the Louisville Historical Society.

In the coal mining towns of Northern Colorado, you could always identify the travel routes of your friends by the plumes of red dust each car made as it sped along the roads. These plumes were actually beautiful in a boy’s mind. To sit under a cottonwood tree by the Goodhue ditch, or the sandstone cliffs by Coal Creek, or on top of the Acme Mine dump and see these billowing red tracers develop along South Boulder Road, Murphy’s Hill, or the old Matchless Mine Road – great bursting plumes, which hung in the clear air for a short time and then settled down to be disturbed by the next speeding car or truck - was exciting to our young minds.

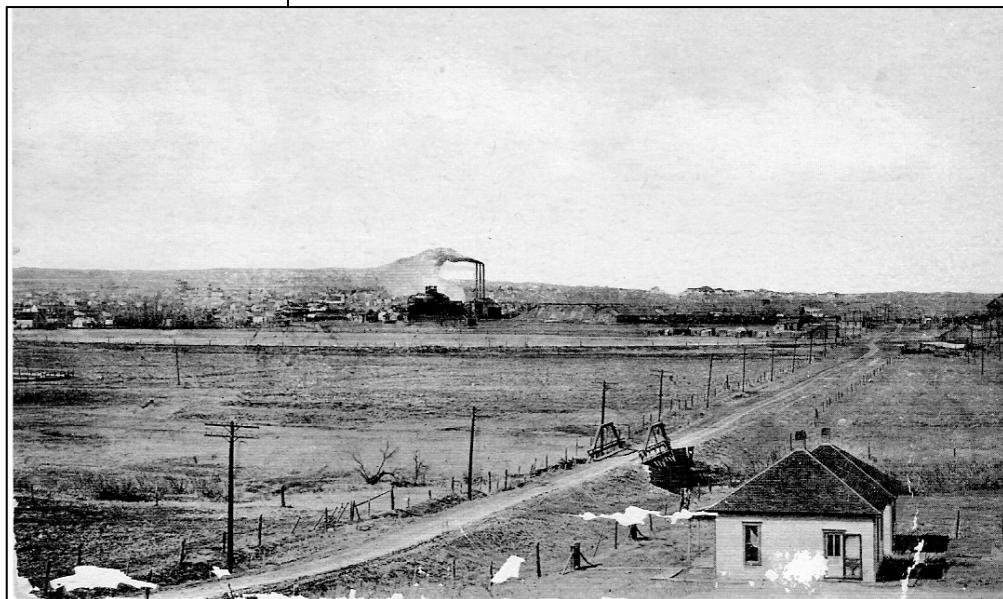
The roads and streets in Louisville and other neighboring coal mining towns were covered with layers of “red ash” to serve as the road bed. Red ash was free for the taking from any of the local coal mines. Each mine had a tremendous dump that was the rock, clay, slate, and poor grade coal dug out of the earth and discarded as the “entries” and “rooms” were dug in the quest for saleable lignite and semi-bituminous coal. This coal was the life blood of each town.

The refuse was hauled out of the mine and raised on the hoist to the surface. It was then loaded on a skip and hauled to the top of the dump and released to cascade down the face of the man-made hill. This refuse always caught fire and burned continuously to reduce the mass to a residual red ash. The dump was the bane of our mothers. Dumps were forbidden territory for any kid to explore. But they were fascinating places, and many kids

enjoyed the adventure of climbing the dump. However, if your mother ever found out, all hell broke loose. Dire predictions of losing your footing and rolling down the dump through smoke and fire, or breaking your leg or arm (or your fool neck) or falling into a fire hole and being burned alive only heightened the adventure. Each dump was a smoking, smelly cauldron of danger and excitement. Any kid worth his salt explored the dumps in town.

(During the Depression, it was an economic necessity to visit the dumps and collect the stray pieces of coal in gunny sacks to keep the house warm – but that is another story.)

*Continued on Page 2*



*This circa 1918 photo is believed to have been taken from a sandstone ledge on Murphy’s Hill, which figures in Harry Mayor’s boyhood memories. The view is looking north-northwest toward the town of Louisville. The Acme Mine, which was located at the intersection of Roosevelt and Hutchinson, appears in the middle of the photo and its mine dump is to the right of it. A bridge over Coal Creek is in the foreground. Today, Community Park is situated in the open area shown in the middle of this photograph.*

Although the sight of red ash rooster tails was beautiful to our young eyes, the fine red ash drove our mothers to despair. The fine red dust would settle on any surface, regardless of how you tried to keep it out of the house. “Cleaning” was a continuous ritual because of this monster which covered every surface and required daily dusting and wiping – which was our job.

One of the things I missed in returning to the town was the beautiful red rooster tails that we as kids could watch on a lazy summer day, but the houses were cleaner and there were no more dumps to show where the great coal mines were located. The town had changed and it was only in our memories that our childhood existed.

### ***Crushed Toes on the Street*** ***By Harry Mayor***

The street sprinkler system that the town fathers had invented to keep the red ash dust under “control” almost cost a young adventurer his toes.

In the hot dry summers in Louisville, the roads became almost impassable. The dry weather made the streets as dry as the desert, and the traffic on the roads resulted in a continuous cloud of dust on the main streets of the town. In addition, the traffic caused the dry streets to become ridged like a washboard, and a trip on them in a Model T was a tooth jarring experience. The city fathers, in a defensive maneuver, developed a water sprinkling scheme to wet down the streets (especially Main Street and the streets where the mine owners and bosses lived) and to keep the dust down on the hot dry days of summer. It was an inadequate solution, but it was used for many years.



***Louisville’s first street grader is seen in this undated photo.***

The “solution” consisted of installing a large water tank on the back of an old Model T truck. This tank had a pipe mounted at its rear with a series of holes punched in the pipe to release the water in the tank. A valve was fitted with a rope leading to the driver’s seat, which he could operate to release or stop the flow. It didn’t work very well, but it was used for many years to combat the red ash until the mines closed down and there was no cheap red ash. Also, the town grew more prosperous after I left town and could afford black top to replace the bane of the local women.

Each day in the hot dry summer, the truck would make its interminable passes up and down Main Street in a valiant attempt to keep the dust down. When the ruts got so bad that people threatened to sue the town, they would wet down the street and bring out the ancient grader to knock off the high points of the ruts and fill in the low spots.

There was a poll tax on every adult male. It was leveled when you reached voting age. You could “work out” your poll tax by doing a certain number of hours of work on community projects. Many of the miners who were out of work in the summer would approach men who were willing to pay their tax, and offer to work for them and collect the fee. Driving the water wagon was one of the available “positions.” If you knew the guy who had the job of driving the truck, you could ride with him and keep him company. Kids vied for the chance to ride on the water wagon.

John Lombardi was one of the guys who was successful in driving the water wagon. He drove the wagon a good part of the summer. Since John was sweet on my aunt Hazel and my cousin Elizabeth, I got the chance to ride with him if I got bored with the other summer activities we were engaged in like playing rubber guns or mumpedly peg or picking the dump.

There were water hydrants at each end of Main Street where the tank was refilled before the water run.

The road was especially rough, and it was a tooth jarring experience to ride on the truck. We had just started our run when I decided that I wanted to ride in the back of the truck. So I crawled through the rear window and got located on the large timbers that supported the tank. (If my mother or any of my uncles or aunts had seen me I would have been skinned alive, but none of them saw me.) Then disaster occurred!

We hit a particularly rough patch of road right in front of Mossoni’s Store and I slipped from my perch and slid down the rails and my feet came to rest between the rails

and the bed of the truck. The next big jolt ended with my foot slipping under the 8 x 8 rails and the whole assembly resting on my shoe. I was trapped and the pain started to be unbearable. I screeched bloody murder. Johnny looked back and saw my predicament. I have to hand it to Johnny. He realized that we had to get to the block and tackle that was used to raise the tank and put it on the truck. That was about six blocks away. He gunned the old truck and took off.

We started to speed down a real bad stretch and the old truck bounded into the ruts and ridges. The tank bounced and I wrenched my poor foot free.

Did I have any toes left? Were they crushed and mangled? I could only visualize the worst. How was I going to tell my parents?

John slammed on the brakes, bounded out of the cab, and pulled me from the truck and started to remove my shoe. I was sobbing when he got the shoe off.

The toes were still attached, and although they looked a little flat, there was no blood. They hurt like hell, but I attempted to move them and they worked! I sat on the curb and put my sock and shoe back on, and hobbled home.

I never told a soul, and Johnny never did either. We kept our terrible secret, but I never rode on the water wagon ever again. Thinking back, I believe my toes were saved because the bed of the truck was rough and my foot slopped into a low spot and didn't take the full weight of the water tank – the poor luck of a foolish kid.

Looking back, I swear at that old water truck and a boy's foolish adventure. Why we didn't die young with all of our misadventures remains a mystery.

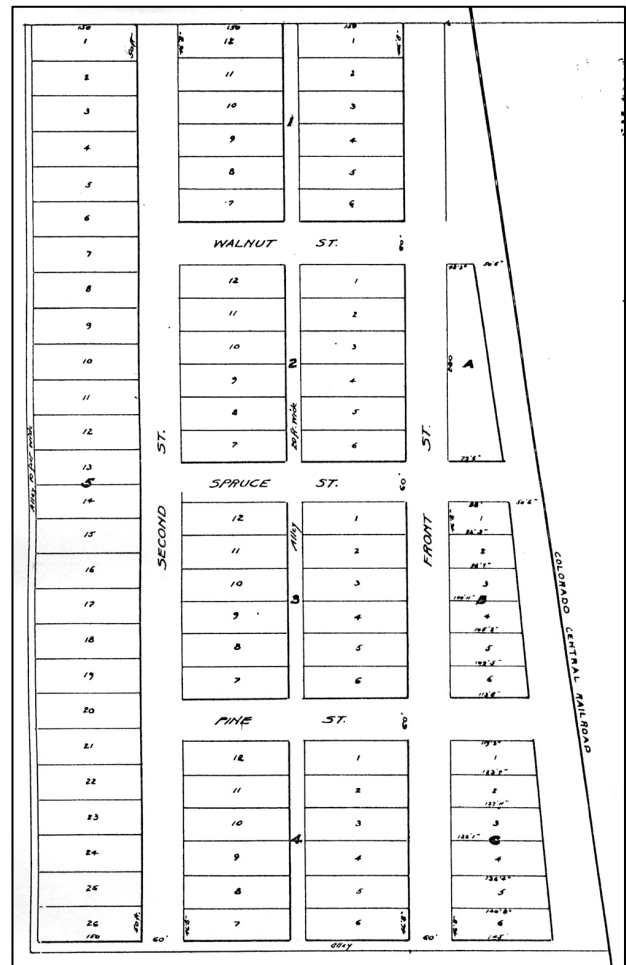
***Street Names in Louisville***  
***By Bridget Bacon, Museum Coordinator***

At the time when Louis Nawatny first platted it in 1878, the original heart of Louisville had only five streets. These consisted of Front Street (also called 1<sup>st</sup> Street), 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Walnut Street, Spruce Street, and Pine Street. These early streets resembled those of Boulder (and perhaps those of some other cities) by having numbered ones going in one direction and streets named after trees extending in the other direction.

Front Street continued to often be called 1<sup>st</sup> Street, then eventually became known only as Front Street.

3<sup>rd</sup> Street, which came to border the original downtown on the west, was soon renamed La Farge Avenue. It was much later, in the 1920s, that 2<sup>nd</sup> Street was renamed Main Street and that is how we know it today. The origin of the street name La Farge, by the way, is still a mystery.

The developers of subsequent additions in downtown Louisville chose not to continue with this pattern of numbered streets and streets named after trees (with the exception of Elm). Instead, new north-south streets were named after U.S. Presidents. The most recently serving presidents to have historic downtown Louisville streets named after them were William McKinley, who served from 1897 to 1901, and Theodore Roosevelt, who served from 1901 to 1909. In fact, Roosevelt was a late addition, with the name being handwritten in pencil on the 1909 street map of Louisville that hangs at the Louisville Historical Museum.



***This shows the original plat of Louisville by Louis Nawatny in 1878. It had only five named streets: Front, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Walnut, Spruce, and Pine.***

Newer east-west streets, meanwhile, were given a variety of names, including Caledonia and Rex (both of

which were likely named after nearby coal mines) and Short. South Street was located, confusingly, north of the original town; however, it was the southernmost street of the town additions of Caledonia Place, Barclay Place, and Capitol Hill Addition. Harper Street seems likely to have been named after the Harper family that owned Harper Lake and the farm around it. Cannon was likely named after James Cannon, one of the developers of Caledonia Place where Cannon Street is located. The origins of the names of other older east-west streets such as Frost, Griffith, and Mead are unknown at this time. As was noted in the most recent *Louisville Historian*, South Boulder Road had the name of Wyman Street as it passed along the northern edge of Louisville; the origin of the name Wyman is also unknown.

Since Louisville began adding new subdivisions beginning in around the late 1950s, street names have come from a wide variety of sources. The Bella Vista subdivision located south of downtown has streets named Lois, Rose, Barbara, and Aline after the wives of the developers. Similarly, the streets Paschal Drive, Roberts Avenue, and Carmen Street located in present day northeast Louisville were named after members of the DiGiacomo family that had a farm there.

McCaslin Boulevard is said to have been named in the 1960s or 1970s for a Boulder County Commissioner by the name of McCaslin, or possibly for all three members of the McCaslin family from the Hygiene area who are known to have served as County Commissioners. On older maps of the area, it appears as a dirt road.

The names in one newer neighborhood north of South Boulder Road honor our community's mining history. These streets were named after coal mines that were located in the area, including the Vulcan, Matchless, Peerless, Sunnyside, Fireside, Centennial, Leader, Regal, Gorham, Paramount, Strathmore, Senator, Monarch, Crown, Jackson, Sunrise, and Evans Mines.

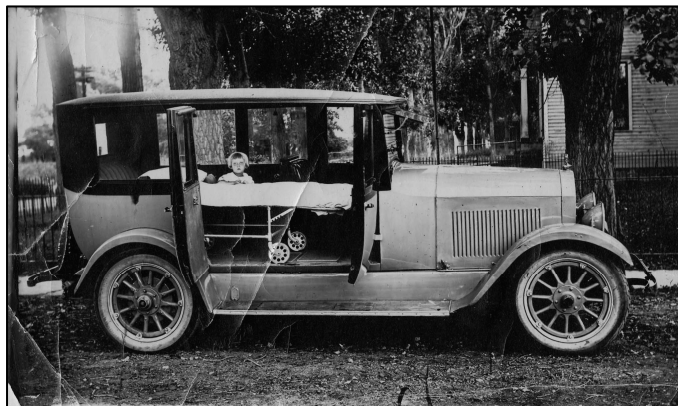
*If you have information about the origins of the names of La Farge Avenue, Via Appia, or other street names in Louisville, please contact the Louisville Historical Museum at 303-665-9048.*



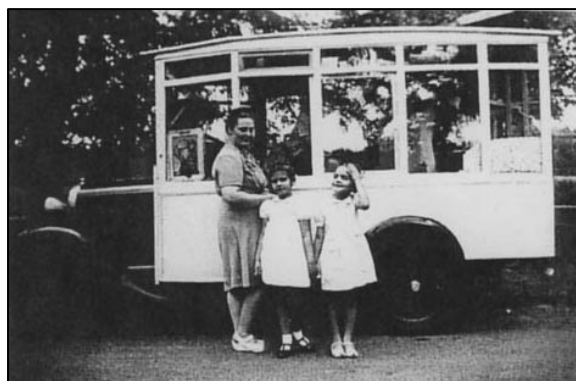
### **Historical Museum Hours and Contact Information**

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.

## ***Vehicles on the Streets of Louisville***



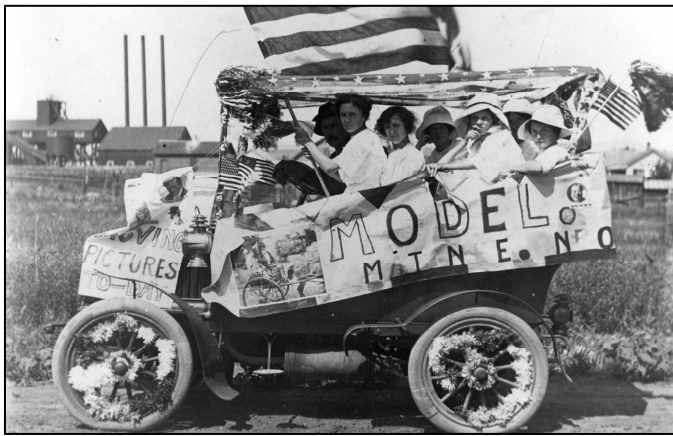
***Louisville's first ambulance was owned by G.R. Henning of Henning Mortuary at 844 Main Street. Henning even provided ambulance service to the coal mines. His daughter, Blossom, poses with the ambulance in this 1924 photo.***



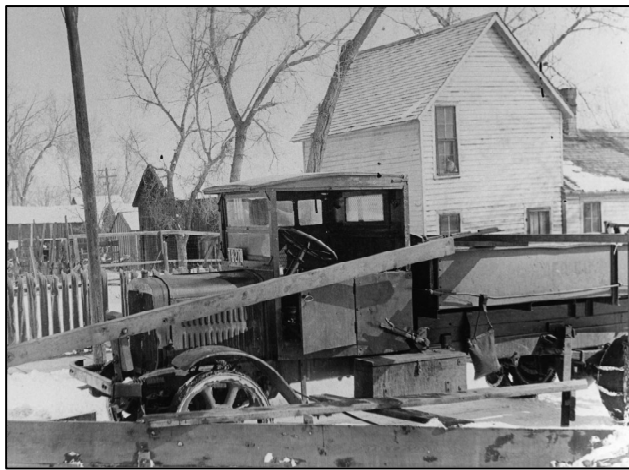
***An ice cream wagon remembered by some Louisville residents is shown in this 1946 photo. Joyce Zarini is identified as being on the left and Barbara Piccone on the right.***



***In this photo from circa 1910, a young man rides a motorcycle on Front Street. The view is looking north on Front Street from what is now the parking lot south of the Steinbaugh Pavillion.***



*Girls and young women are crowded onto a parade float that appears to be advertising moving pictures at the Model Theatre. The Acme Mine can be seen behind them.*



*Louisville's first snow plow is seen in this undated photo. When there are blizzards like what we saw last winter, residents are surely grateful for more modern equipment.*

***Louisville Local Wins Car Donated by Boulder Toyota!***

Congratulations to Mike Ryan from Louisville who won the Honda Civic at our Fall Festival Car Raffle. This fundraiser was a great success as we raised over \$2,200. We are so grateful to Boulder Toyota for donating the pre-owned car for the raffle.

We would like to give special recognition to Steve Doersam and Justin Lombardi from Boulder Toyota and Elle Cabbage from the Historical Commission for making this fundraising event happen to benefit the Historical Commission.



***Spend the Day in Downtown Louisville!***

After touring beautiful homes in historic Louisville with the Holiday Home Tour on Saturday, December 8, head over to the Louisville Public Library for even more holiday celebration downtown. The Library is holding an art exhibit opening featuring Joseph Sikora's wood carvings along with music by Duo Sonique and refreshments from 3:00 to 5:00.

Duo Sonique consists of multi-instrumentalists Joe Grossman and Dan Organ. Back at the Library this year by popular demand, they will present a program of holiday songs plus jazz, folk, and light classical music.

***A Great Holiday Gift Idea: Give a Year of The Louisville Historian!***



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](http://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***

- |                         |                  |
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| Sally Burlingame        | Alice Koerner    |
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## *The Museum Corner*

*Bridget Bacon, Museum Coordinator*



Fall is a great time of the year for the school tours bringing scores of elementary school students to the Museum to learn about Louisville's history. The Museum has also recently hosted two class reunion tours: the Louisville High School's Class of 1957 celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the Class of 1947 (with additional interested visitors from the Class of 1946) celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Look for upcoming publicity about a book club focusing on historical topics from our region! It is being organized by Louisville Historical Society member Anne Robinson with the sponsorship of the Louisville Historical Commission and is being planned to begin in early 2008.

In light of the recent PBS documentary *The War* about World War II, there is increased interest in the role played in that war by the nearly 400 servicemen and women who served from the Louisville area. If you have an interest in this subject and like to do historical research, please consider becoming a volunteer to help compile information about Louisville's World War II servicemen and women and where they served. Those interested can call the Historical Museum at 303-665-9048.

Thank you so much to the people who have been generously volunteering their time and talents for the Museum: Mona Doersam, Mary Kay Knorr, Gail Wetrogan, Bill Cohen, Bill Buffo, Melanie Muckle, Evonne "Duke" Damiana, Jean Morgan, Ed Domenico, and Ardeshir Sabeti. Thank you also to Mona Doersam, June Enrietto, Terry Doucet, Nana Molero, and Marcie Kalish for their invaluable help with the Silent Auction and other recent Commission events.

Last, thank you to Ada Pellillo Bottinelli for her memories of Louisville during her recent visit to the Historical Museum.



## *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.

Photos of the interior or exterior of Redman Hall; scenes showing Louisville's Little Italy or Frenchtown; and interiors and exteriors of Louisville's saloons and pool halls.

## *Memorial Donations*

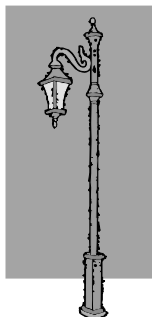


Donations have been made to the Museum in memory of:

Joseph Colacci (1916-2007)  
Rudy Slavec (1926-2007)  
Betty Rosser Martella (1928-2007)

## How Well Do You Know Louisville? (expanded "Streets" edition)

1. Name the streets that cross (or run into) Main Street going from north to south, beginning with South Boulder Road and ending with Rex Street. (Hint: There are twelve streets, including South Boulder and Rex.)
2. Name the streets that cross (or run into) Pine Street going from east to west, beginning with Front Street and ending with Johnson Ave. (Hint: There are nine streets, including Front and Johnson.)
3. Some of Louisville's downtown streets were named after U.S. Presidents. Going east to west along Pine Street, are the names of the Presidents in the correct order of when they served?
4. In 1967, the ribbon cutting ceremony at the dedication of Highway 42 in Louisville received worldwide attention due to the unique material used for the ribbon. What was the ribbon made out of? (Bonus question: What business supplied the material for the ribbon?)
5. The Louisville Center for the Arts (formerly the "little red brick schoolhouse") and Memory Square Pool are located at 801 Grant Avenue. Why do they have a Grant Avenue address when they are not actually on Grant?
6. In what year was the Denver-Boulder Turnpike opened?
7. What was the name of the stray dog adopted by tollbooth operators for the Denver-Boulder Turnpike and whose grave is near the Broomfield section of the turnpike?



Answers appear on page 8.

## Museum Donations

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

**Nadine Harris Caranci** – information and copies of photos relating to the Harris family and related families of Louisville.

**Catherine "Kay" LaSalle** – an original photo of a Louisville baseball team sponsored by the Jacoe Brothers and a scan of a 1916 photo postcard of a Nederland baseball team, both of which show her father, William "Buck" LaSalle.

**June Giorzelli Enrietto** – a DVD of a video showing a 1996 interview with her mother, Stella Bottinelli Giorzelli.

**JoEllen Archer Francis** – photographs of her and her brother as children visiting their relatives, the Cunnings, with Main Street buildings in the background.

**Harry Mayor** – June 1, 1936 issue of *The Lookout*, the school newspaper of Louisville High School.

**Daniel and Susan Swathwood** – kerosene stove that was used for canning food.

**Isabelle Hudson** – scan of a historic photo showing the house of her great-grandmother, Jane Ferguson, at 705 Jefferson Ave.

**May Hubbard Chapman** – items from Louisville High School and Middle School that belonged to her mother, teacher June Hubbard, including LHS prom booklets from 1961 and 1965.

**Kim Daldos** – scans of photos showing the home of Edward and Mattie Affolter, and others showing Louisville from a photo album believed to be from the Moffitt family.

**Bryan Doyle Dillman** – telephone directory for the Louisville area dated 1952-53.

**Robert Piccone** – scans of photos relating to the Piccone family of Louisville.

**David Ferguson** – a 1942 photo of Louisville servicemen and a corn grinder.

**Jean Morgan** – strap-on roller skates and a mug commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First National Bank, 1915-1990.

**Ronda Leggett** – pair of knit cuffs still with the tag of the Hub Store located on Main Street.

**James Graves** – items that belonged to his father, L.C. Graves, including LHS football programs, a LHS sports scrapbook, and issues of *The Louisville Times*.

**Dolores Lasnik Forbis** – LHS cheerleader's outfit and letter sweater from 1946-47.

**Mariann Lastoka** – photos and written material relating to the Harney Lastoka farm and family members as well as Louisville's Little Italy.

### ***Answers to How Well Do You Know Louisville?***

1. In order, the twelve streets that cross Main Street from north to south are: South Boulder Road, Griffith, Lafayette, Caledonia, Short, South, Walnut, Spruce, Pine, Elm, Parkview, and Rex.
2. In order, the nine streets that cross Pine Street from east to west are: Front, Main, La Farge, Jefferson, Grant, Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, and Johnson.
3. The Presidents' names are not in order of when they served. If they were in the correct order, the street names from east to west would be: Jefferson, Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, Garfield, and McKinley.
4. The ribbon at the dedication of Highway 42 in 1967 was made out of real spaghetti furnished by Colacci's Restaurant. [Source: Louisville Times, Nov. 16, 1967]
5. The Center for the Arts, which was built as a school, originally faced Grant Avenue (see accompanying photo). When Memory Square Park was created in 1973, the City eliminated the section of Grant Avenue between Spruce and Walnut. That is why the Arts Center and Memory Square Pool (which opened in 1974) have a Grant Avenue address.
6. The Denver-Boulder Turnpike, now part of U.S. Highway 36, was opened in 1952. It was a toll road until 1967, when the bonds for building it were paid off early.
7. The name of the turnpike's mascot was Shep. He died in 1964.



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*In this photo taken in the 1940s, the building that would later be restored and become the Center for the Arts can be seen facing an unpaved Grant Avenue.*



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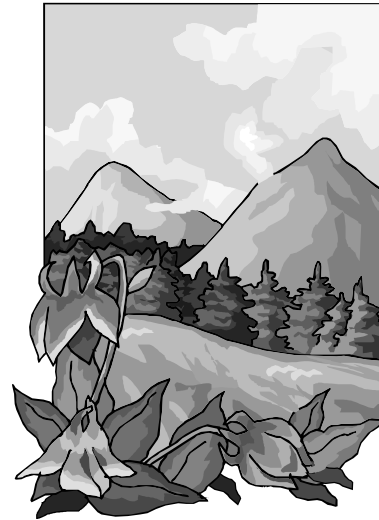
**Sylvia Kilker**

**Kathleen Cummings & Mark Reynolds**

**Jeff & Treacy Cole**

*Regrets*

One of the Historical Museum's Business Sponsors, the Blue Parrot restaurant, lost its patriarch with the passing of Joseph Colacci in August. Born and raised in Louisville, Joe owned the Blue Parrot for sixty years. We extend our deepest sympathy to the Colacci family.



*Our Business Sponsors*

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*Louisville Historical Society  
749 Main Street  
Louisville, CO 80027*