

# The Louisville Historian

Issue #64

*A Publication of the Louisville Historical Commission and Society*

Fall 2004

## *LOUISVILLE'S MAIN STREET CHRISTMAS*

Our city's annual Parade of Lights in December reminds us about both what is the same as it was many years ago and what has changed about Louisville. On the one hand, the Parade carries on a long tradition of holiday celebration in the downtown area. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that every holiday season for many years, a tall Christmas tree was actually placed in the center of the intersection of Main and Spruce Streets.

This Louisville tradition reportedly began in 1929 with a tall, decorated and lighted pine tree at that intersection. Louisville's population at the time was less than 2,000 and there were not many cars to disturb the tree. Still, several people did drive their cars into the tree and it had to be straightened and redecorated. One can only imagine how frequently that would occur today. Also, the wind often blew all of the lights off the tree and they had to be replaced.

Another incident involved a young doctor who had moved to Louisville in 1935 to set up a practice and become a "mine doctor." During the week before Christmas, the doctor and his wife hosted a party for some friends, including a physician from Denver. The story goes that the visiting doctor had too much Christmas cheer and decided to take a walk down Main Street. When he saw the Christmas tree in the middle of the street, he proceeded to climb to the top. Not only did many townspeople come out to watch, but the fire department had to be called to remove him.

Children came to the tree on Christmas Eve to meet Santa Claus and receive a bag of goodies. Art Porta, who worked at the Hub Store at the northeast corner of Spruce and Main, later remembered people bringing their children into the store to keep warm until Santa appeared.

The town's first Santa Claus was George R. (G.R.) Henning. He was to be Louisville's official Santa Claus for thirty years. Mr. Henning also owned Henning Mortuary on Main Street, was the mayor from 1926 to 1930, and for many years provided the only ambulance service to the mines. He would arrive at the Christmas tree memorably ringing bells from a fire truck. Current Louisville residents still recall that he took time to put every child on his lap and talk to them about Christmas.

An important part of the holiday festivities was the bag of goodies that each child received. During the Depression of the 1930s, times were hard and for some children these treats were the only gifts they would receive. One local resident recalled that during hard times, her mother would take the treats out of the bags and put them in her children's stockings because the family couldn't afford to fill the stockings themselves.

Louisville's Lions Club sponsored these holiday celebrations for many years. In particular, merchants who belonged to the Lions Club would donate oranges, apples, popcorn balls, peanuts, and candy for the bags of goodies. The Rainbow Girls, a group of teenage girls sponsored by the Masonic Lodge, would work to fill paper bags with the treats that they would help hand out to the children.

Following the death of G.R. Henning, L.C. ("Bun") Graves became the town's Santa. Other Santas over the years included Roy O'Neal, Leon Wurl, and Ray Caranci. Lions Club member Les Davis took over the job of going to the merchants to get the fruit and candy for the bags and the Rainbow Girls continued to fill the bags.

In the early 1950s, as the population of Louisville increased and traffic downtown became more of a problem, it was decided to move

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the holiday festivities to a different location. A tall pine tree was planted in Pirate's Park with the idea that it would be used as the Christmas tree.

After just a few years, the townspeople realized that this spot was too cold for the children to stand in line while waiting for the festivities to begin. A new City Hall had been built and it was decided to plant a tree on the grounds to be decorated and used as the town Christmas tree, providing a more sheltered area for waiting children. Finally, in 1988, the custom of passing out bags of treats was discontinued due to the town becoming more prosperous and parents not having to depend on the bags of candy for their children on Christmas Eve.

Louisville's holiday celebration continues this year with the annual Parade of Lights on Main Street on Friday, December 3 at 7:00 PM. Let's all remember the generosity and community feeling of Louisville when people took it upon themselves to create a special and memorable holiday, and try to picture that Christmas tree in the middle of Main Street.

*This article is based on the recollections of Virginia Caranci and on an earlier Louisville Historian article with recollections by Eileen Schmidt, Dick Franchini, Emajane Enrietto, Nadine Caranci, Art Porta, and John Garcia.*

## **UPDATE ON the Jordinelli House Renovations**

*Bob Enrietto*

*Louisville Historical Commission Member*

The interior of the house has been completely painted courtesy of Alan Forbes of Forbes Painting. In addition, Sherwin Williams of Boulder donated the paint. Our heartfelt thanks to Forbes Painting and Sherwin-Williams for their generous donations.

We recently contracted for the completion of the remaining electrical work including the installation of light fixtures and outlets.

The City recently completed the installation of sidewalks on the site and is working on a landscaping budget for 2005. A sidewalk will be added to connect the Miner's House to the Jordinelli House and a handicap accessible entrance will also be added through the north side of the Jordinelli House.

*Louisville Celebrates Armistice Day, Circa 1920*



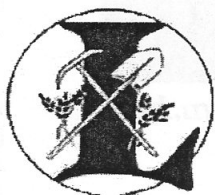
## SHARE THE GIFT OF HISTORY

Share the gift of history by sharing the gift of membership in the Louisville Historical Society. Your gift will be the one remembered throughout the year. A yearly membership is \$15.00 for an individual, \$25.00 for a family, and \$100.00 for a business. Membership means receiving our newsletters and an invitation to our Annual Historical Society Meeting. Membership also helps to ensure the preservation of Louisville's unique history and cultural character.

You will find a membership form on our web site at [museum@ci.louisville.co.us/museum.htm](mailto:museum@ci.louisville.co.us/museum.htm) or you may call the museum at 303.665.9048. You may also write to us at Louisville Historical Museum, 749 Main Street, Louisville, Colorado, 80027. Please remember to communicate your name, address, and telephone number as well as the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) to whom you wish to give the gift of membership. We accept cash or checks. Please make checks payable to Louisville Historical Society.

## Louisville Historical Commission Members

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



## DONATIONS

The Louisville Historical Museum has accessioned the following donations during the months of August through October:

### Isabelle Hudson

*Man's white shirt for use in displays*

### Aline and Glenn Steinbaugh

*1913 photograph of Henry Steuble with a team of horses digging the basement for Steinbaugh Hardware Store at Spruce & Front Streets*

*1938 photograph of J.J. Steinbaugh's flatbed delivery truck*

We sincerely appreciate these recent donations.

## MUSEUM WISH LIST

The Louisville Historical Museum would like to add to its collection the yearbooks and photographs described below. If you would be willing to donate any of the described items, please contact the Louisville Historical Museum and let us know. A reproduction of an original photograph would be acceptable. All donations to the museum, a non-profit institution, are tax deductible. Thank you for your support!

Louisville High School Yearbooks (Cargos):  
1954, 1961, 1964, 1965, 1968, 1969, 1970,  
1971, & 1972

Photographs of Louisville High School's graduating classes:  
1939, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1960, 1961,  
1962, and 1964 through 1971

Centaurus High School Yearbooks:  
1973 to 2000

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

*In Memory of:*  
*Pasquale Scarpella*  
*Carmelita DeSantis Jennings*  
*&*  
*Klubert Warembourg*

## *THE MUSEUM CORNER*

*Bridget Bacon*

*Museum Coordinator*

Since I joined the Louisville Historical Museum as its new Museum Coordinator in early October, I have seen firsthand what a lively center it can be for our community! Fall is the time when Louisville's second grade classes come to see the Museum, and Scout troops are also scheduled to visit soon to learn about local history. In addition, people just stop by the Museum for other reasons. Some are visiting family or friends in Louisville from out of town, and even from other countries, and are intrigued by the Museum sign. Some have lived here for years and finally get around to dropping by. Yet others come in with specific questions about the histories of their homes or families. With its active Historical Commission and dedicated Museum volunteers, Louisville has a wonderful historical community and I am enjoying becoming a part of it.

Members of the Louisville Historical Commission were busy with their Silent Auction during the Louisville Fall Festival at Memory Square Park and they succeeded in raising \$1,378! The Commission also will be hosting two events coming up soon in December.

On Friday, December 3, the Commission will open the Museum prior to and following the Parade of Lights. Commission members will serve cookies and wassail and sell holiday ornaments, handmade by Louisville resident Marion Junior, as well as books, videos, coal sacks, stationery, and postcards relating to Louisville's history.

The next day, Saturday, December 4, the Historical Commission will be hosting the third annual Holiday Parade of Homes to help raise funds for the Museum. This event, when downtown homeowners generously open their homes to the public, is a favorite for many Louisville residents. Having gone on the first two tours, I came away both times with a greater understanding of the people who settled in Louisville and an increased appreciation of Louisville's special

qualities. If you are interested in Louisville's history or if you would just enjoy a Saturday walk through downtown Louisville to visit the warm and cheerful homes, be sure not to miss the tour! As before, the tour will include a Holiday Boutique and refreshments at the Arts Center, 801 Grant Avenue and the United Methodist Church, 741 Jefferson Avenue. The Museum and neighboring Tomeo House will also be open for touring that day.

I would like to thank the volunteers who have helped with the second grade school tours this fall. Duke Damiana and Commission members Don Ross, Alice Koerner, Bill Unrau, and Dan Mellish all lent their expertise to the tours and were thoroughly enjoyed by the children. Many thanks also to Betty Buffo, Lois Kershner, and Heather Lewis for their help at the Museum and to Ron Buffo for all of his past contributions to the *Louisville Historian* as writer and editor.

Finally, I would like to recognize Carol Gleeson for her many contributions as the Museum's first Coordinator. In particular, her development of the education program has been a huge benefit to the community through teaching Louisville's school-children about local history. Thank you and good luck, Carol!

**LOUISVILLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
1001 MAIN STREET  
LOUISVILLE CO 80027  
303.665.9048**

**HOURS:**

**TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY & THE  
FIRST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

**Group tours available upon request**

***museum@ci.louisville.co.us*  
*www.ci.louisville.co.us/museum.htm***

## ***THANKS TO NEW AND RENEWING SOCIETY MEMBERS!***

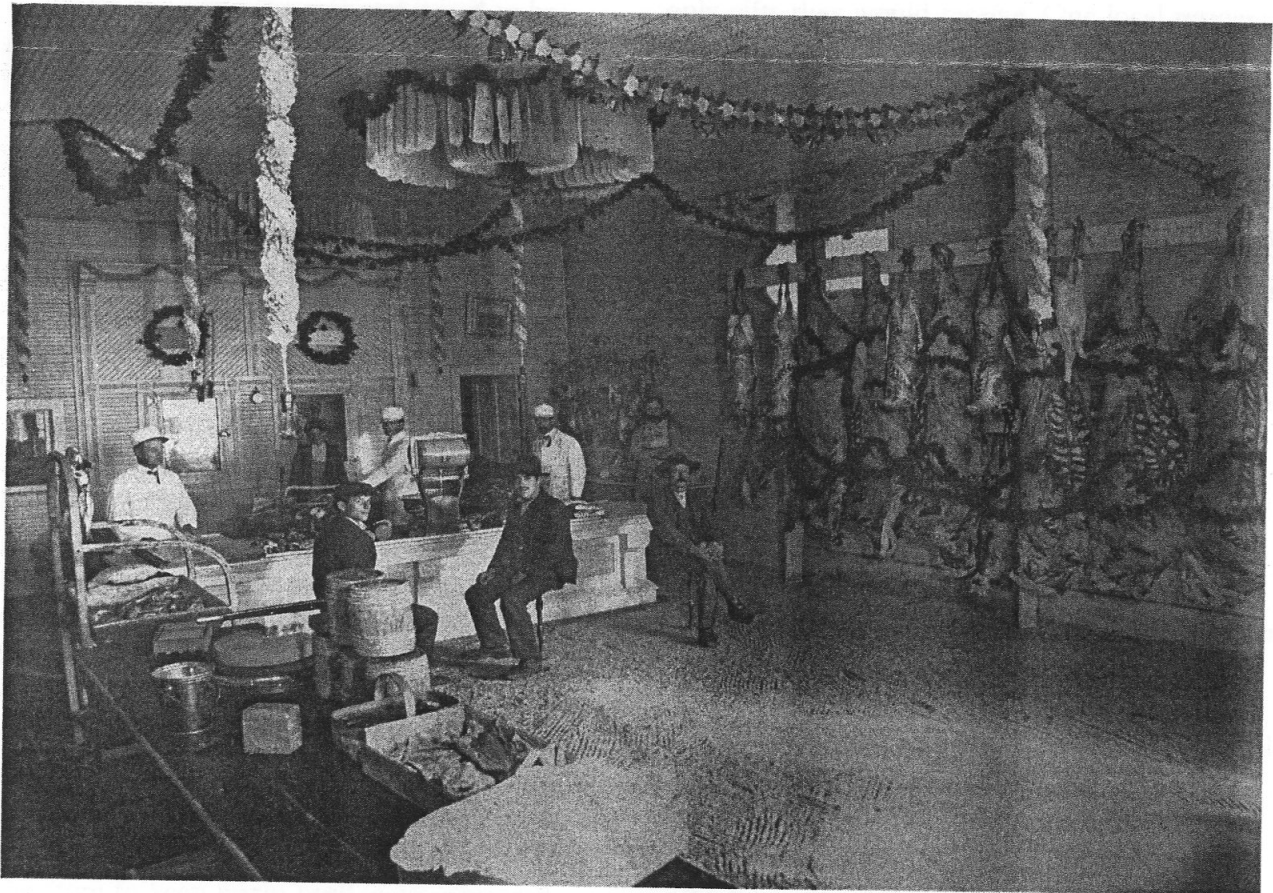
### ***New Members***

Lehman Properties  
Pamela Forcey  
John and Charlene Chiolino  
Nancy Karr  
Tom and Deborah Lamm  
Ferraris Respiratory  
Louisville Tire & Auto Care  
Ledger Services, Inc.  
First National Bank  
Wells Fargo Bank  
Louisville Auto Supply, Inc.  
Heritage Bank  
Helen Kreek  
Andy Zeeck

### ***Renewing Members***

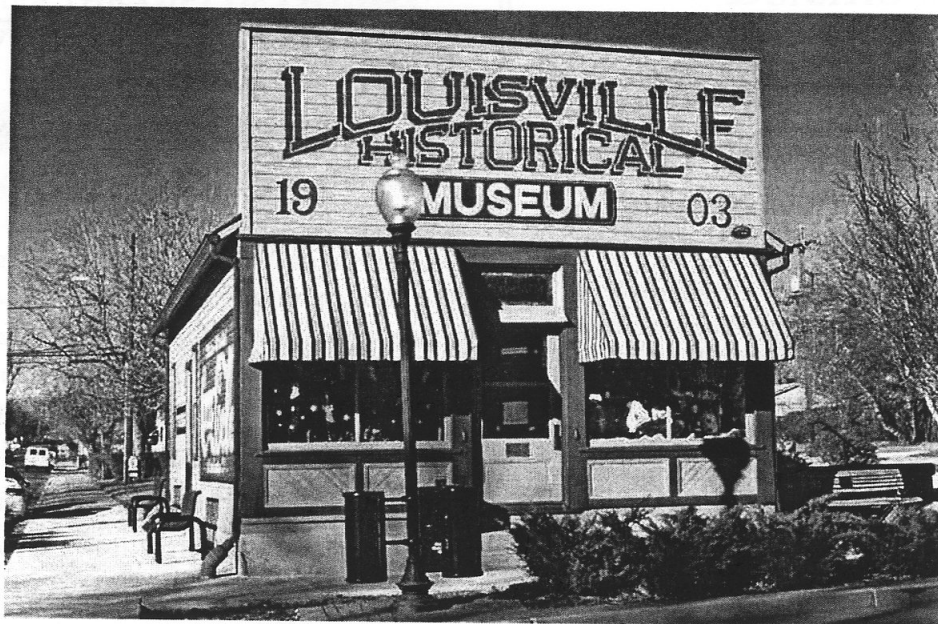
Betty Marino  
Sylvia Kilker

These names consist of recent memberships and renewals in the Louisville Historical Society during the months of August through October. We apologize for any omissions or misspellings. Please contact the museum with corrections to the above list of names.



*The Thirlaway Meat Market, circa 1900, decorated for the holidays  
The market was located at 731 Main Street.*

*Louisville Historical Museum*



1001 Main Street  
Louisville, Colorado  
303.665.9048  
museum@ci.louisville.co.us

Hours:  
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays  
&  
the first Saturday of every month  
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

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749 Main Street  
Louisville CO 80027