

LOUISVILLE HISTORIAN

A publication of the Louisville Historical Commission & Society

Issue No. 27 August 1994

Eileen Schmidt-Editor

MUSEUM CORNER

Several hundred people visited the museums on June 11, 1994, during the "Taste of Louisville." The "Broken Sixpence," a musical group which plays traditional music on old instruments performed under the trees in the front yard of the house museum. This group had performed at the museum during the "Parade of Lights," and were generous enough to agree to a repeat performance. Many visitors gathered around the group and enjoyed them very much; a few people were seen dancing to the music.

We have received several artifacts this summer, and are in the process of cataloging them so that they can be added to our collection. A contract for the shelter to be built between the two buildings has not been finalized, but we are hoping to begin work on this project soon.

Many out of state visitors have toured our buildings this summer, and are very pleased to see the work that has gone into the museums.

The museums will be open on Labor Day, September 5, 1994, during the parade until 1:00 p.m. Cookies and punch will be served outdoors, and we would like to invite all who visit Louisville during this week-end to visit the museums. Labor Day commemorates the establishment of the eight-hour day for the coal miners who struggled for many years to attain this goal. We hope you will help keep the tradition of celebrating this occasion by visiting us and viewing some of the artifacts of our town.

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

It is the time of year to renew your membership in our Louisville Historical Society. We are enclosing a slip of paper for those who wish to join our society or for those renewing their membership to do so. Membership in our society runs from September to September and the cost is \$5.00 per year. Several persons have already paid dues for the year 1994-1995 and their names follow:

Elaine Jacoe	Don and Memory DelForge
Maribeth Bosko	Esther DelForge
Kathleen Crannell	Charles and Iona Thomas
Joe and Joann Petrelli	Barbara J. Downing
Leon and Nancy Wurl	Ann Ahlberg
Frank and Bonnie Domenico	Ray and Dorothy Woodbury
Jennie Milano	Vernon Zurick
Bill Peltier	Theresa Beers
Ruth (Affolter) Babcock	

MOVIE THEATERS IN OUR TOWN

Several months ago, a plan to bring movie theaters to Louisville was finally approved by the city council. The project has been pending for sometime, in spite of the fact that a great deal of support for the theaters was demonstrated by the involvement of the townspeople. Young people, as well as senior citizens and others, had urged the city council to approve this particular undertaking. Attending movies was a favorite pastime of the residents from the early days of the movie theaters. Even during the depression, people seemed to come up with the price of admission—5¢ for children and 15¢ for adults. During the early 1920s there were two theaters in town, the Model and the Isis—both were located on the west side of Main Street, almost side by side. The Model Theater was located in a building that occupied the area where the parking lot of Bank One now stands. The Isis was located in the building which now houses Senior T's, a popular Mexican restaurant.

The abstract indicates that the land where the theaters later stood had many owners dating back to 1878 when the town was first platted by Louis Nawatny. The following transactions were recorded in the abstract beginning in 1901: Joe York—February 1901; J.H. Gilfillan—November 1902; Lewis S. Young—November 1902; J. Vaughn Sickman—March 1907; Otto F. Todd and Janie Todd—April 1908; C.H. Simpson—September 1915; W.H. Dugan—; James Carper—1920; Santino and Mary Biella—1927; Ann and Carmen Romano—August 1945; Beth and Daryl Decker—1972. An interesting item recorded in the abstract shows that Mrs. Jane Carleton received \$285 from the town of Louisville and the United Coal Company for damages done to a house located on the property caused by subsidence of the coal mine which ran under Main Street sometime during 1898.

Continued page 2

LOUISVILLE HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEMBERS

<i>Emajane Enrietto</i>	666-4145
<i>Richard Franchini</i>	666-6272
<i>Marion Junior</i>	666-8283
<i>Donald Ross</i>	666-6836
<i>Eileen Schmidt</i>	666-6853
<i>Patricia Scholes</i>	673-0311
<i>Patricia Seader</i>	666-8385
<i>Cassandra Volpe</i>	665-8542

MOVIE THEATERS continued

Tom Metz was one of the early owners of the Model Theater and his family lived in an apartment which was upstairs above the theater. Otto and Janie Todd were early owners of the Isis Theater which was purchased in 1920 by James Carper who changed the name to Rex sometime during his ownership. The Model Theater closed (sometime around 1925) and the building was used as an IGA grocery store. In the early 1940s Mary LaSalle bought the building and maintained a grocery store there for many years.

Beginning in the late 1920s the movies played an important part in the lives of most people. Even though the movies were silent (the actors didn't speak) the action was accompanied by music played on a piano in the orchestra pit of the theater. Mary (Ferrari) Franchini played the piano in the Rex for several years, but later after the Biellas became the owners a player piano was acquired. Hazel (Zarini) Harris played music on the player piano which added to the excitement taking place on the screen. During these early "silent" movies, the whole plot of the moving picture was portrayed by the expressions on the faces of actors and actresses. After talking pictures were produced, moving pictures became more popular and many wonderful classics are still viewed by audiences. Mike Wisek was one of the early projectionists who were responsible for showing the movies and keeping the projector working properly. Mike Harney was the projectionist who worked for Mr. Biella. Mr. Harney was a very well known ham radio operator, and also taught the young men who attended the U.S. Naval Radio School which was located at the University of Colorado during World War II. Many times during a movie the film would break, and the audience would shout and stamp their feet in protest until the movie resumed. During these times the owners would walk down the aisles shouting for "quiet" adding more confusion to the situation. Young people often arranged to meet a special person at the movies and sat with them during the program.

Shortly after Sandy and Mary Biella became owners of the Rex, the movie industry was booming and the Rex became a first-run facility. This meant that the movies were shown in Louisville at the same time they were being viewed in Denver and other larger cities. This was very important because people didn't have the means of traveling to the larger cities just to see a movie.

Mr. and Mrs. Biella ran the Rex as a family theater. Sandy was responsible for the business end of the operation. Mary, who had been deaf since early childhood, sold tickets; and in spite of her disability very rarely made mistakes in providing the patron with the proper number of tickets that they had requested.

Mr. Biella offered part-time jobs, such as dusting the seats, sweeping the front lobby, sweeping the theater, and other work necessary to maintain the building to the young people of the community. These particular jobs were coveted by the youngsters because although they weren't paid, they were able to attend the movies as often as they liked. Many nieces and nephews of the Biellas were employed by them and grew up being part of the movie business. There was a "back door" to the building which opened to the alley, and it was often left ajar by one of the young workers to allow their friends to come into the theater after it was dark inside.

The movie pictures changed three times weekly. One movie was shown on Sunday and Monday, one on Tuesday and Wednesday, no movies on Thursday, and a different one on Friday and Saturday. Mr. Biella instituted a Saturday matinee which featured a "serial" which continued for several weeks. Some of the more popular serials were "Buck Rogers," "Hop-a-Long Cassidy," Gene Autry and Smiley Burnett adventures, and "Flash Gordon." The youngsters would save their pennies so they wouldn't have to miss one episode of their favorite serial.

As another enticement for people to attend the movies, Mr. Biella offered a "bank night" on Tuesday and Wednesday night. The jackpot started with \$25.00 which often built up to over \$100.00. Patrons attending the movie on Tuesday night filled out a card which was deposited in a large box. Those attending on Wednesday night were also eligible to win the money. The names of those who had registered to participate in the bank night were checked against those who attended the movie on either night and a winner was determined. If there was no winner, five dollars was added to the amount of the jackpot. Needless to say, any extra money was a windfall in those days of the depression. Many times there was "standing room only" at the Rex on bank night.

One special event remembered by many early moviegoers was the showing of "Gone With the Wind" which was shown in Louisville at the same time it was being seen by audiences in much larger cities. This was the first technicolor moving picture ever produced and due to the amount of interest shown, Mr. Biella added a matinee to be shown on Sunday afternoon. The amount of admission charged for this movie was increased to 75¢ and 35¢ for the matinee, and the evening showings were \$1.00 for adults and 50¢ for children. This particular movie was also shown for three days instead of two, and it is said that there was a full house for each showing.

Everyone spoke of "going to the show" instead of "going to the movies." Many times friends met at the "show" to spend

MOVIE THEATERS continued

the evening together watching the movie.

In the early days, the movie theaters also hosted other forms of entertainment such as plays presented by a group of local amateur actors, talent shows, baby contests, and from time to time a traveling show would be presented there. One special occasion occurred when the MGM production company brought the lion which was used in their advertising to Louisville in a circus cage. Everyone gathered on Main Street to see "Leo, the Lion."

Sandy and Mary Biella also added the first concession stand, featuring both buttered and caramel popcorn machine, a variety of 5¢ candy bars, and an assortment of 1¢ candy. The refreshments were a very popular addition. The popcorn which the Biellas had shipped from Chicago was used during the World's Fair which was held there in 1927.

After Ann and Carmen Romano became proprietors of the Rex in August 1945, the Sunday matinee became a part of the schedule. This matinee was well attended because it didn't interfere with the children's bedtime, and the time on Sunday afternoon was filled with a pleasant pastime. At this time most of the movies made were considered family movies and suitable for viewing by any age group.

In 1952 Carmen and Ann opened the L&L Motor Vu drive-in theater; Drive-in theaters attracted families, and the youngsters were often seen in their pajamas as they enjoyed the movies in the family car with their parents. There was a concession stand where snacks could be purchased and items such as pickled pigs feet, sandwiches, and ice cream were added to the usual treats. Many times the family would bring their own treats to the drive-in. This entertainment proved to be very popular, and an old advertisement of the L&L read "Save on baby-sitters, parking expenses, admissions (which were cheaper by the car) and clothing—come as you are." The drive-in was a casual and inexpensive form of entertainment.

Beth and Daryl Decker purchased the Rex from the Romanos in 1972. An admission sign for the time during World War II was found by the Deckers, and the cost of attending a movie for adults was 35¢ including war taxes. After Beth and Daryl took over the theater the business of running it became a family affair. Daryl ran the ticket office, Beth was in the concessions, and sons, Mike and Jeff along with friend, Tommy Hasselwood, ran the projector.

The price of admission then was 50¢ to 75¢. They began running special productions such as Disney's "Wilderness Journey" and other Disney films. They also featured road shows which were special showings of movies that were not shown as part of the regular movie schedule. The company which made the film would do all the advertising, set the price

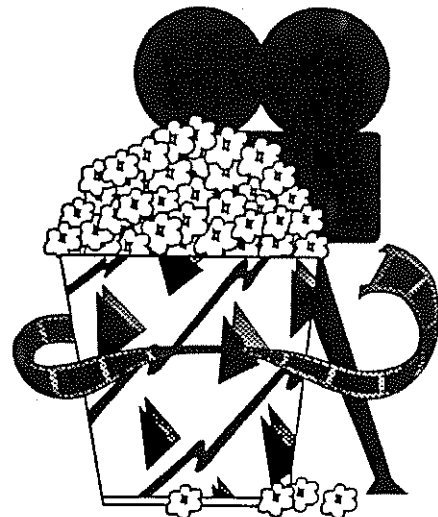
of the admission, and take over the actual showing of the movie. Daryl Decker recalls that they were usually adventurous movies and a nice change from the regular productions. The advertising for the theater was done on the marquee and on posters in the front showing the coming attractions. By 1972 movies were shown on Friday and Saturday nights only. On the day before Christmas, the Deckers showed a free movie which was well attended by mostly children, but anyone was welcome.

The Deckers also discovered a tunnel in the basement of the theater which ran under Main Street. It seemed to lead to the pool hall located just across the street. In 1977, the Rex Theater building was sold to Ted and Carolyn Manzanares and was converted to a Mexican restaurant. The old screen which was used to advertise various businesses is on exhibit in the waiting room of the restaurant. Several seats taken from the old Rex Theater are now used by customers waiting to be seated.

The Deckers also ran the L&L drive-in until 1976 when, because of other business interests, they leased to another party. As television became more popular and more R-rated movies were being made, it was more difficult to be successful running a privately owned theater which featured family oriented movies. In 1981 Beth and Daryl Decker sold the property where the drive-in was located to Boulder Community Hospital and an urgent care center is now situated there.

It will be fun for Louisville to have movies available in our city again, and many of us will remember the early theaters and the L&L drive-in with much nostalgia as we attend the new theaters.

Maybe you'll hear friends again planning to meet at the "show."



BLUE PARROT 75TH ANNIVERSARY

In 1905, when Michael Colacci was 19 years old, he borrowed enough money to buy a suit (about \$18.00) and came to the United States. He had no job, and couldn't speak the English language when he boarded a train headed for Canada. Eventually, he landed in Boston where he found work on the railroad, in spite of the language barrier. Michael stayed in Boston a short time because a friend from the same area of Italy from which he came told him he could make a lot more money digging coal in Colorado. He soon traveled to Colorado, where he found a job in a mine located between Marshall and Louisville. Since he had no other transportation he walked to and from work each day.

Because of the Colorado coal strike in 1910, Michael decided to return to Italy to see his family. Immediately upon his arrival in Italy, he was drafted into the army and dispatched to the colonial war in Ethiopia. After serving three years in the army, he was discharged and returned to the coal mining area around Louisville. He began working in the coal mines again, and he and his brother, Jim, started a dairy business in Louisville; but the farm failed during the agricultural depression of 1919.

Mary (Irucci) Colacci was born in Sheri, Italy in 1899. The Irucci family of six girls came to the United States in 1910. Mike and Mary Colacci were married on January 9, 1916, when she was sixteen and he was thirty, at the St. Louis Church in Louisville. Two sons were born to them--Joseph was born on November 16, 1916, and Anthony was born June 28, 1918.

After the failure of their dairy business in 1919, Mike bought an old drugstore (located where the Blue Parrot now stands) and the house which stood on Pine Street east of the store.

Mike Colacci also owned a store across the street from the restaurant where the Louisville 66 gas station now stands. This store was bought from the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, and the family ran the business until 1929 when they were forced to sell because they had extended too much credit during the years. L.J. Mossoni moved the building to the back of the lot and opened a gas station there.

The following information about the beginning of the restaurant and the Colacci family was taken from a complimentary collector's menu which was printed in May 1993.

"Mike and Mary Colacci started the BLUE PARROT RESTAURANT in 1919. The menu consisted of hot Tamale sandwiches, Chili Hamburgers, and other sandwiches. Mary and Mike's Sunday meal was homemade spaghetti with red sauce that Mary made from scratch by blanching bushels of tomatoes, then sitting for hours with family and friends

peeling tomatoes and drying them on screens, outside in the sun, for tomato paste. Since Mary and Mike were more than eager to feed family, friends, and even strangers roaming through town that were hungry, they usually ended up with a fair amount of people with whom they shared Sunday dinner.

As time went by, Mary continued to fix Sunday dinner for more and more people; someone suggested to her that it was too expensive to keep feeding everyone free and convinced her to start charging a small fee for her spaghetti dinners. Needless to say, that is how the BLUE PARROT RESTAURANT began.

Mike continued to work in the coal mines for an undetermined amount of time to supplement their income until the restaurant could support them.

The couple conceived two sons, Joe, the oldest and Anthony, the youngest. Joe is now the owner of the BLUE PARROT RESTAURANT, but is semi-retired. All of Joe's five children are involved in some capacity at the BLUE PARROT RESTAURANT. His four daughters, Vickie Villegas, Joan Riggins, Edie Colacci, and Mary Ann Colacci, are the managers at present. His only son, Richard Colacci, works within the restaurant making, bottling, and labeling the sauce that is sold to different stores in the area for resale."

The name BLUE PARROT was chosen because the Colacci family often visited the Blue Parrot restaurant, located in Denver, which was a favorite of their mother, Mary.

Joe Colacci recalls that when he returned home in 1945 after serving in the army during World War II, he took down the sign which read "Spaghetti by reservation--on week-ends only" and from that time until the present the restaurant had been opened for business every day. They do close for some holidays now in order for them and their employees to enjoy the time with their own families.

Many of you may remember when the young people of our town gathered around the table in the kitchen of the restaurant on Friday and Saturdays for sandwiches and soft drinks after school functions. People from various places throughout the country have visited the Blue Parrot and many prominent people have enjoyed the food there.

The restaurant has survived hard times, changes of management, and a fire which destroyed much of the old building a few years ago, but it continues to be an important landmark in Louisville.

The Blue Parrot has been a symbol of the Italian culture for seventy-five years and it is hoped that the Colacci family will enjoy continued success in the future.

LACKNER'S TAVERN

On June 1, 1994, a new family restaurant opened in the building which was originally known as Lackner's Tavern. This structure, which was built in 1900, reflects the type of architecture which was so prevalent at that time. The building was a frame, single story saloon which was very similar in design to the other saloons in this area. Although Lackner's Tavern was somewhat isolated from the commercial district along Front Street, its location on the southeast corner of Front and Pine streets, and the nearby railroad tracks, linked it to the other saloons farther north on Front Street. As Louisville matured and began to assume an attitude of respectability, a town ordinance was passed by the town board limiting the saloon trade to Front Street.

The decorative arch above the entrance to Lackner's Tavern with its sun-ray motif provided an important design feature, and reflects the effort of Mr. Lackner to give the building a more imposing and refined appearance. The interior of the structure featured a massive oak bar with leaded windows and Corinthian columns. Through the years, the bar was refinished with several coats of dark varnish. The new owners stripped the bar completely, and returned it to the beautiful oak which it was originally. As the new owners were remodeling the structure and trying to return it to its original interior, a window was discovered which had been boarded up by a previous owner. This has given the building a much lighter interior making it much more attractive.

Joseph Lackner used the vacant lot west of the tavern as a beer garden in the early 1900s. A beer garden has been added to the south of the building by the present owners. This beer garden has proven to be a very popular feature and is often filled to capacity. A large swing which was located in the beer garden west of the original tavern was very popular with some of the town's young people during the early days.

After the Lackners sold the business (about 1930), the tavern attracted a different type of clientele and the condition of the building deteriorated. The reputation of the establishment suffered as a result. Until this year the "Track Inn" as it was called was definitely not known as a family type establishment, but since June 1, the old "Lackner Tavern" has become the "Pine Street Junction" and is becoming very popular with families.

The following is a short family history of the Joseph Lackner family, written by one of the granddaughters. This history of the Lackner family is on file at the Louisville Historical Museum located at 1001 Main Street in Louisville along with the histories of many of the old families that settled here.

JOSEPH LACKNER 1857-1939

Joseph Lackner was born in Zell am Ziller, Tirol, an Alpine region of Austria on 7 December 1857. His parents were Anton and Theresia (Schweiger) Lackner. Joseph had an older half-brother, John Schweiger, and a younger sister, Caroline (Lackner) Dexter. The Schweigers and Dexters settled in Lafayette, CO, and the Lackners in Louisville.

Leaving Austria in 1876, Joseph Lackner immigrated to Pennsylvania where his half-brother, John Schweiger, was living. In 1878 Joseph, John, and his wife, Margaret Mayhoffer, moved to Colorado, living in the Central City-Black Hawk area for a short time. Joseph filed his Declaration of Intention to naturalize in Gilpin County, and on 6 June 1881 he became a citizen of the United States.

It is believed that Joseph Lackner lived in Central City and Boulder, working as a bartender in these thriving communities before establishing a business in Louisville with a partner in 1880. A Louisville Business Directory for 1880 lists the business as Lachner and Co., saloon.

On 8 July 1884 Joseph Lackner was married to Rosina Eberharter in a ceremony in Louisville. The rites were solemnized by a Catholic priest, Rev. G. Raber, and witnessed by Mr. Joseph Heim and Miss Elizabeth Eberharter, presumably a sister of the bride.

Joseph and Rosina's first son, Frances (Frankie), was born in 1886, and their second son, Joseph Albert, was born 24 March 1888. At the birth of their third son, Edward, in October 1889, Rosina died, leaving Joseph with three small children to raise. It is thought at this time Joseph was able to employ Sabina Heim, who lived in Boulder, to care for the children, while Joseph went back to Austria to bring his mother and father to America to live. During this period the baby, Edward, died at the age of four months.

Upon Joseph's return from Austria and a brief courtship, he and Sabina Heim were married on 9 December 1890 at South Boulder. The rites were solemnized by a Catholic priest, Rudesindus Schrembs, and witnessed by Morris and Katie Kirkmeyer, cousins of Sabina. In due time Joseph and Sabina Lackner had six children: Theresia, Mary, Maxcy, Elfreda, Marguerite, and Carmelita.

Joseph Lackner became a property owner in March 1887 when he bought land on Front Street in Louisville. He purchased one lot from Frank Weisenhorn, and adjoining property from Mary Ann Morton in 1891, and from Margaret Fienen in 1903. The total property consisted of 2-1/2 lots at the corner of Pine and Front Streets.

The family home at 630 Front Street was built sometime before 1895, and has been remodeled several times over the years. In 1985 Jim and Judy Garcia purchased the property

Continued on back

JOSEPH LACKNER continued

and did Extensive remodeling, preserving the original style of the Victorian house. It is presently open as a consignment shop, Second Hand Rose.

The Lackners had a beer hall built on the back corner of Lot 1 next to the Colorado Central Railroad tracks. This location was near the depot where the Interurban Electric train stopped on its daily trips between Boulder and Denver. The Lackner building was constructed by Herman H. Ficher, and is still being used today. The business is known as The Track Inn.

Through the years Joseph Lackner managed the beer hall, and also dealt in wholesale cigars, wines, beers and ales. The merchandise was stored in the sawdust-lined attic of the building, which provided good insulation and kept products cool and fresh. At one time Joseph utilized the damp, dirt cellar under the beer hall to grow mushrooms. Joseph Heim, uncle of Sabina Lackner, worked with Joseph at the beer hall.

Joseph Lackner was a quiet, friendly proprietor who was well-liked by the residents of Louisville. He was a member of the Louisville Redman Lodge, and was elected City Treasurer of Louisville for the years 1906-08.

About 1921 pool tables were purchased for the business, and the Boulder County Directory of 1923 lists the business as a Billiard Parlor. The property was well-kept, and the business prospered for many years. Because of poor health and aging, with the coming of the Depression about 1930, the Lackners rented the billiard parlor and the houses to tenants, and Joseph and Sabina moved into Denver. The Louisville property was sold in 1937 to Hugo Peltzer of Denver.

Joseph Lackner died of bronchopneumonia in Denver General Hospital on 12 February 1939. Sabina Lackner died on 7 July 1959 in Mercy Hospital in Denver. Both are buried at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Denver.

Typeset, Layout and Design K de L & Co. Phone / FAX (303) 666-4259

Louisville Historical Commission
749 Main Street
Louisville, CO 80027

LOUISVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY
950 SPRUCE ST
LOUISVILLE CO 80027