

THE LOUISVILLE HISTORIAN

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EDITOR - RON BUFFO

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Virginia Caranci

Every time another year goes by, I think how hard everyone has worked to accomplish all the many projects that were completed.

The Commission was first started twelve years ago when Mayor John Waschak appointed nine people who were interested in preserving Louisville's history. Now to see those dreams come true is gratifying to everyone.

Since the inception of the Historical Commission the following have been accomplished:

- * Preservation of the Community Building that was rapidly deteriorating. We were able to get the brick sandblasted and repainted, the windows replaced and the wood refinished. Someday we will get the cupola (bell tower) replaced and bell put into it, the lions fins back on the roof and it will then be completely restored back to its natural state.

- * The Louisville Historical Society was formed and we now work on all of the projects together. There are over one hundred twenty members in the Society and we are continuing to stimulate more interest each month.

- * Everyone enjoys the quarterly newsletter that is written by the Commission and Society and it continues to create great interest.

- * We have collected thousands of artifacts and pictures from people who are interested in helping us preserve the history of Louisville and their family's story as well. We continue to interview local persons to add to our oral history files.

The family histories are still being collected and will be compiled into a book. (Have you sent your family history to us?)

But not least, we now have two museums that are ongoing projects for the Commission

Yes, we are starting a new year soon and as a member of the Commission for twelve years, and as Chairperson of the Commission at present I want to say, "Members on the Historical Commission have come and gone, but each and everyone has left their mark in preserving the history of Louisville. We could never have achieved this point in our projects without the groundwork of all their efforts. So, thanks to all of you who at one time or another served on the Louisville Historical Commission, a dedicated group of citizens interested in preserving the history of our great city."

JACOE STORE

Finishing touches have been put on the new museum and many thanks go to the following people for their most recent assistance: **Bob Enrietto** for helping with the lighting fixtures, **Don Ross** for carpentry, **Carm DeSantis** for his assistance in the purchasing of hooks, and gallery moulding, and **Vickie Villegas** for her help in acquiring the screen door.

The store is in beautiful condition and the Commission held its first meeting there in November. The public is welcome and the meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

You will notice that the Museum is remaining relatively empty. The reason is that when we do move in with displays and artifacts we want to do the very best job possible. Display cases have to be fixed or refinished and some new display items have to be purchased. Be assured that the Museum will be first class in every aspect.

CURATOR'S CORNER

by Betty Buffo

We are now cataloging on the first and third Thursday's of each month from 1 to 3 p.m. Our collection is becoming quite extensive and that will make for some fascinating displays.

Additionally, it is important to note that the Historical Commission is a member of the **Association of Northern Front Range Museums**. The Association meets monthly at various museums along the front range and different topics are covered at each meeting. The Association has become a great resource for us and soon a member will be assisting us in setting up our newly completed museum. Most recently Bill and Betty Buffo and Marion Junior attended a meeting at Henderson, Colorado.

Donations are continually being sought. An Artifact Acceptance Committee, made up of the curator and Commission members, regularly meets to evaluate donations.

Plans are now tentatively in the works for an outside display as we are beginning to acquire artifacts that will lend themselves to an out-of-building environment.

Ralph and Mary Johnson - Forge, anvil, blacksmith tools, pictures, bench, belt stretcher, theater seat, folding chairs, wood boxes, ax, fire nozzle, single tree and bucket pump.

Mrs. Joe McHugh - WW I bugle and 48 star flag.

Earl and Barbara Bolton - Light fixture from late 1800's and radio tube.

Andy DeBorski - 3 Cardox shells.

Sylvia Kilker - Memorabilia 1935-1940.

William Buffo - Photo.

Albert DePizzo - Cement mixer. WPA era.

Again, thank you one and all for your unselfish contributions.

LADY ELKS - AMERICAN LEGION - BLUE PARROT DONATIONS

Once again the generosity of three outstanding Louisville organizations is in evidence in the form of monetary and material donations to the Museum. The Lady Elks have given a gift of \$250, the American Legion \$50 and the Blue Parrot has donated the screen door for the back of the museum. It is through the example of these businesses that the Commission hopes others will follow.

DONORS ADD TO MUSEUM COLLECTION

The Historical Museum has been the proud beneficiary of many donations throughout the years. We would like to thank the following people for recent donations made to the museum.

Lawrence Rickman - Photos from Louisville Rod and Gun Club.

Ray and Dorothy Woodbury - Hair crimper, toaster rack, papers, space heater, bassinet, wicker toilet chair and hats.

Glen and Ann Huey - War coupon books, K.P. pin, trunk, wood boxes, flour reservoir, school chair and high chair.

Virginia and Eugene Caranci - Chandelier, hotdog cooker and lard can.

Helen Caranci - Bedspread, wood fork, platter and wine spigot.

Marion DiGiacomo - Wool Blanket

John and June Franchini - Sewing basket.

Bill and Florence Windsor - Gold Star Flag, WWII Service Flag.

Brian and Nina Kelleghen - Certificate and miner's pail.

Bill and Kim Junior - Baby articles, book, blanket, brush, powder, soap and wash cloth.

Carmen and Ann Romano - 44 glass photos.

THANK YOU JOHN GARCIA!

Mr. John Garcia, a member of the Louisville Historical Commission since 1986, has announced that he will not retain his seat on the Commission. John has been a valuable asset since his appointment to the board and has been instrumental in the completion of the new museum. For the past year, one couldn't pass the museum without seeing John's car there and him inside pounding, scraping, sanding or painting. It was difficult work yet John was determined to see the museum finished. John's invaluable help in everything concerning the Historical Commission has not been without notice. We will certainly miss John Garcia and we want him to know that he will be remembered as a crucial member of our organization.

Thanks John!

NEW MUSEUM HOURS AND PHONE NUMBER

The Louisville Historical Museum is open on Thursday's from 1 to 3 p.m. Again, special tours can be arranged by appointment. Please call 665-9048 leave a message or hear about upcoming events.

THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH KASENGA, SR. AND MARY SIROKMAN KASENGA

by Elsie Kasenga Stucka

My dad, Joseph Kasenga, Sr. was one of three brothers, John and George Kasenga and one sister. He was born March 22, 1885. At the age of nineteen he sailed for America from what was Austria-Hungary, city of Uloza, and which is now Czechoslovakia. His two brothers had preceded him to America. They settled in Indiana, Illinois or Pennsylvania.

He did not wish to live with them and the West intrigued him. He came to Colorado, worked in the steel mills in Pueblo, and was living there during the big flood. He eventually moved to Louisville and worked in the coal mines. He worked in practically all the mines in and around Louisville, Superior and Marshall. I remember some of the names, but not all of them - Hecla, Highway, Brooks, Acme, Centennial I and II and the Monarch.

There was a big explosion in one of the mines and I remember how terrible he felt. He said that it could have happened to him. He did suffer a broken leg in the mine.

We lived through the First World War, the Five Year Strike, the Great Depression, and World War II. During the Five Year Strike, dad, Louis Gutfelder and George all participated. Dad spoke of how they had taken their guns and were all in a ditch north of the railroad tracks and close to the Hocheder ranch, all ready to go after the scabs, when someone turned on the water in the ditch and almost drowned them.

He also spoke of a time when the W.W.'s (Wobblies) came to town to rouse the striking miners to continue their walk out and not to give in. The scabs hired by the owners were not welcome in the town. I went to several meetings with Dad. They sang songs and had a lot of speakers and they had the audience all stirred up. Then they took up a collection. This went on for awhile. Then one night when we were supposed to go to a meeting, we learned that the leaders had taken all the money collected each night and had skipped town. What a let down.

First, we lived in town in a house one half block from St. Louis Catholic School, 1008 Grant Street, and we all went to St. Louis Catholic School, even after we moved out on the farm.

When I was six in 1919 we moved out on a ten acre farm northeast of Louisville where the Royal filling station now is, and where the Christopher Village shopping center - Medical/Dental Center is now located.

Dad and Mother lived there until they bought their house at 943 at 920 Lincoln Avenue, Louisville, where

they lived until Dad died on March 15, 1977 and Mother died on June 10, 1982.

While on the farm, Dad raised white popcorn for the local theater owned by Mr. Biella, and he kept him well supplied for many years. They raised sweet corn and sold it to the town, rhubarb, raspberries, chickens and eggs, and even milk for a little while. Mother was known to give a baker's dozen to all her egg customers.

During the Depression, and even during the summers when the mines were not working, we lived on the things that were raised on the farm - succulent ears of corn, carrots, other vegetables, apples, cherries, watermelon, cantelopes, pickles and of course, chickens, eggs, milk, cream and cheese.

While on the farm we lived in a house, four rooms, that dad bought from the Hecla mine, which was just across the road from his property to the east. I still remember the bullet hole in the kitchen window which was put there during the strike. Dad was a good carpenter and he put a back porch on the house and built a front room and an enclosed front porch.

I remember a huge snowstorm when I was eight or nine years old. All the roads into town were closed and we had so many night frosts that it was frozen solid and we had to walk on top of the snow to get to school. We built a tunnel house in one of the big drifts in the backyard and we played in it for weeks. Uncle Mike Sirokman walked on top of it when it began to melt and fell through the ceiling of our snow house. Dad shoveled paths through the deep snow to the outhouse, to the chicken coop, and to the horse and cow barn. It was deeper than I and it was most exciting to run through them.

I also remember a terrible rain storm. It rained and rained for days. We ended up with a huge pond in the center of our farm and when it stopped and got warmer I saw my first polliwogs.

Dad had many responsible jobs in the coal mines. He received a shot firemen's certificate and for years he was the one who planted the charges of dynamite in the mines. He retired at the age of seventy-four. He and Mother became custodians of the St. Louis Catholic School for many years after that. He tended his lawn and flowers, planted a little garden, and even cared for chickens in town. He loved planting trees and gave them away to neighbors and friends.

I will never forget when he died and funeral cars started from the church, first the bells tolled, and then it seemed like the entire town stopped for a minute to bid him farewell.

Dad became a Naturalized Citizen before he and Mary were married and he was very proud of that fact. After we children were born and began to talk, he made sure that we spoke in English and he insisted on that language being spoken around the house. The only time I heard them speak in Slovenian was when they argued or he did not want us children to understand. We did learn some words and that was okay.

Dad had very little formal education, but he could speak, read and write in both languages, and he was a whiz with figures and math.

He greatly admired Josephine Roch and John Lewis who helped the working miners and did all they could to get fair wages and eight-hour days, and safety in the mines.

MARY ELIZABETH SIROKMAN was my mother. She was a **HOMEMAKER** in the big sense of the word. She was only sixteen and a half when she married my father. They had three children, Joseph Jr., Margaret, and myself (Elsie) during the Five Year Strike and she did a good job in rearing us. She was an excellent cook, baked all her own bread and rolls, and sewed for the entire family. Remember the flowered flour sacks! We had blouses, dresses and undies made from them.

We were so poor, but so were so many other families, that we hardly noticed it. Mother would make soup and Dad got the meat and we got the vegetables. She fried bacon and eggs for Dad, and he got the bacon and we could have an egg, for she raised chickens, and we could dip our home made bread in the drippings (mousti), and to this day, I love the drippings almost more than the bacon.

When we walked home from school, which was over a mile, and were fairly starved, she always had fresh bread with homemade butter and a little bit of cinnamon to serve us until it was supper time.

She was an immaculate housekeeper and she taught my sister and I how to keep a house clean.

Every Saturday we had to help her kill and clean the chickens for Sunday's dinner. I remember once when Albert had a pet chicken who followed him all over the farm and mother decided that the chicken was getting almost too old to cook and eat, and when Albert was away, she caught the chicken with a long wire and was just ready to cut or chop its head off, and the chicken turned to her and said, "Caw, caw", and she just could not kill it. It lived to be a ripe old age and finally died.

She made our dresses for school and for Sunday. She washed them on a wash board, and ironed them with a

heavy iron that she heated on the coal stove. She always baked bread on the same day so that she would have a hot stove. She was the first one in Louisville to get a Maytag Wash Machine and that was wonderful. Almost the entire town talked to her and she was instrumental in selling many, many wash machines for the company. She took such good care of that machine that it lasted over fifty years, and she only bought a second one when it wore out.

Mother canned fruit and made jam, put up pickles and relishes by the hundred jars, and even made sauerkraut by the barrel. Dad loved his sauerkraut and had it almost every day of his life.

Mom embroidered a lot and I still have some of her scarves, pillow cases and tea towels. She was in her 80's when she stopped because it was hard on her eyes.

The ladies of St. Louis Catholic Church used to have a chicken dinner to help the church. Mother and Mrs. Gutfelder, Susie DiGiacomo, Rose Ross, and a lot of other ladies, used to go to the farmers to get the chickens and then they would clean and dress them, and then they would get up at 2:00 a.m. to start frying them. They would ask young men to help in the kitchen and do the dishes, for they did not have dishwashers in those days. They would serve as many as 1,000 dinners. We would take our children up there, and they were oh, so good.

Mom and dad celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary with their children on April 20, 1974.

She attended her son's (Joseph Kasenga, Jr.) 50th Wedding Anniversary in 1982 in a wheelchair and she had a wonderful time visiting with her old time friends and relatives. It was her last "big party" for she died on June 10, 1982. She was a wonderful mother.

**THE LOUISVILLE
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION AND
SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO
WISH EVERYONE
A HAPPY AND JOYOUS
HOLIDAY SEASON**

THE KILKERS AND THE WILLISES - LOUISVILLE PIONEER FAMILIES

by Jane Barker (from the Boulder Daily Camera - June 3, 1973)

In 1897 two pioneer Louisville families, the Kilkers and the Willises, began construction of their new homes. The houses, located southeast of Louisville, were to be large, two-story frame structures identical to each other in construction and design.

It was not really surprising that the Kilkers and the Willises shared the same ideas about houses since they had so many interests in common. Both families had immigrated to the Colorado Territory and had homesteaded in the Louisville area. An early history "Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity" published in 1898, states that Kilker, Willis, and James F. Jones were the first settlers in this section of the Coal Creek Valley.

Owen Kilker was born in Ireland in 1842. As a young child he immigrated to the United States with his parents who settled first in Indiana, and then later in Denver.

After completing his schooling, Owen married Bridget Lavell, also a native of Ireland. The couple then came to Boulder County. Here they acquired 160 acres of land which, during the next 16 years, they turned into one of the finest irrigated farms in the territory.

Mrs. Patricia Gelwick (Mrs. Clyde Gelwick) of Boulder, a great-granddaughter of Owen Kilker, recently shared an account of the early days written by her mother, the late Nellie Ellsberry McCorkle:

"My earliest recollections of pioneer living was during the 1890's. I spent many summers with the Kilker family, my mother's parents, Owen and Bridget Kilker who had homesteaded 160 acres of land one mile south and one mile east of Louisville. It was 1878 when they filed on the land.

"I remember the log house - one big room and two smaller ones, a kitchen with a big coal range, the other room was a bedroom. My grandmother, grandfather, great-grandfather Lavelle, Sabina, John, Michael, Gene, Anthony, James, and Patrick (children of Owen and Bridget) lived there. In the spring and summer the day began about daylight - 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning. Chores were done before breakfast - milking, feeding and watering the stock. While this was being done, Grandmother and my Aunt Sabina prepared breakfast. What a breakfast - pancakes, bacon, ham, sometimes fried potatoes (Irish fried) occasionally oatmeal or cornmeal. Tea was made in a large granite pot with the

coffee in a bag and it was boiled and boiled. If there was any left over, it was used again. After breakfast it was my duty to gather up the dishes from the long dining table and one of the boys helped me.

"In the meantime Sabina started the baking, mixing bread, baking pies, cakes, doughnuts, coffee cake, sweet rolls, fried dough. Something was always cooking or baking on the old coal range. They used lots of dried fruit, prunes, peaches, apricots. There was some fresh fruit-apples, mulberries, cherries. They canned some fruit, but it was hauled all the way from the western slope and was quite expensive.

"After breakfast Grandmother (we called her "Ma") and Gene and Mike went out to look after the chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, pigs, and young calves. The milk was not separated in those days. It was strained and put in big milk pans, taken to the cellar and covered with cheese cloth. Pans from the previous days were skimmed of the cream and put in crocks set in water to be kept cool for churning.

"The garden was the next project. Ma, Gene and Mike (the boys) hoed and pulled weeds while she selected the vegetables, peas, beans, lettuce, radishes. The late vegetables-turnips, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, Hubbard squash, cucumbers and sweet corn. These late vegetables were planted away from the early ones and great-grandfather planted and cultivated these. All vegetables had to be washed at the well. The water was hauled up in buckets and tubs and buckets were filled every day for house use. The well water was hard-full of alkali. On wash days Ma used Sal soda to break the water. This brought the alkali to the top of the boiler which was then skimmed off. There was a barrel under one corner of the roof to catch the rain water for washing hair.

"The men did everything the hard way too. Grandfather, Anthony and John did the farming. Horses and a team of mules were used for the farm work. Plowing seemed the hardest. The boys followed behind the plow and walked in the furrows. With the other machines they could ride-the rakes, mowers, harrows, binders and seeders.

"In the later summer when the grain was ripe, the threshing machines moved in. That was so exciting. The women cooked and baked ahead of time to feed the threshing crew. This went on for about three days, depending on the weather. After this was done, there was usually a feeling of depression because the grain

didn't turn out as well as they had hoped, or prices went down on the Chicago grain market...

"Nevertheless life went on and they hoped for better things next year. At the evening meal they talked of a new house-next year. The farmers in this community were always concerned over the water situation. These farms were under the Goodhue ditch, but felt they were not getting their fair share of water which was so essential for irrigation and successful farming. Regardless of all these problems, the family was a happy one and always ready for fun..."

Regarding the Kilker house, Mrs. McCorkle wrote:

"The family was growing up and finally a new house was built-a large house with nine rooms, five bedrooms upstairs. There were rag rugs and ruffled curtains all over the house. The women sewed and sewed on carpet rags, and Mrs. Murdock wove the rugs.

"Ma knitted mittens and wristlets for all the young clan. Winter time was not so busy, although Grandfather and the oldest boy worked in the mines. Everyone went to church on Sunday morning. Grandfather Lavelle usually walked to Louisville to attend early Mass. He was a familiar figure to the neighbors as he trudged along the roadside with his cane.

The Willis farm, located one mile north of the Kilker farm, is on the road directly east of the Louisville cemetery. William A. Willis, a native of Kentucky, came to Colorado in 1864 as a teamster on a wagon train. It was his job to drive the six yoke of oxen pulling one of the 52 wagons in the train.

1864 was a year of great unrest among the Indians of the West, and of frequent occasions of hostile actions between the tribes in the area and the white settlers pushing through Indian lands. The wagon train with which Willis traveled were aware of the constant danger and took precautionary measures of forming stockades and corrals for the cattle whenever the train stopped to camp. The train arrived in Denver on Aug. 23, 1864. From there they went to Golden and then on to Central City.

Willis continued in the freighting business for a couple of years, and then engaged in farming in the Arvada area. Later he herded cattle around Coal Creek, and in 1876 homesteaded 160 acres east of Louisville. There he built up a prosperous farming and cattle raising business.

Nicknamed "Uncle Billy" by his friends and relatives, Willis served for two terms as constable, and in the fall of 1897 was elected to the Boulder County Board of Commissioners. He was one of four candidates (all of whom were old settlers) who ran for office. Much to his surprise he was elected to the board by a majority of 386 votes.

In July 1894 Willis had discovered coal on his land and three years later sold all except five acres of his original 160 acre tract to the Citizens Coal and Coke Company. On his remaining five acres he built his two-story frame house.

JINGLES FOR THE ALUMINUM DRIVE

During World War II the "Home Front" was a vital resource for the war effort. A part of the sacrifice made by civilians was supplying aluminum, in various forms, so that war materials could be manufactured. Taken from a news article pasted in a Louisville scrapbook were the following jingles.

I had a little stewpan-
It set me back a deuce;
I'm sending it to Knudsen
To help cook Hitler's goose.

Mary had a frying pan,
A kettle and a pot;
But very seldom used 'em for
She ate outside a lot.

She gave them for the land's
defense -
Now when a bomber wings
Its way o'erhead she claps her
hands
And cries, "There go my things!"

Yoo hoo, mistress,
Have you any pots?
Yes sir, yes sir,
I have lots.

One for Benito
And others for Fritz-
And, boy, am I hoping
They score perfect hits!

LOUISVILLE'S OWN PLAYS IN WORLD SERIES!

Bert Niehoff, born and raised in Louisville was destined to play professional baseball. Bert attempted to become an electrician but an untimely labor strike (typical of those days) put an end to that.

A friend of the family offered Bert a job in Trinidad and later on he was playing on the town's baseball team. This austere beginning was a prelude to a professional baseball career that lasted from 1913 until 1918.

Bert began fighting his way through the minor league system and was part of the Cincinnati franchise located in Louisville, Kentucky. While in the minors Bert stole 60 bases or more in three consecutive seasons.

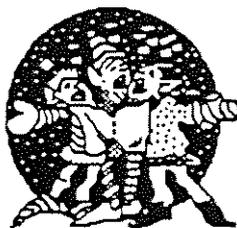
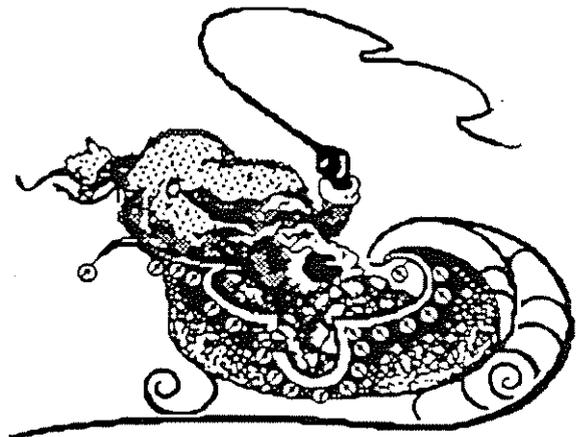
In 1914 Bert was the starting second baseman for the major league Cincinnati team but the following year was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies. At Philly Bert also played second base and one of the stars of that team was Grover Cleveland Alexander who pitched 31 victories that year.

The Phillies met Boston in the 1915 World Series and at that time a rookie pitcher by the name of

George Herman Ruth appeared in a brief pinch-hitting role. Boston won the series in five games although four of them were one run decisions. The series was Bert's greatest thrill along with the fact that President Woodrow Wilson threw out the game ball.

1918 saw Bert Niehoff traded to St. Louis and tough competition resulted in him being traded to John McGraw's New York Giants. Almost as soon as he got to New York Bert was involved in accident with Giant outfielder Ross Youngs. Niehoff's leg was badly broken and he was taken from the field in a police paddy-wagon. Laying on the hard floor of the wagon Bert remembered the long bumpy ride over the cobblestone streets of Philadelphia. Bert had been taken from the stadium at 4:00 p.m. and his leg wasn't set until 9:00 p.m.

Bert's playing days were over but he went on to manage in the minor leagues and in 1929 was an assistant coach under John McGraw with the Giants. After 35 years of managing in the minors at Oak Ridge, Tennessee Bert was offered a scouting position with the Los Angeles Angels. His scouting area included Bakersfield, Santa Barbara and the San Fernando Valley.



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