

Ouray County Historical Society
HISTORIAN
NEWSLETTER
SPRING ~ SUMMER ~ 2012

The Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS) thanks Ouray County Plaindealer, for their assistance in printing and distributing our newsletter.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS) is dedicated to preserve, protect, procure, exhibit, and interpret whatever relates to the natural, social, and cultural history of Ouray County and the adjacent San Juan Mountain Region of Colorado.

Vignettes of History 2012 “War & Angels”

Miners, Soldiers, and Irena: WWII Revisted

The OCHS 7th annual Vignettes of History (August 17) weaves a tapestry of WWII. The theme relates to Ouray in that many of the city’s citizens were involved in the war effort. The evening culminates with Judy Winnick portraying Irena Sendler, “Angel of the Warsaw Ghetto.”

The evening begins with appetizers at the Venue Roscoe Fox followed by dinner at the Beaumont Hotel. Special exhibits will highlight Ouray County’s WWII servicemen and women as well as tell stories of citizens who helped the war effort on the home front. The performance will be at the Wright Opera House. OCHS will honor Ouray County WWII veterans at the event.

In the midst of the Holocaust, Irena Sendler used ingenious methods to rescue and hide 2,500 Jewish children. A Catholic social worker, she provided them with false identifies and kept records of their families buried in glass jars. She was eventually

captured by the Nazis and narrowly escaped death on several occasions. After the war was over, she found homes for those whose parents died in concentration camps. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, she received many awards for her humanitarian efforts including recognition from the State of Israel as one of the “Righteous Among Nations.” Irena Sendler died in 2008 at age 98.

Judy Winnick’s one-woman performance will illuminate that revered woman’s accomplishments. A former teacher, Judy received one of Colorado’s Distinguished Teacher Awards. Since her retirement, she has portrayed many extraordinary women from history. Judy has performed Irena Sendler throughout the state, bringing extensive research and genuine inspiration to this role. Judy’s perform-

ance is funded in part by Colorado Humanities.

Tickets are \$75.00 donation for the entire evening’s events or \$25.00 donation for the performance only. For reservations or further information contact the OCHS 970-325-4576.



Calling all cyclists



Bicyclists of all ages, sizes and tire preferences should start training now for the first-ever, Log Hill Lungbuster Challenge, a time trial and fundraiser for the OCHS.

The event is slated for Sunday, September 16. This will be a new kind of fundraiser for the OCHS, one that capitalizes on the growing number of outdoor enthusiasts who both visit and live in southwest Colorado.

The competition’s route starts at the Old Schoolhouse Emporium on West Sherman Street in Ridgway, then follows a 15-mile course west out of town along Hwy 62 and CR 24A. At CR 1, bikers follow the road’s steep, serpentine ascent up Log Hill escarpment, ride around various subdivisions of Log Hill, and finish at the Divide Ranch and Country Club.

OCHS President Kevin Chismire observes that many other nonprofit organizations in the area sponsor successful athletic events such as the Mt. Sneffels Half-Marathon and Marathon, Imogene Pass Run, and the Mt. Sneffels Half-Loop Nordic ski race.

“Missing from all these fabulous events is a bicycling event,” says Kevin, an avid cyclist. “Both mountain bicycling (fat tire) and road bicycling (skinny tire) are becoming increasingly popular in our region. The OCHS felt it was time to have a biking event that would include both road and mountain cyclists.”

The Log Hill Lungbuster Challenge will be in the form of a time trial, in which contestants start at intervals of about one minute apart. Then each rider races against the clock. Best time awards will be given in both the Road Bike and Mountain Bike categories, plus sub-categories for gender and age groups.

Although Kevin acknowledges that this new fundraising concept could “take us a little out of our comfort zone,” he predicts it will be an enjoyable competition that attracts cyclists from throughout Ouray County and beyond. Of course, those who are not up to busting their lungs are welcome to participate as spectators and volunteers.

The race’s \$40 registration fee will benefit the OCHS. For further information and to register for this event visit our website: www.loghilllungbuster.com or phone the OCHS at 970-325-4576.



A Taste of France

The Beaumont Hotel would like to invite you to an evening of fine food & wine to benefit the Ouray County Historical Society.

In honor of the Beaumont's French Gothic architectural style, the Chef and Wine Director have selected four rare French wines paired with four traditional French courses featuring duck. These wine selections were imported exclusively for the Beaumont, and are not available for sale anywhere in the United States.

Wednesday, May 9th 7:00 p.m. • \$75 per person • Grand Ballroom
Seating is limited & reservations are required. (21+ only).
For reservations call the Beaumont Hotel
970-325-7000 or 970-325-7050

Ouray County Historical Society: President's Message

I wish to pass along to all my good friends and members of the OCHS my best wishes for an early spring and an end to the "Cabin Fever Days" of winter.

Why am I so bent on moving spring up a few weeks or so? It's because of all the wonderful events the OCHS has on tap for the upcoming season.

We are starting out with the generous offer by the Leaver Family (the new owners of the Beaumont Hotel), to host a magnificent four course wine dinner on the 9th of May at the hotel. Rare wines and great food should make this an event to be placed on everyone's calendar. Of course our season will include the ever popular and educational Evenings of History Series and will also include a return to the Vignettes of History program which got rave reviews in past years. This year's theme promises to be both educational, emotional, nostalgic and enjoyable as we look back at the World War II era, Ouray County's involve-



By Kevin Chismire

ment in the war effort, and gain an emotional insight into the love and courage of individuals such as Irena Sendler (the angel of the Warsaw Ghetto), who helped shape the final outcome of the war.

Our Quilt Raffle will also take place this year and the talented quilters in our midst have already begun the creation of a new quilt with a ranching, farm and dairy theme that will appeal

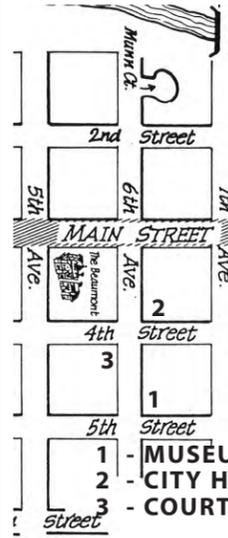
to all the new and old residents of our county who know how important those industries were to our region.

Lastly, I don't want to forget a new fundraising event that will be sponsored by the OCHS and is slated for Sunday the 16th of September. The Loghill Lungbuster Challenge is a time trial bicycling event that we hope will bring all the road and mountain biking enthusiasts in our county out to have a fun day of competition and camaraderie. (See article on page 1 in this newsletter).

In conclusion, we face another event packed year of OCHS involvement in our community. Please take some time out of your schedules to come and participate and don't forget to tell your friends.

Become a member!

Please join us and become a member of OCHS. Your financial and volunteer support is essential to the historic preservation of Ouray County. Members receive free admission to the Museum and 10% discount on items in the OCHS bookstore.



OURAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Maria Jones, Kate Kellogg and Gail Saunders.

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2012 Raffle Quilt

Honoring Ranching Heritage

A vibrant pastel painting, recreated in fabrics, highlights the 2012 OCHS raffle quilt. This year's quilt celebrates Ouray County's ranching history.

Entitled "High Country Ranching," the quilt features a center panel based on the pastel, "Elk Meadows Mother and Son," by Ridgway artist Floyd Day. The pastoral scene of cow and calf is surrounded by 16 vintage sepia-tone ranching photos from the collections of the OCHS and the Ridgway Library.

"Floyd's pastel was the inspiration for the quilt, which is a true representation of his piece," said Sue Hillhouse, leader of the raffle quilt team. "It is made with batik cloth and embellished with hand-embroidered grasses and wildflowers, thread sketching and cloth paint to simulate snow in the mountain peaks."

When completed, the hand-quilted piece will be approximately 48" x 44," the perfect size for a beautiful wall-hanging. As always, the finely-detailed piece is the work of local quilters, who designed the quilt and selected materials. They are fashioning the quilt from muslin, suede cloth, batik cottons, and (in keeping with the ranching theme) denim.



The 2012 Raffle Quilt: High Country Ranching

The label on the back of the quilt is an additional vintage photo signed by all the quiltmakers: Paula Ashmead, Joan Chismire, Susan Dougherty, Charlotte Duckett, Linda Hanson, Penny Hanshaw, Sue Hillhouse, Martha Metzger, Sandy Michaud, Joan Moyer, Kathy Pettengill, Nancy Rule, Norma Shafer, Mary Stapleton, and Marianne Zegers.

Sue projects the quilt will be finished and ready for display in the museum by May. Price is two tickets for \$5 and five for \$10. All proceeds from sales benefit the Ouray County Historical Society and Museum. Tickets will be available at the OCHS museum.

Museum to unveil Bridal Exhibit

By Kate Kellogg

A new temporary exhibit takes visitors for a walk down the aisle of history. When the museum opens April 19, a selection of vintage bridal gowns will be on display in the Domestic and Forsman-Erickson Rooms.

Sue Hillhouse researched and designed the exhibit with help from fellow volunteers Sharon Case and Marianne Zegers, and staff member Kate Kellogg. Susan Dougherty, also a staff member, transformed the Domestic Room to reflect the nuptial theme. The exhibit runs through June 30.

Too fragile and numerous for permanent display, the wedding gowns emerged from archival storage last month. Most were donated by local families; the brides who wore the gowns include Angie Chapman Henn, Rose Kerner Icke, and Mary Wood. Although each gown is unique---and, of course, hand-made---the dresses and accessories represent styles of particular periods and reflect changing societal values.

The oldest piece in the exhibit, a delicate cotton lawn dress, belonged to Lillian Berry Marlow. Lillian married George Marlow, of Marlow Brothers fame, in 1883 and settled with the family in Billy Creek. In contrast to that frontier simplicity is Angie Henn's luxuriant ivory satin wedding gown with an impossibly small waistline. She wore it to marry Roger in 1942. Harry Truman, then a senator, attended the wedding held in Washington D.C. Long-time Ouray residents, the Henns have been married for nearly 70 years.

Rose Kerner Icke's satin wedding gown, with long train, illusion veil, and seed pearl trim, was undoubtedly the talk of Chicago in 1937 when she



Roger and Angie Henn



Rose Kerner Icke

See EXHIBIT pg 4

Archival space sought

As many of our members undoubtedly know, the Ouray County Historical Society has been actively searching over the past few years for a structure in which to house our ever growing library, photograph collection and paper memorabilia collection. The museum building is bursting at the seams with artifacts and displays. Our rooms and offices are often filled with patrons, volunteers and employees hustling and bustling about. A separate, quiet structure geared for quiet study, research and reading is what we seek in terms of a useable archival building. The closer such a building or home could be to the current museum, the better.

We invite all our members, friends, and neighbors to keep an eye out for any home or structure they believe might fulfill our needs. As a nonprofit 501-C3 organization, the sale or donation of a home or structure to the OCHS could result in some sizeable tax savings for the benefactor.

Please keep our needs in mind and if you have any thoughts or suggestions, don't hesitate to give us a call.

Thank you,

Kevin J. Chismire M.D.
President
OCHS.



OCHS Guided Tours & Special Events 2012

April 19 - June 30 ~Bridal Exhibit
April 19-July 5 ~ Otto Mears Exhibit
4th of July ~ Brownies & Lemonade at the Museum
June 9 ~ Corkscrew Railroad Bed & Turntable Hike
July 9-August 15 ~ OCHS Photo Exhibit
July 11 ~ Museum Tour led by Don Paulson
July 14 - Cedar Hill Cemetery Tour
July 21 - Historic Main Street Tour
August 17 ~ Vignettes of History "War & Angels"
August 17 - November 19 ~ Otto Mears Exhibit
August 18 ~ Cedar Hill Cemetery Tour
August 25 ~ Historic Main Street Tour
September 1-30 ~ Annual Quilt Show
September 28 ~ Quilter's Tea and Announcement of Quilt Raffle Winner
September 16 ~ Log Hill Lungbuster Bike Challenge
September 20-23 ~ Ouray County Railroad Days

*For further information and times please visit the OCHS website: ouray-countyhistoricalsociety.org



Preserving tomorrow's past

I am the paper archivist at the museum. I sit in a cubbyhole in the northeast corner of the building surrounded by hundreds of people. Well, there are no actual people present, but their lives are stored in boxes around me. Each letter, each bill or receipt, or each



By Glenda Moore

piece of paper tells something about those individuals and the history of Ouray County. When an article is donated, large or small, it receives an accession number, is indexed on a paper source, and then on the computer. However, that is not the end of the donated article -just to hang around in an acid-free folder in an acid-free box. It becomes the source for research on a family who lived in the county in earlier days, the foundation for a book, a historical presentation, background information on a legal issue, or a topical exhibit in the

museum. The archival material is handled only by one of the research volunteers or myself, and only a copy of the article is used for an exhibit in the museum. The archives also contain old maps, newspapers, and legal documents.

Now my job sounds tedious and sometimes it is, but when visitors come in to learn about their family in the very early years, it is pure pleasure to find any scrap of paper to furnish information about that family's life. They may be able to find a relative that they did not know existed. We always hope that we don't find the skeleton in the family closet.

The contents of the archives are priceless, and each donation is treated with special care. In the archives we feel that we preserve the past to understand the character and the future of Ouray County.

Ouray County Historical Society's 2012 Evenings of History

June 12- Andrew Gulliford, "Utes in Colorado - The Ute Trail, Ute Peeled Trees & Modern Utes,"
June 19- Bob Larson, "The Revenue Mine"
June 26- Kay Sibold, "San Juan Mountain Wildflowers"
July 10 -Dee Williams, "The Wright Opera House - Past, present and Future"
July 17 - Tom Noel, "The Silvery San Juan: A Liquid History of Legendary Watering Holes"
July 24 - Don Paulson, "Rural Schools of Ouray County"
*August 1 - Ginny Harrington, "Ridgway Area Ranching"

The first six talks are at the Ouray Community Center and the last talk is at the Ridgway Town Hall. All talks begin at 7:30pm.

Curator's report: Museum improvements, etc.

Our staff has been busy making improvements in the Museum. These include new fluorescent lighting in most rooms, quilt hanging molding in most rooms, repairs to walls and painting of five rooms, new entry way carpet and new carpet tread and painting of the front stairs.

We have prepared several new displays for opening day. Thanks to heroic efforts by Sue Hillhouse and Monte Knifen, senior archivist of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in Omaha, Nebraska, the museum now has an authentic early 20th century Sisters of Mercy nun's habit, which is displayed on a mannequin in the patient room. The Sisters of Mercy ran the Ouray Miners Hospital from 1887 until 1920.

Sue Hillhouse, Maryanne Zegers, Susan Dougherty, Kate Kellogg, Sharon Case, and Maria Jones have put together an outstanding Victorian Bridal show that opens on April 19th. Don Paulson, Sharon and Dudley Case, and Susan Dougherty have completely redesigned the displays in the toy room.

This year our Annual Exhibit opens on April 19th and features the Life and Times of Otto Mears, the Pathfinder of the San Juans. Most of us know about Otto Mears system of

toll roads and his railroads, but he had a profound influence in many others areas. He ran hardware stores, financed newspapers, fought in the Civil War, was the president of the Mack Truck Company, was active in Colorado state politics, and was involved in numerous mining innovations. Those were just a few of his important activities that spanned a period of more than 50 years. Come and learn about the importance of Otto Mears to the development of the San Juan region.

The Otto Mears Commemorative Plaque, which was first placed at Bear Creek Falls in 1926, has been repaired and once again placed in a prominent position at the Bear Creek Falls overlook. The plaque was damaged in a 1963 road widening. Through the efforts of Joyce Jorgensen, the Plaindealer publisher, it was once again set there in 1972 but the repair was poorly done. Thanks to the efforts of Dan Fossey and Ed



By Don Paulson



Witherspoon of Ouray's Public Works staff, Curtis Gamaehlich and Ed Dillon of American Civil Constructors (contractor to CDOT), the monument has been permanently repaired. Daren Hinton, of Mountain View Surfaces in Palisade, repaired the area where a large piece of granite

had broken off in 1963. Snyder-Grand Valley Memorials of Grand Junction did the engraving work on the repaired portion. American Civil Constructors, and Speedy's Concrete in Ouray each donated \$100 toward the repair work.

We have an exciting Evenings of History program planned for this summer. Talks include the Revenue Mine, Wildflowers of the San Juans, Rural schools of Ouray County, the Utes in Colorado, the Wright Opera House, a Liquid History of Legendary San Juan Watering Holes, and Ridgway Area Ranching.

We have scheduled guided tours of Cedar Hills Cemetery, Main Street



Nuns on hospital porch, circa 1897

Ouray and the Silverton Railroad Right-of-Way on Red Mountain. And there is always the outstanding Annual Quilt Show, which this year takes place in September, as well as our Annual San Juan County Memories Photo Show in July.

We continue to add new informational signs to our displays so if you haven't visited the museum in a while you will find many changes. For additional information see our web site at www.ouraycountyhistoricalsociety.org.

Ouray County Citizens Help the War Effort

Dave Calhoon wanted to join the military when he was seventeen, but his mother refused to sign the paperwork that would allow her underage teenager to enlist. She insisted that he finish high school. The year was 1942 and the next May after he turned 18 and graduated, Dave and his older brother Robert were inducted into the Navy.

David Andrews Calhoon was born on November 16, 1924 in the mining town of Victor, Colorado. His father George worked as an electrician for power plants and his mother Evelyn Andrews, a graduate of Western State College, taught school and raised three boys. Dave grew up during the hard depression years. He remembers working all week to earn the 10 cent cost of movie admission. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Dave was the delivery boy for the Rocky Mountain News. He sold the special edition that marked the event. In the eleventh grade, Dave worked nights after school as a crusher man in a mill earning 49 cents an hour. With his shift starting at 11:00 pm, he managed to get only about four hours of sleep at night.

Dave and Robert left for the induction center in Colorado Springs less than a week after their graduation ceremony and then travelled to Farragut Idaho for boot camp. Training included "a lot of marching with 'dummy' rifles and running obstacle courses."

Robert and Dave next attended a diesel class at Iowa State University and received their red stripe signifying that they were fireman first class, and

By Gail Saunders



then they qualified as motor machinists. First stationed in at Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Maryland, he worked in the transportation department. Dave remembered that "It was one of the coldest places in the world. We woke up every morning to frozen windshields."

After a little over a year, the Navy transferred Dave to Norfolk Virginia where he was put on a troop train headed to California. The route through the southern states took over a week, and after arrival, he was shipped out on a troop carrier (with many seasick sailors). Their destination was a naval supply base on Calicoan Island in the Philippines. By the time Dave arrived in late 1944 or early 1945, the allies had captured the Philippines from the Japanese.

Dave remembered the island as having "a lot of monkeys, mosquitoes, python snakes, and bitter bananas." Beer rations were two cans a week, and corned beef, biscuits speckled with maggots, and powdered eggs and powdered milk were on the menu. An eccentric Captain decided that the Quonset huts needed to be painted coral, and Dave and two other sailors were chosen for the job. Aboard ship, the sailors slept on canvas bunks hung from chains stacked three deep.

From Calicoan, Dave was transferred to Olongapo Naval Repair Station near Manila to pre-

pare for the invasion of Japan. He was assigned to Landing Ship Tank (LST) #668. These naval vessels were designed to carry primarily tanks but also vehicles, troops, and supplies directly onto a shore. They measured 300 feet long and 50 feet wide, and the bows of the ships had large doors to facilitate unloading tanks. Dave was an engine mechanic. Then, on August 6, 1945, the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb.

After a defeated Japan surrendered in March of 1945, Dave's LST sailed to Luzon to pick up tanks for transport back to the U.S. The ship only travelled about 8 to 10 miles an hour and during the voyage, the vessel ran into a typhoon that filled the tank deck with water. To further complicate the trip, one of the ships engines failed. The ship limped first into Pearl Harbor and then into the San Francisco harbor 64 days after leaving Manila. Petty officer 2nd class Dave Calhoon mustered out of the Navy in May of 1946.

Dave's brother Robert served in Europe. During the D-Day invasion, his landing craft sunk but Robert survived. After the two brothers returned to Victor, Dave paid \$300 for his first car, an old Model A.

In 1950, Dave put his suitcase in his car then moved to Ouray with three schoolmates to work at the Idarado. Dave lived in the bunk house at the mine. Then, he decided to take advantage of the GI Bill and left mining to study engineering at Fort Lewis College in Durango.

After returning to Ouray, a friend introduced Dave to Josephine Ficco and the couple married. A self described "Jack of all Trades," Dave also served as a Ouray County Commissioner for 24 years. Dave and Josie have a son Joe who lives in Ouray and is the proprietor of Cascade Woodworks and two grandchildren Aaron and Andrea. Aaron followed in his grandfather's footsteps and joined the Navy serving as a Navy Seal. He is currently finishing up a mining engineering degree at the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering in Reno. Andrea is married and teaches high school in San Diego. Josie and Dave will celebrate their 62nd wedding anniversary in April.

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Dave Calhoon: WWII Vet

On the Home Front:

Ouray County Citizens Help the War Effort

Even before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Ouray County's residents felt the "winds of war." In the fall of 1940, Congress instigated the draft. By November of that same year, Ouray County's selective service board registered 286 men between the ages of 21 and 35, and Dr. Bates determined the physical fitness of each man. By January of 1944, almost every able bodied man of military age living in Ouray County was either serving or employed in the mines, farms, or railroads, occupations deemed essential to the war effort.

President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Lend Lease bill on March 11, 1941 a year after the outbreak of war in Europe. This bill gave the President the authority to ship weapons, food, and equipment to the Allied nations; the result was a re-tooling of U.S. industries. World War II created a need for planes, ships, tanks, guns and bullets and Ouray's mines geared up to help supply that demand. Restrictions on gold mining began almost immediately after Pearl Harbor and the War Production Board closed the nation's gold mines altogether in 1942. Production shifted to lead and zinc. The Idarado mine expanded its operations, and the Mickey Breen, the Revenue, and Mountain Top mine all shipped ore. Old mine dumps were run through mills to extract strategic ores.

By Gail Saunders



The Ouray County Herald announced on October 20, 1943 that "Mining in Ouray best since World War I. Payroll is quadrupled, business boosted. Every house in city is filled and the demand is for many more. Twenty-five mines going." But after men shipped out to war, the mines suffered from a shortage of workers. At the Camp Bird, office workers became muckers to keep production going. Ouray County farms too were hard hit by the draft.

Ouray County citizens held scrap drives to gather up metal left from old fences and trash dumps. They collected the rails of the Silverton Northern as well as abandoned mining equipment all over the San Juans. In July 1942, over 2000 tons of scrap was shipped out. Ouray's Boy Scout troop #88 helped with the effort.

Occasional air raid alerts sounded the city hall siren. Food rationing books arrived limiting the amount of sugar, butter and meat as well as gasoline and rubber. The Woman's Club gathered up nylon, silk, and rayon stockings and sent them to the armed forces for parachutes. The city council decided to suspend Christmas lighting for the 1942 holiday season. War chest drives raised money, and the government encouraged citizens to buy war bonds. The Ouray Red Cross with the slogan "Remember Pearl Harbor" collected dona-

tions, and woman knitted socks and sweaters and sewed pajamas for the troops.

The Ouray Herald reported news of Ouray's military men and women. In January of 1943, its readers learned that Lieut. B. D. Sport was heard from after spending two years in a Japanese prison camp. Second Lt. Albert C. Schneider received medals for "accomplishing extremely dangerous and difficult missions." (May 25, 1945). Corporal Al Fedel sent news of his training in the Air Corp (March 27, 1942). In March of 1944, Minnie-Bell Boyd wrote a thank you note to the Woman's Club for sending her greeting cards. She was stationed in Albuquerque at the air base. "Fred Zanett is Back From the South Seas" headlined the December 14, 1945 edition.

On D-Day June 1944, a general alarm sounded to announce the invasion of Europe so people could "pray for the success of the boys." On August 17, 1945, V-J Day, huge celebrations took place. The Ouray Herald reported, "The people of the city poured out of their homes and onto the main thoroughfares, shouting in their joy and blasting their horns. It was pandemonium." Ration books became artifacts. Approximately 125 men and women from Ouray County served in the military during World War II; seven men gave their lives.

(Want to learn more? Visit the Veteran's Room located on the upstairs floor of the Museum.)

EXHIBIT: Vintage gowns

From pg 2



married Philip F. Icke. The couple later moved to Ouray where Philip became a prominent attorney and eventually Ouray County Judge. Their son, Philip K. Icke, serves on the OCHS Board of Directors.

Ouray part time resident Linda Wise Cracraft's 1966 wedding gown is the only "modern" piece on display. The sleek, peau de soie sheath dress with lace trim is featured on a pedestal to show off its flowing train. Linda is an OCHS volunteer and daughter of John Wise, who was a manager at the Idarado Mining Company.