



# Englewood Historic Preservation Society

## *Preserving Englewood Colorado History*

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P.O. Box 11234 Englewood, Colorado 80151

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### Upcoming EHPS Events

#### **November 6th - Wednesday**

*Monthly EHPS Study Session at 6 pm followed by the General Meeting from 6:30 - 8:30 pm at the City Center Community Center. Everyone is welcome at both meetings.*

#### **November 9th - Saturday**

#### **December 8th - Saturday**

*Join EHPS at the Englewood Public Library on Saturdays starting at 10am. We will be archiving the remaining historical artifacts.*

#### **November 20th - Wednesday**

*Board Study Session from 6 - 8 pm at the City Center Community Center. There will not be a regular meeting, but those interested are invited to join the board meeting.*

#### **November 22nd - Friday**

*Join the Englewood Historic Preservation Society for our monthly lecture titled "Dolls of the Centuries." Beverly Cummins, an active and valued member of EHPS will be presenting at the Englewood Public Library at 3 pm. The event is free and refreshments will be served. There will not be a lecture in December.*

### Ongoing EHPS Events

Plans for the Englewood Holiday Parade are underway. EHPS will make a float and walk in the parade. We are looking for volunteers to help build the float and walk with us in the parade.

Joanne Michaelis is actively working on oral histories. If you know someone who would like to have their story told, or someone who is interested in transcribing from audio, please let us know.

### January 24th Lecture

Ida May Nicholl, outreach chair of EHPS is confirmed as our upcoming speaker for Friday, January 24th. She is a long time bottle digger and researcher and has made presentations to other bottle collecting groups. Old bottles can tell a great story and some are worth a lot of money. Join EHPS at the Englewood Public Library at 3pm for this free lecture.

### Englewood Historic Preservation Society Mission

*To Preserve and share  
Englewood's history.*

### OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLEWOOD

compiled by Doug Cohn  
adapted from Wikipedia & The City of Englewood

The history of Englewood begins when gold was discovered on what came to be called Little Dry Creek by William Green Russell, an early settler of the high plains, in 1858. Two years later, Thomas Skerritt, considered to be the founder of the city, established a home in the area, which was called Orchard Place. Four years later the first road connecting Denver and Orchard Place was created by Skerritt himself using his own plough. In 1879 the first telephone arrived in the area.

1883 was an important year, as it was the year that the Cherrelyn horsecar path was laid. The Cherrelyn trolley was and is an important city icon, being carried up Broadway by horse and down by gravity. 1903 brought incorporation, but Skerritt was edged out by J.C. Jones as the first city mayor. Jones was a prominent landowner, having originally owned almost all of what is now north Englewood. The next two years brought the establishment of the first newspaper in the city, soon to be named the Herald. In 1905 Swedish National Sanitorium was founded, soon to become the massive present-day Swedish

Medical Center. 1906 brought the first pavement and street lights, and a year later the police and fire departments were established. In 1908 the famed Cherrelyn horse trolley stopped running. 1911 was a big year. John Valentine planted flowers and began a big business. He was the first to say "Say it with Flowers". Then he began a national group called FTD. In 1917 Alexander Industries a moving making company set up on Broadway. In 1924, they began to make airplanes. The plane were called Alexander Eagle Rock. It was the most successful plane of its time.

1948 was a start of a great period of change for the city. 2,500 acres (1,000 ha) on the Platte Canyon were purchased, and soon McLellan Reservoir was created. This ensured water independence from the powerful Denver Water, and in fact, Englewood provides water to most of the south metro area now due to its vast, early-established water rights. Soon after the city embarked on a huge building boom; most of the city was in fact built up by 1960.

In 1965 City Park was sold to make way for Cinderella City, the

largest mall west of the Mississippi River and one of the largest in the world when it opened in 1968. The developer provided the funds to create a vast city park network to replace the single City Park that the mall was built on. Thirty years later, the city demolished the defunct mall in order to make way for a new, transit-oriented development that would also contain a new Civic Center, library, and the relocated city hall. The RTD completed its southeast light rail corridor in 2000, and established passenger rail transit in Englewood.

In 2006 Englewood opened the Pirates Cove water park as part of a multi-million-dollar improvement package for the city parks system. In addition to Pirates Cove many improvements were made to the South Platte River trail system and to the Englewood Recreation Center, originally constructed in 1975.

Englewood is a full-service city with its own, independent park, library, and public works systems. Englewood provides snowplow service to neighboring municipalities and water to a large portion of the metro area.

## **EHPS PAST EVENTS** *Report*

At the history talk in September we learned about key people in Englewood's past. We found out about Ernie Anderson, George Perrin and Roy Altenbach, each of whom is memorialized with a library meeting room named in their honor. Additionally, we talked about John Nicholl, one of the very influential County Commissioners. Doug Cohn told stories about a number of people who saw an opportunity and took it.

EHPS hosted a photo booth at Sheri

dan Days where patrons dressed up in fun outfits and had their pictures taken! The pictures can be seen on the EHPS Facebook page.

At the October talk, Kay Howard presented the vision of the group working to create a permanent memorial to those from Englewood who gave their lives for their country.

EHPS hosted a booth at the Englewood Recreation Center Halloween Carnival. The event was very well attended and EHPS had the opportunity to distribute our literature. Also, EHPS is hosting a coloring contest with a gift card to Chucky Cheese as the prize.

## **EHPS needs a home!**

*Englewood Historic Preservation Society is actively seeking a permanent home. If you know of any building up for lease that might work as a museum, allowing space for storage of archives and general meeting & lectures, please let us know. The City Center Community Center are graciously allowing us to use their place for our meetings, but they have no place for a museum.*



*“Remembering Our Mothers”  
Vesta’s story is one of overcoming  
tragedies and misfortunes  
and living fully.*

*“Someone has to do it!”*



In part one of this story, we left the family in the dugout in the prairie south of Lamar. They had settled in and had begun farming.

In the early 1920s, when Vesta was about five years old, the family moved to Lamar. One of the family’s dreams was to have a grocery store. Vesta’s mom was a great baker and could easily sell her creations. The local school was five miles away. Vesta had trouble walking that far, so her brothers would sometimes carry her to school. After a few months of struggle, her father built another school about a mile from home. This was the second school he built. He also served on the school board for many years.

Small town life suited the family well. The people all knew each other and cared about each other. She entered a dress making contest and won the prize, a diamond ring! In the early 1930s, Vesta graduated from high school, at 19 years old married Harley Hedgwood and moved with her new husband to Nebraska. The family stayed there three years and Vesta was blessed with a baby girl, Beverly. The family returned to Lamar when Beverly

was just a few months old.

Life was tough during those years. The depression was full blown and the dust bowl winds were howling. The family had very little money and furnished their house with old furniture. Vesta discovered she had a talent for fixing up old things. Seeing her skill, her father bought a store to help her get into the furniture business. After a few years, the store became profitable and a new baby joined the family, Yvonne.

A family friend, wanting to close his flower shop, offered the store to Vesta. She wanted the shop, but needed to learn the floral business. Vesta took classes at a school in Denver. She took Yvonne and Beverly with her. The classes lasted for months and she traveled back and forth to Denver. Denver Wholesale Florist was her sponsor. She learned quickly and was able to buy the store. She soon moved the store to the “right” side of the tracks. She remodeled the building, and had the business going. One cold winter night, after Vesta and her employees had worked hard making many corsages for the high school homecoming dance, as well as several flower arrangements for two funerals, in the middle of the night, Vesta received the bad news that the store had burned down. The store was across the street from the fire house, but the hydrants were frozen, and the building was a complete loss, along with about a half block of buildings.

She thought her business was gone as well as the few hundred dollars cash she had in the register. She was devastated. However, others did not share her discouragement. At four o’clock that morning, she began getting calls from her employees and

other business owners. Standing in the ashes, Vesta determined that she was not going to quit! There were funerals and parties that needed flowers! She was the person who could supply them! Her flower supplier from Pueblo brought flowers. The local radio station broadcast calls for help every half hour. Vesta told people she was working on their flowers and when they called, she asked them to call back as their flowers would be ready. She and her team got the job done. The whole town pulled together to get her back in business! For six months she ran the business out of the car dealership, and then moved into a small store front. It took more than a year to get back into full operation and there were many challenges and changes. She divorced and became a single mom.



Vesta and one of her suppliers, Frank Beckel, became very close and married in the early 1950s. Beverly’s brother Bernie was born in 1953. The family was happy and after 20 years Vesta decided to retire from the floral business. Vesta then tried to raise pheasant chickens. Tragically, Frank was badly injured in a car accident. He was paralyzed, blind in one eye and could not speak. Vesta was once again taking care of her family on her own. She worked hard and kept things together. She sold freezer food plans to keep food

on the table. She heard about a new treatment called “reflexology” and took her husband back and forth to Kansas for treatments. Vesta was grateful she had some extra time to share with him. He died a few years later. Being the family leader and sole provider strengthened her resolve. “Someone had to do it!”

In 1959, she married George Frank. Tragically, he was killed in a car accident six years later, and Vesta was once taking care of her family alone. Her “never give up” attitude soon had her move to Littleton where she worked in a small flower shop. She later worked in the Denver Dry Goods Store and Joslins as a floral designer.

After retirement, Vesta started a new business. She had never owned a doll, but doll collecting was big business in the 1980s and became her hobby. Her self-taught skills and her ability to repair and restore dolls made a natural next career. She fixed broken dolls and made new outfits for them from her small apartment in Orchard Place in Englewood.

In 1991, she and her daughter, Beverly, saw an opportunity for a new venture. It was the Mini Flea Mart. The store was in the 3400 block of South Broadway in Englewood. The store sold consigned new and used goods, Vesta’s flower arrangements, and new and repaired dolls. Because reflexology had given

her more time with Frank, Vesta always invited a reflexology person to have a space in her store.

In her eighties, Vesta had the attitude that “I have been in business all my life and see no reason to stop now.” The mini-flea market was a friendly and inviting place. Everyone who came in was treated like family. The store was in business for ten years. Even after they closed the store, Vesta continued to make flower arrangements and repair dolls.

Come and see all the beautiful dolls and hear more information about a remarkable woman at the Monthly EHPS lecture, November 22nd, at 3 pm at the library.

*We are seeking people to write articles for our newsletter and local newspapers. Please consider sharing a story of historical significance with your Englewood Community. Contact Doug Cohn for more information.*