

### **About the Author**

Bill Newton was one of the early members of Columbine Country Club (No. 36) and has played an active role in the development of our community since its inception. He was the fourth to begin construction of a home in the Club area, and since 1957 has resided at 20 Wedge Way, where he and his wife Brenda have raised three children.

Bill was the first Secretary-Treasurer of the Columbine Valley Homeowners Association and has served twice as its President. He has served on the Board of Directors of Columbine Country Club and was Mayor of the Town of Columbine Valley for two terms, 1972 - 1976. Currently he is Consultant to the Town Planning Commission, which he founded in 1975, and for which this first 22 year history of our community was written.

The Columbine Valley Homeowners Association takes pleasure in underwriting the printing of this history for distribution to members of the town. May the next 20 years be as illustrious as the first!

May 1978

Gene G. Rae, President  
Columbine Valley  
Homeowners Association

### **I. EARLY DAYS**

Unique for Colorado in 1955 was the planning and establishment in Arapahoe County of a championship golf course surrounded and interspersed among its fairways by some 200 homesites. The 17 founding members patterned this suburban project after Thunderbird Country Club in Palm Springs and Paradise Valley Country Club located near Phoenix. They selected as a beautiful, natural setting the 295-acre Heckendorf Farm located along the South Platte River Valley west of the Town of Littleton. The area offers an open view of the mountains, a plateau, and a winding river valley, all of which reflects a feeling of quiet spaciousness. The founders incorporated their group as the Middlefield Development Company. The State flower was used to name the project "Columbine Country Club."

The Town of Columbine Valley is an outgrowth of this home development. It is my purpose to present a brief developmental history of the community, with mention of some of the significant events which shaped its character and growth.

Middlefield Development Company insured the future success of its project by good preplanning. This included filing with the Clerk and Recorder of Arapahoe County a set of declarations as to limitations, restrictions and uses to which lots constituting the platted subdivision known as "Columbine Valley" could be put. These declarations constitute covenants running with the land, as provided by law, and are binding on all property owners in this addition.

Provision was made for a Homeowner's Association, which was incorporated as non-profit under the name of the Columbine Valley Mutual Improvement and Maintenance Association. Middlefield directed that after fifty (50) percent of the building sites in Columbine Valley were sold, a five-resident member Architectural Control Committee be appointed by the Homeowner's Association to exercise the authority provided in the recorded "Use and Building Restrictions" pertaining to Columbine Valley. Only a few homes were built prior to the turnover of the Architectural Control Committee to the homeowners. Selection of members to serve on this committee is made annually by the Board of Directors of the Homeowner's Association.

In addition to administering the covenants and architectural control for the community, the Homeowner's Association provides through its Board of Directors a means to direct certain services, such as weed cutting, insect spraying, landscaping, and to provide for services and projects which are deemed necessary to promote cleanliness, safety, and an enjoyable standard of living for the residents.

The Jay Lindsey family moved into their new home at 27 Wedge Way in 1956, the first in the community, and prior even to the installation of natural gas service. Lindsey was appropriately elected the first President of the Columbine Homeowner's Association. The by-laws of this organization were duly adopted by the general membership at a meeting held on September 13, 1956. In the early days of the Association, the active membership comprised principally those members who lived in Columbine, had homes under

construction, or had plans for construction underway. Meetings were quite frequent when this group was fairly small. These were either called by the Board, or held informally at cocktail parties prior to Club functions. For the first few years, home cocktail parties were held, and were open to all active members.

A spirit of pioneering, neighborliness, and fun characterized the early community, which grew at a moderate pace. As in later years, the elected leaders met often to solve new problems as they arose. The Architectural Control Committee was especially busy, and always made an on-site investigation to check set-backs, protect views, and to preserve privacy between homes. Because there were so many vacant lots, weed cutting and spraying for insects and grasshoppers were important functions of the Association.

The changeover from a farm to suburban atmosphere was not immediate. Deer were frequent visitors to the golf course, and occasionally livestock from neighboring farms got loose and wandered over the golf fairways. The story is told about how Frannie Chisholm one morning attempted to "shoo" some pigs away from the new home the Helfrich's were building. Instead, the pigs chased Frannie back home to No. 8 Fairway Lane. They then had the audacity to stare her down with their noses pressed against her window.

The first real family crisis for the community of about 18 residents came on the morning of May 16, 1957. It had rained for two days with occasional snow, and the gravel streets were soaked, but looked good. As it turned out, few heads of households got to work and few children got to school. The writer stopped his car to test the depth of a small stream of water which was crossing Wedge Way at the Fairway Lane intersection. He carefully put his right foot into the water but there was no base and suddenly he fell in to his middle. The stream of water was only a foot wide, but it was flowing 13 feet deep down to the sewer line! Harding Lawrence came by, was advised of the problem, and immediately got stuck up to the axle of his car as he tried to cut through the vacant lot on the corner. Bill Ludwig was jittery because his pregnant daughter was visiting and ready to go to the hospital

- - if she could get out!

Middlefield responded to this alarming situation by sending in a fleet of trucks loaded with sand. Several of the trucks soon encountered the sewer lines and were soon lying on their sides. By the time all was calm again, the Homeowner's Board had met and the decision was made to pave the streets and install pan gutters. Dale Rea and Associates, the Engineers who originally surveyed the community, were called in to survey the proposed gutters, to grade and to supervise the concrete installation. Arapahoe County blacktopped the streets. Each homeowner and lot owner was billed for street and gutter expense by the Association's Secretary-Treasurer. A few homeowners found their lawns to be in the air as the street grade was cut down to provide good drainage, but the main crisis was over and most people were pleased.

## II Homeowner Association Achievements

Members of the Columbine Homeowner's Association have made many contributions to their community and to the Country Club. Notable among these was the women's garden club "The Divot Diggers"; name proposed by Agricultural Agent Herb Gundell. This industrious group of women held highly successful fund-raising events, such as bridge luncheons, rummage sales, house tours, bazaars, and famous Derby Day. Funds from these activities were used to construct the entrance gates on Platte Canyon Road and at the south end of Middlefield Road; donations were made to the Littleton Library; and in 1973, the Divot Diggers donated \$3,150 to the Country Club's tree replacement goal of \$10,000.

There have been some outstanding individual gifts by homeowners to the Country Club, which are available for all to enjoy. Among these are the many evergreen shrubs which line the banks of Dutch Creek by the dam, a gift to "Judge" Fundingsland. "Ev" Collier donated the beautiful colored fountain at the rear of the Club. "Mid" Peirce donated the concrete bridge span to Number 10 green.

Columbine Homeowner members have an outstanding record of following pressures and events which could have an adverse effect on the community and on the Country Club. In 1957, the U.S. Corps of Engineers held a public meeting on the proposed Chatfield Dam. The Columbine Homeowner's Association was the only organized entity that made an appearance in favor of constructing this proposed dam. Under pressure of the affected landowners (who did not want to sell their property), and the Denver Water Board (who wanted the Two Forks Dam to be built by the rival U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as a water supply for Denver), the Corps of Engineers shelved the project. This fateful decision proved to be disastrous to both the community of Columbine Valley and the City of Denver in 1965, the year of the great flood along the South Platte River, downstream from Castle Rock. Later in the year of 1965, at a public hearing in the Denver Library, the U.S. Corps of Engineers again requested input as to the public desire for a Chatfield Dam. And, again, it was the representatives of the Denver Water Board, the City of Denver, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation who almost convinced the packed audience of flood-stricken people that the proposed dam was not needed. The issue would have been dead again except for the presence of a member of the Columbine Homeowner's Association who stood up and pointed his finger at the representatives of the Denver Water Board and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as responsible for the losses incurred by those present as a result of the June 16, 1965 flood along the South Platte River. An emotional speech brought the audience out of its lethargic state of mind and the "Dam the Platte Committee" was immediately formed. It was this group of dedicated people who had virtually lost all of their businesses and/or family possessions in the flood, who eventually got approval by the U.S. Congress of appropriations for construction of the Chatfield project.

## III Community — Club Relations

The Country Club was the focal point of activity for the new community and

for several years only club members moved to Columbine. Among the many inducements was the opportunity to have a lawn sprinkling system installed and connected to the Country Club piped system for a tap fee of \$350 and an annual irrigation fee of \$75. Domestic water was also served by the Club wells, through an arrangement with the Columbine Water and Sanitation District. This water was quite hard and water softeners were needed to make life easier. While everyone put in a lawn sprinkler system, not everyone took advantage of the right to own a golf cart and maintain it in the home. The general age of the early residents was 40-ish, with home-owned golf carts becoming more popular as the community aged.

#### **IV Annexation Threats**

Success of the community attracted the interest of neighboring communities, particularly Littleton and Denver. There were rumblings of annexation to increase the tax base of these cities. The Bow Mar development was likewise threatened, and incorporation there was instituted as a protective measure. Columbine homeowners began holding meetings on the subject of incorporation to weigh all aspects of such a venture. The action which pushed the matter to conclusion was the decision by Middlefield Development Company to offer their 16 acres of Lot 1, Block 1, located west of the Clubhouse, for development. The proposed plan of the developers included commercial and single and multi-family dwellings. The Club Board of Directors disapproved the plan, but neither the Club nor the Homeowner's Association had any jurisdiction over the matter. Word of the plan travelled fast by telephone and the vote of the homeowners to incorporate the entire area was overwhelming.

#### **V Town of Columbine Valley**

On August 15, 1959, the Secretary of the State of Colorado signed the incorporation papers of the Town of Columbine Valley. Harding Lawrence of 28 Wedge Way was elected the Town's first Mayor. His Board of Trustees consisted of six elected members.

Incorporation resulted in a shift of many of the community's management responsibilities from the Columbine Homeowners' Association to the Town. New responsibilities were also created by incorporation. For example: street ownership and maintenance was transferred from County to Town; a Town budget had to be prepared in accordance with State law; taxes were levied in accordance with State rules and regulations; ordinances pertaining to police powers, building codes, traffic, dogs, etc. had to be compiled, published, and enforced in a newly created Municipal Court. The price of protection from annexation was great, but was also to prove rewarding in many respects.

Incorporation of the Town reduced the activities of the Homeowners' Association, but by no means did it eliminate the need for this organization. The early establishment of the Columbine Homeowners' covenants and by-laws stamps and preserves the quality and character of the community's homes and its people. Certain community controls and restraints are contained in these documents which are inappropriate for inclusion in Town ordinances.

Election of the Mayor and six (6) Trustees is held the second Tuesday in April of even-numbered years. These unpaid representatives meet formally each month, and more often informally as the need arises. Problems and needs seem to increase in direct ratio with Town growth.

Initially, there was no thought of Town expansion beyond the original outline of the Middlefield filing. However, the desirability of controlling the type and quality of construction immediately adjacent to the Town's borders became evident as the community of Columbine Valley grew in number of homes, and in stature as an outstanding area in which to live. Then adjacent lands became desirable to promote and develop. From a real estate point of view, it was desirable to annex to Columbine Valley if one wanted to build single family, quality homes; if one wanted to promote commercial construction, multi-family, or tract homes it was advantageous to annex to the City of Littleton. These two real estate philosophies exerted pressure on the Town to annex for preservation of the integrity of its original boundaries.

The first tract annexed (1967) was by petition of the owner of the land bordering the No. 2 golf fairway and now occupied by the Villas. Condominiums were constructed in accordance with a planned unit development (PUD) approved by the Town Trustees.

#### **VI The Town Grows in Size**

In November, 1969, the owner of the property formerly known as the Bourne Estate petitioned Littleton for annexation. This property included most of the land located between Middlefield Road and Platte Canyon Road extending north from the Town of Columbine Valley to Bowles Avenue. Exceptions were the Weber and Thorpe tracts on the west side of Middlefield Road and the property on the southwest corner of Middlefield and Bowles. Plans of the developer included commercial, single and multifamily tract housing "for Martin Company employees". Because of control of such a small amount of contiguous acreage to this land, Littleton was forced by State law to divide the property into three separate annexation actions.

The first segment of land designated for annexation bordered Bowles Avenue, extending between Middlefield and Platte Canyon roads. This was successful, and Littleton soon gave permission for the construction of a gasoline filling station at the southeast corner of Bowles and Platte Canyon Road. However, annexation of the remaining two-thirds of the property was another story. The resident-farmers on both sides of Middlefield Road and extending along Bowles Avenue east to Watson Lane appealed to the Town of Columbine Valley for annexation in order to protect themselves from annexation by Littleton.

After due consideration, the Town of Columbine Valley agreed to annex these lands to protect its north boundary and included in its annexation outline the remaining two-thirds of the Bourne Estate tract, which had not yet been formally acquired by Littleton. When the votes were counted, Columbine Valley was successful in acquiring by annexation essentially all the County lands between its north boundary and Bowles Avenue and west from Watson Lane to Platte Canyon Road. This was in 1973, and it took until 1976 for the



boundary to be settled between the neighboring communities of Littleton and Columbine Valley.

By petition from the owner, the L. L. Tuck Ranch bordering the Town's south boundary was annexed in two parts during the years 1973 and 1974.

This left only the west boundary of the Town, between Fairway Lane and Platte Canyon Road, uncontrolled by the Town insofar as land development was concerned. Efforts were made by the Town in 1975 to annex this Morris property, but the owners were interested only in commercial development along with high-rise construction. In 1977, however, this property was sold and annexed to Columbine Valley with a prior PUD called Burning Tree already approved and recommended by the Town Planning Commission.

### **VII The Great Flood**

Probably the most catastrophic event to affect Columbine Valley was the great flood of the South Platte River on June 16, 1965. It was to scar the community temporarily, but the healing was to be sound and the process a binding together of the residents in a common goal.

It was late afternoon on June 16 when radio warnings of a severe cloudburst in the Castle Rock area told of possible flooding along the course of the South Platte River. Many of us went to the terrace above the No. 13 tee, along Fairway Lane, to wait for the rising waters which were said to be fed by both the South Platte River and Plum Creek. It was at the confluence of these two streams that the downpour had been the heaviest. It was cloudy over Columbine, but no rain.

Because of warnings, the women's bridge game at the Jay Brown's had broken up. Nearby neighbors helped Tom Grant carry furniture upstairs in his 1-½ story home. After all, the Grant home was the closest to the river and prudence dictated to be prepared for the worst.

We watched a couple of golfers go by on No. 13. They too must have heard the helicopter calling down to us from above, "You people from Columbine should get in your cars and leave for higher ground." Several in our group did leave, but as a geologist who had never witnessed a major flood, the writer was not about to forego such an event, should it really occur.

It did not take long for the full force of the flood to develop. The first indication we could observe upstream to the south was a rapid widening of the South Platte River to lake-size proportions. Soon thereafter came a train of logs perched on a wall of water. The log train was some 40 to 50 feet wide, 10 to 15 feet high, perhaps a quarter of a mile in length. Atop the log train rested a propane tank and a haystack, all cruising serenely along at about 5 to 7 miles per hour. This debris had been plucked from the low-lying floodplain along the valleys of the streams responsible for this deluge of water.

The log train travelled downstream on rising water until it reached the first river bend along the 13th golf fairway. Unable to negotiate the sharp turn, the train broke up at this point and logs, stumps, propane tank, haystack and all began tumbling across the fairway in the rising flood of water.

The logs and stumps served as battering rams to crash through the patio

doors of homes along Driver Lane and front doors of homes across the street. The writer fled the scene when the swollen river reached the eaves on the Grant home.

Columbine Valley residents returned from higher ground to the Clubhouse shortly before midnight for a pow-wow prior to returning to their homes. Here they learned that the Grant and Crane homes had been swept down the river, that at least two other homes had been battered beyond repair, and that others were badly flooded and invaded by logs, debris, and mud. It was a sad night as those of us more fortunate returned to our candle-lit homes. About 2:00 A.M., we were again awakened and left in cars, but it was a false alarm.

The sun shone brightly the next morning as several of us arose early to survey the scene. Mud, logs, and huge stumps seemed to be everywhere on the lower reaches of the golf course and among the flooded homes still standing.

Few men left for work on the 17th, and this was essentially the pattern for the next week. With approximately 25 Columbine homes either destroyed or severely damaged by this "100 Year" flood, there was much to do. Men, women, and children pitched in for long hours to clean up the mess. Organization came into being rapidly; looting was prevented by the Town's volunteer police force; and sightseers were turned away. Although electric and telephone services were interrupted for a few days, domestic water, natural gas, and sewerage services were intact and functioning.

The financial loss was estimated to be \$2 million in Columbine Valley, with no flood insurance. The tournament of the Professional Golf Association (PGA), scheduled for the following year, was postponed until 1967.

Renovation of the golf course and the adjacent homes was rapid, new trees were planted, and a successful PGA tournament was held in a serene and beautiful setting in 1967. The Chatfield Dam was dedicated in 1973. Channelization of the South Platte River, the second phase of the Chatfield flood control project, has been delayed since 1971 by the intervention of the so-called Littleton Floodplain Park Plan. Thus, full-scale flood protection for Columbine Valley has not yet been achieved, nor have full-scale beautification plans along the river been accomplished.

### **VIII Our Unique Community**

Fortunately for the Town of Columbine Valley, most of those elected to its Board of Trustees are a dedicated group of individuals willing to give their time and experience for the betterment of the Town. The planning Commission, legally formed and adopted in 1975, has been a guiding force for the Board in problems of annexation.

While all this work goes on behind the scenes, the outward appearance of the Town is one of quiet, peaceful existence. It is said that the person who works in downtown Denver, no matter what the daily frustrations may be, experiences a feeling of relief and restfulness as he enters the gates of Columbine at the end of the day.

This is the way the community was planned, the way it has developed, and the way it should be.