

SMOKY HILL EXPRESS

Elbert County Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

SPRING 2020

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The Elbert County Historical Society regrets to announce that due to the COVID-19 virus, the

ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM

will remain **CLOSED FOR 2020** and the

20TH ANNUAL PIONEER FOURTH CELEBRATION

has been **CANCELLED**.

We wish to recognize and thank all our **GENEROUS** season sponsors for their continued support. And in light of this unprecedented event, all sponsorships received this year will automatically be **EXTENDED INTO 2021!**

TO SEE A COMPLETE LIST of our sponsors, look for the banner in front of the museum, on our website, as well as the back page of this publication.

DONATE NOW
THROUGH
COLORADOGIVES.ORG





ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
515 Comanche Street • PO Box 43
Kiowa, Colorado 80117

ElbertCountyMuseum.org

The Elbert County Museum is owned and operated by the Elbert County Historical Society, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

MISSION STATEMENT

To record and maintain the history of Elbert County, Colorado from the earliest settlement.

To work for the establishment of appropriate vaults and archives for the preservation of original manuscripts, documents, photographs and artifacts which may come into the possession of the Society.

To maintain, preserve and house the above stated articles in the Elbert County Museum.



RECURRING DONATIONS: GIFTS WE CAN COUNT ON!

Your recurring donation to **Elbert County Historical Society and Museum** is support we can count on!

When you use this option, you are making a commitment to donate a particular amount over a specific period of time. You can give as little as \$10 per week, month, quarter or year. Simply set up your donation schedule and your deductions will happen automatically, straight from your credit card, debit card or bank account.

To learn more about recurring donations, contact ECHS Treasurer Donna Smith at info@elbertcountymuseum.org, or visit www.ColoradoGives.org FAQs.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Individual - \$15

Student/Senior - \$8

Family - \$20

Volunteer - Donation of six (6) hours of volunteer time or participate in two (2) functions and/or events.

SEASON SPONSORSHIPS

Museum Season Sponsorships are collected annually and expire at the end of each calendar year. Sponsorships support the general operating fund, new and permanent exhibits, development of educational initiatives and public programs, and the historic museum building and its infrastructure.

Season sponsorships are available at four different levels and are identified by icons of early Elbert County industry

LOCOMOTIVE-

Contributions of \$200 cash/merchandise or more will receive:

- acknowledgment as a Season Sponsor on all exhibit and event flyers (including Pioneer Fourth)
- recognition on signage inside the museum and at the Pioneer Fourth
- inclusion in the newsletter(s) and
- on our website



PONDEROSA PINE-

Contributions of \$100 cash/merchandise or more will receive:

- recognition on signage inside the museum
- inclusion in the newsletter(s) and
- on our website



WINDMILL-

Contributions over \$25 cash/merchandise will receive:

- recognition on signage inside the museum
- inclusion in the newsletter(s)



CULTIVATOR-

Contributions of \$250 cash or more through the **East Central Enterprise Zone**** will receive:

- acknowledgment as a Season Sponsor on all exhibit and event flyers (including Pioneer Fourth)
- recognition on signage inside the museum and at the Pioneer Fourth
- inclusion in the newsletter(s) and
- on our website



**East Central Enterprise Zone

By making a \$250 or more cash donation, **contributors receive 25% of that amount as a credit against their state tax liability (i.e.: \$250 donation = \$62.50 credit).** The contribution also may be itemized on their federal tax return.

For additional details on the different levels of **membership** or **sponsorship**, forms can be picked up at the museum's visitors desk or printed off our website at ElbertCountyMuseum.org.

NEW TOWNS ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

The settlement of the American West began in the 1840s when early Europeans began to move westward, some journeying beyond the Mississippi River, encouraged by the thought of prosperity. Two events helped spur a much larger migration by 1849. First, the U.S. victory in the Mexican War (1846-1848) gave the young nation vast new areas of land in the West. Second, a gold rush in California in 1849 attracted droves of American fortune seekers called "Forty-Niners." The gold rush also attracted Chinese, Europeans, South Americans, and others, all hoping to "strike it rich."

But until the early 1860s the area that comprised the vast plains west of the Mississippi was simply an inconvenient obstacle to be crossed over, not a place to inhabit. Then in 1863, work was begun on a railroad line that would stretch across the western US, between Council Bluffs, Iowa and San Francisco, California. The first Transcontinental Railroad was completed on May 10, 1869. This marked a profound change in travel across the US. A dangerous journey that once took months could now be completed in a week. As the trains crossed the continent, vast areas were opened up to settlement and economic development.

The Homestead Acts, the first of which began in 1862, were several laws in the United States by which an applicant could acquire ownership of government land or the public domain, typically called a homestead. In all, more than 160 million acres of public land, or nearly 10 percent of the total area of the United States, was given away free to 1.6 million people. In response to the Homestead Acts, settlers from the East poured across the plains to mine, farm and ranch. They were a varied lot...farmers, skilled and unskilled laborers, educated and uneducated people, and after the war, former soldiers. African Americans, who were explicitly included in the 1866 act, came from the Deep South, convinced that prosperity could be found in this new land. Many Chinese men who had been working on the railroads (as many as 15,000 of them, comprising up to 90% of the workforce) also stayed, adding to the diversity of the region's population.

From 1850 to 1900, swift and widespread changes transformed the American West. By the end of the era, the West had become a bustling society populated by new immigrants of all kinds.

And of course as people began settling in these new areas, they needed goods and services, so towns began to spring up at a rapid pace. The railroads played a major part in developing these towns. Eager to promote trade and transportation; federal, state, and local governments granted land to railroad companies. The railroads' clear purpose was to promote and control business along their lines. Every railroad that encouraged agricultural settlement also tried to lure prospective business people to their new towns. Some railroad towns were created in nonagricultural areas, but the majority of places were designed to be trade centers. While anyone might promote business growth in towns along the line, the railroads had an interest in controlling growth by limiting the number of stations. They adopted a regular spacing, at seven-to-ten-mile intervals.

Railroad towns were often laid out in a T-shape, with the top portion being the street paralleling the railroad and the straight part being the town's main street.

A typical town in the late 1800s had at least one of the following businesses: bank, general store or mercantile, post office, feed store, land office, train depot, saloon, hotel, bakery, butcher shop, drug store, blacksmith, lumber yard or hardware. There might have also been a milliner and dry goods store, and in some towns, a creamery (to process and ship the milk products brought in by the farmers.) There were often offices for a newspaper, lawyers, doctors and dentists and sometimes an undertaker. There was also usually a community building or town hall, and perhaps a justice of the peace or marshal's office and jail. Churches and schools were typically located on the edges of towns.

ELBERT COUNTY TOWNS

There were quite a few incipient towns in early Elbert County, most of which either never really materialized or were abandoned.

There are six remaining today:

AGATE

Est. 1882.

Folklore is the name came from "A gate" near the Union Pacific siding; others claim it stems from the numerous specimens of agate rock in the area.

ELBERT

Est. 1875.

MOVED to its present location in 1882 to be on the Denver & New Orleans Railroad line. Named for Territorial Governor and State Supreme Court Justice, Samuel H. Elbert.

ELIZABETH

Est. 1880. Inc. 1890.

Land for the town was given by the Charles Garland and Thomas Phillips families. Named by Territorial Governor John Evans in honor of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Hubbard.

KIOWA (Elbert County Seat)

Est. 1859. Inc. 1912.

Was a stage station on the Smoky Hill Trail. Named for the Kiowa Indian tribe, once known as Middle Kiowa and Wendling.

MATHESON

Est. 1886.

Named for Duncan Matheson, a sheepman, upon whose land it was built upon. When the railroad filed the town plat, the name was misspelled "Mattison". It was corrected 25 years later.

SIMLA

Est. 1888. Inc. 1912.

Legend has it that the daughter of a Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railroad official suggested the name from a book she was reading on India at the time. The town was once regarded as the Pinto Bean Capital of the World.



ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

PO Box 43 • KIOWA, COLORADO 80117

ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM SPONSORS

While the museum receives funds through monetary donations given at the museum and with annual historical society memberships; Season Sponsorships and the Pioneer Fourth celebration are the main areas of income which allow the Elbert County Historical Society to develop exhibits and educational opportunities and to improve and maintain the museum building.

Thank you for your commitment to the educational and historical importance of the Elbert County Museum!

LOCOMOTIVE

All Wired Up Electric
Anonymous Donor
Ben & Laurie Duke
Bino's Pizza
Front Range Kubota
High Plains Food Store
High Prairie Survey Co.
Lucy Hoffhines
Intermountain Rural
Electric Assn (IREA)
JR's Village Repair
Katee & Rick Kolm
Legacy Plow & Trailer
Jim & Carla Martell
Mountain View
Electric Assn (MVEA)
Murdoch's -Parker
Sawmill Bar & Grill

(LOCOMOTIVE CONT.)

Sun Valley Electric Inc.
Pattie Thayer
True Value -Elizabeth

PONDEROSA PINE

360 Diesel & Auto Repair
AAC Enterprises
Angie's Cuttin Corner
Monty & Phyllis Ashliman
Big R -Elizabeth
Laurel Brown
Elizabeth Locker Plant
Hamacher Well Works Inc.
Christian Herneky
Integrity Auto Repair
Jill's Feed & Country Supply

(PONDEROSA PINE CONT.)

Tom & Marge Mottinger
Ann Pidgeon
Marta Railsback
Royal B Threads, LLC
Skadoodles Ladies Boutique

WINDMILL

Adriana's
Mexican Restaurant
Advance Quality Auto Repair
America's
Most Lovable Painters
Bernie's Kitchen
Cost Cutters -Elizabeth
Dusty Plains
Veterinary Service
El Rinconcito -Elizabeth
Elizabeth Floral
Forty Mile Feed
HomeSmart Realty Group
-Karen Berends
Betty Hood
Kings Kars
Kiowa Creek Community
Church Foodbank
KW Home Accents
-Karin Royston
Iron Horse Equine Medical
& Surgical Services

(WINDMILL CONT.)

MK Liquors
Patsy North
Once Upon A Tan
Parker Port-A-Potty
Running Creek Auto Center
Safeway -Elizabeth
Sweet Alfas
Walmart -Elizabeth

CULTIVATOR

Glaser Gas &
Equipment Co. -Kiowa
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-Tammi Schneider
Smith Ranches