

SMOKY HILL EXPRESS

Elbert County Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

FALL 2022

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**THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED
FOR THE WINTER.
REOPENING
SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2023!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Elbert County Museum
2023 Opening Day**
Sunday, May 28, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Pioneer Fourth Celebration 2023
Tuesday, July 4, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Elbert County Museum Grounds

Annual Membership Meeting 2023
Saturday, September 9, 9:00 am
Elbert County Museum Office

**DONATE NOW
THROUGH
COLORADOGIVES.ORG**

2022 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

The Elbert County Historical Society and Museum had a great year with nearly 800 visitors and eighty-six Museum Season Sponsors! Contributions were made in person, through the Colorado Gives website or the East Central Enterprise Zone program. Thank you sponsors!

In the spring WI-FI was installed in the museum, along with a card reader in the gift shop, allowing us to now accept credit card purchases and donations. New gift shop merchandise was donated courtesy of the Malerich family and over thirty-seven local/regional history book titles were stocked -including a beautiful



266 page, full-color, hardbound book on the history of the Kiowa School District from the 1870s to the present, published by ECHS.

The summer exhibit **Music on the Plains** featured early Elbert County musicians and how music played a role in the lives of early residents. The display featured early photographs and stories of some of the county's musicians, a variety of musical instruments and the

background of their origins, and even a turn-of-the century vignette parlor, complete with a pump organ and Victrola.

Our annual Pioneer Fourth Celebration was very well attended. In addition to our regular group of fantastic volunteers, this year the Town of Kiowa Event Planning Committee and the Elbert County Dad's Club assisted throughout the day. Old favorites like the Pie Baking Contest and Auction, Cake Walk, Silent Auction, BBQ, Museum Open House, Kid's Games and Watermelon Eating Contest were enjoyed by all. After a long hiatus, the Horseshoe Tournament made a successful return, and the Cornhole Throw was a popular new addition. The crowd favorite of the afternoon was the traditional homemade Pie Auction, with this year's highest selling pie bringing \$620! Special thanks to our hometown musicians, Duane and Billie Owens, and our favorite auctioneer, Lee Benjamin.



In August, we joined the Kiowa Merchants Association for their annual Colorado Day Celebration at the town park and served up mini snow cones. Towards the end of the season we welcomed our first wedding (in front of the Judge's Bench), held our annual General Membership/ Volunteer Appreciation meeting, led several school tours, participated in the Harvest Festival at Forty Mile Feed, hosted a large group from the Smoky Hill Trail Association's annual Fall Conference, and moderated the Eastern Colorado Museums & Historical Societies Fall gathering.



ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

JOE MARTELL

President

DEBBIE SCOGGIN

Secretary

PATSY NORTH

Board Member at Large

CARLA MARTELL

Past President

DONNA SMITH

Vice President

HANK SMITH

Treasurer

MONTY ASHLIMAN

Board Member at Large

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

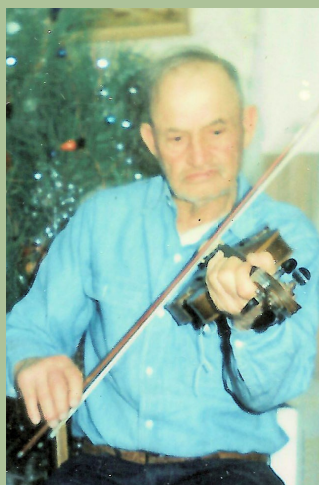
To record and maintain the history of Elbert County, Colorado from the earliest settlement.

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.

WHO AM I?

- Where was I born?
 - Woody, CA
 - Woody, IL
 - Woody, TN
- Where did I meet my future wife?
 - County Fair
 - Rodeo
 - School
- What sport did my family play?
 - Baseball
 - Checkers
 - Tennis



Answers on page 5

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.

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Thank you to our fantastic museum hosts for another successful season! Our docents for the 2022 Season included: Darrel & Shirley Abbey, Monty Ashliman, Terry Courtright, Lynn Hayes, Lucy Hoffhines, Dulcie Jones, Rick & Katee Kolm, Carla Martell, Joe Martell, Herb & Nita McKnight, Sherry Metli, Marge Mottinger, Margie Musgrave, Patsy North, Cecil Pugh, Tom & Debbie Scoggin, Hank & Donna Smith and Cheryl Whiting.

The board of directors appreciates the dedication of all our faithful volunteers. If you would be interested in being a museum host in 2023, please call Carla Martell at 303.621.2229.



HARVEST FESTIVAL

Joe Martell, Debbie Scoggin, Carla Martell, Patsy North and Monty Ashliman (not shown) manned a booth at the Harvest Festival at Forty Mile Feed in Kiowa on Saturday, October 8. Over the course of the afternoon, Joe conducted history tours on early day Kiowa, accompanied by a horse-drawn wagon.

HAPPY RETIREMENT!

After nearly 50 years of volunteer service, Elbert County Historical Society Secretary Lucy Hoffhines, officially retired from the board of directors during the General Membership meeting in September.

Lucy has been involved with ECHS since the 1970s, following America's Bicentennial and the Society's second resurgence. She worked alongside Kenneth and Lyndall Scott and others to put on the legendary Pioneer Dinners (complete with beans, cornbread and gooseberry pies), set up county fair booths and other fun things. She also spent time with Joe and Leona Gilbert, traveling across the county gathering oral histories and locating artifacts.

When the Society reemerged in the early 1990s and the Elbert County Museum was organized; Lucy once again rolled up her sleeves and with her husband John, they collaborated with the Martell family, Donna Reese and others to develop the museum into what it is today. Over the years she has served in a variety of roles including: Gift Shop Manager, Museum Host Coordinator, President and most recently Secretary.

Lucy plans to continue helping when she can, but is looking forward to spending more time with her family and traveling. Congratulations and enjoy retirement!



JOHN AND LUCY HOFFHINES
DEDICATION OF THE ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM, JUNE 1993

GIVE
WHERE YOU
LIVE

COMMUNITY FIRST FOUNDATION

COLORADO
GIVES DAY 

ColoradoGivesDay.org Dec. 6

SUPPORT THE ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM ON COLORADO GIVES DAY!

Colorado's largest day of giving, Colorado Gives Day, is taking place on **Tuesday, December 6, 2022**. On this day, thousands of people come together to support Colorado nonprofits like ours.

When you donate to the **Elbert County Historical Society & Museum**, you're helping to ensure the museum's commitment to developing quality displays such as the Smoky Hill Trail exhibit, presenting informative historic-themed programs, and expanding educational opportunities to museum visitors and tour groups.

Please help us reach our goal of **\$2,000.00**. Thanks to the \$1.4 million incentive fund from Community First Foundation with support from FirstBank and sponsors, your donation goes further on Colorado Gives Day.

You can schedule your donation today, or visit www.coloradogives.org/ElbertCountyHistoricalSociety on Tuesday, December 6.

SMOKY HILL TRAIL ASSOCIATION TOUR

The Smoky Hill Trail Association held their annual three-day fall conference on October 21 through 23, at the Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch in Limon, Colorado. To kick off this year's assembly, conference organizers chartered a bus and trail enthusiasts traveled from Limon to Kiowa along portions of the trail's southern branch on present day State Highway 86.

The Smoky Hill Trail was important to the early development of Elbert County and those who traveled it in the 1860s utilized a mode of transportation much different than those who would follow twenty, thirty or even fifty years later. The trail began as an ancient Native American path along the Smoky Hill River across Kansas and into Colorado. Upon reaching the river's headwaters in Eastern Colorado, the trail then meandered to a point west of present-day Limon, where it then split into three branches – known as the North, Middle and South routes. The Southern

Branch came through Kiowa, winding its way north of Elizabeth and into what is now Parker before rejoining the other two routes outside of Denver. Eager gold seekers followed the Smoky Hill and other trails into Colorado, where they hoped they would find their fortunes.

ECHS members Lucy Hoffhines, Carla and Joe Martell, Patsy North, Tom Scoggin and Hank Smith welcomed the group and showed them around the museum. Later in the afternoon, Joe shared stories of Kiowa's early stage stop days and Hank spoke on the 1868 Dietemann Massacre which took place approximately four miles east of Kiowa and near the southern route.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JERE DeBACKER

GOING FOR THE GOLD



Smoky Hill Trail

2022 CONFERENCE
October 21 - 23, 2022
LIMON, COLORADO

RELIC FROM THE PAST

This summer Varner (Kip) Backlund III presented ECHS with a framed newspaper print of his grandfather, Varner Backlund, Sr., standing alongside the Kiowa State Bank safe that survived the Kiowa Creek Flood of 1935.



Kip posed beside the same safe.

AN AUTUMN WEDDING

On Friday, September 2, the Elbert County Museum hosted its first wedding. Josiah Duncan and Savannah Gilbert were married in the East Room, in front of the Judge's Bench by retired Army Chaplain, Wayne MacKirdy.

Savannah is the daughter of Lisa Gilbert, granddaughter of Joe and Leona Gilbert and great-granddaughter of Judge Frank Hart. The Hart family were early Elbert County residents and over the course of his life, Frank served as County Clerk, Treasurer and Judge.

The Gilbert family was active with ECHS during the 1970s and 80s.



Who am I?

Continued from page 2

Answers: b) Woody, IL; c) School; a) Baseball

Earl B. Wood was born April 13, 1893 and grew up in Woody, Illinois, the youngest of three children born to Leonard and Viola (Stone) Wood. When Earl was eight years old, the family moved to a homestead on Bland Creek near the Bland Post Office. Tragically his father later died, freezing to death while working to gather cattle during the Blizzard of 1913.



As a young man, Earl looked after his mother and worked the ranch. He married Lillie Ehnes of Simla in 1917 and they had a son, Kenneth, the following year. However, tragedy struck again when Lillie died four years later, leaving Earl and his mother to raise his young son.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Wood was elected to the Pease School board, where he later met and interviewed his future bride. Edna Kusma had grown up north of Kiowa and after graduating from Greeley State Teachers College, had taught at a couple one-room schools before applying to Pease. The two were married in 1925, and had seven children: Leonard, Donald, Leila, Doris, Joyce, Clifford and Leslie.

The family's livelihood consisted of raising cattle, hogs, sheep and feed for the livestock. Everyone in the family played a part in the operation from milking 10 to 15 cows

twice a day -seven days a week, to collecting and selling eggs, to tending the garden and other chores.

Like most men in the area, Earl played on the local baseball team and many Sunday summer afternoons found the family traveling to Alta Vista, Arriba, Calhan, Deer Trail, Elbert, Elizabeth, Genoa, Holtwood, Hugo, Karval, Kiowa, Kuhn's Crossing, Kutch, Limon, Ramah, Rush, Simla, and other various places to watch the games. Later when the kids were old enough, the family formed their own ball club -the Earl Wood Family Team.

In addition to playing ball, Earl taught himself to play the fiddle at an early age. He played many Saturday night barn dances but would also play at schools or friend's homes.

Earl Wood passed away on December 4, 1980 and was laid to rest in the Simla Cemetery.



EARL WOOD'S FIDDLE AND STRING BOW
FEATURED IN THIS SUMMER'S *MUSIC ON THE PLAINS* EXHIBIT

2022 PIONEER FOURTH CELEBRATION

Photographs courtesy of Kimberly Boyd





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

Bender Menders
Bino's Pizza
Laurel Brown
Champion Bank -Parker
Mark & Lynn Conroe
CORE Electric Cooperative
Ben & Laurie Duke
Elbert County
Abstract & Title Company
Front Range Kubota
High Plains Food Store
High Prairie Survey Co.
Lucy Hoffhines
Integrity Auto Repair
JR's Village Repair
Kamerzell Bros
Well & Pump Service
Kiowa Car Wash
Katee & Rick Kolm
Legacy Plow & Trailer

(LOCOMOTIVE CONT.)

Jeff & Connie Lehman
Jim & Carla Martell
Mountain View Electric Assn
Napa -Elizabeth
Outback Liquor
Patty Ann's Cafe
Phillips 66
Sawmill Bar & Grill
Sun Valley Electric Inc.
Patti Thayer
Town of Kiowa
Mindy Webb

PONDEROSA PINE

360 Diesel & Auto Repair
Monty & Phyllis Ashliman
Big R -Elizabeth
Elizabeth Locker Plant
Galt, Inc.
Hamacher Well Works Inc.

(PONDEROSA PINE CONT.)

Christian Hertneky
HOO Motors
Jill's Feed & Country Supply
Mark & Teri Moore
Tom & Marge Mottinger
Murdoch's Ranch &
Home Supply -Parker
Tom & Linda Peterson
Marta Railsback
Sprouts Farmers
Market -Castle Rock
True Value -Elizabeth

WINDMILL

Adriana's Mexican Restaurant
Albertsons
Anonymous Donor
Lenore Bates
Bernie's Kitchen
Bucknam Mortgage, LLC
dba Taylor Mortgage Group
Leanne Cook
Cowboy Handyman
Culver's -Parker
Dairy Queen -Elizabeth
Dusty Plains
Veterinary Service
Edward Jones -Elizabeth
Isabel's Coffee
King Soopers -Stroh Ranch
Kiowa Creek Community
Church Foodbank
KW Home Accents
-Karin Royston

(WINDMILL CONT.)

MK Liquors
Mountain Man
Fruit & Nut Co. -Elizabeth
Patsy North
Once Upon A Tan
Ann Pidgeon
Safeway -Elizabeth
Sandra's Fuzzy Pets
Sizzor Magic -Betty Haulman
Sonic -Elizabeth
William Thomas
Judith Tobias

CULTIVATOR

All Wired Up Electric, LLC
Buzzard's Pizza Inc.
Catalina's Diner
David & Linda Ehmann
Glaser Gas &
Equipment Co. -Kiowa
JC Martell
Sherry Metli
Raylene Owens
Potestio Brothers
Equipment, Inc.
RE/MAX Accord
-Tammi Schneider
Simla Frozen
Food Locker, LLC
Smith Ranches