

SMOKY HILL EXPRESS

Elbert County Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

FALL 2023

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**THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED
FOR THE WINTER.
REOPENING
SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2024!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Elbert County Museum
2024 Opening Day**
Sunday, May 26, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

Pioneer Fourth Celebration 2024
Thursday, July 4, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Elbert County Museum Grounds

Annual Membership Meeting 2024
Saturday, September 14, 9:00 am
Elbert County Museum Office

**DONATE NOW
THROUGH
COLORADOGIVES.ORG**

2023 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

It's hard to believe it has been thirty years since the Elbert County Museum first opened its doors on a sunny afternoon in June 1993. During those early years, attendance and displays were lean but over time both have become more robust and diverse. This year the museum had over 830 guests, with one family from Luxembourg! Season sponsorships also continued to grow with ninety-two sponsors for the year, as well as an increase in contributions made through the East Central Enterprise Zone program and online during the annual Colorado Gives Day.

Prior to opening weekend, the spring was filled with a few ambitious projects. In addition to installing the summer exhibit ***That's Entertainment!*** - a nostalgic display featuring early forms of amusement long before the internet; a new pictorial component was added to the Early Pioneers' room showcasing portraits of early county ranches and homestead houses, and the basement restrooms received a long overdue renovation. A well attended docent orientation closed out the month of May and introduced our incredible hosts to the new exhibit and gave them a behind-the-scenes access into some of the quirky stories about the artifacts out on display.



Following a month of torrential rains, the museum grounds were lush and green for this year's Pioneer Fourth Celebration in July. Museum visitors were treated to all their fan-favorites throughout the day including the cake walk, silent auction, BBQ, pie baking contest and auction, kid's games and museum open house. This event gets bigger and better each year and we appreciate our great volunteers, musicians, auctioneer, and the Dads of Elbert County for their time and talents in helping make the day one to remember.

The summer season culminated with the General Membership Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation in September. This year's meeting was bittersweet as we recognized Monty Ashliman's retirement from the ECHS board of directors after 15 years of dedicated service. Over the years, he helped in organizing field trips and programs and was always willing to lend a helping hand or share his expertise in a wide range of interests. Congratulations Monty and enjoy your retirement!

ELBERT COUNTY SESQUICENTENNIAL 2024

Elbert County was established on February 13, 1874, and its 150th birthday is almost here! Earlier this fall various municipalities and community organizations, including the Elbert County Historical Society, gathered together to form the 150th Anniversary Committee and start planning for this once-in-a-lifetime event.

Look for details to be announced after the first of the year for special activities and events throughout 2024 celebrating this historic milestone.



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

SARAH MALERICH

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?

1. What was my profession?

- a) Barber
- b) Doctor
- c) Preacher

2. What was my favorite pastime?

- a) Collecting stamps
- b) Fishing
- c) Photography

3. What catastrophe impacted me?

- a) Blizzard of 1913
- b) Flu Epidemic of 1918
- c) Flood of 1935



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.



HOW MAY I DIRECT YOUR CALL?

The Eastern Colorado Museums & Historical Societies met for their 2023 Fall Meeting on September 16 in Cheyenne Wells. Representatives from eight historical groups were treated to tours of both the Cheyenne Wells Old Jail Museum and the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Museum (left). Special thanks to the Eastern Colorado Historical Society and their members for their gracious hospitality!

SAY CHEESE!

Over the summer the museum hosted a bunch of tour groups, including the: Kiowa 2nd-3rd-4th Graders, Elizabeth Historic Advisory Board, KHS American Literature Class, Rocky Mountain Model A Car Club of Colorado, Kiowa School Teachers & Staff, and Rocky Mountain Thunderbird Car Club (right).

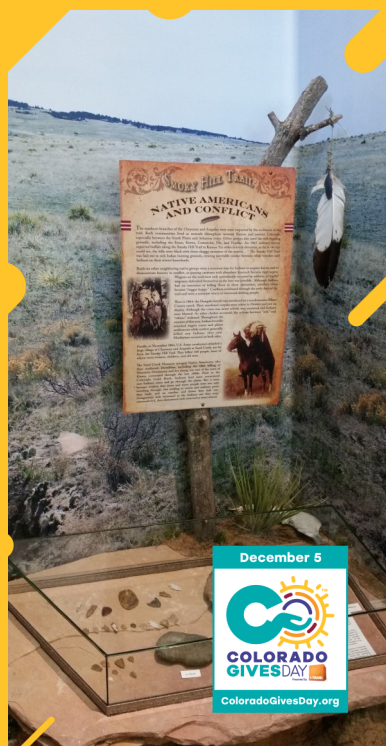


FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Thank you to our fantastic museum hosts for another successful season! Our docents for the 2023 Season included: Monty Ashliman, Roger Burton, Terry Courtright, John DuVall, Gayle & John Gardner, Lucy Hoffhines, Amy Holland, Betty Hood, Dulcie Jones, Judy & Dan Kimzey, Rick & Katee Kolm, Carla Martell, Joe Martell, Nita & Herb McKnight, Sherry Metli, Helena Miller, Marge Mottinger, Verena Nelson, Patsy North, Debbie & Tom Scoggin, Hank & Donna Smith and Carole Taylor.

The board of directors appreciates the dedication of all our faithful volunteers. If you would be interested in being a museum host in 2024, please call Carla Martell at 303.621.2229.

**Easily
the
best
day
to
give.**



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 5, 2023**. 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 **\$1,500**. Thanks to the 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 5.

ECHS PRESIDENT HONORED

Elbert County Historical Society President Joe Martell was recently honored at this year's Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference in Fort Collins.

Each year the Colorado Tourism Office recognizes eight individuals from their respective regions at their annual conference. This year Joe received the 2023 Frontline Tourism Worker Award for Region 5 (Pioneering Plains) for his outstanding contribution to tourism and hospitality in Colorado. Joe's work, and that of his colleagues, at the Elbert County Museum is greatly appreciated as they diligently preserve the heritage of the county and the local communities. Thanks to Joe and his friends who care for Colorado's history at this historic building located in Colorado's Central Plains.

Congratulations Joe, for your guidance and work that benefits so many people!



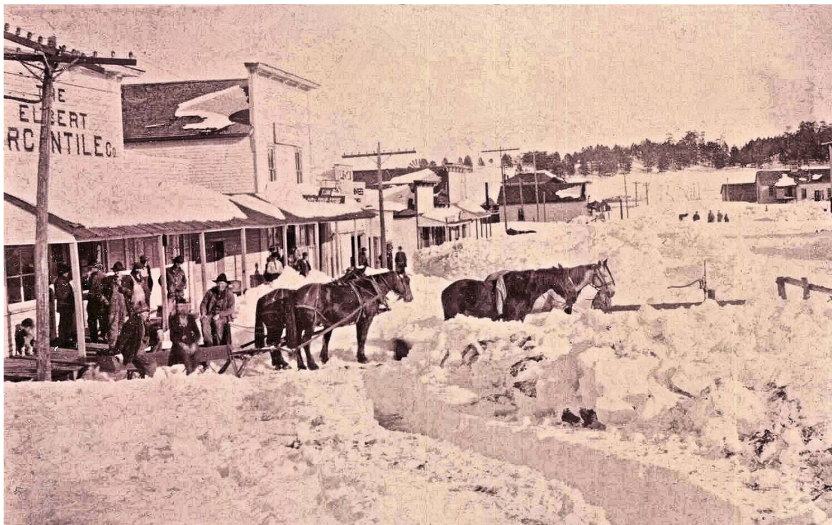
PRESENTATION OF THE 2023 COLORADO FRONTLINE TOURISM WORKER AWARDS (L TO R) GOVERNOR JARED POLIS, DONNA VANDERBAAN, ROSE STEVENS, JOE MARTELL, TERI JOBE, ASHLEY EFRAM, ARIEL CHOMEY, KEN CARMODY AND TOURISM OFFICE DIRECTOR TIM WOLFE.

A GREAT DECEMBER BLIZZARD

The Worst at This Season of the Year since 1878.

From the stories being told by the old timers of this community Elbert County has experienced the worst blizzard since the spring of 1878.

The storm started on Monday, December 1st, and by Thursday noon snow had fallen to the depth of three feet on the level. Thursday evening the blizzard started, lifting the snow which had fallen and piling it into drifts from ten to twenty feet deep. All traffic was suspended, there being no way of getting into or out of the town except on "skis" or snowshoes. Railroad traffic was entirely blocked, the first train to reach Elbert since last Thursday was the next Thursday morning.



LOOKING EAST ALONG GARFIELD AVENUE. TOWN OF ELBERT, 1913

the stores in the residence sections, bread and milk wagons unable to reach their customers, and the street cars were tied up from Thursday until Sunday.

This great fall of snow coming at this season of the year when the sun has but little power to thaw means that we will likely experience one of the most severe winters that we have had in many years. Fortunately the farmers all raised bumper crops of grain and hay the past season and will probably have plenty of feed.

Elbert County Tribune, December 12, 1913

Who am I?

Continued from page 2

Answers: b) Doctor; b) Fishing; a, b & c) Blizzard of 1913, Flu Epidemic of 1918 and the Flood of 1935

Robert H. Denney, M.D. was born in Carrol County, Ohio on November 21, 1872. He was the son of Henry H. and Eliza J. (Gregory) Denney. The first eight years of his life were spent on the home farm where he was born. The family moved to Carrollton, Ohio, where he attended high school and graduated with honors.



Coming to Colorado in 1891, he began to teach school in Elbert County and did this for about four years. In the meantime, he started the study of medicine under Dr. McNeilan of Elbert and took a course of lectures in Gross Medical College in Denver, from which he graduated from in 1896 with a degree of medical doctor. Soon afterward he began to practice in Elbert and bought out Dr. Murrey's office. In 1898 he was chosen county physician and health officer.

Dr. Robert Denney married Miss Lillian Nicholls on January 4, 1899, in Elbert. Lillian was born in Canada in January 1875, the daughter of Samuel and Mary (Lewis) Nicholls. The Denney's had two children: Robert Jr. and Elizabeth (Gleason).

During his 70 years of practicing medicine at Elbert, Dr. Denney used every means of transportation; on foot, on horseback, horse and buggy, sled, and later by car. At the time of the Blizzard of 1913, he spent all day and wore out four saddle horses making a trip of about 12 miles, and

spent the next day getting back home.

Probably the most strenuous year of all those years was 1918, the year of the flu epidemic. He was up and started on his rounds by six in the morning and seldom arrived back before midnight. At the time, Dr. Rogers of Kiowa, and Dr. Witter of Elizabeth, were both down with the flu at the same time and Dr. Denney took care of those communities in addition to his own.

The Kiowa Creek Flood of 1935 washed his office completely away, together with all his equipment, books and records. It also damaged his home and it had to be torn down. Many thought that with everything gone, office and home, that he would move to the city. His reply was that the need for a doctor was still there, and he built a new house with office.

Of the 4,846 doctors licensed to practice in Colorado, he held the oldest license, which was issued in 1896. In 1946, the Colorado State Medical Society honored Dr. Denney with a 50-year pin, marking his 50th year of practice. His favorite sport was fishing. He devoted his spare time to his garden, lawn and flowers.

On January 4, 1959, the three communities of Elbert, Kiowa and Elizabeth honored Robert and Lillian's 60th wedding anniversary with a card shower. The Elbert Presbyterian Church, the Aid Society and Elbert community each sent floral tributes in recognition of Mrs. Denney's years of work and service to the church, and the Doctor's years of service to the community.

Lillian passed away at Penrose Hospital in Colorado Springs on December 23, 1959. Robert died on September 19, 1968 at the age of 95.

*Portrait and Biographical Record of Denver and Vicinity, 1898
History of Elbert County, Colorado, 1989*

Did You Know?

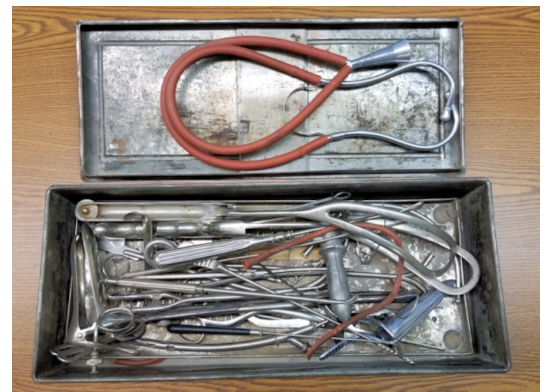
The communities along the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad (Highway 24) were served by an equally dedicated medical professional.

Dr. Dale O. Groves and his family moved to Calhan in 1908, where he tended to his patients at their homes. First traveling by horse and buggy and then later by car. Dr. Groves was the only Rock Island Railroad doctor between Colorado Springs and Limon during that time, and he attended to sick passengers on the train, as well as the railroad men who were injured in the many accidents that occurred while operating the railroad. The train was often used as an ambulance in those days to transport the sick and injured to larger medical facilities in Colorado Springs. He's also credited with having the first drug store in the area, known as Groves' Drug, it was located in Calhan.

Dr. Groves took a respite from the field of medicine in 1925 when he and his family moved to Bridgeport, Nebraska, where he managed a Chevrolet garage. However in 1928, Groves and his family returned to the area, moving to Simla where he rejoined the medical profession.

During his practice in the 1930s, Dr. Groves also served as the Elbert County Coroner. He was selected as the attending physician for the first electric chair execution done at the state prison at Canon City, where he observed the execution and later performed the autopsy.

Groves served as mayor of Simla from 1932 to 1936. He was an impressive dresser who was known for his hard straw flat hat, suit and vest.



DR. GROVE'S TRAVELING "DOCTOR'S BAG" WAS ACTUALLY A COPPER TIN BOX WITH A LID AND CARRIED EVERYTHING HE NEEDED FOR HOUSE CALLS. WHEN NECESSARY, THE TIN COULD BE EMPTIED AND FILLED WITH BOILING WATER TO SANITIZE THE EQUIPMENT.



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
Colorado Greenhouse
Builders, LLC
Mark & Lynn Conroe
CORE Electric Cooperative
Ben & Laurie Duke
Elbert County
Abstract & Title Company
Elizabeth Locker Plant
Front Range Kubota
Gordon Insurance Agency, Inc.
High Plains Food Store
High Prairie Survey Co.
Lucy Hoffhines
Integrated Electrical Contractors
Jill's Feed & Country Supply
JR's Village Repair
Kamerzell Bros
Well & Pump Service
Kiowa Car Wash

(LOCOMOTIVE CONT.)

Katee & Rick Kolm
Legacy Plow & Trailer
Jeff & Connie Lehman
Jim & Carla Martell
Mountain View
Electric Assn (MVEA)
Sawmill Bar & Grill
Tom & Debbie Scoggin
Sun Valley Electric Inc.
Patti Thayer
Through Your Eyes Photography
Town of Kiowa
True Value -Elizabeth

PONDEROSA PINE

360 Diesel & Auto Repair
Monty & Phyllis Ashliman
Big R -Elizabeth
Boykin Chiropractic Care, PC
Carriage Shoppes Tea Room
Costco -Parker
Culver's -Castle Rock and Parker

(PONDEROSA PINE CONT.)

Galt, Inc.
Hamacher Well Works Inc.
Christian Hertneky
HOO Motors
IC Threads, Inc.
Tom & Marge Mottinger
Murdoch's -Parker
Napa -Elizabeth
Patsy & Jason North
Sprouts Farmers Market
-Castle Rock and Parker
Mindy Webb

WINDMILL

1897 House "The Nest"
Adriana's Mexican Restaurant
Anna's Car & Dog Wash
Leanne Cook
Cowboy Handyman
Dairy Queen -Elizabeth
Dusty Plains Veterinary Service
Fuzzy Pets Grooming
Freddy's -Castle Rock
Gayle Gardner
H1 Enterprise LLC
Home Depot -Parker
Betty Hood
Pat Huddleston
Isabel's Coffee
Jac's Pizza
Kiowa Creek Community
Church Foodbank
KW Home Accents
-Karin Royston
Barbara LeTourneau
Janet Malerich
Christine Maxfield

(WINDMILL CONT.)

MK Liquors
Mountain Man
Fruit & Nut Co. -Elizabeth
Outback Liquor
Patty Ann's Cafe
Parker Port-A-Potty
Safeway -Elizabeth
Sizzor Magic -Betty Haulman
and Linda McFarland
Betty Taylor
The Gals at the
Carriage Shoppes
William Thomas

CULTIVATOR

Advance Quality Auto Repair
Catalina's Diner
David & Linda Ehmann
Farmers State Bank of Calhan
Glaser Gas &
Equipment Co. -Kiowa
Harold Heckman
JC Martell
Sherry Metti
Raylene Owen
RE/MAX Accord
-Tammi Schneider
Simla Frozen Food Locker, LLC
Smith Ranches