

SMOKY HILL EXPRESS

Elbert County Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

SPRING 2014

HAPPY 140TH BIRTHDAY ELBERT COUNTY!

ESTABLISHED FEBRUARY 13, 1874

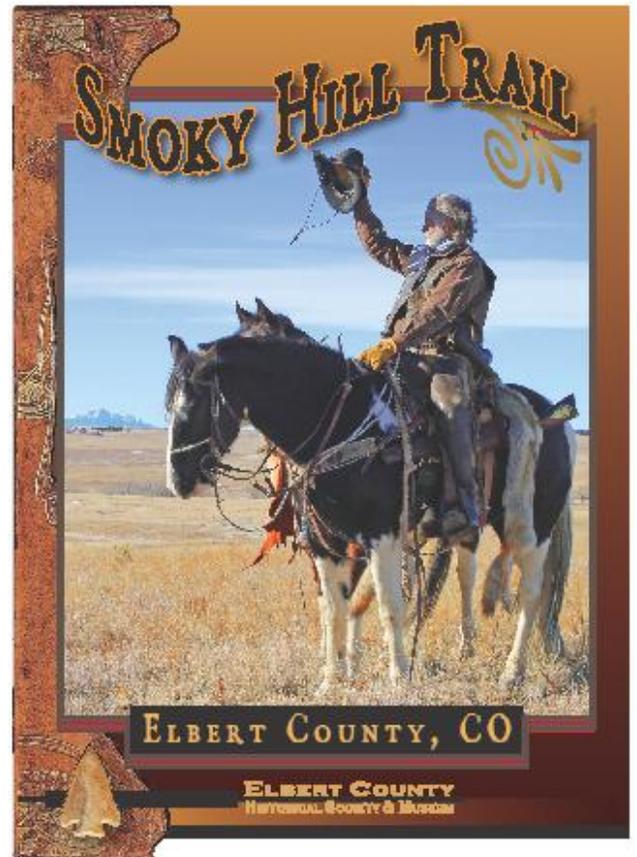
SMOKY HILL TRAIL —SHORTCUT TO THE ROCKIES

It is with great anticipation that many people have been looking forward to opening the first phase of a three year permanent display. Outside an inviting banner advertises the new opening of Phase I of the Smoky Hill Trail exhibit.

Inside a vital segment of pioneer history is being portrayed in the form of an experience one might have as a newcomer in the 1850's upon entering the eastern boundaries of what we presently know as Elbert County. We want to give visitors a feeling of what it might be like from a pioneer perspective, following a wagon while walking along the Smoky Hill Trail. There are artifacts unique to this period along with nature's enhancements.

With this completed phase we will present a taste of things to come in the next two years as the Smoky Hill Trail was followed by the development of the railroads and lastly, automobiles moved along the same route which is still being used today.

On opening day, **Sunday, May 25** from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. be sure to sample some dried foods that are typical of foods that were packed for this long journey and pick up information that explains how this drying process was done.



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE ELBERT COUNTY MUSEUM

Elizabeth Area Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours

Thursday, May 8, 5:00 pm at the Museum

Kiowa High School Alumni Open House

Saturday, May 10, 4:30 to 5:30pm at the Museum

Opening Day of Elbert County Museum

Sunday, May 25, 1:00 to 4:00 pm

The Museum is **OPEN** Thursday through Sunday,
1:00 to 4:00 pm every week during the summer.

Orientation Meeting

for museum hosts and Pioneer Fourth volunteers

Saturday, May 31, 10:00 am at the Museum

Pioneer Fourth Celebration

Friday, July 4, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on the Museum Grounds

Closing Day of Elbert County Museum

Sunday, August 31, 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Annual Membership Meeting

Volunteer Appreciation

Saturday, September 27, 10:00 am at the Museum



ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Joe Martell
President

Lucy Hoffhines
Secretary

John Metli
Board Member at Large

Carla Martell
Past President

John Hoffhines
Vice President

Donna Smith
Treasurer

Hank Smith
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?
 - Ohio
 - New York
 - Colorado
- What was my profession?
 - Merchant King
 - Public Servant
 - Cattle Barron
- My father-in-law was
 - Ulysses S. Grant
 - Kit Carson
 - John Evans



Answers on page 5

GIFT SHOP

Be sure to stop by the gift shop. We have T-Shirts, a variety of books including the Smoky Hill Trail, Elbert County individuals and towns; Pioneers and Indians; cookbooks; children's books, pioneer craft kits and much, much more!

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

Cultivator -

Contributions of \$250 cash** 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

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)

**East Central Enterprise Zone

By making a \$250 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.

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the Smoky Hill Express.

ORIENTATION MEETING for Museum Hosts and Pioneer Fourth Volunteers

Saturday, May 31 at 10:00 am
Elbert County Museum Assembly Room

If you have been a museum volunteer in the past or would like to be one, please join us! This is a great opportunity to meet new people, become informed about the changes that have taken place since last year and learn about the 2014 exhibits and Pioneer Fourth celebration.

Everyone is welcome to attend so please feel free to invite family and friends.

PIONEER FOURTH CELEBRATION

Friday, July 4 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Elbert County Museum Grounds



Once again in celebration of Independence Day, we have an opportunity to gather with family and friends in a relaxing atmosphere, taking in all the museum has to

offer inside and out. Entertainment and good food is available for all to enjoy while visiting and playing.

Visitors are invited to wear historical period costumes or simply one of a patriotic theme if they so choose. If you wish to enter the costume parade it will be held shortly after the noon hour.

In lieu of craft booths this year we plan to have artisans demonstrating various pioneer skills & handy work throughout the grounds. Please be sure to stop by and visit with them.

A tradition long held during this celebration is a highlight of the day. If

you desire to enter your pie (s) be sure to bring them to the museum by 11:30 am (no cream pies please).

Following the pie judging, the auction will begin at 1:00 pm. Thank you to all who donate your tasty pies to this fund raiser and also to those who bid on them.

The silent auction is always a good opportunity to donate or



bid on items as part of the museum's fund raising. If you wish to donate items please contact Carla Martell at

303.621.2229.

Items need to be received by Saturday, **June 14.**

There will be fun for all on the museum grounds with a variety of games and contests. Tickets may be purchased at the main



Photographs courtesy of William C. Thomas

entrance to the museum to use in these activities. Be sure to enter the cake-walk and watermelon contest.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

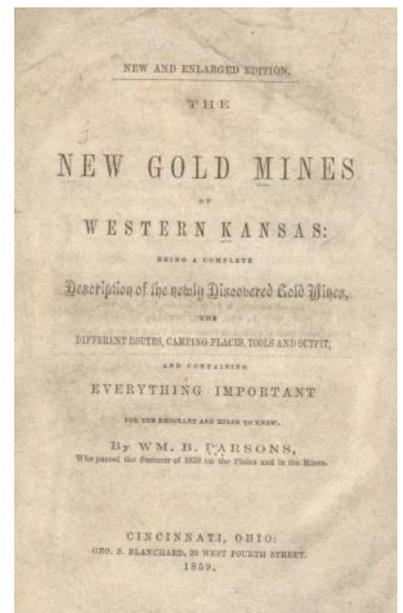
Saturday, September 27 at 10:00 am
Elbert County Museum Assembly Room

Be sure to mark your calendar! Everyone is welcome to attend this meeting as we acknowledge the accomplishments and highlights of our 2014 museum season and recognize our outstanding hosts and volunteers.

PARSON'S GUIDEBOOK

William Parsons was a Lawrence, Kansas city attorney who wrote his guidebook for Pike's Peaker prospectors. He had been a leading member of the Lawrence exploration party of 1858 and prospected at the mouth of Cherry Creek in Denver that summer. Parsons returned to Lawrence that fall and immediately starting writing his guidebook which recommended Lawrence as an outfitting point. Besides the book, the town offered inexpensive goods and a shorter distance to haul them, since Lawrence is located further west than some of the other outfitting points.

At Lawrence a traveler had a choice of trails west, all of which were discussed in Parsons' book. A description of travel on the Smoky Hill Trail was included even though Parsons had not used the trail either going to or returning from Denver. Parsons asserted that the Smoky Hill was equal to the route along the Arkansas or that along the Platte. In reality, the Smoky Hill Trail, although the shortest route, was much more dangerous.



HOW DID THEY GET THOSE NAMES?

Thornton Wilder's "Our Town", though set in New England, can also typify the small towns dotting Elbert County. The pace is somewhat slower than that of the 'big city'. Everyone knows everyone else and tragedies bring a helping hand from every neighbor.

Though many small settlements grew up around the railroad, the major ranches and the stage routes – they vanished only to become names in history books. Towns that remain today include:

Agate – Established in 1876, Agate began as only a trading post on the Union Pacific Railroad line. The town began to grow in 1918. At that time, the railroad sold land to ranchers for from 75 cents to \$1.50 an acre.

Elbert – The original Elbert was a post office about eight miles southwest of the present day town which was established in 1882. After the Denver & New Orleans Railroad reached the present site of Elbert in May of 1882, the town was established there. A major flood in 1935 wiped out much of the town.

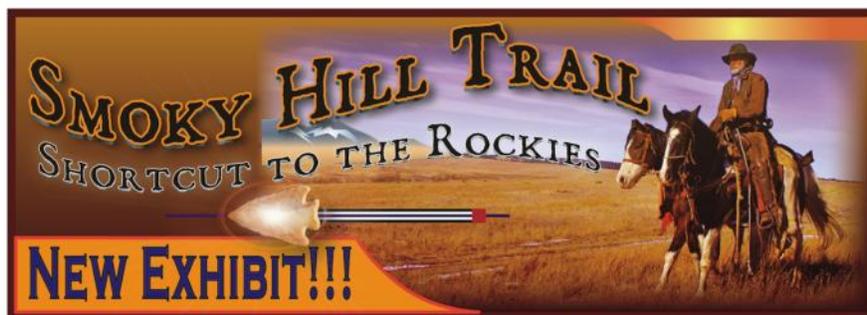
Elizabeth - Established in 1880, incorporated in 1890, Elizabeth was a rough and tumble lumbering town built

around Webber's Mill. It was named by Colorado Governor John Evans for his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Gray Kimbark Hubbard. The governor was seeking names for towns along the Denver & New Orleans Railroad, of which he was promoter and principal owner.

Kiowa – Francis Joseph Huber came to Colorado in 1858 and took up a parcel of land on Kiowa Creek. He built his first house near the present site of Kiowa. Kiowa was a stage stop which included a general store and a saloon on the old Butterfield Trail. Established in 1869 and incorporated in 1912, it is the Elbert County seat and was once called Middle Kiowa.

Matheson – Established in 1886, the town was named for Duncan Matheson, a sheep man, upon whose land it was built. The post office was located at the Matheson Ranch before the town was started. When the first store was built, the post office was moved in 1907. Early homesteaders in the area raised sheep, cattle, potatoes and pinto beans.

Simla – For years, the railroad siding in the area had been known as Simla. The daughter of a railroad official suggested the name because it was in a book she was reading when her father noticed the townsite from the train. The town was established in 1888.



A HEARTY THANK YOU!

A gathering of 75 people attended the February General Membership meeting at the historic Russell Gates Mercantile Building in Elbert.

The morning began with a welcome and introductions by ECHS President Joe Martell, followed by a brief membership meeting which included a progress report on the Smoky Hill Trail exhibit and 2014 museum season activities.

Ric Morgan's slide show presentation entitled: *1864 and 1868 Indian Wars in Elbert County* examined the relationship between the local Native Americans and the ever-growing population of new settlers, the circumstance and conditions which led to confrontations between the two, and ultimately the removal of the Indian tribes from the plains. Ric shared the microphone with his friend, author and historian, Dr. Jeff Broome, who spoke about his new book *Cheyenne War: Indian Raids on the Roads to Denver 1864-1869*.

Both men examined deprivation claims filed with the US Government for property losses due to Indian raids –



specifically addressing those related to the Hungate and Dietemann Massacres, as well as a separate skirmish that nearly surrounded the town of Elbert.

Special thanks to Ric Morgan, Dr. Jeff Broome, the Elbert Women's Club (for use of their historic building), and to Ann Coontz and Viaero Wireless for providing cinnamon rolls and juice.

WHO AM I?

Continued from page 3

Answers: a) Ohio, b) Public Servant, c) John Evans

SAMUEL HITT ELBERT was born in Ohio on April 3, 1833, but moved with his family to Iowa when he was seven years old. He grew up in Iowa, but returned to his native state to attend Ohio Wesleyan University, from which he graduated in 1854 with high honors.



After graduation, he moved to Nebraska to set up a law practice. In May, 1860, he served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago. At that convention, Elbert made the acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln, who had been nominated as candidate for president, and of Dr. John Evans.

When Evans was appointed Colorado Territorial Governor in 1862, President Lincoln also named Samuel Elbert as the Colorado Territorial Secretary. On more than one occasion, Elbert acted as governor in Evans' absence. It was during one such absence in 1864-65 that Elbert organized the Second and Third Colorado Volunteer regiments to protect the territory from both the Confederacy and Native Americans who were uprising at that time.

Following the uprisings in June of 1865, Samuel Elbert married Miss Josephine Evans, daughter of governor Evans in Evanston, Illinois. He moved his new bride to Colorado where they lived in the heart of Denver. Josephine died three years later. An infant son, John, was born and died two months prior to his mother. He never remarried.

In 1868, Elbert was elected to the Territorial Legislature and in 1870 was elected Secretary of that body. In 1872, he became chairman of the Republican Territorial Central Committee and is credited with organizing the Colorado Republican Party.

Mr. Elbert was appointed governor of the Colorado Territory by President Ulysses S. Grant in 1873, but Elbert's political enemies in the Republican Party urged Grant to remove him from office in 1874.

Colorado became a state in 1876 and after that, Elbert served for more than ten years as justice of the state supreme court and in 1880 he was promoted to Chief Justice. He was praised by both political parties for his sense of integrity while in that office.

Samuel Elbert left office in 1889 because of ill health and died on November 27, 1899, after years of conscientiously serving the people of the Territory and State of Colorado.

Elbert County, the town of Elbert and Mount Elbert, one of Colorado's "Fourteeners," were all named in his honor.

Resources: Colorado State Archives and Colorado Central Magazine

BEHIND THE SCENES....

Creating earth dioramas for the Smoky Hill Trail



Shown above is our museum artist as he creates the rock/earth forms that the top areas will act as display space for Smoky Hill Trail artifacts. Here he is applying a scratch coat of stucco over sculpted Styrofoam as the first shaping process to create earth. The finished texture and soil is shown in the inset photo.

Building custom cabinetry for the Gentsch dioramas

A new arrival at the museum! This is the first cabinet that displays Smoky Hill Trail dioramas by artist Hank Gentsch. Five cabinets will link together to show all ten depictions by Mr. Gentsch on the trail theme.

The oak cabinet is the creation of master craftsman Gerry Vidmar (right) of Custom Interior Designs Ltd. His design not only professionally presents the dioramas beautifully,



there are also two heavy-duty pull-out drawers for additional artifact display areas (fun for kids and adults alike). Gerry began his career at age 16, and we are proud to add his brilliant work as an integral part of the museum. Thanks Gerry!

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!



Cultivator

Bender Menders
 Laurel Brown
 Colorado Office of
 Economic Development
 Glaser Gas & Equipment
 Co. -Kiowa
 JC Martell
 Mountain View Electric
 Association
 PDC Energy Co.
 Smith Ranches

Spring Valley Golf Club
 Sun Valley Electric Inc.



Locomotive

Elbert County Abstract &
 Title Company
 Elizabeth Family Dental
 Ben & Laurie Duke
 High Plains Food Store
 Intermountain Rural Electric
 Association
 Katee & Ric Kolm
 Sonic -Elizabeth



Ponderosa Pine

Elizabeth Locker Plant
 Gordon Insurance Agency
 Hamacher Well Works Inc.
 HOO Motors
 J.C.'s Greenhouse
 Jim & Carla Martell
 Kiowa Creek Community
 Members
 George Krieger, DDS
 Simla Frozen Food Locker
 LLC
 The Rock Parts -Castle Rock
 True Value -Elizabeth



Windmill

Angie's Cuttin Corner
 Barr Bear Salon
 Boykin Chiropractic Care
 Costco -Parker
 Christian Hertneky
 Elizabeth Tanning
 Kiowa Post Office
 Love Funeral Home -Limon
 MK Liquors
 Parker Port-A-Potty
 Safeway -Elizabeth

There is still time to be a sponsor for the 2014 Season. If you or your business would like to be part of this historical and community effort, please contact Carla Martell at 303.621.2229.

ELBERT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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