

THE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

November-December 2018

RIO GRANDE COUNTY MUSEUM



MISSION STATEMENT

The Rio Grande County Museum and Cultural Center preserves Rio Grande County's memory as a teacher and champion of its heritage for the citizens of Rio Grande County.

VISION

The Rio Grande County Museum and Cultural Center enriches people's lives by helping them to understand Rio Grande County's past, to appreciate the present and to embrace the future.

MORE MUSEUM HISTORY – THE DEAN HAMMOND STORY

Once an empty lot that belonged to Dean and Evelyn Hammond is now the location of the Rio Grande County Museum. In the early days of Del Norte, Henry Kiel who was a very prominent businessman in the development of the town, had his home here. It is appropriate that history should continue on a site that two businessmen of Del Norte and Rio Grande County owned as both of them contributed much to the area.

Dean Hammond was born December 4, 1907 in Cambridge, Nebraska. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1929. At the University, he edited the University newspaper. Journalism and newspapers were his love as he worked for the Daily Nebraskan, The United Press in Lincoln, Nebraska and then the Rocky Mountain News before coming to Del Norte when he purchased the Del Norte Prospector and Creede Candle in June of 1933. The name of the

newspaper had been changed from the San Juan Prospector to the Del Norte Prospector just a few years before Dean took over.

On June 2nd 1933, in his first addition of the newspaper he promised the community that while he needed to have a profitable newspaper to support himself, but wanted to “produce a clean, newsy, live-wire newspaper that will record the current history of the Upper San Luis Valley”. He wanted to support and become part of the community. Those of us who had the opportunity to know Dean and read the paper knows that he did indeed produce a clean, newsy and live-wire paper. His sense of humor and wit came through in each and every issue.

In October of 1933, he married Evelyn Templin who the community knew as Ev and Dean fondly called her “Tootsie”. They were parents to two daughters, Lee and Sue. Evelyn worked the newspaper along with Dean in a “two- person” operation.

Dean served as the president of the Colorado Press Association in 1949 and was named the Publishers of the Year in 1974. He also served as county commissioner from 1976 to 1980 and was a member of the Forest Service Advisory Counsel for 10 years. He was part of many civic organizations in the community.

In visiting with Suzanne Benton, she told the story of the donation of the land on which the museum now is located. Dean told the county commissioners and Suzanne who was the county administrator that he would like to donate the land to the county with the stipulation that a museum would be built on it. The Hammonds’ wish and dream came true. Thanks to the Hammond family and the County Commissioners, the Rio Grande County community has a museum!



Donations continue to make the Museum an interesting destination for both visitors to the area and our local citizens. This 1927-1928 great refrigerator came to the museum from the Jesse and Mary Bingel Wiley home donated by Tony Dinger and Gary Sabrowski. Gary and Tony and the Velasquez Construction LLC did the

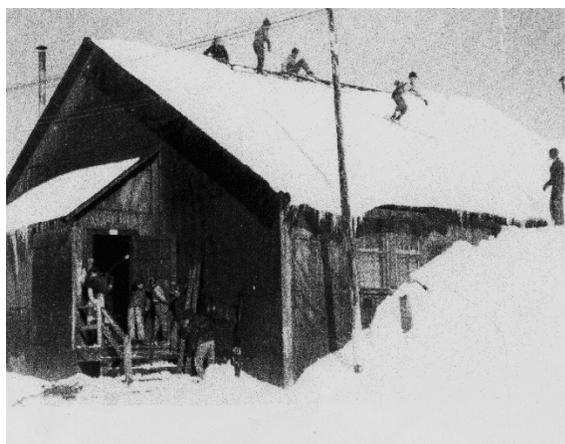
hard work in getting this heavy object into the museum and in place in the WWI On the Homefront kitchen exhibit. Our thanks for the donation and the hard work to get it in.

SNOW AND SKIING – FUN OR HARD WORK

With Wolf Creek ski area already open winter has almost arrived. The Summit mining district dealt with snow with developing the first ski club in the State of Colorado in 1877. It was written up in the San Juan Prospector. At this time, skis were called snowshoes and were ten feet long. The club members competed in downhill races and had daily drills.

The ski was not only used for pleasure, but it was a form of transportation in the snowy mountains. The mail was carried from Del Norte to Summitville and then on to Pagosa Springs with the carrier on skis. Also checking on mining claims could involve skiing. Newspaper articles in the 1870s talk about P.J. and Mary Peterson skiing down to Del Norte from Summitville.

Tragedy struck on January 18, 1933 when Telesforo Romero and H. C. Reims died in an avalanche. They were using skis to get around as the snow was quite deep. They were working in the Winchester Tunnel and living in the old boarding house about 500 yards from the tunnel. A search was immediately started, but had to be abandoned until later. The men's bodies were eventually found and brought to Del Norte.



In the 1930s, skiing became a sport in Summitville again. Living in Summitville as children, Martin and Melvin Gates and Robert Myers talked about skiing as part of the Summitville life style. Several years ago, Patricia Pabst interviewed them and these stories are part of the Summitville exhibit.

Here, the school house is used as a ski jump! There was a hill close to the school and they had a ski trail also on that hill.

In a story written by Ken Kernan it talks about his father, Lloyd, working in Summitville after he graduated from High School in May of 1928. The next winter the snow was so deep that the easiest way out the building was to lay a plank out the window and walk out on the plank. On his days off, he would cross country ski in the surrounding mountains.

Several of the men had heard about the Norwegian style of ski jumping. They decided to give it a try. They located an old wooden door and took it out to the base of a steep hill. They made a ramp with it and packed snow on the top of it. Then they climbed the steep hill and came barreling down toward the ramp. They flew high into the air and crashed down on the flat. Nobody told them that they needed to have a steep incline below the ramp in order to land and keep going.

THE GIFT SHOP

The holidays are fast approaching and it is time to think about gifts for that special person that are unique and also help to support a good cause. The Gift Shop at the Museum helps to support the some of the work that is done at the Museum. Also, a membership to the Rio Grande County Museum, Inc., 501 (c) 3 would be an excellent gift that would give benefits to the recipient all year.



History books of the area as well as coloring books and children's books are available.

The museum also helps to support local artists who in turn with their work supports the museum. Byron Williams from Saguache has his gourd bowls shown here as well as Alex Colville from Del Norte who has his one of a kind wooden vases. Sam Smith, age 16 is starting his own business with delightfully crocheted hair scrunchies. We are proud to help him start his business! Cards, neck scarves, pot holders, the collector's Rio Grande County Museum mugs are just a few of the many items that can be found here.

Other artists include Patty Pogue Haught with jewelry, Judy Nicolais with crocheted doilies and Jean Hanna with crocheted pot holders, scarves

and more and framed prints by Sharon Edwards. Cards by Sharon Edwards, Yvonne Halburian and Wilma Shaffer are also available.



UPCOMING PROGRAMS IN THE MUSEUM

LIFTING THE LID, A STORY OF LUCK AND RESEARCH

Last fall, Angie Krall, archeologist for the Rio Grande National Forest, contacted the museum about helping them with a project that became called “Lifting the Lid – a Story of Luck, Research and a Lifelong Passion.

In the fall of 2017, two Forest Service employees on a survey hike found two partially buried boxes at the foot of a cliff. The contents of box include items dating roughly from 1890 to 1918 and include clothing, recipes from magazines stuffed into old time, children’s books, copies of *Good Housekeeping*, cutlery and a tortoiseshell pattern silicone comb. All the items are of a life of a home and a family. There were names of many different people with these items.

Krall states that once these items were found she though of Ella Axelrod, CC student, and Scott Ingram, CC professor, who has helped with other area projects. She also contacted the museum to see if we could assist in finding information on the names included in the box.

Krall explains that the Forest Service policy is to leave items where they are found. However, this was found at the base of two climbing routes and it looks as though it was disturbed already. They immediately excavated the boxes and contacted Ella and Scott.

Ella is conducting the research in conjunction with the Rio Grande National Forest and Rio Grande County Museum so that the items can be archived and displayed once the research is done. There are many pages of research that has been done here at the Museum identifying families



who lived in the area of the discovery as well as the names in the box.

Once the research is done, a program and exhibit are planned at the museum.

For the entire story, it is shown at www.coloradocollege.edu/newsroomf/lifting-the-lid-a-story-of-luck-research-and-a-lifelong-passion.

One of the many artifacts found in the box being researched by Ella and Scott. The mystery gets more intriguing as more work is done.

Do You Know: The Rio Grande National Forest covers 1.82 million acres of the San Luis Valley and surrounding mountains in southern Colorado. It has a long history with evidence of human occupation dating as far back as 11,000 B. C



CULTURALLY MODIFIED TREES

Marcy Reiser along with Marilyn Martorano, Angie Krall, Laurie Huckaby and Peter M. Brown have done extensive research on culturally modified trees. Ms. Reiser will be presenting a program at the museum sometime in the winter months with the date and time yet to be determined. Ms. Reiser is an archeologist along with Angie Krall on the Rio Grande National Forest. Posters showing her work are on display at the museum. The following article is taken from one of these posters.

WHAT IS A PEELED TREE?

The most commonly cited motivation for peeling trees, especially in North America, is the tradition among many pre-reservation indigenous people of peeling bark to harvest the cambium, or more specifically the phloem that lies just underneath the bark. The cambium is rich in nutrients like carbohydrates, vitamin C, minerals and fibers.

ETHNOGRAPHY OF PEELED TREES

Across many cultures the methods used to peel trees, especially when cambium was the objective, are strikingly similar. Using a stone tool, metal adze or other implement, a series of horizontal cuts were typically made at the base of a tree, but not so far down that a wedging stick or other tool couldn't be inserted below the cuts and thrust upward to dislodge the bark. Frequently, a second set of cuts was made at the top of the strip and within reach of the harvester in order to fully separate the bark/cambium from the tree.

By design, the amount of bark removed from the circumference of a tree was usually limited to avoid killing the tree, thereby leaving a distinctive rectangular or oval shaped scar, 20 or more centimeters above ground. Peel scars, like many other characteristics of culturally modified trees, can often be distinguished from other scars and injuries to a tree such as those caused by fires, animal foraging or lightning.

WHY PEEL TREES

Reasons for peeling trees could include: emergency food; as regular or stored food; for sugar; for pitch; for the bark or outer wood; for ceremony or marking territories. The cambium layer provides nutrition, could be rolled into balls, dried and ground into flour. It could be boiled in the spring to get the sugar. Pitch was used to seal baskets and used as a glue. The bark and outer wood could be used for trays, cradleboards, baskets, twisted into cord and bow stave blanks. The trees could be used to mark trails, boundaries and sacred sites. One pound of inner bark has 600 calories, is high in fiber, calcium, protein, carbohydrates, iron, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus and vitamin C.

This is only a part of what will be presented in the program. Stop by the museum to see the display done by Ms. Reiser. This is courtesy of the Rio Grande National Forest.

MUSEUM BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Board is planning on starting the holiday season with “Gateway to Holiday Season” open house on Saturday, November 17th from 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. at the museum. Music by local groups and artists and refreshments will be part of the festivities. One can come, spend time and visit with friends and neighbors and check out the museum. Both Thanksgiving and Christmas will be celebrated during the event.

A membership “thanks you” party for those who have supported the museum over the many years by paying their dues to the Association is being planned for the spring. The dues and the support from the membership help to keep the museum functioning. Invitations will be sent for the event.

The “Antiques Roadshow” fundraising event will also be scheduled for the spring. More information will be sent out as the date of the event is scheduled.

The annual meeting where all members are invited to attend will be held on January 8th, 2019 at 5:30 P.M. at the museum. The meeting will include the election of officers for the 2019 year, passing the proposed budget. New board members are needed. Anyone interested, please contact one of the present board members.

For more information on the board events please contact the board officers. Please call the museum office at (719)657-2847 for contact information for the officers. The Rio Grande County Museum email is rgmuseum@riograndecounty.org and the information can be directed to you for the officers.

DID YOU KNOW: Del Norte, the Rio Grande County Museum, Kristy Mountain Sports, the Great Sand Dunes and the UFO Watch Tower are featured on You Tube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rtpNOhY38U or search “Last Minute Trips Del Norte” It went live at 2:00 P.M. on Friday, October 5 and has had more than 60,000 views within five days!!



Snow mate sock people will be available during the holiday season as well as at the “Gateway to the Holiday” event as a county fund raiser. Each one is hand crafted by Rosie B. and make a fun decoration or gift for the holiday.



With the upcoming holidays, the museum will be closed for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Please call during that period of time to check the hours.



Fall in the Seven Mile Plaza and Swede Lane area.

RIO GRANDE COUNTY MUSEUM

580 OAK STREET

DEL NORTE, COLORADO 811132

Board of Directors: President: DeAnn Jacobs; Vice-President: Hugh Lee Roy Fuchs; Secretary: Sandra Wagner; Treasurer: Cindy Hill. Board Members: Gene Glover, Suzanne Bothell, Karla Shriver, Ron Marx, Steve Nicolais.

Museum Director: Louise Colville. Assistant to the Director: Mikayla Baird.

Volunteers: Rose Basaldua, Kami Humphreys, Steve Nicolais, Braden Whitehall, Kyndra Powell, Iris Wells.