

The Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado, FHSECO

407 N. 12th Street, Rocky Ford, CO 81067

fhsecolo@outlook.com – fhseco.net - 719-468-9126 – Like us on Facebook – September 2023, edition 3



The FHSECO is organized as a public benefit corporation exclusively for charitable & educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and, more specifically, to discover, collect, restore, and preserve materials of information, publications, accounts, and illustrations about Southeast Colorado, and then, develop, promote, and teach said history to engage the community. A repository for historic data. We serve all of Southeast Colorado with our volunteer program and historic projects. So come join us!

We are looking for members to join our team that love history, would love to see the schoolhouse restored and Southeast Colorado history preserved.

The “Little” White Schoolhouse was built in 1877, 12 years after the Civil War and 23 years before the RF Sugar Factory. It was truly part of the Wild West. It was first to accommodate 15-20 students. It was the first schoolhouse in the township of Rocky Ford, and was originally located where Nava Manor is located now on 10th Street. The 15 X 15-foot original adobe building was weather-boarded and painted white. Ten years later, Rocky Ford held its first election in the building on August 6, 1887. The Little White Schoolhouse was the place of all important meetings at the time, whether it was held as a voting booth, a city ordinance meeting, or a meeting place for churches, etc. While the Sugar Factory was being built, the town grew very fast and the student population doubled and tripled in size monthly. In 1896 the school was then enlarged to hold more students. Finally, when a bigger school was built to replace this building (known as the First Liberty School) this school was then sold, dismantled in order to remove the adobe, moved to its present location in 1897 and rebuilt.

The Friends plan on restoring the 1877, historic Little White Schoolhouse to its original condition but cannot start until we can get funding. Our share of a Colorado Historical Society grant would be about 25%. We can start sooner if we could get more volunteers and of course, money! We are a 501(c)(3) so you could receive a tax deduction if you chose to donate.

Membership Drive for the FHSECO is in our initial phase in developing this organization, we offered everyone who paid a \$25 membership that you would be in a drawing to win one of four guns or \$200 cash. We drew for the prizes on December 1, 2022 and we would like to congratulate M Mariani, J Bland, H Carter & R Van Dyke, who won the guns and J Beal who won the cash. J Beal graciously donated the \$200 back to the Friends. Thank you all so much for joining the Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado. The Friends have 211 members as of September 2023. From the membership drive we raised \$5,200 in annual memberships and \$4548 in donations. Our goal for the Friends would be to have at least 500 annual memberships in support of our mission.

As an incentive for this year, the Friends are also donating another \$200 cash in a drawing for each membership paid for the coming year and each year thereafter. So, don't delay in getting your donations in.



Our volunteers will be working from home until our new office in the schoolhouse has some restoration before working in there. Our plan for the future is to also have classes in the schoolhouse like quilting, painting, computer classes, genealogy, etc. We plan on helping Southeast Colorado in raising funds for specific historic community projects like restoring the schoolhouse, Rocky Ford ghost signs, geomodeling the Historic Engleville cemetery near Trinidad, which the town mine was started in 1876, public projects, etc.

Items Needed!!!! Those old historic newspapers, scrap books, flyers, signs, documents, newspaper clippings, pictures of Southeast Colorado, awards, phone books, historic data, maps etc. When you are digging through your parents, and/or grandparents' items, thinking “what am I going to do with all of it?”. Now you have a place to take it. The Friends are also interested in any historical Southeast Colorado book for our library. We are also looking for historic playground equipment for the yard. Email or call us!

The Schoolhouse was gutted of chalkboards, child desks, etc. in the late 1800s to use in other schools in Rocky Ford. So we are looking to replace them. Items needed are four rows of school desks seating 20 students. There was also a framed picture of Washington and Lincoln in the school room as well as individual slates. Also, if you have a late 1800's old pot belly stove you are not using, we would be interested in it. Let us know what you have. Our goal is to recreate a late 1800's schoolhouse to show our current students how it was back then.

Walking Tours of Downtown Rocky Ford: Emmett Davis, a Friend of FHSECO will be offering walking tours in Rocky Ford. Then we plan to give tours in other areas soon. If you would like to help in these tours of local towns, please contact us. Comfortable shoes are a must! Tours will be wandering south and east through Rocky Ford's historic neighborhoods, through Main Street to library park, and to the Fairgrounds with the historic adobe stables.

All of this area was once a shallow sea with dinosaurs leaving their footprints in the shore's mud. We will discuss the pre-Columbian Apishapa Phase (a 1000 - 1400 BCE culture), the Apache, the Spanish, the Comanche and Kiowa, the Cheyenne and Arapahoe, the French Louisiana, Bents Fort, Santa Fe Trail, and the Atchison Topeka Santa Fe Railway. We will discuss George Washington Swink, his Illinois roots and migration to what becomes Rocky Ford with its future cattle-raising, experiments with irrigation and horticulture and honeybees, the sugar beets and our former sugar factory, the Volga Germans, the Japanese, and Latins, especially from northern New Mexico. We will cover Odd Fellows, seeds, Woman's Club, Carnegie Library, and Watermelon Day, plus much else in between. Call or email for a special tour.

Donation Items received, On loan, is a Swink family bible and two Swink family quilts, one of which was made by Mary Swink. Donations to the Friends for the repository is a box of class of 1956 memorabilia, a handful of RFHS Le Cantaloupe annuals, local books, a large framed unknown uncompleted family tree found in a basement in Manzanola, two sets of antique reading glasses in the cases marked from historic Rocky Ford businesses, two masonic aprons dated 1899 and 1916 that belonged to the Covers, etc.

Grants, BHE has installed a gas meter and now we need now is a working furnace and air conditioning in the schoolhouse. The old schoolhouse had water and sewer but was connected to the building to the South and has been disconnected to our building. We are in need of a new water and sewer tap including the installation of it all. This project will be a big expense and the friends are actively working on obtaining a grant for just that. In the meantime, we cannot be opened for any research or cataloging of items due to extreme hot or cold weather at this time. Until the building gets opened to the public, we can do research for you, let us know what you are looking for. Email us at fhsecolo@outlook.com.

FHSECO Website, Fhseco.net, the website is being updated slowly and surely. Be patient with us. Our website was sponsored by the First National Bank of Colorado in Rocky Ford, thank you for your support. Michael Romero and Virigina DeBolt is updating the website. The Friends are working on a story of Schools in and around Rocky Ford complete with pictures of those schools with that story being dedicated to Harry Harada by his family along with a nice donation. If you have any information that we may not have, please contact us or visit us on our Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado Facebook page.

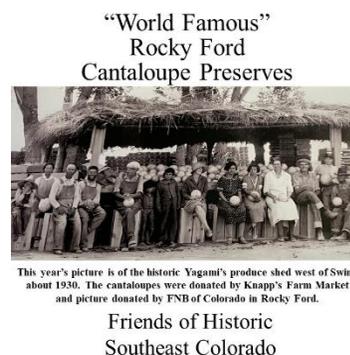
2023 Lifetime achievement Award: The 2023 first annual lifetime achievement award goes to Gloria Powers. They moved to Rocky Ford from Trinidad back in the early 1960's and eventually made Rocky Ford their own. Ed Powers worked many years for Valco until he had to retire due to health issues. She and her husband had purchased the El Capitan in 1988, which was built in 1901. Gloria had worked there many years before purchasing the restaurant from the Reed family. Ed helped at the restaurant and he had greeted and seated everyone who came in with a huge smile, he is missed dearly. Gloria went on and ran the family business. After purchasing the restaurant, Gloria added her special touch by adding in homemade bread served with the meal, then a little later adding the famous Cantaloupe Preserves which everyone loved and now miss. Gloria retired in 2017 and the El Capitan was sold. The restaurant and the preserves have been missed since... until now.



Ed and Gloria Powers



2023 Cantaloupe Preserves



2023 Cantaloupe Preserves label close up

fhsecolo@outlook.com

16 oz

Rocky Ford, CO 81067

407 North L 9th Street

2024 Lifetime Achievement Award: Next year's Lifetime achievement award will be awarded to a person who will be chosen by the Directors after receiving a letter of the history of that individual/s lifetime story including

pictures, story and pictures the more the better. All lifetime stories need to be sent by mail or email by June 1st, 2024. Our annual parade entry will highlight our Lifetime achievement individual.

The Friends raised just over \$600 from the sales of Cantaloupe Preserves last year with the cantaloupes being provided by Hirakata Farms. The Friends are selling preserves again this year with a new label using a new picture provided by the FNB of Colorado and the cantaloupes provided by Knapp Farms. Again, all of the supplies for the preserves were provided by Floyd and Jeanette Myers. Over 130 jars were sold this year, they went quick!

Fox Family Foundation, A grant was applied with The Jonathan & Shari Fox Foundation and the FHSECO was granted \$500 in December 2022 towards repairs on the schoolhouse. A Big thank you is in order for the Jonathan & Shari Fox Family Foundation.

GoFundMe, A GoFundMe account has been set up in the name of FHSECO so we can move forward in restoring our Little White Schoolhouse. A link is also on our website for ease of donating.

Yard Sale, The Friends plan on having a yard sale soon and would love to take in your yard sale items to raise money for restoration of the schoolhouse. Please Call Jeanette, Donna, Steve, Dustin or Holly and we can pick up your yard sale donations. The Friends also purchased random items, cleaned them up and resold them on Facebook and raised another \$600 last year.

Computers, printers, etc. The Friends have purchased one state of the art laptop for the Friends in late December and are in need of a couple more updated computers and a color laser printer in order to start our research lab. Our goal is to create a library so any person can research Southeastern Colorado and/or their family tree. Also we could use these computers to teach others to use computers and do research. You can also create family tree charts of any type as well.

Demolition of the First National Bank in RF: The Friends talked to the FNBC staff and was given a tour of the Bank building and said that they plan on razing the building after the new bank is built in the first week of April 2023. The new building has been built where the old building was razed in 2022 of the old Carousel, before that it was Hested's and it was our first Safeway location. The bank's decision was made to raze the building due to high costs of restoration of the old building. We asked if the bank would donate the two sets of historic pictures placed on glass on the south side of the building facing Elm street and the long set of historic pictures placed on glass inside the bank. The Bank staff said that they would be interested in saving the windows. The Friends found an owner for the large 7 foot windows but unfortunately, couldn't get them out in time. They went down with the building. The 20-foot-long set of pictures of the Yagami's historic farm market located about 1 mile South of Mary's Fruit Stand West of Swink went to Chuck Hanagan to be displayed at the Old Sugar Factory in Swink. A huge thanks to Dustin Bryan for getting them down after about 5 hours of dedicated work. Thank you to Henry Dierks for saving the Beman slab of concrete from the bank building after it was torn down. As it was once the Beman Motors building years ago prior to the bank owning it, which will soon be placed in the schoolyard.



Third picture in the set saved prior to demolition, Old FNB Of Colorado & New FNB Of Colorado in Rocky Ford

“REWARD” offered to the community for any pictures of Rocky Ford's First Little White Schoolhouse. There may not be one, but as an incentive, we will offer a reward to any person who may have a picture/s of the schoolhouse when it was a school or after in the late 1800's. We are also interested in any old photos or stories of interest in Southeastern Colorado. We are creating a library of historical data to create a repository for research and saving any and all original data. Let us know what you have.



Corporate Members A special thanks to Innovative Water Technologies and Jack Barker for supporting our utility bills, Bonnie Mohr for their generous donations, and research on the Swink Family Tree. Larry and Donna Abert on oral history, knowledge of Historic Rocky Ford and their generous donations, Tracy Marshbanks for the CZUR scanner for scanning large documents and many donations, Emmett Davis for providing walking tours, First Natl Bank of RF for supporting our website & Don Morris, Phil Covarrubius, Gary Caldwell, Joan Proctor, Ron Johnson, Will Dell, Patrick Shima, Gary Caldwell, Teri & Dave Kitch, Hirkata Farms & Knapp Farms for becoming corporate members.

Friends of Historic Southeastern Colorado Facebook Page The Friends currently have over 2,500 friends on the Facebook page. The Facebook page has stories from all over Southeast Colorado and you could scroll through for hours reading and still have more to view. The page will take you back in time and remember the good ole' days for sure. Join our page and see what you are missing. There are detailed video's, pictures and first hand accounts of places in Southern Colorado.



The Facebook page tells many stories including from top left picture, the largest set of dinosaur tracks in the country, Bishops castle built over the last 53 years by one man, the Ludlow massacre and what lead up to the deaths, the Crowley County Heritage Center for events and Museum, the historic Charles Goodnight barn west of Pueblo and Senator Barela's home in Barela East of Trinidad in 1902 and many other stories.

As always, please donate your excess items to the Friends for our annual yard sale or make your annual tax deductible donations to the Friends. Also call us for help with estate cleanup of your parents items and most definitely their clippings, scrap books, pictures or anything historic southeast Colorado.

Membership Application, FHSECO is always seeking new members.

Annual membership: \$25 Individual ___ or \$50 Business ___

Monthly pledge donations: \$5 - \$_____ per month.

One time donation \$_____ I want to Volunteer ___ Todays Date _____

Name _____ Company _____

Address _____ City, St, Zip _____

Email _____ Contact No. _____

Comments _____

Your newsletter will be sent by email unless otherwise directed. Your donations are always tax deductible.