

The Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado, FHSECO

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

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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!

The Friends are restoring the 1877, historic Little White Schoolhouse to its original condition and have started this last year with a generous grant from the Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation, thank you so much. With this grant we were able to replace our old furnace that was in dire need of replacement, install a new A/C in the school, install a new water line and connect to the City of Rocky Ford Sewer.

We were quite blessed with this grant as we were able to accomplish more than what we expected. While we were trying to get the furnace in, we found that the basement wall had collapsed and buried some of the furnace so another Friends member, Jack Barker and Innovative Water Technologies had immediately sent a crew over and in a week, had the dirt removed from the basement and a new wall installed so Kelly Howe could install the new furnace. A Huge thanks to Jack Barker and his crew for stepping up and helping with this issue.

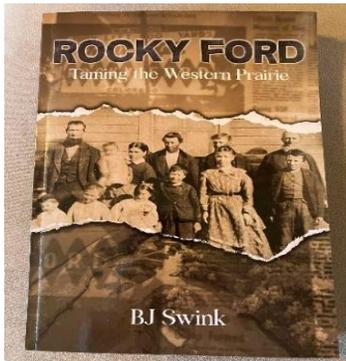
The Friends received some much needed help from the City of Rocky Ford as they were able to help us dig the line to the Schoolhouse. Big thanks to Rick Long and the City of Rocky Ford on this project. Another huge help from Dustin Bryan and Steve Carlile for laying the line and connecting the water inside the schoolhouse not to mention always being there to help in any way. We now have water in the schoolhouse, woohoo! The old original water line had been supplied with water from the next door building at 405 North 12th street as it had been owned by the same company for many years. Before that, the old building had its own cistern.

We were also blessed with Don Morris and members of the Rocky Ford Class of 1959 that stood up and donated money to support the painting of the schoolhouse. Between the Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation and this group, we were able to paint the schoolhouse as well as install the furnace, A/C, water and sewer lines. We also had some amazing help from Cindy Abert for the task of scraping and painting the worst part of the schoolhouse, the East side, in 100-degree weather, not to mention her husband Darren for donating his time by lifting Cindy up exactly where she needed to be with good ole' small town country technology. We also had the old East door replaced by Frank Burchett with a good used nice wood door then painted white with the rest of the schoolhouse, a huge thanks to Frank with his expertise! After the East side was accomplished, Jason Gonzales stepped in with his crew and finished painting the remaining of the schoolhouse in record time!

We had Harry Tomlin and his crew come and re-stucco the remaining wall in the basement as it was crumbling and he also removed the old staircase/balcony on the top of the back porch so that looks a lot better and not collapsing the back porch. The old door on the second floor on the West side must be replaced back like it was years ago with a double pane wood window. A 30" to a 32" wood window being at least 4' tall will be installed. Jeanette Myers had recently found old historic wood windows that will fit in the door and it will be able to be restored. We will be replacing the East upstairs window, as there are enough windows to replace that one as well. Let us know if you can help. You talk about a stunning new look for the schoolhouse, come by and take a look!



Right now we are focusing on the exterior part of the schoolhouse. The West side of the schoolhouse wall was pieced together and the Friends planned on having it restored just before the big snow storm hit, so that is next on the list. We are also taking bids on the roof due to it being a T Lock shingle roof currently and will apply for a grant for that as well. Lots of projects going on. We are always open to experts on any of the projects to offer their help whether its re-building an 1884 cabin to building a fence and hanging sheet rock, let us know how you can help.

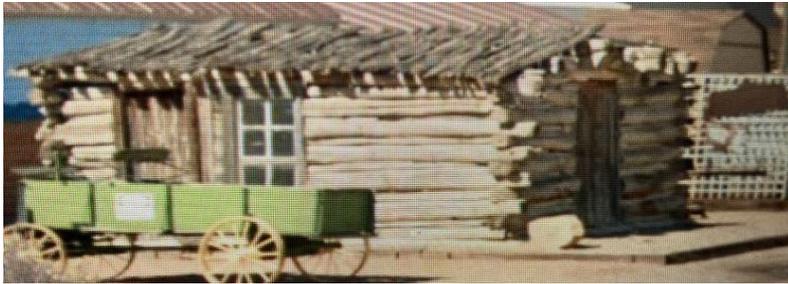


New Book, Rocky Ford, Taming The Western Prairie, Swinks first home on the river, and Garry & Bonnie Mohr

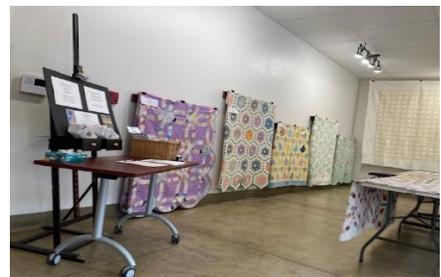
“Step back in time”... with the new book “Rocky Ford, Taming the Western Prairie”, authored by the Great Great Granddaughter of George Washington Swink, Bonnie Mohr Swink. This book had been released on December 1st, 2024. Get your copy now, you will not be able to put this book down. If you ever wanted to know how Rocky Ford Colorado was first started, dive into this amazing historical fiction book about how Rocky Ford all started. This book was carefully written to make sure history was accurate as possible. The “Fiction” part was important in noting that due to creating stories written were created in an effort to make the book interesting. Some stories were true stories but maybe not exact as it was written. Call Jeanette if you want a book for \$20, 719-468-9126.

The Fowler Historical Society, has donated to the Friends the 1884 Jackie Moore cabin that was originally an old stage station located North of Fowler and North of the Arkansas River on the west side of the road. Years

later it was moved to Las Animas and then landed up at the Fowler Historical Society. It was recently moved due to the property North of the Historical Society being sold. It now belongs to the Friends and we will move it to 407 North 12th behind the White schoolhouse in Rocky Ford. Those interested in helping rebuild the cabin, please let us know. A grant was obtained from The Jonathan and Shari Fox Foundation in support of the rebuilding of the cabin on the Friends property. We will be working on getting a fence up around the property and then start on the cabin.



Heritage Quilt Show October 11, 2024 The Quilt show was a huge Success, with the community bringing in historic quilts from all over Southeast Colorado. Two quilts that were made by Mary Swink in early 1900's and donated by Bonnie Mohr to the Friends made of flour sacks. A longtime quilt professional, Sally Saulmon, was there at the show. A huge thanks to Pebble Pearl, Linda Fenter, Sally Saulmon, and Donna Abert for presenting the show. We had about 24 quilts from the Arkansas Valley. All on display hanging inside The Idea Place at 410 North Main Street in Rocky Ford.



“REWARD” offered to the community for any pictures of Rocky Ford’s first Little White School House. 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 historic data. Let us know what you have.

Corporate Members A special thanks to Innovative Water Technologies and Jack Barker for supporting our utility bills and helping with repairs on the Schoolhouse, Garry & Bonnie Swink Mohr for their generous donations, research on the Swink Family Tree and her new book, Rocky Ford, Taming the Western Prairie. 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 Colorado in Rocky Ford for supporting our website & Don Morris, Phil Covarrubius, Gary Caldwell, Joan Proctor, Ron Johnson, Will Dell, Patrick Shima, Teri & Dave Kitch, Roy Fritch, Hirakata Farms, Knapp Farms,

Mr. Kienitz, Ron Ascherman, Stacy Harada, Donna McGreery, Mona Stone, RF Daily Gazette and Caroline Chandler Abert for becoming corporate members.

Items Needed!!!! *Those old historic newspapers, scrap books, flyers, signs, documents, newspaper clippings, family trees, pictures of Southeast Colorado especially schools, 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 and 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 current students how it was back then.

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 are 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 or pictures that we don't have, please contact us or visit us on our Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado Facebook page or email us.

The 148th Annual Arkansas Valley Fair, The oldest continuous fair in the State of Colorado, is coming up on August 13th to August 16th, 2025 in Rocky Ford at the historic Rocky Ford fairgrounds at the north end of Main Street. The fair is and always will be free entry. Watermelon Day is always held on the Saturday of the fair, August 16th at 11am in front of the 4H Event Center on the West side of the grounds.

The FHSECO (Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado) will be having a booth at the Fair this year. We will be selling tickets for a 50/50 drawing to raise money for our projects at the Schoolhouse. Tickets will be \$5 each and if you get a \$25 membership application, we will double your tickets to win! We will also have on hand Rocky Ford's new book written by Bonnie Mohr Swink called Rocky Ford, "Taming the Western Prairie", each book is \$20. Recently we had 3 boxes of photos given to us from the Rocky Ford Daily Gazette that have been hidden for over 50 years that we plan on displaying for your enjoyment to gaze upon, look thru the pictures, help identify anyone in them, buy one or two if you wish. All proceeds go back into restoring the schoolhouse.

We are a 501(c)(3). If you need a tax deduction by the end of the year, please contact us.

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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 _____

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Your newsletter will be sent by email unless otherwise directed. Donations are tax deductible. Don't forget to send a donation for this year's tax deduction, make sure you ask for a receipt!