

The Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado, FHSECO

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

fhsecolo@outlook.com – fhseco.net - 719-771-3663 – Like us on Facebook – Aug 2026, edition 5a

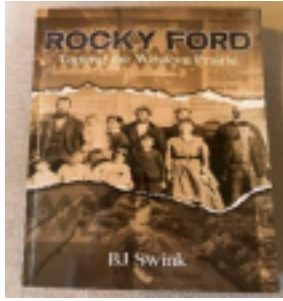


The FHSECO is organized as a public benefit corporation exclusively for charitable & educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and, more specifically, to discover, collect, restore buildings, and preserve materials of information, publications, accounts, 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 in the last four years with a generous grant from the Robert Hoag Rawlings Foundation. With this grant we were able to replace our old furnace, install a new A/C in the school, install a new water line and connect to the City of Rocky Ford water and sewer. The schoolhouse has been painted and a new roof has been installed by Schleigh and Sons. The chimney was crumbling, so Clay Hammond repaired that. The upstairs west window was turned into a door at some point and we had it put back to a window and removed the old balcony. At the same time, we had the east window repaired and removed the old wood panel in the window. Lace curtains have been purchased and will be placed in the windows.

Donna and Larry Abert donated a beautiful “White Schoolhouse” sign above the door. The West side of the schoolhouse wall was pieced together and the Friends plan on having it restored, so that is next on the list. For extensive photos and to follow our progress on the schoolhouse, please go to fhseco.net and see the pictures.

“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.



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

Jackie Moore Cabin: The Fowler Historical Society had donated to the Friends the 1884 John Steuben “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. In April 1961 it was moved from the original location and set up in Las Animas at the Kit Carson Museum. In 2013 it was moved to the Fowler Historical Museum where it was located for 11 years. It was moved on March 24, 2024 to Rocky Ford, The Friends of Historic Southeast Colorado, due to the property north of the Fowler Museum being sold. It was moved and rebuilt at 407 North 12th behind the White schoolhouse in Rocky Ford on June 12, 2026. We had a crew of local people dedicated to saving the cabin and are rebuilt it in as original as possible and as a workable cabin completely furnished. A grant was obtained from The Jonathan and Shari Fox Foundation in support of moving the cabin on the Friends property. We thank you so much! A huge thank you to the Fowler Historical Society for their huge donation and trusting us in the care of it. Thank you to Monti McCanless and her family for help loading it and to Dustin Bryan, Steve Carlile, Tom Case, Floyd, and Jeanette Myers for the first phase in getting the cabin moved from Fowler to Rocky Ford. The second phase was the cabin being rebuilt off site for measurements, checking the logs for strength, replacing those that didn’t pass the test, as well as the doors and windows, which were rebuilt as needed, while always trying to save the original pieces.

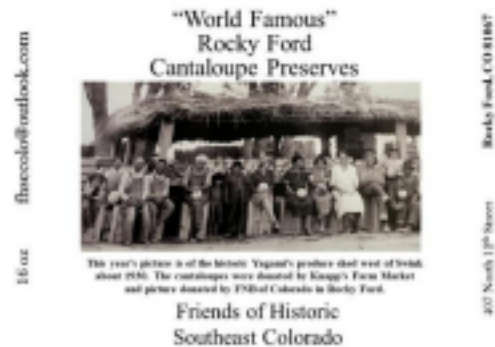
The third phase was numbering the logs and moving them to 407 North 12th street. Then we started rebuilding it in place permanently. A huge thank you to Zak Gardner as our lead on the 2nd and 3rd phase of rebuilding the cabin. We had an awesome crew on those phases that were there helping building it. Thank you to Zak Gardner, Dustin Bryan, Steve Carlile, Scott Davignon, John Garcia, Jeanette Myers, Floyd Myers, Kirk Virden, Jason Gonzales, Tom Smith, Julian Maes-Kiefer, and Edward Maes for their hard work on getting this moved and rebuilt. Please go to our website at fhseco.net to see many pictures of the historic move. We also posted video’s on the website.



Bob and Doris Johnston Foundation: This will be our first offsite grant for a public entity in Southeast Colorado. The recipient is the White Rock Schoolhouse for \$25,000, which is located about 35 miles West on Highway 10, between Rocky Ford and Walsenburg, in Pueblo County. The land is owned by the Colorado Land Board and the building is owned by the White Rock Community. In June of last year, a hailstorm had pretty much destroyed 80% of the lap siding on the North side of the building. After getting estimates from James from Valley Painters, they will replace those boards, repair the window frames, replace the North outside door, repair the school sign, repair stucco walls inside the schoolhouse, repair the ceiling in the porch and repair the chimney where the concrete was falling out. James started construction on July 23rd, 2026. This will be phase one as next June we can reapply to refinish the wood floor. Bob Johnston is the one who gave the Community the Schoolhouse as a gift years ago.



Cantaloupe Preserves: The cantaloupe preserves are in the plans for this year. All proceeds go directly to the FHSECO. Please message us on Facebook if you are interested in getting some. We don't mail them, sorry. Watch on our Facebook page to see if we were able to make any due to several farms being hailed out. Please call or message us if you want some at 719-468-9126.



“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, Garry & Bonnie Swink Mohr, Larry and Donna Abert, Tracy Marshbanks, Emmett Davis, First Natl Bank of Colorado and the family of Harry Harada and Stacy Harada, for supporting our website, Scott Davignon for his amazing computer tech service, Don Morris and the class of 1959, Phil Covarrubius, Gary Caldwell, Joan Proctor, Ron Johnson, Will Dell, Patrick Shima, Dave & Teri Kitch, Roy Fritch, Hiramata Farms, Knapp Farms, Mr. Kienitz, Ron Ascherman, Donna McGreery, Mona Stone, Rocky Ford 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. 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. We are also looking for items that would have been in a historic stage station on the Pueblo branch of the Santa Fe Trail.

FHSECO Website, Fhseco.net, is being updated. Jeanette and Donna have been working with Scott Davignon once a week since February. Scott has been a blessing to us. He has taught us so much. The website has been updated as per Scott as well as our data is now in the cloud. The progress on our grants have now been placed on the website as well as

lots of pictures for each project. Jeanette is still updating information.

Donna created a documentary on VHS back in the 1980's with the Rocky Ford Historical Museum. Scott is working on it and bringing it up to date in digital format and will be premiered at the Arkansas Valley Fair at our booth. Scott helped us create a booklet on Jackie Moore and a 6-minute movie clip, it is on the website and our Facebook page. He also designed a logo for the Friends, which is at the top of this page and will be on all documents in the future. He has also filmed the building of the cabin with his drone and made a video of the progression of it. Go to our website and see what we are doing at fhseco.net.

Our website was sponsored by the First National Bank of Colorado in Rocky Ford and Stacy Harada and the family of Harry Harada, thank you for your support. There are also local stories on the website. The Friends are working on a story of Schools in and around Rocky Ford complete with pictures of those schools. 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.

Newspapers Hidden from the last 140 years, The Friends were given the opportunity to organize and scan over 140 years of newspapers from the Arkansas Valley that is not already on the internet. We are currently working on getting this information scanned as our most current project. We are in need of some dedicated volunteers on this historic event. If you have the opportunity to help, please let us know as soon as possible so we can get through this huge task. Contact us at 719-771-3663.

The 149th Annual Arkansas Valley Fair, the oldest continuous fair in the State of Colorado, is coming up on August 19th to August 22th, 2026 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 22nd at 11am in front of the 4H Event Center on the West side of the grounds, come get a free watermelon. See this year's schedule of the fair at <https://www.arkvalleyfair.com/>.

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, we will double your tickets to win! We will also have on hand Rocky Ford's new book written by Bonnie Swink Mohr 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. All proceeds go back into restoring the schoolhouse and other projects in Southeast Colorado.

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

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 _____

Today's Date _____

Name _____ Company _____ Address _____

City, St, Zip _____ Email _____

Contact No. _____

Comments _____

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