

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2016

NEWSLETTER

FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 6, 2016 – 1:00 TO 4:00 PM
PROGRAM WILL BE:
FREMONT COUNTY HOSPITAL AND FARM
BY SUE COCHRAN

ROYAL GORGE
REGIONAL
MUSEUM & HISTORY
CENTER

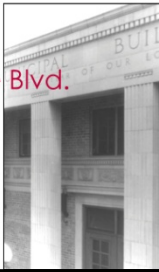
EXHIBITS

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rgmhc.org



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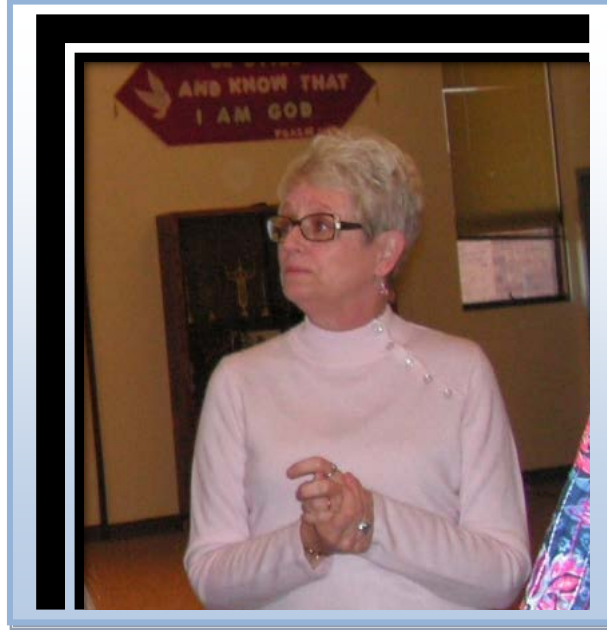
We invite you to join our
board of directors.



FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015
FROM LEFT: BEVERLY EMBRY, ANN ZIELINSKI, REX HOOBLER, BARBARA
GALLOWAY, GEOFF ORMANDY, GERALDINE COLLETTE, CAROL MCNEW

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**Our speaker for the annual meeting will be Museum and History Center Staff Member:
Sue Cochran**

And the story of the Fremont County Hospital and Farm

In the late 1800's, the population of the world was decimated regularly by plague, influenza and tuberculosis. The numbers by the millions that died of these dread diseases were counted every day in every country - including the United States of America.

Tuberculosis was finally conquered in the 1940's, but one cure was established in early century by the work of dedicated doctors who saw an improvement in the patients who were outside exclusively, kept away from general populations, and bedridden almost entirely. This state of affairs spelled difficulty for the poor, especially. Death was welcomed, rather than starvation or worse - the torture of seeing a family member drop from the disease, even the youngest were not immune.

Colorado has the climate and dry, healthy air that was prescribed for many years as a possible cure for the dread TB disease. Many of our citizens in Fremont County came here because of the incentive of a cure for their "consumption". If some of these people were unable to keep a home and family together, they were summarily relegated to the "Pest House", a hovel on the edge of the river where those who could not afford care were required to live out their lives. Come hear the "Rest of the Story" and Sue explains the way it was.

www.fremontheritage.com

PROBILLINGSITE KESSLERI

The Fremont County area is one of the most interesting and productive sites in the world for fossils and geologic strata exposed so the ordinary geologist can immediately identify the era, or period in which they are standing.

We were very fortunate to have a gentleman in the late 20's who understood the value of our environment, and worked constantly to educate those who were around him - be them students of high school, college or just curious public wanting to know more.

The industrious "Prof" Kessler was a teacher at the High School for many years, and when he retired moved to the museum as curator of the collections there. Many of the local people had brought rocks into the museum as well as Dall DeWeese who was the instigator of the institution, in that he helped finance and build the building at 612 River Street (now Royal Gorge Boulevard).

One of the more exciting finds, as a matter of record, one of a kind specimen that Kessler found was the *probillingsite kessleri*, named for him as discoverer, and to this day, still considered a one-of-a-kind specimen of the *probillingsite* genus, a type of nautiloid.

Walter C. Sweet, a Geologist from Ohio was extensively interested in this area, and wrote a very detailed report about his finds and the Fremont formation as well as finds of others, such as Dr. Walcott (1892) from typical exposures of the unit on the lower slopes of Fremont Peak, about a mile northwest of the Colorado State Penitentiary.

This picture of the specimen now in the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center was found by Professor Fred Kessler in the late 1920's and named by him and others as a *probillingsite*, although of original and unusual banding, etc. which then led to the conclusion it was a completely different nautiloid from those previously found. Therefore, named after the discoverer - our own "Prof" Kessler!



probillingsite kessleri

CHANDLER - A FREMONT COUNTY GHOST TOWN

We are fortunate that many of our historical towns have survived and are now thriving as more than “company coal towns”, or ghost towns. One such town is indeed a ghost town in that there are no longer buildings or indications of the massive mine that once existed there.

Chandler was named for the rancher, Asa C. Chandler, who homesteaded that particular area, and was a Southern Sympathizer, where some of the confederate veterans were helped on their way to a better life in the West. The rancher then sold his property to the Western Fuel Company, who later sold to the Victoria-American Fuel which opened the mine in 1890, naming the area Chandler and platting 11 blocks of homes and buildings for the workers.

Chandler was filled with miners from all over the world, and 600 men went underground each day (12 hour shifts, or more) to dig the black gold. They produced up to 12,000 tons in a month, which was shipped to nearby smelters, the CF&I Steel Works, and graded to be available for local use in coal fired furnaces in homes, as well as cook stoves. The coal was good quality and the company was in business until 1942 - 52 years of sending miners into the 36 miles of tunnels beneath the piñon covered hills surrounding the town of Chandler.

Bitter wars between the mine owners and workers erupted in the early 1900's because of working conditions. Complaints ranged from “short pay”, when the pay master would not weigh the coal right, or count the cars coming from the mine correctly. The Company store was often the only place the “Scrip” was good for using to shop, and the Company owned the entire town, houses, school, etc.

There was one murder at the mine, and this resulted in an extended trial in the County Courthouse. The workers were from 9 years old to 60 years old and the conditions in the mines were always dangerous. The work was hard, the pay scanty, and living conditions included the “outhouse” at the back of the lot, wood shed, coal bins, and clothes lines. Water was piped from a storage tank on the hill with gravity feed, into faucets that were available in back yards (for the foremen housing) and on the street for the workers homes.

The entertainment consisted of community meetings and dances at the schoolhouse and the typical summer occupation of baseball. The mining camps all had baseball teams, with Rockvale being named the champions most years. The crowds at the ball games were enthusiastic and numerous, with games between Cañon City, Chandler, Rockvale, Florence and the other towns throughout Eastern Fremont County. The Western end of the County also had teams, and we assume they would ride the train to try their skill against the miners.

In 1943 the mining company started selling all the structures (estimated at 100 residential homes) in the Company town. The Victoria-American Fuel Company sold the houses for \$25.00 to \$100,00 per room, according to Harry Johnson, the last Superintendent of the Mine.. The more elaborate homes were sold for \$100.00 a room. (Bathroom fixtures were charged over and above the base price). The houses were moved to various sites, the majority of them to Cañon City. The community structures were demolished and the materials used in various buildings, such as the school house materials were used in Cañon City for the Vocational buildings at the present Middle School. The moving company hauled these homes throughout Eastern Fremont County and a list available at the History Center contains some of those addresses. The buyers of the homes had to pay for moving, and preparing the lots where the homes would be placed. *Pictures on page 4*

Quote from the Daily Record in 1943: “Biggest buyer thus far is Mrs. Mary Starika, operator of a West Elm Avenue dance hall and tavern. She has purchased four of the four room units, is moving them to Prospect Heights and Capitol Hill.”

CHANDLER – VICTORIA-AMERICAN FUEL COMPANY TOWN



CHANDLER LIVES ON IN FREMONT COUNTY: see Page 4

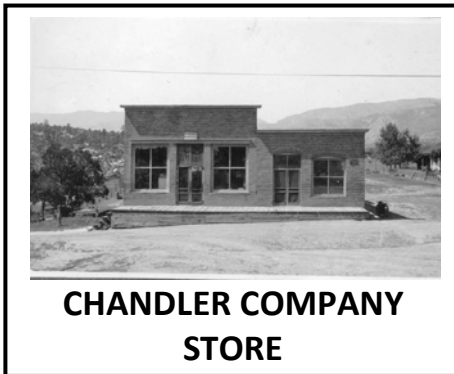
There is a record of 37 of the homes moved in 1943' amazing after all these years. Here are some of these grand old houses in their new life!



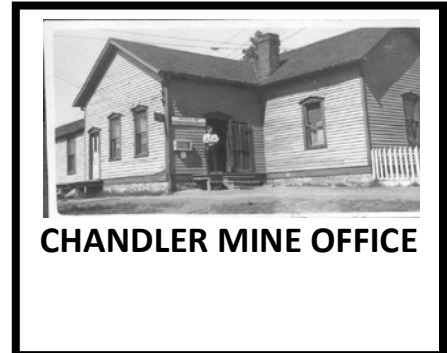
ORIGINAL BUILDINGS THAT WERE IN CHANDLER FROM 1904 TO 1943



CHANDLER HOTEL



**CHANDLER COMPANY
STORE**



CHANDLER MINE OFFICE


FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM & HISTORY CENTER

Carol McNew, /Newsletter Editor
703 Cyanide Avenue
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www.museumfriend

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LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

This was started in 2015 as a convenience to our long-time supporters and as an additional fund-raising program. We now have lifetime members, and hope that many more of our yearly members wish to support us in this way:




JoAnn Grenard
Broker, Owner



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