

December 2014

From Karen McGuire

To the best of my recollection the start of the Depot museum

The year 1976 was the bi-centennial year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. There was a Bi-Centennial Commission in Broomfield. A project by the Broomfield Jaycees that year was the saving of the old Broomfield Depot. They had been using it as a meeting place on it's original site by the tracks at the corner of Old Wadsworth and 120th Ave. in old Broomfield. When the railroad stated that they were going to tear it down, the Jaycees bought it for \$1.00 with the stipulation that they would remove it. The city took care of the majority of the expenses of moving and putting it on a foundation in what is now Zang's Spur park on 10th Ave. - west of 287. The chimneys were taken off. before the move, so they wouldn't fall. The depot was hauled a short distance east on 120th, then turned the corner and headed west onto 287 and continued north up to 10th Ave where they turned west over to what is now Zang Spur Park. When they turned the corner from 120th onto 287 just east of the tracks - men with long poles held up the telephone lines so it could go under. My husband and I followed it's progress on our mopeds - it was an awesome sight. A big concern was whether or not the safe in the agents office would break thru the floor with all of the jostling. It didn't !

About that same time, the Broomfield Historical Society was formed. The first president was Laura Spitler - author of the Gem of the Mountain Valley- , followed by Rick Steele, Barbara Robinson, and Wayne McGuire. The Society's job was to organize a museum in the depot. With the city - under the direction of newly hired park director Paul Derda - basically handling the work and expense of painting and repairing the exterior of the building, the Society and many volunteers went to work repairing, cleaning, painting, refinishing showcases, etc. in the interior. Another job was attending workshops and meetings with the experts at the State Historical Society to learn how to handle the incoming collections correctly. The Broomfield Historical Society handled the expenses of purchasing fixtures, etc. by selling fruitcake, books, depot stationary, and

depot belt buckles. There was never a budget from the city but - with the unwavering support from the city council, George DiCiero and Paul Derda - they handled all the utility costs over the years, as well as repairs beyond the ability of the volunteer groups. The museum opened in 1983, with volunteers keeping it open on Sunday afternoons. The first tours were given to 2nd graders from Kohl Elementary, even though there was nothing in the building. The teachers insisted, so history of Broomfield talks were given, accompanied by train sounds and railroad information. Oddly, they kept coming back! Over the years, that expanded to all the elementary schools and the Broomfield Heights Middle School. In the midst of receiving items for the collection and cleaning and cataloging them, volunteers were doing oral and written histories with old time residents who were getting to be very few. Along with the Sunday openings, a program called Reminiscing was started. There was a talk by a civilian - Eleanor Collins - who was a technician in the hospital at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked on Dec. 7, 1941-- a civil war re-enactor came -- and a man demonstrated how an authentic in tepee was put up without the aid of ladders etc. The minutes and the Society scrapbook were lost somewhere along the way due to illness and death of a member. We incorporated as the Broomfield Historical Society for tax purposes but changed the name to Broomfield Depot Museum as the Society basically ceased to meet, since members were all working on the museum. In addition, the public seemed to find it confusing to write a check to support the museum, but making it out to the Historical Society. Sometime, during the "getting the museum ready to open" time, I became the director - we were so busy keeping track of everything else, we didn't keep track of things like that. In 1994, when my husband's job changed and I thought I was going to have to move, I asked Peggy Atkinson to take over as director.