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Quarterly Publication of the Friends of Broomfield History

The Broomcorn

Express

**Join the Friends of Broomfield History as we celebrate the
life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. on
January 13, 2024 at the Broomfield Depot Museum!**

(details inside)

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Broomfield Out Loud!

By David Allison, Broomfield History Coordinator

The Broomfield Arts & History team has launched a new project called Broomfield Out Loud, a community storytelling activity in which stories from Broomfielders are brought to life through performances and exhibits. The Friends of Broomfield History are key partners for this project, and board members have been stepping up to support oral history recruiting, recording, and transcription.

This project will be presented in four stages, culminating in 2025:

Stage 1 (Oct 2023–March 2024): VOICE gathers Broomfield community stories and provides storytelling workshops

Stage 2 (April 2024–Sep 2024): CREATE brings together artists and creatives to interpret a curated list of Broomfield community stories

Stage 3 (Oct 2024–May 2025): EXPERIENCE hosts performances, exhibits and experiences by the artists and creatives inspired by Broomfield stories

Stage 4 (Oct 2024–May 2025): GROW takes stories and new creative works and expands them into educational curriculum for future generations to learn about their community from a variety of perspectives

During this current oral history gathering phase of the project (Stage 1, VOICE), I am spending lots of time scheduling interviews, recording conversations, and transcribing. This work is always rewarding, as the stories that I'm hearing are fascinating and help me understand our community better. The oral histories are also the foundational structure of the project, which means that the work

happening now will benefit the rest of the stages of Broomfield Out Loud.

Our philosophy around oral histories is that everyone has a story worth telling. Listeners have an opportunity to develop empathy, as these stories reveal our shared humanity. When we stop and take a moment to really listen to our neighbors—to understand their life's journey—we come to understand that it is our similarities amidst diversity that gives our community strength.

If you are interested in supporting or helping with the Broomfield Out Loud project, please contact David Allison at dallison@broomfield.org or 720.402.8425. Moreover, we would love to interview you for Broomfield Out Loud. Please contact us and tell us a bit more about your story using the link found at [Broomfield.org/BroomfieldOutLoud!](https://www.broomfield.org/BroomfieldOutLoud!)





A Sparkle in My Eye

**Andrea Margheim-Minnich
President,
Friends of Broomfield History**

Happy New Year, Friends!

Thank you for subscribing and reading our first addition of the Broomcorn Express of 2024!

This year we are excited to offer you a chance to purchase your very own thoughtfully compiled edition of the *Broomcorn Express* in a glossy paperback book! This is a must have for those who are locally born and raised! Please pick up a copy at the Broomfield Library or take one home when you make a donation at the Depot Museum. I have to say we are quite proud to have this little book as part of our archives and available to the public! Please purchase yours as a gift to a fellow Broomfielder, neighbor, family member, friend, or for yourself to enjoy for years to come!

This year we are excited to have the City's support for our Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities. It's more than just a day off—it's a day to remember, unite, serve and celebrate! With the City's help, we hope to engage the

community in upcoming conversations, events, and visuals. We invite you to take a moment to notice and connect with Martin Luther King Jr. visuals and quotes you see around town this month. Feel free to take pictures and add comments on Facebook ([@FRIENDSOFBROOMFIELDHISTORY](https://www.facebook.com/FRIENDSOFBROOMFIELDHISTORY)) or email us at BroomfieldHistory@gmail.com.

There are many ways to spend a day of service in our amazing community, including stopping by the Depot Museum on January 13 for snacks and fun MLK Day events. Rev. King often preached about the importance of helping our neighbors, so when you come by on January 13, you may bring a donation of some warm clothing for local organizations that help our friends and neighbors in need.

In 2024, we will continue to support Broomfielders by sharing information about our local history. We also hope to make some of our own history this year!

In Peace and Love,

Andrea

Join Friends of Broomfield History in celebrating the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

**Saturday, Jan. 13 • 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Broomfield Depot Museum**

collaborative art projects
speeches • snacks • new exhibit

In the spirit of his dedication to service, please bring gently-used warm clothes to donate.



for more information, visit
friendsofbroomfieldhistory.org



The Kite Line

By David R. Feineman



Undated photo of a D&I trolley car stopped at the Broomfield Depot, the Broomfield History Collection.

TODAY'S NEWS

You may have read the news that federal funding will help kick start Colorado's Front Range Passenger Rail between Fort Collins and Pueblo, a project that will bring passenger rail service to many towns along the Front Range, including Broomfield.¹ You may also have seen the periodic references to the long-postponed extension of the RTD B line from Westminster to Broomfield, Boulder, and Longmont.² We know that the renewed interest in passenger rail service as an alternative to expanding road networks is a national trend with distinct motivations and challenges at the local level.

A TRIP IN THE WAYBACK MACHINE

As some of you may remember, in *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends* cartoon series, there was a recurring segment called "Peabody's Improbable History," in which a dog (Mr. Peabody) takes a boy (Sherman) in his time-traveling invention (the Wayback Machine) to meet various historical figures.³ It would certainly be useful for us local history aficionados to have access to a Wayback Machine today, which could take us back a hundred years to a Broomfield with regular passenger service to Denver via electric trolley on the Denver & Interurban (D&I) Railroad. D&I was a Colorado & Southern Railroad subsidiary and their



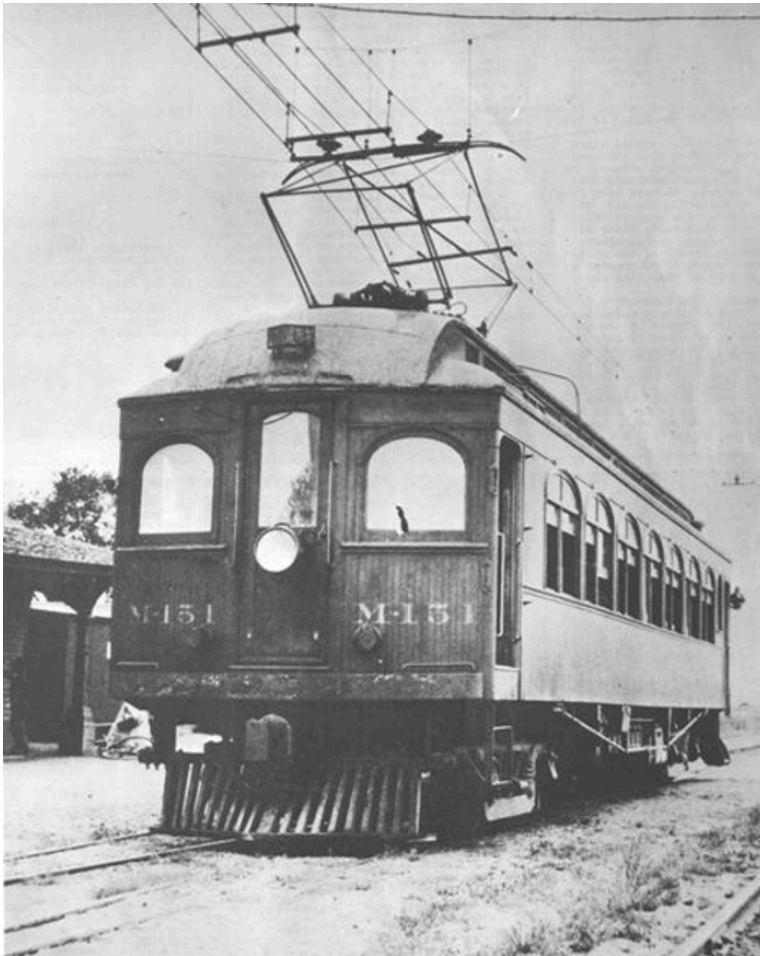
Map of the D&I Kite Route

service operated from 1904 through 1926. You could ride from Platform 11 at the Denver Union terminal to Boulder.⁴ Given the D&I Railroad's track layout, which resembled a diamond in the north and a long-curved segment to the south leading to Denver, it was referred to as the "Kite Line" (or Kite Route).⁵ Travel from Denver to Boulder took less than an hour and cost 50 cents, with trolleys running in both directions every hour.⁶ After the first day of service, the Denver Post declared, "Boulder is now a suburb of

Denver."⁷ The Colorado Encyclopedia states that the route had about 565,000 riders per year at its peak. On the next page is a D&I trolley at the Westminster Station, circa 1908.⁸

INTERURBAN EXPANSION IN THE EARLY 1900s⁹

There was a proliferation of trolley lines throughout the United States in the early 1900s, following on from multiple demonstration electrified systems exhibited at the World Cotton Centennial in 1885.



A D&I trolley at the Westminster Station, c. 1908, Boulder Historical Society/Museum of Boulder collection.

A reference in Wikipedia states that by 1895, almost 900 electric street railways had been built in the United States.¹⁰

The same trend was happening locally in Colorado. Denver had 250 miles of track within the metropolitan area, and interurban extensions to the Golden and Boulder area had an additional 40 miles of track.¹¹ According to one article on D&I history, a big driver here was the “phenomenal growth in people, businesses and small communities along the Front Range. Because roads were primitive and few people owned automobiles, any new method of transportation was received with enthusiasm.”¹² Interurban lines, which were the systems designed to link cities

with rural areas, sometimes shared facilities with passenger railroads, as was the case in Broomfield.

END OF THE LINE

Given the rapid expansion of trolley service into rural areas, you might be surprised at their short time in operation, much like that of the stagecoaches before them. By the 1920s, the growth of automobile use had significantly impacted ridership, and by the Great Depression, many of the routes had ceased to operate. A 1920 accident in Globeville with multiple fatalities may have taken the sheen off of local trolley service and impacted the operators’ financial status. The D&I ceased to be profitable in 1923, and the Kite Line service, which was discontinued at the end of 1926, was replaced by a bus service that also failed to be profitable.¹³ Local transportation activity became and is still dominated by increasing numbers of single-occupancy vehicles accessing our road infrastructure.

BACK AGAIN

At a December 14, 2023 press conference, Governor Polis said, “The fact is that Coloradans are ready for Front Range rail. I would argue we were ready five or ten years ago, but we’re certainly ready now.”¹⁴ Perhaps it is not so strange that the same populated places that were served by interurban trolleys a hundred years ago are back as part of the route where we might be ten years (or longer) into the future.

INTERURBAN ELECTRIC LINES. Ticket office and station on Arapahoe Street, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets. 37 for list of lines.

INTERURBAN LINES TO SURROUNDING TOWNS

Route

No.

- 82 **ARVADA**—A town of 915 people, lies in the beautiful Clear Creek Valley, 7 miles from Denver. It is a fertile irrigated farming district. Take Route 81 car at the Interurban Loop.
- BOULDER, ELDORADO SPRINGS, LOUISVILLE, MARSHALL and SUPERIOR**—Boulder, a city of 10,989 inhabitants, lies in a beautiful irrigated district 30 miles from Denver. The State University of Colorado and the Colorado Chautauqua are located here. Eldorado Springs is a popular summer resort, with swimming pool and many other amusements. Louisville, Marshall and Superior are coal mining towns located in the Northern Coal Field. The Denver & Interurban R. R. cars leave the Union Depot.
- 83 & 84—**GOLDEN**—A city of 2484 inhabitants, is located in the foothills, 14 miles west of Denver. Here the State School of Mines has fine buildings located in beautiful grounds. There is an ore testing laboratory and a museum with a fine collection of minerals. The Denver & Inter-Mountain R. R. and Tramway Golden cars leave the Interurban Loop on Arapahoe St. for Golden. Tickets are inter-changeable.
- 82 **LEYDEN**—Runs from Interurban Loop past Arvada, to the coal mining town of Leyden. This trip affords a beautiful view of the Rocky Mountains. Fourteen miles.
- LITTLETON**—Eleven miles from Denver. Take Route 3 car at the Loop. At the end of the line in Englewood, change to the Littleton car.

Portion of the Clason's Guide which listed the streetcar routes for systems across the US that shows the Denver & Interurban Railroad line into the Broomfield area, from Kevin Pharris' *Riding Denver's Rails*.

1. <https://www.denverpost.com/2023/12/06/front-range-train-rail-colorado-bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>

2. <https://broomfield.org/3294/Northwest-Rail>

3. This is personal history that I just couldn't make up. For more details see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mister_Peabody Would certainly be useful for us to have access to the Wayback Machine to get closure on if Broomfield was named for the broomcorn crop or after James Broomfield.

4. Some references put the Denver terminus at Denver Tramway's Interurban Loop at 15th and Arapahoe Streets

5. Map from the GES Gazette, March 14, 2022. See <https://gesgazette.com/2022/03/14/globeville-was-once-a-hub-for-rail-travel/>

6. Hard to imagine being able to drive from Denver to Boulder in under an hour today. Some references state the actual travel time may have been 30 minutes longer.

7. <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/broomfield-depot>
8. <https://localhistory.boulderlibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora:69759>
9. <https://gesgazette.com/2022/03/14/globeville-was-once-a-hub-for-rail-travel/>
10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streetcars_in_North_America
11. Kevin Pharris' book *Riding Denver's Rails* is available from the Broomfield Public Library through the Libby online book reader
12. <https://gesgazette.com/2022/03/14/globeville-was-once-a-hub-for-rail-travel/>
13. <https://www.american-rails.com/clrdointerustre.html>
14. <https://coloradonewline.com/2023/12/14/gov-polis-state-officials-celebrate-important-step-in-front-range-passenger-rail-planning/>



Metzger Farm, December 2023, by Roberta Depp

Metzger Farm Open Space Trail Overlook: Native American Campground View

By Roberta Depp, Friends of Broomfield History

Local historians know that Arapaho and Cheyenne bands wintered along the northern Front Range in the 1800s. Some of their campsites were located along the Big Dry Creek. To view a site that provides the particular features they required in a campsite, follow the Metzger Farm Open Space Trail to the Dry Creek overlook on the east side. Looking at the area spread out below, you will see what could have been a location for a Native American campsite.

A suitable site needed to include fresh water, cottonwood trees and willows for fuel and shelter, game trails for hunting, some shelter from winds, and forage for their horses. All these features are present in this site.

Small bands consisting of a few families lived a nomadic life, settling in foothills draws and canyons in the winter and then joining up with other bands in the summer for buffalo hunts on the eastern prairie. While buffalo and other game were a major food source, they also made use of native plants for food, medicine and ceremonial uses. Some of these included:

Western Yarrow	Ragweed	Milkweed
Wild Onion	Sage	Dogwood
Wild Strawberry	Wild Geranium	Thistle
Wild Mint	Wild Buckwheat	Raspberry

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 resulted in the forced removal of the Arapaho and Cheyenne from Colorado. Contemporary tribal members, however, still consider Colorado's Front Range to be their homelands and remain connected through historical events, traditions, and ceremony.

The Metzger Farm Open Space is located at 12080 Lowell Blvd., Broomfield.

Sources:

Broomfield Trails Map. City and County of Broomfield, Open Space and Trails, 2021.

O'Meara, Sean. Indigenous Connections: Native American Ethnographic Study of Golden, Colorado and the Clear Creek Valley. Anthropological Research, LLC, 2022.

Ubbelode, Carl, Duane Smith and Maxine Benson. A Colorado History, 9th ed. Pruett, 2006.

Searching for Broomfield's History

By David R. Feineman

ON THIS SITE IN 1897 NOTHING HAPPENED

As seen on a brass wall plaque.¹

You may have noticed that the Mamie Doud Eisenhower library has few books on Broomfield's history. In the past, some neighboring cities like Denver, Boulder, and Golden had larger institutions and political significance that was captured in early newspaper stories; perhaps the day-to-day activities on the large and small farms in the Broomfield area just weren't newsworthy at the time. So, while it may seem that the discovery of gold at Ralston Creek, Arvada in the late 1850s should have brought an influx of people, Broomfield lacked the activity focus of nearby gold, silver, or coal mining towns. Instead, we were largely providing agricultural support for other towns.

HISTORY ABSENT EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

If our understanding of the history of Broomfield is dominated by large periods of time dominated by everyday activities, is that very different from today? We don't normally place much emphasis on events happening as expected. Consider the old Shel Silverstein song called, "The Wreck of the Old '49" that turns the trope of train crash songs upside down by focusing on the ordinary.

"Well, I'll sing you a song 'bout the old Forty Nine
The fastest engine on the Santa Fe line
On the fourteenth of April, she made a desp'rate dash
And she got there on time and she did not crash!"²

LOCAL HISTORY VERSUS LOCAL NEWS

So maybe things aren't really that different from 1850 to today. We know that time passes, and routine things happen daily without much fanfare or excitement unless it impacts us personally. As distinct from history, journalism focuses on the newsworthy, short-duration events like a chunk of jet airliner engine cowling falling on someone's front yard without anyone being injured,³ or a fugitive being captured by police in a dragnet.⁴ News stories become part of our lives even when they don't impact us personally: in today's connected world, we are going to get that information feed just because of where we live.

There may be intrinsic issues here as well—news reports want to capture our attention and will sensationalize even mundane events.⁵ Somewhere between the largely

unrecorded everyday, and the view that life “is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.”⁶ we need to find the history of Broomfield.

You might then ask, what are the attributes of local history that distinguish it from news reports? According to one article I came across, local history comes down to three points:

“It is methodical, having a focused topic and clear thesis that can be defended. It is interpretive, meaning its arguments are clear, logical, and supported by documented sources. And it is patient, never leaping to conclusions.”⁷

We attempt to meet those expectations in the articles produced here in the *Broomcorn Express* while trying to pay close attention to how individuals relate to one another and the greater Broomfield community, now and in the past. Local history for us is quite inclusive, spanning localized case studies of national history and regional studies, as well as our primary focus on community studies. What ultimately makes local history so important is that it tells about the everyday lives of ordinary people, and how they were impacted by the place they called home.

THE MOVING MONUMENTS OF BROOMFIELD HISTORY

As a relative newcomer to Broomfield, we may have some confusion about local history that stems from our approach to historic preservation and history. Consider that the train depot currently sits in a place where no trains ever passed by. Even turnpike dog Shep’s final resting place has been relocated

away from the turnpike he watched over. There are obvious advantages to retaining these historical pieces as artifacts of Broomfield’s past, but here that benefit comes by breaking the connection with their original geographic context. Does it even matter? It is striking that in the period from 1873 to at least 1908, the arrival of rail lines contributed to the development and significance of Broomfield—and literally put Broomfield on the map. Now ask yourself, would a visitor to the current lonely depot location on a hill next to a field of prairie dogs have any clue how this building was an integral part of an important, active transportation hub in our local history?

FOCUSING ON ORAL HISTORY

If there are issues in having a record of Broomfield history which is interesting, covers both major milestones and everyday life, and gives us some sense of the where things have happened, then it strengthens the need to progress on the multi-year Story of Us project⁸. This Friends of Broomfield History project is collecting oral histories across diverse segments of the population to build up a people-centric history collection. While the objective of building a comprehensive and inclusive story about those who have made Broomfield their home will certainly be challenging, it seems like the best way of bridging the gaps in our understanding of Broomfield’s history and making it accessible for the future. Given that the City and County of Broomfield is a comparatively recent invention, our local history may act as a critical catalyst to allow us to see Broomfield as an evolving, connected community with shared stories and traditions, in a narrative much richer than stories about a collection of disparate neighborhoods.

1. FYI: You can get one of these brass plaques for your residence for about \$25. For the truly curious, I found a whole treatise on the whole concept of “nothing happened” at https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Crane_Nothing_Happened.pdf
2. <https://genius.com/Shel-silverstein-wreck-of-the-old-49-lyrics>
3. <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/travel/airline-news/2021/02/20/broomfield-colorado-united-plane-debris/4527648001/>
4. <https://www.denverpost.com/2022/09/29/broomfield-denver-shooting-person-dead-police-injuries/>
5. <https://forthefainthearted.com/2011/07/04/insignificant-meaning/>
6. <https://nosweatshakespeare.com/quotes/famous/sound-and-fury/>
7. <https://www.knoxcountylibrary.org/explore-the-east-tennessee-history-center/local-history#:~:text=Local history is human history,war, work–are universal.>
8. The Story of Us oral history project run by the Friends of Broomfield History is coordinating with an NEA grant funded activity by the CCoB in a project called Nobody Knows/Broomfield Out Loud, which is also collecting oral histories.



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Once logged into King Soopers, search for *Friends of Broomfield History* either by name or *KU085* and then click Enroll. If you don't have a King Soopers account, open one today! You will need a loyalty card from the store and an email address.

The Friends of Broomfield History is dedicated to sustaining the history and heritage of Broomfield through our relationship with the Broomfield Museum, our members and other community partners. Your membership or contribution bolsters all our work, and we greatly appreciate your support. "Be in! Be appreciated! Be connected! Join today!"

Find us on Facebook!

[@FRIENDSOFBROOMFIELDHISTORY](https://www.facebook.com/FRIENDSOFBROOMFIELDHISTORY)



Friends of Broomfield History Donation Form

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