

Grand Lake Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 656  
Grand Lake, CO 80447

PRSR STD  
ECRWSS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
EDDM RETAIL

Local  
Postal Customer

Spring, 2023



### **50 Years Proud!**

*Mark your calendars for a special FREE event, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm, at the Community House in Town Park. The stories of how your all-volunteer Grand Lake Area Historical Society came to be, and the stories of the people who struggled and succeeded to make it what it has come to be, are pretty amazing.*

*Everything starts from something. In Grand Lake, it all started when a group of concerned citizens came together in 1973 to begin what they called the Grand Lake Historical Society. Their main purpose at the time was purchase of the last existing Victorian rustic hotel along the lake, the Kauffman House.*

*So much has changed since 1973, as the Grand Lake Area Historical Society has grown its membership and collections, and has increased its impact and effectiveness in the Grand Lake area; operation of two museums, interpretation of area history and preservation opportunities, historical presentations, special exhibits, publications including two versions of an historical Walking Tour, research and archival storage of family and property histories, and more.*

*Join us on July 12<sup>th</sup> to share our history and great stories. We are **50 Years Proud!** The GLAHS Members Annual Meeting will follow the presentation.*



**Grand Lake Area Historical Society**  
*Our mission is to preserve, protect and promote the  
History of the Grand Lake Area.*

**Keeping History Alive**





Visit our Websites:

[www.grandlakehistory.org](http://www.grandlakehistory.org)

Facebook: Kauffman House Museum

Smith-Eslick Cottage Court

[www.cottagecourt.wordpress.com](http://www.cottagecourt.wordpress.com)

[www.SmithEslick.com](http://www.SmithEslick.com)

Send us your e-mail address so we  
can send our monthly E-Blasts:  
[historygrandlake@gmail.com](mailto:historygrandlake@gmail.com)

Contact us:

970/627-8324

P.O. Box 656 Grand Lake, CO 80447

**Kauffman House Museum**

407 Pitkin Street

Grand Lake

**Cottage Court History Park**

729 Lake Avenue

Grand Lake

**GLAHS Board of Directors**

Jim Cervenka- President

Melody Anders – Vice President

Patti Stahl – Treasurer

Elin Capps – Secretary

Steve Batty – Newsletter, BLOG

Frank Reardon – Docent Chair

Alan Walker– Property Chair

Sandia Bruton – Membership

Cindy Southway – At Large

Layla Schnacke – At Large

Lucy Fitch – At Large

**Adjunct Committee Chairs**

Malene Mortenson – Gift Shop

Lois & Dave Sauer - Gardens

**Cottage Court History Park  
Committees**

Steve Batty Heather Bishop

Sandia Bruton Elin Capps

Jim Cervenka Lucy Fitch

Dennis Humphries Lesley Janusz

Dawn Kaback Sandy Kukoy

Kathy Means Donna Ready

Lois Sauer Layla Schnacke

Patti Stahl Bonnie Thompson

## At the Kauffman House Museum



The Kauffman House Museum, located at 407 Pitkin Street overlooking the beach in Grand Lake, will be open daily 11:00 – 5:00 beginning May 27<sup>th</sup>. Visit us this summer for fascinating local history in this restored, 1892 Victorian rustic hotel. A treasure! As a Distinctive Destination, National Trust members get a 20% admission discount;

GLAHS members, children, and Blue Star active military are always given free admission. Visit the portable station for viewing digitized, archival films and audio, new to the House, and the wonderful “Grand Lake Artists Past and Present” exhibit in the Gallery.



## Welcome to the Cottage Court History Park!

The Cottage Court Museum, located at 729 Lake Avenue, at the corner of Vine Street and Lake, will also be open daily 11:00 – 5:00 beginning May 27<sup>th</sup>. Come by to enjoy the stories of ingenious entrepreneurs, surprising inventions, goofy mistakes, seemingly endless struggles and hard-won success as cars first brought visitors to town and forever changed our lives and our economy. Be sure to get your picture taken in the '29 Ford!



The humble building next to the Court is the Eslick Store, built by a Smith Family grandson, Loren Eslick in 1933. Beginning in early July, 2023, it will begin a transformation to become a visitors' welcome center at the still-developing Cottage Court History Park. Lifted in place, and put on a foundation, it will have its exterior restored, roof replaced and windows and doors made just as they were originally. Then, in Fall, we'll begin fixing the interior, adding a tour guides' station with all the necessary electronics, a gift shop and a public restroom. It's going to be a valuable asset to the site and the west side of our community, and it's exciting. Stop by to watch the work and learn what's next for the Eslick Store!

As you may have noticed, we've changed the name of the site where the Cottage Court Museum and Eslick Store are located. It was previously called the Smith-Eslick Cottage Camp. It will become more than that name suggests. It will become the Cottage Court History Park, with bench seating, a firepit, a small pavilion mimicking the cottage court roofline, a projection screen for presentations and much more. All on the grassy area behind the Cottage Court.

A seventeen-member Planning Committee is working hard to firm up these plans which we will then have in-hand to share with the community. It's going to be a perfect place for sharing fascinating history stories, fun events, music, and so much more. We invite you to learn about this project. Contact us, and we'll send information, answer questions, and arrange tours of the site.

[historygrandlake@gmail.com](mailto:historygrandlake@gmail.com) 970/627-8324 [SmithEslick.com](http://SmithEslick.com)



*Volunteer as a Tour Guide at our museums. We need YOU*  
970/627-8324 [historygrandlake@gmail.com](mailto:historygrandlake@gmail.com)



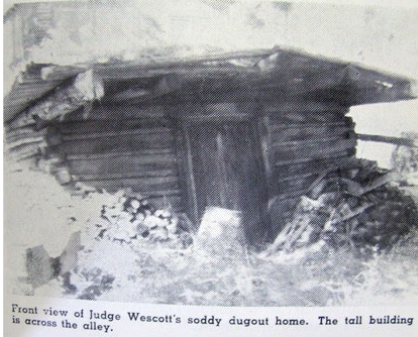
# JOE WESCOTT – a PIONEER’S LIFE

By GLAHS Board Member Steve Batty with Annabel DeAlessi

## Joseph L. Wescott (1838-1912)

Grand Lake’s first permanent white resident was a pioneer, miner, trapper, fisher, poet, storyteller, Civil War veteran, and even Grand Lake's first official postmaster in 1877. He originally came to Colorado in pursuit of a fortune in gold and silver but when the Civil War broke out, he became a private in the 15th Regiment, Colorado Cavalry (formed Dec. 1861) and fought the Texas Confederates at Glorieta Pass in 1862.

When he mustered out in 1865, his inflammatory arthritis was so bad that he sought the warm springs at Hot Sulphur to heal, traveling most of the way in a hammock slung between burros. However, due to a few bad business deals, he eventually settled in Grand Lake in 1867. Under the Homestead Act of 1862, which allowed a person to improve a property within five years of attaining it and to become the owner of up to 160 acres, Wescott was able to build a second cabin not long after he arrived. In the early 1880s Joe homesteaded 154 acres at the west end of the lake.



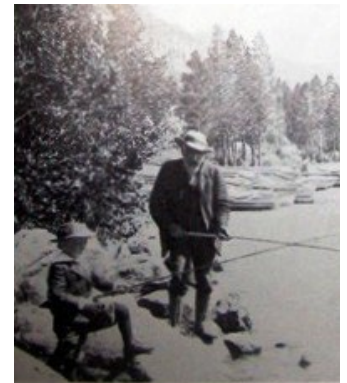
Front view of Judge Wescott's soddy dugout home. The tall building is across the alley.



Wescott was born in Nova Scotia, Canada to John (abt. 1797-1865) and Hannah (1802 - 1891) Wescott. He had two sisters and 3 brothers; the youngest sibling having been born in the US. The family first migrated to Grand Rapids, Michigan, but ended up in Marshalltown, Iowa by 1860. In all the census listings Wescott gave his occupation as miner. However, this term was used as a catch-all, and he probably earned his money by fishing and



trapping, sending his catch over the mountains to sell in Georgetown and elsewhere. He would keep the fish in live boxes at the west end of Grand Lake where he lived alone in a two-room basic log cabin with dirt floors and few amenities. One source says he was a good cook and guests especially like his baked potatoes, sour dough bread and cake. As a bachelor, Wescott wasn't exactly a hermit, but not sociable on his own terms. He knew and shared great stories and legends. One, which he heard from the Ute Indians, he turned into a long poem titled the Legend of Grand Lake. As the years went by, he sold off his land for home lots. In fact, today’s Point Park was part of Wescott’s homestead.



Etching of Joseph Wescott by Alexander Phimister Proctor

He returned to Iowa and the home of a niece when his health deteriorated and died in 1912. His cause of death was listed as ‘Locomotor Ataxia,’ a severe progressive disease of the central nervous system. The funeral director was the D. C. Wilbur Store, which was probably primarily a general or hardware store because funerals were a common side business in small rural towns in the 1800s and early 1900s.

**Want to learn more?** Visit Steve’s BLOG, [cottagecourt.wordpress.com](http://cottagecourt.wordpress.com), or [grandlakehistory.org](http://grandlakehistory.org), or [SmithEslick.com](http://SmithEslick.com) for more fascinating stories and pictures.

## MEMBERSHIP, DONATION OR PLEDGE CARD

I wish to support the GLAHS by **becoming a member.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Individual Membership ..... \$35  
☐ Family Membership ..... \$50  
☐ Business Membership ..... \$50  
☐ Benefactor ..... \$100 - \$1,000

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to support the GLAHS by **contributing or pledging.**

Method of Payment (Please check.) ☐ Enclosed ☐ Pledge amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please bill me ☐ monthly ☐ quarterly ☐ yearly for a ☐ one ☐ two or ☐ three year period

Charge my credit or debit card \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card ☐ Discover

Cardholder's Name : \_\_\_\_\_ Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 3-Digit Verification Code: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ GLAHS may publicly acknowledge my contribution. ☐ Gift in honor of ☐ in memory of

Cardholder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please apply my contribution to the Cottage Court History Park Project.

Make checks payable to GLAHS. Mail to GLAHS, POB 656, Grand Lake, CO 80447

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT**

IF YOU PREFER, YOU CAN ALSO DONATE OR BECOME A MEMBER AT THE GLAHS WEBSITE:  
[www.grandlakehistory.org](http://www.grandlakehistory.org). Check it out... fascinating photos and historical information.

### 2023 coming events – Mark your calendars!

More Information at 970/627-8324 or  
[historygrandlake@gmail.com](mailto:historygrandlake@gmail.com)

**May 21<sup>st</sup> 2:00pm, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 5:00pm & May 23<sup>rd</sup> 10:00am** Training for all Cottage Court volunteer tour guides

**May 24<sup>th</sup> 12 Noon & May 25<sup>th</sup> 5:15 pm** Training for all Kauffman House volunteer tour guides

**May 26<sup>th</sup> 8:30 am** Volunteers' Breakfast at the Cottage Court

**May 27<sup>th</sup>** Museums open for the season, 11:00 – 5:00 Daily thru Labor Day, Weekends in September

**July 1<sup>st</sup> 11:00 am – 4:00 pm** Ice Cream Social & Pie Sale at the Cottage Court

**July 12<sup>th</sup> 7:00 pm**, GL Community House, GLAHS Annual Meeting and Community Presentation

**July 14<sup>th</sup>** Stars at the Barn! A wonderfully fun, musical and delicious fundraiser at the AA Barn. If you haven't received information, would like to attend, or have questions, contact us at 970/628-8324 or [historygrandlake@gmail.com](mailto:historygrandlake@gmail.com).

**August 1<sup>st</sup>** Colorado Day at the Kauffman House

**August 13<sup>th</sup>** Community Picnic at the Cottage Court Delicious food, music, fun 5:30 pm

**September 5<sup>th</sup>** Museums begin "open weekends only" thru September

Kauffman House open 1:00 – 4:00 pm on **November 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>**, and **December 26<sup>th</sup>**