

The Louisville Historian

A Publication of the Louisville Historical Museum Issue #143 Summer 2024

This Woman's Work: Women Business Owners in Early Louisville by Sophia Imperioli

Life as a woman in Louisville was no easy job. Imagine leaving your mother and father, the country you grew up in, all for the dream of a better life. Only, when you arrive in Louisville, your husband works backbreaking hours as a coalminer, sometimes for 12 hours a day, and is

what's a woman to do? Well, many women turned to starting their own businesses or owning property to supplement their income or for financial independence.

Louisville's quality of coal was quite poor, which meant miners mostly worked in the fall and winter when there was high demand for fuel for heating. In the spring and summer, mines went down to skeleton crews, and most miners were laid off in the warmer months. Women who owned and operated year-round businesses provided much needed financial relief to their families when their husbands were out of work.

Female business owners contributed to the stability of Louisville's economy by providing necessary services and employment, including employment to other women. Their contributions allowed the town to continue to grow throughout the 20th century.



The Louisville Hotel c.1890.

Earliest Enterprises

The first recorded femaleowned businesses in Louisville were boarding houses and hotels. These were key in a coal mining town because a good percentage of miners were single men who came to Louisville looking for work and needed a place to live.

Josephine O'Dwyer Wilson is noted in an 1896 edition of the Louisville

Times as operating the first hotel in Louisville, known as the Wilson House. She is also listed as early as 1882 in a Louisville Directory as the proprietor of a hotel. Her husband, Robert Wilson worked as a miner.

Businesses in Louisville often changed hands freely between men and women. A great example of this was the Commercial Hotel, which Josiah Taylor and his family constructed in 1892. It was a two-story building located on the south side of Pine Street between Main and La Farge. Board cost \$18 a month in 1895, which equates to about \$673 in 2024.

Mrs. Hannah Wilson purchased it from the Taylors three years after its construction in 1895. Mrs. Wilson sold it to Joe Humphreys, and in 1910, he sold to Daniel and Laura Williams. The Williams ran the hotel along with their daughter, Margaret Hodgson

until 1924. Mrs. Leslie became the new owner until Mrs. Mabel Ostrander purchased the hotel from her in 1932. Mrs. Ostrander's husband, Albert, worked as a miner while she ran the hotel and the Louisville Bakery.

Through multiple iterations, the hotel was consistently owned and operated by women over the years. At different times it was known as the Taylor House, the Louisville Hotel, and the Commercial Hotel.

Cottage Industries

Cottage industries—a business carried on in a person's home—comprised a significant percentage of the local Louisville economy. For many women, their skills as homemakers and caregivers could bring in much-needed income by starting small businesses within their home. Some cottage industries in Louisville during the early 1900s were washing laundry; dressmaking and sewing; hemstitching; hairstyling; selling eggs, cheese, and other food products; bread baking; and breeding canaries for use in the coal mines.

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Newspaper advertisements from 1925 for women who were working out of their homes washing and mending clothes, ironing, and dressmaking.

Josephine Guenzi

Josephine Guenzi, who lived at 1036 Walnut, owned a sewing machine and earned money with dressmaking and adding decorative stitching to tablecloths, handkerchiefs, and pillowcases. When Museum volunteers interviewed Josephine's daughter, Edith Guenzi, in May of 2010, she said of her mother's abilities: "[She] could just look at you, and she would have a pattern cut out of you."

Married Couples

Martha & Ludwig Eberharter

Martha Eberharter was a prominent figure in the Louisville community from the late 1800s until her death in 1958. Not only did she own a grocery store for many years, but she also supported numerous philanthropic endeavors.

Martha came from a line of entrepreneurs. Her parents, Casper and Anne Baier, emigrated to Boulder County from Tyrol, Austria, and owned a boarding house and a general merchandise store in Louisville in the 1880s. According to a family friend, Martha "had a head for business" and owned many different kinds of investments including several properties around Louisville which she operated as rental homes to provide another source of income.

In 1895, Martha married Ludwig Eberharter. He was a farmer and cattleman, a former mayor of Louisville, and one of the men who opened the Hi-Way coal mine. The Eberharters owned 1200 acres of land, some of which the government later requisitioned to build the Rocky Flats Plant in the 1950s.

Martha and Ludwig opened the Eberharter Store at 805 La Farge Avenue for "fancy groceries" in the early 1900s. Martha would run the store while Ludwig rode around to check on his investments in land and cattle. The Eberharter grocery store remained a fixture in the Louisville community for close to 30 years before Martha sold the property to Ed Smith in 1931. According to The Louisville Times on April 11, 1958, the store was one of the biggest in Louisville, and it had "everything except meat and at one time had all the flour from the community." After Ludwig's death in 1935, Martha took his place on the board of directors for the Hi-Way Mine and served there until a fire caused the mine to close in 1954.

The stories of Martha's giving spirit are numerous. Martha made sure that the families of local miners received credit at her store through the lean summer months when they were out of work. She gave weekly baskets of fresh fruit to a girl suffering with rheumatic fever, and she paid all the medical expenses for

her son and his three friends when they were involved in a serious automobile accident.



An interior view of the Eberharter Grocery Store at 805 La Farge. The Eberharter sons, Fred and Frank, and two women pose by the counters and stove. Martha appears to be the woman on the left.

Christina & Charles Zarini

Christina Zarini was granted a liquor license in 1942 and opened the Louisville Liquor Store shortly after. The business was situated between the Rex Theater (now Waterloo Restaurant) and a candy store on Main Street. Christina and her husband, Charles, ran the business without incident until they had a run-in with the law on June 2, 1948. A law enforcement agent suspended Christina's liquor license requiring her to close the store. The agent charged Christina with selling alcohol to a minor when he encountered the boy carrying a case of beer on the street. Mrs. Zarini appeared at a hearing a few days later and cleared up the confusion by explaining that the boy's mother had purchased the case of beer from her and had sent the boy to pick it up. He had been taking the case home when the agent picked him up. Her liquor license was reinstated, and the store reopened shortly thereafter.

The Zarinis operated the business until Charles had a heart attack in 1955. They decided to sell the business to Charles's niece and her friend— Lois Zarini and Jennie Milano.

Single Women

Lois and Jennie had both been telephone operators at the Louisville Telephone Exchange and good friends for years. When dial service came to town in 1955, their jobs became obsolete overnight. The girls decided to go in together and purchase the Louisville Liquor Store from Lois's aunt and uncle.

During their time as business owners, the girls sought the help of the Town Council to change a local ordinance concerning street parking. Colacci's Italian Restaurant opened just across the street the same year their ownership began in 1955, and with it came a whole slew of customers in their automobiles during evening hours. Street parking became impossible to find, and so Jennie and Lois lobbied the Town Council to create a zone in front of their store for five-to-fifteen-minute parking only. The motion passed, and the women were granted a two-car temporary parking zone to serve their customers in the evenings (except Sundays).



The photograph shows the interior of Louisville Liquors with Lois Zarini (left) and Jennie Milano (right) standing behind the counter.

Marjorie Downer

Marjorie Downer was another single female business owner who owned several rental cabins in a "cottage camp." Her views on business in Louisville were tied to the hotly contested debate on whether or not to install sewer lines for indoor toilets in the early 1950s. According to Downer in a Louisville Times article from April 5, 1951, "We [need] them, and we should have had them years ago. Then we would have been prepared...and businesses would already

have been here and the town would have been bigger." The issue of indoor plumbing particularly affected Marjorie as she deliberately delayed "modernizing" her rental cabins while waiting to see if the town would get sewers. At the time, Downer already had three waste cesspools on her property and did not want to dig any more holes to deal with the problem.

Marjorie was quite active in local politics, and she appeared before the Louisville Town Council multiple times to make her opinion known about various downtown projects. When it was proposed that the city introduce an additional 75 cent charge on monthly water bills to raise revenue in April of 1964, many people turned up to voice their opinions, including Downer. Someone proposed that the revenue be raised from implementing a cigarette sales tax, but the Council said it could not know how much money that would bring in when compared to an increased water fee. Marjorie posed a question to the Council, "Why not put a tax on beer along with cigarettes?" This solution was not chosen.

FOR RENT: 3 room and bath of a double cabin. Marjorie Downer.

Marjorie Downer took out this "For Rent" advertisement for one of her cabins in the October 3, 1958 edition of The Louisville Times.

Widows

Many women lost their husbands due to the dangers of coal mining like explosions, cave-ins, or other accidents. Other men passed away from diseases like black lung or from accidents in everyday life. Widows sometimes started businesses as a way to make ends meet.

Kate Allera

Kate Allera was one such widow who ran a grocery store and bakery after her husband, John, passed away unexpectedly at a relatively young age in 1905. Kate opened up her shop when she was in her early twenties. It was located at 502 La Farge Avenue, and



Kate Allera stands in front of her grocery store with her two sons, John and Joe, at the northwest corner of the intersection of South Street and La Farge Avenue in 1912.

she used the income she made to raise her two sons. Kate achieved some prominence around town, and her business is a featured on the grand drapery curtain that hung at the Rex Theatre in the 1920s. The curtain is currently on display in the Museum.

Kate ensured the business was a family affair, and she employed the efforts of her own sons alongside other neighborhood children who lived on La Farge to carry out grocery deliveries. Kate's son, John, was a skilled pianist and very outgoing and friendly. Sometimes, John would go out for delivery and end up sitting down at someone's piano to play for a while. This usually meant that he would get back late from deliveries.

Jane Carlton

Jane Carlton was another widow who turned to business to provide an income in widowhood. Her husband, David Carlton, was president of the Louisville Coal Miners Company in 1889. The Carltons were part of the initial wave of skilled coal miners from England, Wales, and Ireland that helped establish coal mining methods in Louisville. Shortly after arriving in Louisville, David Carlton died in 1892, leaving his widow, Jane, with six daughters.

Jane became a real estate investor in Louisville beginning in the early 1900s, and she owned dozens of properties around town. Some properties she rented out to families and others she rented to businesses.

One such commercial building was her property at 900 Main Street.

900 Main first served as the place where William "Bill" Schutz set up his photographer's wagon. Bill Schutz was a well-known local photographer who documented much of early Louisville life through candid photographs as well as formal portraits.

In 1924, Jane Carlton sold part of the 900 Main lot to Rose Starkey who owned a chain of gas stations that operated in surrounding cities, including Lafayette and Longmont. As business women, both Jane and Rose recognized an opportunity with the emerging automobile industry.



This photograph, taken in the early 1900s, shows Jane Carleton (center), with women of the Ladies Aid Methodist society.

Continued Tradition

After the last mines closed in the 1950s, Louisville underwent a strong revitalization effort. The construction of Highway 36 between Denver and Boulder as well as the Rocky Flats Plant near Louisville contributed to many women finding employment outside of the home. However, women continued to set up small businesses in Louisville, still drawn by the appeal of working close to home.

Today, the entrepreneurial spirit remains alive and well. As of 2022, Louisville was home to 1,690 businesses of which 294 (32%) were owned solely by women. Another 124 are owned by two partners. From the enterprising spirits who first purchased

boarding houses on dusty Main Street to the innovators of today, women have shaped Louisville's economic landscape since the town's beginning. Their stories are not just tales of business acumen but narratives of resilience, creativity, and determination.



Upcoming Programs and Events

Join us for these upcoming programs exploring historical topics, large and small. For more details and registration, visit the Museum website and calendar. All Museum programs are FREE!

First Friday: Italian Games

Friday, August 2 | 6 - 8 PM | 1001 Main St. August is Italian Heritage Month in Louisville! Come learn how to play the world's loudest game—Morra, where all you need is a big voice and your hands. Learn about Bocce, or try your hand at dice games that were played in Louisville!

September is Louisville History Month!

Celebrate history all month long by visiting the Historical Museum campus or attending one of our programs!

Exhibit: Above & Below: Views of Louisville

September 1-30 | Library | Coal Creek Gallery Visit the Coal Creek Gallery at the Louisville Public Library during the month of September to see views of Louisville from the skies and under the ground!

Walking Tours:

Space is limited. Register on the Museum website. **100 Years of the Louisville Public Library**Saturday, Sept 7 | 9 AM | Meet at 1001 Main St. **Louisville's Little Italy**Saturday, Sept 14 | 9 AM | Little Italy neighborhood **Historic Trees of Downtown Louisville**Saturday, Sept 28 | 9 AM | Meet at 1001 Main St.

First Friday: History Outdoors

Friday, September 6 | 6 - 8 PM | 1001 Main St. The Museum campus has some new outdoor additions! Bring the kids and discover how children contributed to home life in the backyards of Louisville. Meet artist James Dixon and learn about his creation and restoration of the "Fire Vase" bronze sculpture that survived the Marshall Fire.

Program: Legendary Ladies

Wednesday, Sept 11 | 6 PM | Louisville Center for the Arts

The Legendary Ladies will whisk you back in time, with historical performances as Mother Jones, Mother Cabrini, Mary Elitch Long, and Lady Catherine Moon (aka Cussin' Kate). Museum staff will also discuss the impact Mother Jones and Mother Cabrini had directly on Louisville.

Vintage Base Ball Game

Saturday, Sept 21 | 11AM | Miner's Field Take me out to the 4th annual vintage base ball game! This showdown will feature historic uniforms, equipment, and game rules. Bring the whole family to enjoy America's pastime with free t-shirts (while supplies last), cracker jacks, and photo opportunities!

First Friday: Haunted House History

Friday, October 4 | 6 - 8 PM | 1001 Main St. Stop by to learn about Halloween traditions in Louis-ville straight from the imagination of Louisville's children circa 1952. Close your eyes and stick your hands in jars filled with creepy - or not so creepy - things... grapes or eyeballs?

Workshop: Making Rag Rugs

Saturday, October 12 | 11 AM | 1001 Main St. Rag rugs were a staple in Louisville homes and were a great way to re-purpose old clothing and scraps. Learn to make your own braided rug in this hands-on workshop. Space is limited, registration required.

Workshop: Hispanic Heritage "Worry Dolls"

Saturday, October 12 | 3:30 PM | 1001 Main St. Learn to make "Worry Dolls," a traditional Indigenous Guatemalan craft, taught by Luna Cultura. It is said you can tell your worries to these dolls and they will take them away for you. Join us for this family friendly event that is equal parts history, craft, and self-care. Please register only for those creating a craft, additional family members may attend for free!

Film Showing: Cabrini

Friday, October 11 | 6 PM | Louisville Center for the Arts

In honor of Frances Xavier Cabrini day on October 14, "Cabrini" tells the story of Mother Cabrini, a Catholic missionary, and her experiences in New York City facing sexism and anti-Italian bigotry as she built an orphanage and hospital. Rated PG-13.

Program: Stories in the Dark

Thursday, October 24 | 7-8 PM | 1001 Main St. Join the Boulder Valley Spellbinders for rarelyheard, local mystery and suspense stories told under the stars. This program will take place outside in the Museum Courtyard. Bring a blanket or chairs, if desired. Ages 6+. Check the Museum calendar for registration details. Rain Date: Oct. 25 at 7 PM.

Summer Internships Underway! by Summer King

We are thrilled to welcome two summer interns!



Kira Boatright is the Collections Management Intern. Kira is from Westminster and is now earning a master's in history from UC Denver. She has a background in historical research and has contributed to multiple public history projects in the state, including the Leadville Irish Miners' Memorial.

Kira is excited to explore the many stories of Louisville's community and past through the Museum's collections. One unexpected bonus: while sorting through collection materials, Kira found letters to her great-grandfather from his Louisville classmates in 1933!

Millie Keogh joined the Museum this summer as the Education and Outreach Intern. She grew up in Broomfield and is currently pursuing her undergraduate degree in English at Dartmouth College. Millie loves reading (obviously), making ceramics, quilting, and baking. With a wealth of child-

hood and family education experience, she is working on interpretive panels, tours, and preschool programs for the Museum. She is excited to engage with the incredible history of Louisville and all of the stories that Museum visitors bring with them.

Museums for Digital Learning by Summer King

In response to the growing demand for accessible educational resources, museums are using digital platforms to broaden their reach. Museum Associates Summer King and Hadley Kluber Siefert spent several months developing a digital resource kit for Museums for Digital Learning (MDL). MDL's motto is, "Bringing museums into your classroom, digitally!" The MDL website hosts educational materials from over 88 national and international museums!

In July, the Museum debuted the new online resource kit, "Underground Coal Mining Impacts on a Small Town." The kit features a timeline of Louisville focused on coal mining impacts, as well as educational resources on coal formation, types of coal mining, and an interactive map demonstrating why various areas in downtown Louisville developed differently as a direct result of underground coal mining. The final activity is an escape room where students test what they've learned to solve a question: "What was Louisville's baseball team called?"

You can check out the kit at: MuseumsForDigital-Learning.Org/ResourceKit/236

Museum Receives Award! by Gigi Yang

The American Association for State and Local History recently awarded a Leadership in History Award of Excellence to the Museum for the Marshall Fire Story Project. The Marshall Fire Story Project (MFSP) was initiated by Museum staff in the aftermath of the Marshall Fire to document the devastation and social impact of the fire on Louisville and neighboring communities. Through the MFSP, staff collected oral histories, personal written accounts, photographs, documents, and artifacts related to the fire and recovery efforts. The Museum also assisted fire victims with conservation of salvaged and fire-damaged items through a series of conservation workshops.

It is hoped that the Marshall Fire Story Project positively impacted the community by providing space for reflection, empathy, and healing in the moment and will be a significant historical resource for understanding climate change, collective trauma, and community resilience for future generations.



Gigi Yang and Bridget Bacon examine a Colorado State flag damaged in the Marshall Fire.

The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in its 79th year, is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history. This year, AASLH conferred 47 national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, and publications. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history.

Museum Corner by Gigi Yang

One of the best things about working at the Museum is the diversity of people who come in. Since the beginning of the year, we have had visitors from 31 states as well as international visitors from Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Wales!

With recent visitors from the Netherlands, we discovered that like Louisville, Italian immigrants made up a significant portion of their early coal miners. We also learned that they used a specific species of evergreen tree as support beams in the mine tunnels. The timbers would "sing" when there were vibrations and tremors in the ground, alerting miners of impending cave-ins. Perhaps Louisville miners from Europe also knew this trick.

In addition to tourists, we are always thrilled when Louisville residents stop in to share family stories. Whether multigenerational, long-time, or newcomers, we invite all Louisville residents to "Be a Part of the Story" and share an anecdote about their lives in Louisville by paying us a visit, filling out our online form, or getting in touch about recording an oral history. To learn more about sharing a story, please visit the Museum website: www.louisvilleco.gov/museum/BeAPartOfTheStory.

Lastly, we hope many Louisville residents will come out to help celebrate Louisville History Month in September! Check the Museum calendar for a full roster of Museum programs, walking tours, exhibits, and our fourth annual Vintage Base Ball Game!

Oral History Program Update by Sophia Imperioli

These past few months, the Oral History Program has had the pleasure of welcoming aboard several new volunteers:

Lucie HarringtonBahadeer PurkhetRoger KeelerElyssa TorrenceKaylee NanceLena Wenzel

Some are with us for the summer until they head back to school, while others are based here in Louis-ville. With everyone's help, we have been able to start digitizing and transcribing more interviews, and we hope to have them up on the Museum's YouTube channel soon for your enjoyment!

The Museum would also like to thank Nancy Cooley and Sandra Richmond for sitting down for interviews. If you'd like to join in our efforts with this program to help capture the personal histories of Louisville, please contact Museum Associate Sophia Imperioli at SImperioli@LouisvilleCO.gov.

Thank you to our continuing volunteers!

Louisville Historical Museum Volunteers

Leslie Aaholm	Amy Marks	
Michelle Baker	Jean Morgan	
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Ady Kupfner	Marty McCloskey	
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Historical Foundation Update by Jeff Bradley

The board members of the Louisville History Foundation were delighted to see the Museum win an American Association for State and Local History Award of Excellence for its response to the fires in Louisville. Strong support of the Museum enables the staff to respond to unexpected situations as well as having the resources to keep the Museum in great shape.

Generous individuals, families, and companies are underwriting the upcoming Vintage Base Ball Game, keeping it free to the public. If you would like to support the Museum, please visit our website site at https://www.louisvillehistoryfoundation.org/.

The Louisville History Foundation (LHF) exists to support the Museum's programs, collections, and staff. We encourage individuals, families, and companies to learn the fascinating history of our town and its people.

Louisville History Foundation Board Members

Jeff Bradley Gordon Madonna
Jane Coyle Celeste Murphy
Jennifer Henderson Cory Nickerson

Val Igler Jennifer Levin

Donations to the Museum's Collections and Records

The Louisville Historical Museum recently accepted the following donations for the Museum's permanent, education, and reference collections. Thank you to the donors!

April—June 2024

Estate of Lola Dixon Gaudreau – Book c.1880 – "The History of Coal Creek and Boulder Valley," Dixon family portrait, newspaper- The Colorado Banner from July 10, 1883, two scrapbooks and documents related to Louisville and Superior, Digital

scans of Dixon family photos related to Lola Dixon Gaudreau and Vera Taylor.

Monarch High School – Yearbook for 2024-25.

Hugh Patterson – "Colorado Headlines: A History of the State in Selected Newspapers of the Day" c. 1926 – Education Collection.

Cassandra Volpe – "Louisville Tidbits" cookbook from Louisville Middle School, 1975.

erika winter– "Beautiful Cakes Aluminum Cake Decorator" set – Education Collection.



Thank You for Your Monetary Donations

Thank you to the following people and businesses for their generous monetary donations, other than memorial donations, to the Louisville History Foundation.

Anonymous
arc Thrift Stores
Alan Iannacito Family
Origins CPA
Sandra Richmond
Chris Skrotsky
Society of Italian Americans
Kathy Takemoto
Raymond & Janice Waldorf
Carol Wooley

Regrets

We extend our sincere sympathy to the families of lifetime member Richard Biella and regular members Helen MacDonald and Evelyn Harney Santilli.

Memorial Donations

Thank you so much for these recent memorial donations.

In Memory of Richard (Dick) Biella (1933-2024) Dino DeSantis, The Marino Family

In Memory of Judy DeSantis (1941-2016)Dino DeSantis

In Memory of June Enrietto (1926-2023) Anonymous

In Memory of Helen MacDonald (1938-2024) Ady Kupfner

In Memory of Mary Malmstrom (1937-2024) Ady Kupfner

In Memory of Anne Mojo Loren Laureti

In Memory of Ronald Dean Rickman (1962-2024) Leo Deborski, Paula Elrod & Karen DiCarlo

In Memory of Evelyn Harney Santilli (1948-2024) Paul & Becky Harney

In Memory of Roy Warembourg (1953-2024)
Paula Elrod & Karen DiCarlo

Become a Member!

Members receive the quarterly Louisville Historian with substantive articles about Louisville history.

A yearly membership is \$20 for an individual and \$35 for a family. Annual membership for businesses is \$125. Visit the Museum website at www.louisvilleco.gov/museum to pay online or to print out a form to send in.

Please remember to send your new and renewing membership dues to the Louisville Historical Muse-

um. Other monetary or memorial donations can be made to the Louisville History Foundation. Your membership and donations help support the Museum with outreach, collections preservation, and professional development.

Museum Hours & Services

Museum Tours

The Museum welcomes walk-in visitors! Groups of six or more people, schools, or anyone requiring special accommodations may request tours by appointment using the online group tour form.

Open Hours

Tues, Thurs, Fri & Sat: 10 AM —3 PM Wednesday: 1—5 PM

Donations

If you are interested in donating objects or photographs to the Museum, please contact the Museum at Museum@LouisvilleCO.Gov or 303-335-4850.

About

The Louisville Historical Museum is owned by the City of Louisville and is as part of the Department of Cultural Services under Sharon Nemechek, Director of Cultural Services. The Museum is located at 1001 Main Street. Its mailing address is 749 Main Street, Louisville, CO 80027.

Staff

Museum Services Supervisor Gigi Yang

Museum Associates

Sophia Imperioli – Public History & Interpretation Summer King – Outreach & Communications Hadley Kluber Seifert – Collections Management



Thank You to New and Renewing Members!

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Pine Street Plaza

Seward Mechanical Systems Society of Italian Americans

Stewart Architecture
Ters Family Dentistry

The Singing Cook



Thank you to Boulder County residents for generously funding cultural facilities through SCFD for over 30 years! This year, the Louisville Historical Museum joins the many facilities funded through your generosity!

Louisville Historical Museum 749 Main Street Louisville, CO 80027

Return Service Requested

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