



## El Dorado County Historical Museum Commission Overview 2025

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON  
OCTOBER 21, 2025

Good morning, Supervisors. Thank you for the opportunity to present on behalf of the El Dorado County Historical Museum Commission. We'll share who we are, the challenges we've overcome, and the tremendous value the Museum delivers for our community.

## Purpose/Objective of the EDCHM Commission:

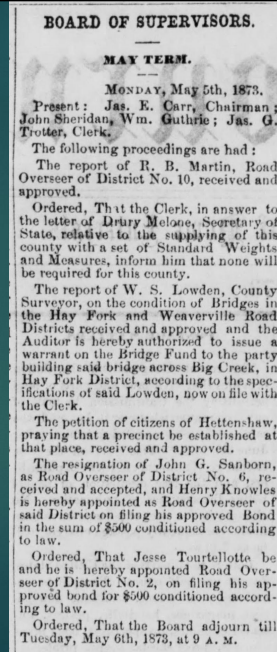
ORDINANCE No. 4551, CHAPTER 2.23 - COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM COMMISSION

2.23.010 Established. There is created and established a citizens' advisory commission consisting of seven (7) members to be known as the County Historical Museum Commission.

2.23.020 Purpose. The [El Dorado] County Historical Museum is established to assist the County in maintaining a vision and subsequent goals for the County Museum; to encourage opportunities for county residents to become involved in the historic interpretation and preservation of historical artifacts and documents important to the county.

Core Responsibilities [Summarized / Abridged]:

1. Advisory and Policy Governance
2. Financial and External Advocacy
3. Collections and Administrative Oversight



[Ordinance 4551 was passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 29th, 2000.]

**Did you know** that the roots of our County Historical Museum collection date back 87 years to 1938 when the collection was first formed? And the Commission itself was first appointed by this Board over 50 years ago. This longevity demonstrates the immense impact the collections have had on our community. Our role is simple but important: we advise, advocate, and safeguard. We are very effective at helping to ensure that the Museum is enabled to preserve the county's history, as well as accessible and relevant to our residents.

My name is Jacob Rigoli and I am the chair of the EDCHM Commission. Today, I have the honor to speak with you on behalf of my fellow museum commissioners. Collectively, we represent the community regarding museum and history-related topics, and we also serve as a liaison to yourselves, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors.

# Commission Membership

Seven (7) members appointed "at large" by the Board of Supervisors, with at least two members representing established historical organizations.

The Commissioners are:

- Jacob **Rigoli**, Chairperson
- Randy **Mitchell**, Vice-Chairperson
- Jeannette **Barrett**, Commissioner
- Keith **Berry**, Commissioner
- Sean **Manwaring**, Commissioner
- Dee **Owens**, Commissioner
- Joseph **Williams**, Commissioner



*El Dorado Western Railroad (EDWRR),  
preserving our railroad history.*

Photo Credit: Mountain Democrat photo by Noel Slack

We are a seven-member body appointed by you, representing both the public and established historical organizations. Many of us also hold leadership roles in community organizations and nonprofits. This ensures we're deeply tied to the community we serve:

Our Commissioners additionally include:

Randy Mitchell, Vice-Chairperson

Jeannette Barrett, former chair and current Commissioner

Dee Owens, Commissioner

Keith Berry, Commissioner

Sean Manwaring, Commissioner

And we welcome our newest confirmed commissioner, Joseph Williams, who joined us last month.

# EL DORADO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM (EDCHM)

**Our Mission:** To preserve, protect, and promote El Dorado County's history and heritage.

**Main Facility:** El Dorado County Historical Museum (104 Placerville Drive)

**Living History Program:** El Dorado Western Railroad (El Dorado & Shingle Springs)

**Additional Archival Storage:** El Dorado County Library (345 Fair Lane)



*The EDCHM main entrance at 104 Placerville Dr.*

This Commission serves as your liaison to the public and to the museum, ensuring our core mission: to preserve, protect, and promote El Dorado County's history, is met. We do this through the Placerville facility, our living history program with the El Dorado Western Railroad, and our archives housed at the library.



## What we do:

- Create and support a vision for the EDCHM
- Recommend museum policies
- Recommend to accept or reject artifact donations
- Make strategic planning recommendations
- Make budget and funding recommendations
- Represent the museum externally
- Advocate for the museum



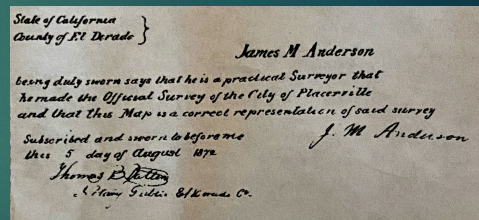
Wheelbarrow made by JM Studebaker on display at the EDCHM. By 1855, "Wheelbarrow Johnny"'s wheelbarrows were fetching \$10 each, enabling him to amass savings amounting to \$3,000.

As Commissioners, we advise on policies, guide donations, support planning and budgets, and advocate broadly. In short, we're the bridge between the Museum, the public, and you. More specifically, the Commission's purpose as described in the founding documents can be summarized as:

- a) Creating and supporting a vision for the Museum
- b) Recommendation of museum policies (working with the museum administrator to ensure realism and alignment)
- c) Recommendations to accept or reject artifact donations
- d) Make strategic planning recommendations
- e) Make budget and funding recommendations
- f) Represent the museum externally
- g) Advocate for the museum, broadly

# Governing Documents

- ▶ Ordinance No. 4551
  - ▶ Established the EDCHM Commission in 1973
  - ▶ Updated February 29th, 2000, as part of the creation of the Collections Management Policy.
- ▶ Bylaws
  - ▶ Updated November 18 2019
- ▶ Museum Collections Management Policy
  - ▶ Originally adopted October 1999
  - ▶ Second Revision adopted November 2020
  - ▶ By incorporation, additional governing documents such as the County Museum Emergency Response Plan, County Museum Ethics Policy (Code of Ethics), etc.



From the EDCHM Collection.  
James M Anderson was El Dorado County's Surveyor and tax collector in the late 1800s, and the first to create a survey of Yosemite Valley in 1883.

**This year, the Library department reviewed and prepared draft revisions for the Museum's governing and operational documents to improve clarity, transparency, and efficiency. The Commission supports these suggested updates and encourages the Supervisors to adopt them, as they are designed to simplify operations and improve the Museum's ability to serve the public.**

[NOTE: The following is for reference only and won't be read.]

**Ordinance** - The new 2025 draft substantially updates governance, accountability, and transparency. It ensures compliance with the Brown Act, clarifies appointment and vacancy procedures, and clarifies advisory powers. Most importantly, the draft ordinance makes it easier for the Commission to engage the public, the Board, and external partners while ensuring that county leadership retains ultimate oversight.

## ByLaws:

- The proposed 2025 version improves clarity and operational efficiencies.
- It provides stronger definitions of roles, duties, and administrative processes.
- Intended impacts of the updates include smoother Commission functioning, reduced ambiguity for appointments and meetings, and better

- alignment with County legal frameworks.

**Museum Collections Management Policy:**

- The new draft 2025 Museum Collections Management Policy creates an improved mission statement, a new vision statement, and a clarified collecting scope. It additionally reorganizes the document for consistency and coherence, and refines the acquisition and deaccessioning policies.

# A challenge overcome through collaboration and foresight.

1. Temporary Closure.
2. A Collaborative Solution.
3. Looking Forward.



*The EDCHM Research Room is open for the first time since before COVID. Librarian, Bonnie Battaglia, and volunteer and author, Rodi Lee, are seen here supporting community research inquiries.*

**In late 2024 and early 2025**, the Museum faced a serious challenge: it was closed for four months due to a staffing vacancy. Unfortunately, funding for the Museum Administrator role was additionally removed from the 2025 budget. Thanks to collaboration with the Library and Historical Society, we reopened, albeit on a limited schedule. Library Administrator Bryce Lovell stepped up to take on the Museum Administrator duties, and Library staff helped reopen the EDCHM on a very limited schedule. Our capacity has been further enhanced by the El Dorado County Historical Society (EDCHS), the original donor of our collection, and we are grateful for their decades-long partnership. Community response has been overwhelmingly positive: people want more access, and that's a good problem to have!

## Service & Performance Indicators, Collections

Following the acquisition guidelines recommended for adoption by the Commission, the Museum accepted the following into the collection:

- 3 small boxes of miner lamps and crucibles from Coloma
- Autobiography of Charles Peter, original printing
- Turner Collection: 1 box containing bed warmer, parasol, 2 tea sets, 2 pairs of gloves, box of pins, drawing of Judge Arnot, opera glasses, doily, pudding cook book, Trivet, photos, etc.
- Vesuvio's Pizza: Pictures from the 1960s
- 1 El Dorado Rose Sash as worn by Clara Nielsen in 1982
- Loose photographed prints of works by Carol Matthis, including photos of Carol
- David Birge, El Dorado County gold rush era doctor's medical books, journals, instruments, etc.
- Peggy Bosch donation of Johnny & Selma White family letters and photos (late 19th and early 20th century)
- ZUM ANDENKEN memorial / mourning art



*Director Lovell and Commissioner Rigoli, reuniting an 1850s crucible to the Jake Jackson Museum in Trinity County; September 2025*

Even while managing the transition and staffing challenge, the Commission remained focused on its core curatorial duty: protecting our historical assets and making them accessible to the public. The Museum collection is a unique and special asset for the County. In fact, it is a growing collection which we're careful in our role as a commission to protect: for every artifact we accept, we may decline ten. That diligence ensures quality and reputation, in addition to operational efficiency. This year alone we've accepted several extraordinary items, from Gold Rush-era medical journals to prominent local family archives. Each connects us to our county's past in tangible ways.



## Upcoming Goals/Workplan: The Community is Asking For More!

- **Our Next Step:** When budgets and time allow, we can significantly grow **community engagement** and drive new **tourism revenue** for El Dorado County.
- **Supervisor Goals:** We're focused on supporting the Supervisors' core goals and the Library Administration.
- **Call to Action:** Let's **collaborate** to build a plan that serves our County residents **and** boosts the county's economy.



Teenage tourists (Jak and Alex) from Ohio touring the EDCHM in front of the M.T. Kelly replica store display.

Looking forward, the community is asking for more. We believe the Museum can play a greater role in tourism, education, and economic vitality.

As your appointed advisors, we offer our collective expertise to provide guidance on a plan for greater access and impact, staying closely aligned with your strategic goals.

We understand the financial pressures, but when the time is right, we are ready to collaborate with you and Library administration. Our commissioners are deeply integrated and highly-experienced in both community development and revenue generation. We believe leveraging this expertise through a stronger partnership will enable the museum to contribute far more significantly to public engagement and economic growth.

As a next step, we request an opportunity to meet with you or your designees and Administrator Lovell to outline a path for this collaboration.

With that possibility in mind, I'd like to briefly show you the tremendous community value that your decision to enable the museum to reopen this year has already created.



Author and Lake Tahoe resident, Maggie Gorrill, presents on the historic Tahoe Meadows community.

Maggie's research, and this EDCHS community event, were supported in part by the EDCHM.



Here's an example from Lake Tahoe where the independent non-profit historical society hosted author Maggie Gorrill to speak about her well-researched book on Tahoe Meadows. Over 50 people came to learn about this remarkable and historic Lake Tahoe community. The event was supported by the El Dorado County Historical Museum's research, turning history into scholarship and community engagement.

Commissioner Manwaring, introducing historian and author Jill Kearney at Sportsman's Hall.

Research performed at EDCHM supported and enabled this community event.

It was so popular, that there was a waitlist!



Additionally, the El Dorado County Historical Society shared the gripping story of the Bullion Bend robbery at Sportsman's Hall in Pollock Pines. It was so popular, it had a lengthy waitlist. They gave a riveting account of the legendary 1864 Bullion Bend stagecoach robbery by Confederates during the Civil War which resulted in a shootout and death of El Dorado County Deputy Sheriff, Joseph Staples. Again, this event was enabled by research performed at the EDCHM and shows the huge turnout and interest in our county's history.

Commissioner Owens,  
supporting the EDWRR  
and EDCHS at the El  
Dorado station.

Research performed  
at EDCHM supported  
and enabled this  
community event  
where Commissioner  
Owens was the  
speaker.

It was so popular,  
there was a waitlist!



Here, Commissioner Owens presented on railroad history at the El Dorado Train Depot. Again, standing-room only. She provided a fascinating glimpse into the history behind the oldest railroad line west of the Mississippi. Originally, there were five combined freight and passenger depots in Latrobe, Shingle Springs, El Dorado, Diamond Springs and Placerville. The only existing structure is a portion of the Shingle Springs freight depot, built after an 1896 fire burned the original 1865 station. Again, this event was enabled by research performed at the EDCHM.





Our County Museum’s research has also powered the annual Save-the-Graves performances, bringing together over 3,000 local residents to date. Research performed at EDCHM supported and enabled all 5 years of Save-the-Graves performance. The next STG event is October 18th!

Commissioner  
Berry and  
members of the  
EDWRR recognize  
community  
member  
contributions  
including the  
Scouts.



The El Dorado Western Railroad continues to draw families, volunteers, and tourists alike, preserving our living history. The town of El Dorado now has a scaled version of the El Dorado Station through the generosity of volunteers and donors. In this photo, we see a local scout and his father recognized for their contribution to the restoration of one of the operating trains.

Commissioners Manwaring and Rigoli and members of the EDCHS facilitate a \$10K grant to the Federated Church to restore the 1851-3 M.E. Church building.

Research performed at EDCHM supported and enabled the grant application to be created.



And we even helped secure a \$10,000 grant to restore the 1851-3 Methodist Church, showing that research can even translate directly into preservation funding.

Built in 1851-3, the M.E. (Methodist Episcopal) Church is a California state historic landmark that holds a special place in El Dorado County's heritage. It served as a center of religious and community life in the earliest days of the Gold Rush, and its significance as a symbol of the region's past endures to this day.

In closing, the Museum is more than a building. it's a living resource that strengthens community pride, education, and tourism. We're grateful for your continued support, and we invite you to partner and meet with us on shaping the Museum's next chapter. Thank you, and my fellow commissioners and I would be happy to take any questions at this time.