



\* County: Elbert  
 \* Site Name: Russell Gates Mercantile  
 \* Approximate Location: Downtown Elbert, Colorado



It would be easy for most people to drive right by this historic store in Elbert without understanding how significant it is, but not you. You are participating in Off the Beaten Trail, and you get the whole story...which begins with an understanding of the man behind the store.

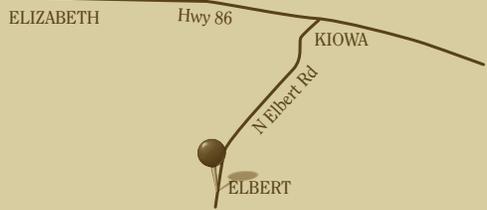
Russell Gates was a New York native, who was making good in the nursery business. At the age of 30 his health began to fail, so he relocated to the Colorado Springs area where he became a successful sheep rancher. When Gates found himself ready for something new in 1888, he and his family picked up and moved to Denver. He bought a controlling interest in the Summit Grain and Feed Co., and from his office on the second floor of the Railway Exchange, he could see great possibilities for a mercantile business along the new railroads. According to local historian Carl F. Mathews, "Gates opened stores over the years in Eastonville, Calhan, Peyton, Limon, Elizabeth, Kiowa, Elbert, and other places. He was one of the originators of the chain store idea and made a great success of it." Each mercantile business that Gates built grew to be bigger and better over the years.



To learn more about this specific store's place in Russell's chain, just keep an eye out for our sign.



## OBT Directions



- \* From Highway 86 at Kiowa
- \* Turn south on Elbert Road for 9.6 miles
- \* Turn west at Lavell Avenue
- \* Destination on the south side of street

## OBT Since You're in the Area

- \* Take a side trip by finding an old country road and enjoy the ride.
- \* Find a local who can tell you more about the days when Elbert was a soft coal mining town.
- \* Make sure you walk around to the back of the 1906 Mercantile building to find the only wall left from the original store that was built in 1902.
- \* Have a contest in the car. One person finds horses, the other cows. First to 50 wins!
- \* Visit the Elbert County Museum.\*

\* Please visit [www.ourjourney.info](http://www.ourjourney.info) for opening dates/times.

## OBT Geocache Information

Coordinates	N 39° 13.183 W 104° 32.211
Size of Cache Box	Regular
Difficulty Level	Easy
Terrain Rating	Easy

Treasure location clue: Miss this one and you are going to get benched.



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