



A RESOURCE PLACE by Charmayne Umbowers

The museum is a wonderful place. Wonderful for meeting old friends for a visit on a rainy day, wonderful for taking a class, teaching a class, making a kite, and most importantly, a wonderful resource for learning and gathering ideas. Bob and I first saw the Edmunds kite several years ago, hanging upstairs in the World War II display room. This was a very interesting kite and in October of 2008 we were able to take, seemingly, a myriad of photos and measurements and notes. We wanted to make our own J.R. Edmunds kite.

For over a year the project was tabled. It suddenly came back to the forefront when the Fanø Classics kite was announced. In 2010 the type of kite showcased would be the antenna lifters. Yes, we had the perfect project! Fabric bought and ironed, pattern drawn, pieces cut out, and the kite was sewn. Bob worked on spars. Questions asked of Kay (never quite enough photos and measurements and notes) and answered. Soon our kite was standing in the kite room ready for bridle lines.



We expanded our project, deciding that making the replica was not quite enough and we started researching the kite's origins. The original kite hanging in the museum was stamped "made by J.R. Edmunds" "Wray, Colo.". Who, what, when, where, and why? Hours of Internet research lead us to the little town on the eastern side of Colorado and the daughter of J.R. "Pete" Edmunds. Mr. Edmunds had a contract with the military to make his kite in the 1940's and it was indeed an antenna lifting kite as well as being used for artillery practice. Our research tapped into Kay's files, United States government records, the WSU Engineering department, the Edmunds family plus the senior citizens of Wray, the Wray Museum and it's director Ardith Hendrix, and even other historians in Colorado.

J.R. has been dead for over five decades but his kite lives on. Through the World Kite Museum, his kite design has been revived and seen the skies. Little pieces of it's history and the whens, wheres, whys have been resurrected. I think J.R."Pete" Edmunds would be surprised and pleased.

