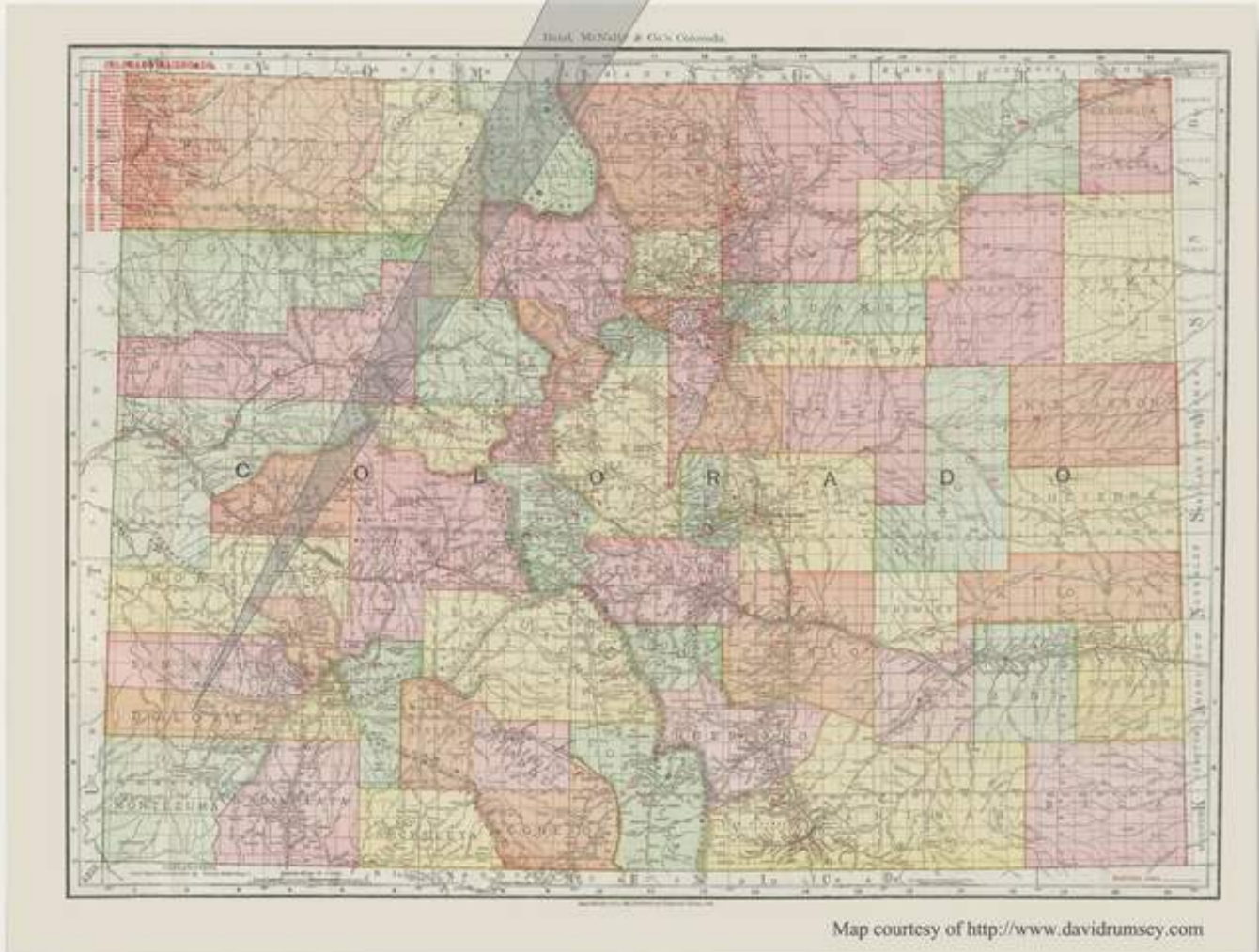


Dolores County



Established: February 19, 1881

County Seat: Dove Creek



DOLORES COUNTY

By William H. Bauer

The early boundaries of the area that became Dolores County are rather indefinite; however, since the land was still Indian (Ute) Territory it made little difference. Dolores County is located in the southwestern corner of Colorado, just to the north of Montezuma County.

When Colorado Territory was formed the area was at first included within the boundaries of Lake and Conejos Counties. With development, the extent of those counties was gradually reduced. The first reduction that included the future Dolores County was January 31, 1876 when San Juan County was created. By that time, most of the area was no longer Indian Territory. A year later, January 18, 1877 Ouray County was formed with San Juan County assuming its present boundaries. The western portion of Ouray County was still virtually uninhabited by white settlers.

By 1881, mining activity in the vicinity of Rico was in full boom and the lengthy travel to the Ouray County seat, at Ouray, led to the creation of Dolores County on February 19, 1881. Ouray County would be further reduced on February 27, 1883 with the creation of San Miguel County.

From 1881 the boundaries of Dolores County remained unchanged until 1973 when a small, triangular section to the northwest of Cross Canyon was severed from Montezuma County and added to Dolores County. That area, roughly thirty square miles, was and is sparsely populated but to transact official business the residents had to make a lengthy and time-consuming trip around Cross Canyon to Dove Creek and then south to Cortez. The Dolores County seat at Dove Creek was much more convenient for the residents. The change greatly improved the availability and efficiency of services, such as road maintenance, in the adjusted area.

Dolores County is a long, narrow, east-west oriented county. Not including the triangular appendage, the north-south width is only eighteen miles; however the maximum east-west distance is approximately sixty-six miles. The southern border and most of the northern border are near straight lines fitted to the Federal Land Survey grid. The northeastern and eastern borders follow drainage divides between the Dolores River and the San Miguel and Animas River watersheds.

Dolores County is bordered on the north by San Miguel County, on the east by San Juan County, on the south by Montezuma County and on the west by San Juan County, Utah.

The Dolores River is the principal stream of the county and drains the eastern and central portions; however, most of the western portion, on the high tablelands west of the Dolores Canyon, drains to the southwest to major streams outside of Dolores County.

The topography is varied. The eastern portion is within the San Juan Mountains complex and has a number of peaks over 13,000 feet in height. The highest, at the border junction with San Miguel and San Juan Counties, is San Miguel Peak at 13,752 feet.

The western two-thirds of Dolores County are more properly considered a portion of the canyon lands that dominate Utah. A number of peaks do rise above 9,000 feet but much of the area is rolling topography, deeply incised by numerous streams. The principal canyons are those of the Dolores River, Disappointment Creek and Cross Canyon.

Early settlement in Dolores County was mainly in the mountainous eastern portion and was focused on mining. Rico was the principal mining center, with lesser activity at Dunton and perhaps briefly at Hermitage.

Ranching was an early activity in the western portion but the lack of reliable rainfall prevented development of agriculture. In the early twentieth century, a number of irrigation projects and the development of dry land farming techniques opened the western part of Dolores County to homesteading and farming. The farmers learned early that the land was most suitable to bean farming and with a portion

of Montezuma County the area became, and still is, an important producer of beans. All of the post offices that opened in western Dolores County owe their inception to the development of agriculture in the 1910-1925 period.

Transportation was another factor that hindered growth of the Dolores County area. In the east the Dolores River Valley became the main travel route. While, from the south this was a relatively easy way to Rico and the mines, travel from the north or east was difficult. From the north the wagon road came over 10,222 foot Lizard Head Pass, today's modern Colorado Highway 145. From the east there was a wagon road beginning at Rockwood in La Plata County, going through the southwest corner of San Juan County and entering Dolores County over 11,410 foot Bolam Pass. That road is still there but is a four-wheel drive road at best.

For western Dolores County there was an early wagon road from Cortez to Monticello, Utah that later became the path of US Highway 666 and in 2003 was renumbered US 491. A more modern road is Colorado Highway 141 that begins west of Dove Creek and runs north to Naturita.

Another modern road that does cross the county from north to south begins at Norwood and eventually finds its way south through the mountains to Dolores. Most of this road is unpaved. I have driven only the northern portion, from Norwood to Disappointment Creek. It is a good road and I suspect it continues to be a good road, not requiring a four-wheel drive vehicle.

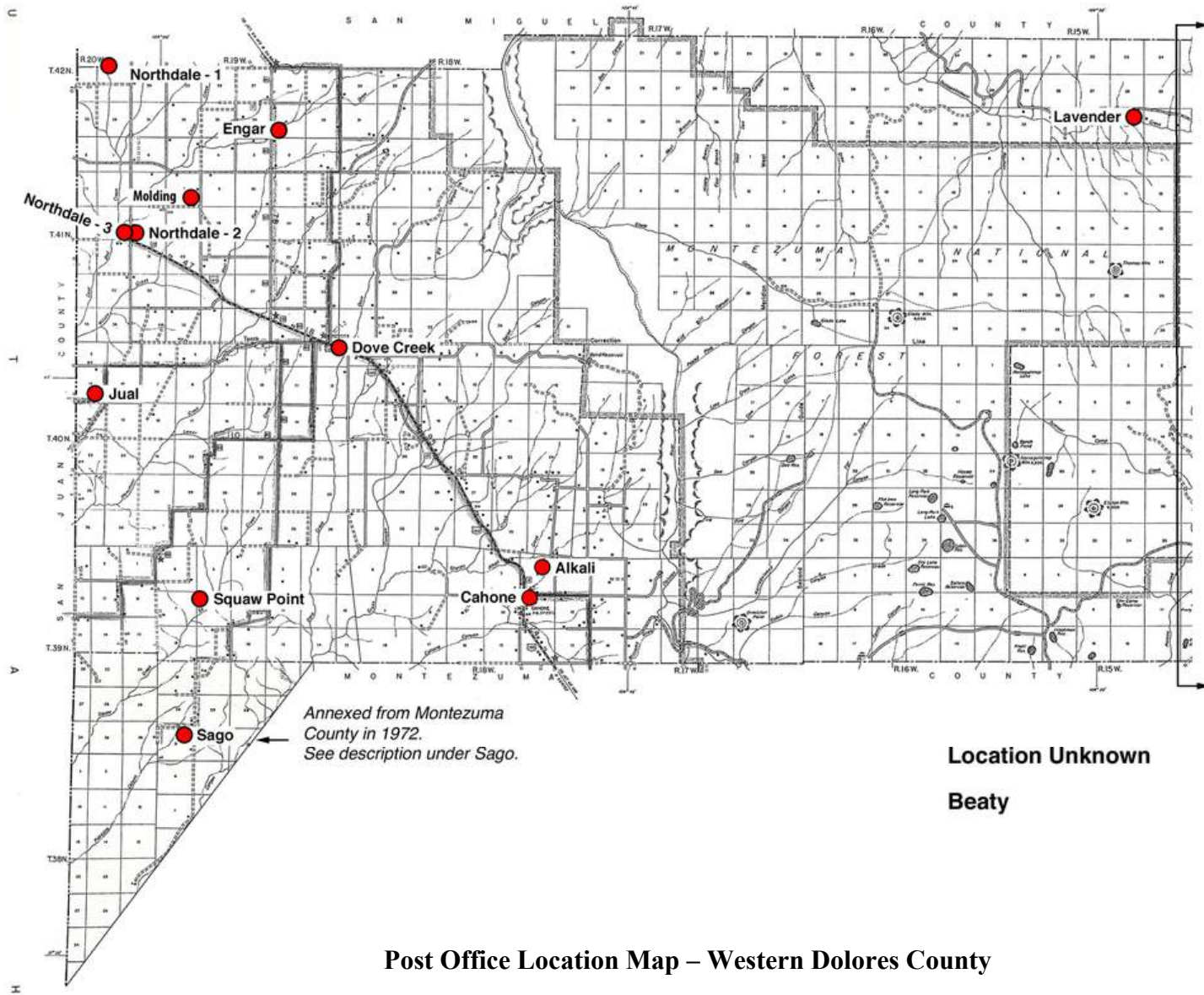
Railroad activity in Dolores County was limited. The only through route was the Rio Grande Southern Railway, which paralleled the wagon road over Lizard Head Pass, through Rico and down the Dolores River to Dolores in Montezuma County. There were temporary logging railroads built to exploit timber resources along the Dolores River beyond Dolores and McPhee.

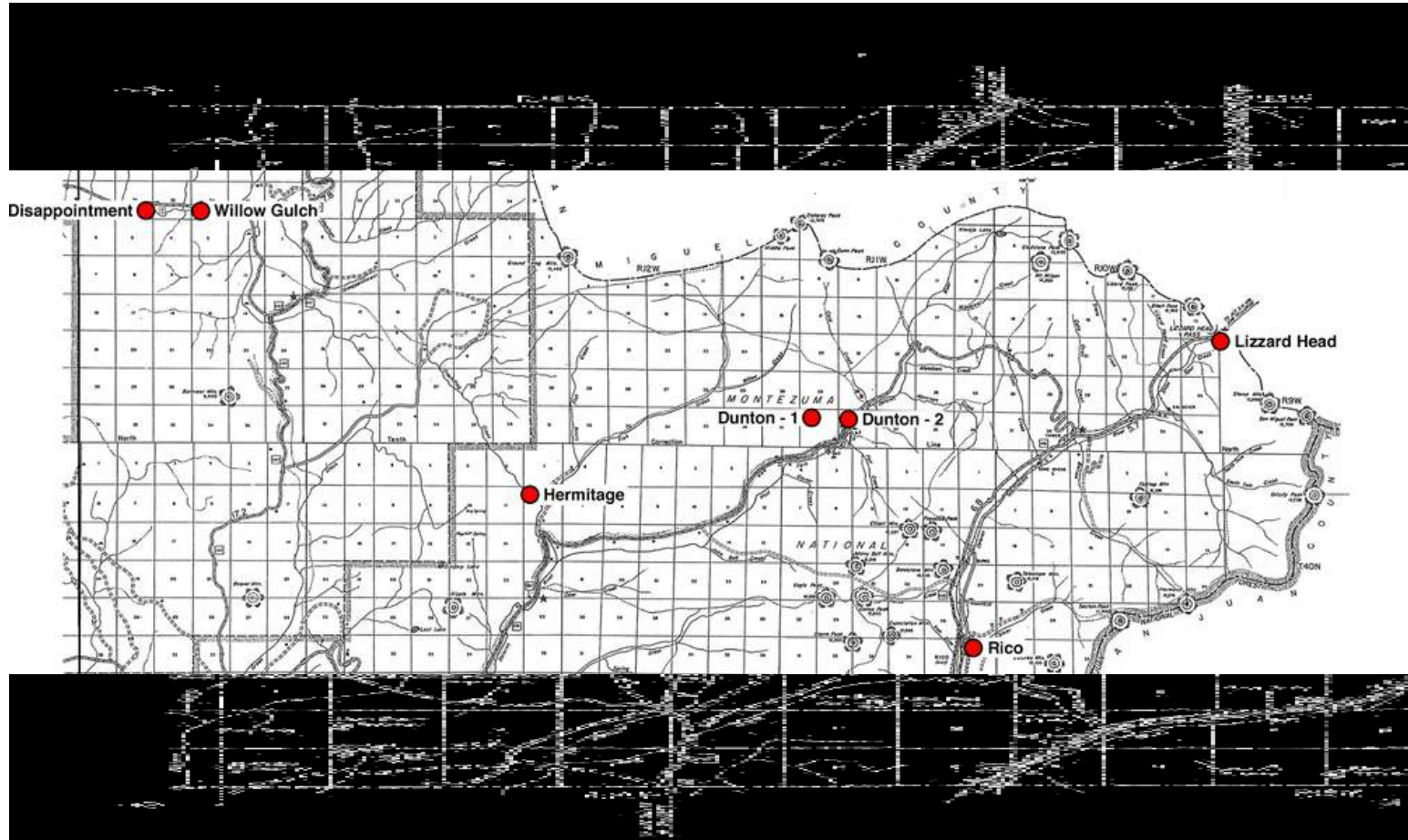


Lizard Head, Colorado

Photograph by William H. Bauer

September 23, 1994





Post Office Location Map – Eastern Dolores County

ALKALI

The evidence indicates that Roscoe B. (Bert) Ballenger sought to have a post office that would be called Alkali, established at his home. For some reason that did not happen. A site location report was filed and an office was “established” with Ballenger as postmaster. However, those actions were rescinded but no specific date was recorded.

On the Geographic Site Location Report for Alkali, that name is crossed out and Cahone is added. Indeed, fifteen days after Ballenger was appointed postmaster at Alkali, he was appointed postmaster of Cahone, at the same location. This, the first version of Cahone, remained in operation until November of the following year.

A likely scenario is that while waiting for approval of the Alkali Post Office, Ballenger decided that the name Alkali would not attract people to this new community and therefore requested a different name, but the request was not processed until after the initial establishment, hence the rescindment and the establishment of Cahone on May 21, 1916.

Alkali is a mixture of soluble minerals common to water in arid and semi-arid regions. It makes the water unsuitable for drinking or for agriculture.

The site of Alkali/Cahone is a mile northeast of the present day community of Cahone. To reach the site, from Cahone drive east one mile on Dolores County Road R. Turn north on County Road 14 one mile to Road P. The location was in the southwest corner of the intersection of Roads P and 14. There are still some occupied buildings in the northeast quadrant of the intersection and also the Cahone Community Church.

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 7 1916	----	NE/4 Sec 2 T39N R18W 1/2 mile south of Alkali Creek
		Applicant for postmaster - Roscoe B. Ballenger
May 6 1916		Established
May 6 1916		Ballenger, Roscoe B.
----	----	Establishment rescinded

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM ALKALI

BEATY

There is no Geographic Site Location Report for a Beaty Post Office in Dolores County. And I have found no mention of such a place in the historical literature of Colorado.

A postmaster was appointed but four months later the establishment was rescinded. Thus, it is highly unlikely that the Beaty Post Office was ever in operation.

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 20 1902		Established
Aug 20 1902		Rice, Phidelia A.
Jan 2 1903		Establishment rescinded

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BEATY

CAHONE

The Post Office Department records indicate that this post office started out to be known as Alkali; however that was only briefly, if at all, and it quickly took the name of Cahone. The office was in the home of the postmaster, Roscoe B. (Bert) Ballenger. Ballenger served for about a year and a half and then the office was discontinued. When it was to be reopened in 1920, Ballenger declined the appointment, probably because the new location was to be three miles south and east of his home, only a short distance north of the county line, at the home of Jefferson F. Simmons.

At about the same time, a store was built at the present site of Cahone and the Ballenger brothers also built a store there. Soon the post office was operating from the Ballenger brothers store with Simmons the postmaster.

The community takes its name from Cahone Creek and Cahone Canyon which begin just southwest of the town. Cahone is a corruption of the Spanish word, "cajon" meaning box, in this case referring to a box canyon.

From its inception, Cahone was strictly a supply center for ranches and farms in the surrounding country. It continues to serve that purpose with a few residences and small businesses. Beans are the principal crop. It is located on US Highway 491, two miles north of the Dolores-Montezuma County line. Until recently this was US Highway 666, however the superstitious deemed 666 to be, "the number of the beast" and after lengthy agitation for a change, in June 2003, US 666 was replaced by US 491.

Latitude = 37:39:32 North Longitude = 108:48:26 West

Chronology of the Post Office

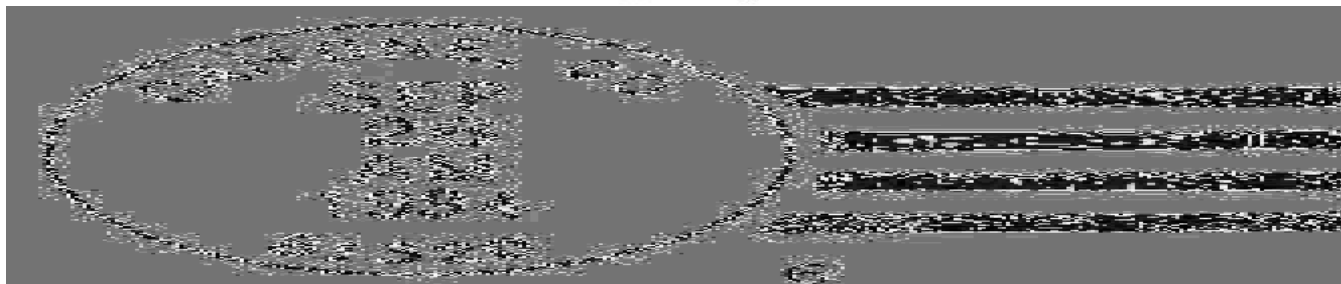
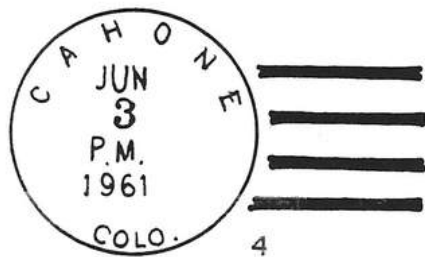
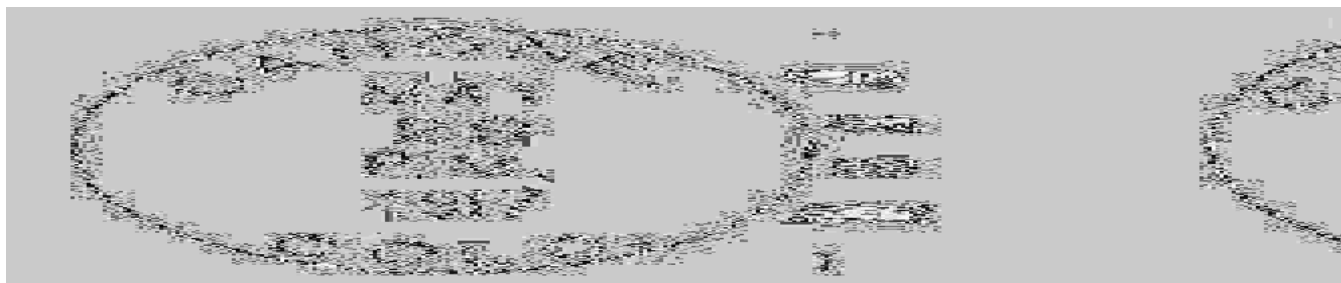
Mar 7 1916	----	NE/4 Sec 2 T3N R18W 1/2 mile south of Alkali Creek	
		Applicant for postmaster - Roscoe B. Ballenger	
May 21 1916		Established	
May 21 1916		Ballenger, Roscoe B.	
Nov 30 1917		Discontinued Mail to Yellow Jacket	
Mar 15 1920	----	SE/4 Sec 13 T39N R18W 20 Rods south of Big Cahone Creek	
		120 rods north of the county boundary	
		Applicant for postmaster - Faye E. Johnson	
Jun 12 1920		Re-established	
Jun 12 1920		Ballenger, Roscoe B.	Declined
Jun 18 1920		Simmons, Jefferson F.	Confirmed
Jul 15 1920		Simmons, Jefferson F.	Commissioned
Jul 30 1920		Simmons, Jefferson F.	Assumed charge
Jan 11 1934		Simmons, Mrs. Beatrice	Assumed charge
Mar 8 1934		Simmons, Mrs. Beatrice	Acting
May 5 1934		Simmons, Mrs. Beatrice	Confirmed
May 24 1934		Simmons, Mrs. Beatrice	Commissioned
Sep 20 1938	----	NW/4 Sec 11 T39N R18W A move 3/10 mile southeast of previous location	
		"Change of Road" [SRM Note: Move was ca. 1 mile NW of 1920 location]	
Jan 5 1942	----	NW/4 Sec 11 T39N R18W On US 160	
Dec 31 1944		Thompson, William A.	Assumed charge
Jan 15 1945		Thompson, William A.	Acting
Sep 21 1945		Thompson, William A.	Confirmed
Nov 2 1945		Thompson, William A.	Commissioned
Oct 31 1947		Gardner, Henry Vernon	Assumed charge
Jan 13 1949		Gardner, Henry Vernon	Confirmed
Feb 10 1949		Gardner, Henry Vernon	Commissioned
Mar 16 1951		Howard, Thomas B.	Possession
Mar 27 1951		Howard, Thomas B.	Acting
Nov 29 1951		Howard, Thomas B.	Appointed
Dec 28 1951		Howard, Thomas B.	Commissioned

CAHONE – Continued

Jan 14 1952	Howard, Thomas B.	Possession
Nov 30 1966	Vinger, Mrs. Ogrita B.	Possession
Aug 25 1967	Marsell, Robert R.	Commissioned & Possession
Mar 31 1972	Marsell, Mrs. Beatrice M.	Officer in charge
Aug 5 1972	Wallace, Mrs. Wanda Z.	Commissioned
Nov 9 1973	Blaisdell, Mrs. Mary	Officer in charge
Dec 8 1973	Blaisdell, Charles W.	Commissioned
Oct 20 1978	Blaisdell, D. Mary	Officer in charge
Apr 21 1979	Blaisdell, Mrs. Dorothy M.	Commissioned

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CAHONE, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-??x19mm	May 29 1917
2	CAHONE, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x20mm	May 1 1936 Aug 7 1940
3	CAHONE / COLO. CI 10P 33.5	4bars S-24x19mm	Jan 4 1946 Apr 11 1959
4	CAHONE / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Jun 3 1961 May 2 1963
5	CAHONE, CO / 81320 CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-25x18mm	Apr 26 1969 Oct 2 1976
5.1	CAHONE, CO CI 11P 27.0/17.0		Nov 2 1971
6	CAHONE, CO / 81320 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x18mm	Apr 30 1991 Mar 28 1996



DISAPPOINTMENT

Disappointment was the second in the chronological series of ranch or rural post offices that were located along Disappointment Creek. It was also the shortest lived of the three.

The location on Disappointment Road is approximately two miles west of the Willow Gulch site; six miles from the junction with the Norwood-Dolores Road. This is eleven and a half miles east of the Dolores-San Miguel County line.

At the location, cited below, The Colorado Department of Highways map for Dolores County (1966) bears the symbol for a cemetery. However when Jim Ozment and I visited the area in September 2003 we could not find the cemetery, or any other evidence of habitation in the general area. Thus, we were disappointed with Disappointment.

Chronology of the Post Office

May 14 1918	---	SE/4 Sec 32 T42N R14W
		Applicant for postmaster - Delford Taylor
Apr 19 1919		Established
Apr 19 1919		Foster, Jeremiah J.
Jun 30 1920		Discontinued Mail to Norwood

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DISAPPOINTMENT

DOVE CREEK

Settlement of the portion of Dolores County west of the Dolores River Canyon did not truly commence until the second decade of the twentieth century. At that time the development of irrigation projects provided water to make the land suitable for farming. The climate and soil proved suitable for the growing of beans, which became and remain, the principal crop of the region.

Beginning about 1912, brothers by the name of Stokes ran a small store on the road from Dolores to Monticello, Utah. In 1915 one R. Butt is supposed to have bought the store and a post office opened. But the post office records show Charles A. Stokes as the first postmaster, holding the office until late 1918.

In the years immediately before and after 1920 seven post offices, nine if you include Alkali and Egnar, opened in the area. Only Cahone and Dove Creek remain and the others have all but vanished.

Dove Creek, established in 1918, is the principal town and in a general election in 1944 the residents of Dolores County voted to move the county seat from Rico to Dove Creek. By then the majority of the county's population was in the western end of the county. As county seat, Dove Creek continues to be an active community. The town has schools, municipal water and sewage systems and an airport. Dove Creek has become the principal supply center for a large area that includes portions of Montezuma and San Miguel Counties as well as western Dolores County.

The town was named for the nearby stream, Dove Creek, which, it is claimed, was named by an early freighter for flocks of doves that inhabited the vicinity.

Dove Creek is located on US Highway 491 (formerly US 666), about seven miles east of the Colorado-Utah State line and two miles east of the junction with Colorado Highway 141, the road to Naturita. If you are travelling through the area, there is a small but pleasant community park on the west end of town with picnic tables where you can pause to eat lunch.

Latitude = 37:45:58 North Longitude = 108:54:19 West

DOVE CREEK – Continued

Chronology of the Post Office

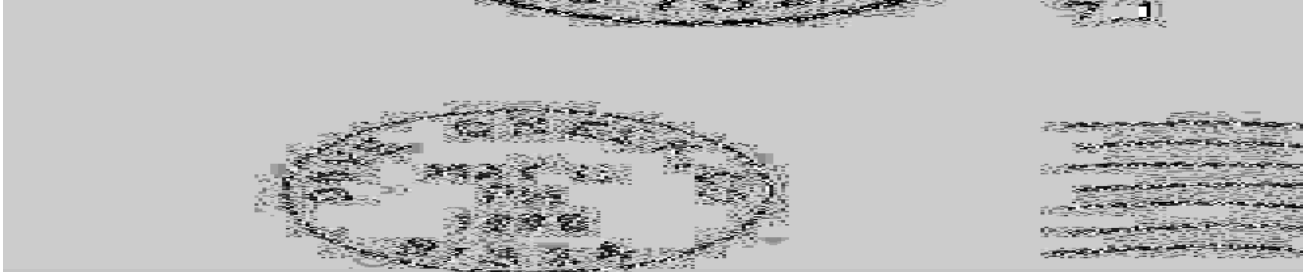
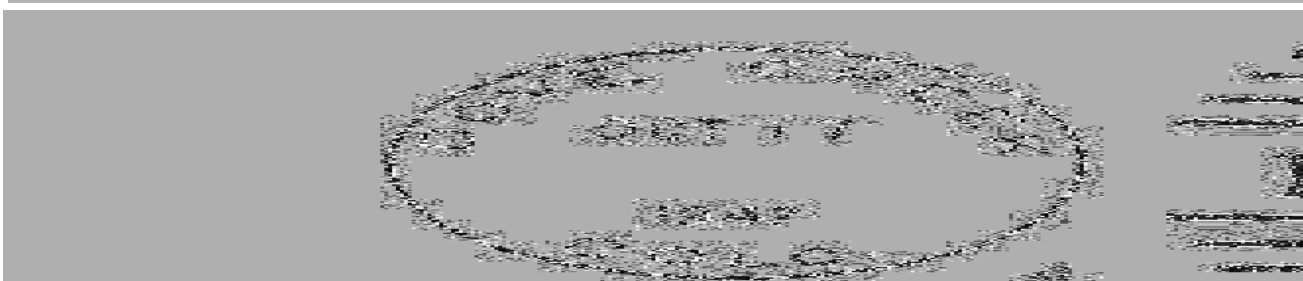
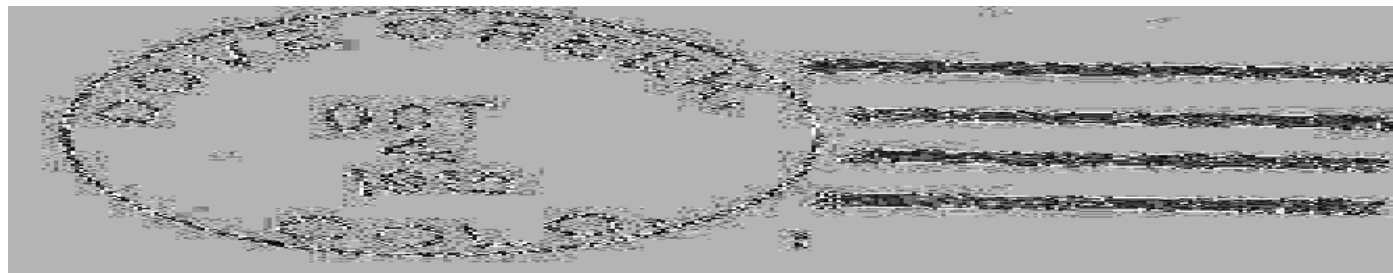
Oct 2 1914	----	NE/4 Sec 1 T40N R19W	1/4 mile west of Dove Creek	
Jan 16 1915		Established		
Jan 16 1915		Stokes, Charles A.		
Oct 5 1918		Harter, Charles E.		
Jul 11 1921		McGrath, Watha E.		Acting
Dec 31 1921		McGrath, Watha E.		Appointed
Apr 29 1925		Larrance, Watha E.		Name changed by marriage
Jul 1 1941				Office made Presidential
Oct 27 1941	----	SE/4 Sec 36 T41N R19W	Right on U.S. 160 highway	
Oct 29 1941		Larrance, Mrs. Watha E.		Nominated
Nov 6 1941		Larrance, Mrs. Watha E.		Confirmed
Nov 7 1941		Larrance, Mrs. Watha E.		Appointed Presidential
Nov 7 1941		Larrance, Watha E.		Name changed by marriage
Dec 3 1941		Larrance, Mrs. Watha E.		Commissioned
Jun 30 1944		Hodson, Mrs. Beverly E.		Assumed charge
Jul 1 1944		Hodson, Mrs. Beverly E.		Acting
Apr 6 1945		Hodson, Mrs. Beverly E.		Executive order
Mar 14 1946		Hodson, Mrs. Beverly E.		Nominated
Apr 5 1946		Hodson, Mrs. Beverly E.		Confirmed
Apr 6 1946		Hodson, Mrs. Beverly E.		Appointed Presidential & Commissioned
Jan 7 1948	----	Lot 1 in NE/4 Sec 1 T40N R19W	Dove Creek 1/2 mile east of Post Office	
		A move 1000 feet northwest of a previous location		
Jan 29 1976		Story, Orville		Officer in charge
Jun 30 1977		Hatfield, Ms. Anna B.		Officer in charge
Mar 11 1978		Blodgett, Duane W.		Appointed
Jul 14 1979		Quintana, J. C.		Officer in charge
Dec 15 1979		Knowles, Richard J.		Appointed
Jun 28 1980		Hatfield, Annabel		Officer in charge
Jul 25 1980		Huskey, Sharon		Officer in charge
Feb 21 1981		Hatfield, Anna B.		Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	DOVE CREEK, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Oct 4 1915
2	DOVE CREEK, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-23x19mm	Jun 7 1934 Apr 16 1939
3	DOVE CREEK, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	May 9 1940 Jun 15 1945
4	DOVE CREEK / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, diamond with 1	Oct 17 1947 Nov 16 1964
4.1	DOVE CREEK / COLO RC 10P 17.5X21.0		1950s Parcel Post Box [NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]
5	DOVE CREEK, / COLO. CI 11P 32.0/23.0	Rolr 7 wavy lines between repeating cds	Jul 24 1968 Sep -- 1973
6	DOVE CREEK, CO / 81824 CI 10P 22.5	Mach 7 wavy lines	May 7 1971 May 26 1978
7	DOVE CREEK, COLO. / 81824 CI 10P 34.0	4bars S-25x19mm	Oct 19 1977
7.1	DOVE CREEK, CO / 81824 CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-25x18mm	Dec 13 1979
8	DOVE CREEK, CO / 81324 CI 10P 30.0	4bars S-23x17mm	Oct 3 1985 Mar 14 1990
9	DOVE CREEK, CO / 81824 CI 10P 22.5	Mach 7 wavy lines	Feb 7 1986 May 23 1993

DOVE CREEK – Continued

- 10 DOVE CREEK, CO / 81324 Sep 26 1994
CI 10P 35.5 4bars S-24x21mm
- 11 DOVE CREEK, CO 81324 / USPS Dec 9 1992 Sep 26 1994
CI 11P 28.0/18.0 Hstp No killer



DUNTON

Dunton is the only town in Dolores County, other than Rico, that owes at least a part of its history to mining. It is said that the first claims were staked in 1885 and included the Emma, the Smuggler and the American. The Emma was the best and may have continued to produce into the 1930's and 1940's.

By 1892, Horatio Dunton had acquired title to several thermal springs in the vicinity of the mining community and began development of a new community around the springs. Colorado business directories of the 1890's listed Horatio Dunton as a mine owner, proprietor of a hotel and grocery store and as justice of the peace. The settlement was appropriately named for Horatio Dunton.

By 1897 a twenty-stamp mill and a smelter were under construction and in 1901 a new eighty-stamp mill was added. The mining soon peaked and by 1918 Dunton was reduced to a few residents. Joe and Domenico Roscio purchased the town. The Roscios would be the first in a series of owners who operated the town as a combination cattle and dude ranch with the hot springs as the main attraction. Some of the old buildings were converted to guest cabins and one of the old saloons became a combination bar and restaurant. The property has changed hands several times since 1918.

In September 1994, Jim Ozment and I visited the site of Dunton. At that time it was undergoing a major renovation, with several of the cabins and the main lodge being refurbished. I have since heard that Dunton continues to be an active resort, but if my information is correct, it is a semi-private club for members and guests only. [SRM Note: Now a high end luxury resort. See https://www.forbes.com/sites/annabel/2012/10/19/colorados-ghost-town-deluxe-dunton-hot-springs/#7c0_fca5e682c for details or Wikipedia article on Dunton].

During our brief visit we talked with some of the people working on the site. We were told that the post office building had been in the large, double building that was once the main lodge. After the post office closed, the boxes were moved to a smaller building, which was labeled Dunton Store. There are two ways to get to Dunton. Coming from Telluride on Colorado Highway 145, five miles after crossing the county line at Lizard Head Pass, a dirt road to the left (west) immediately begins a climb up the steep side of the Dolores Valley. This is labeled Dunton Road on some maps. Although narrow, this was (1994) a decent road through a large aspen grove. It is a shelf type road with some tight switchbacks and climbs more than 1,000 feet above the Dolores River to a high meadow at the head of Coal Creek. In 1994 the crossing of Coal Creek was partially washed out. We had to detour through the creek and would not have been able to make it without 4-wheel drive. I would think that this situation has been fixed but it might be well to check in Rico before trying to reach Dunton from this direction. From the meadow, which offers some spectacular views of the Mount Wilson complex, you descend to the West Dolores River and then follow the river to the site of Dunton. By this route, it is 10.2 miles from Highway 145 to Dunton.

The alternate route begins in Montezuma County at the junction of the west fork of the Dolores with the main Dolores River. The road follows the river all the way, about 20 miles, to Dunton and is an easy grade. This will also take you past the site of Hermitage. During the fall color season this should be a spectacular drive from either direction.

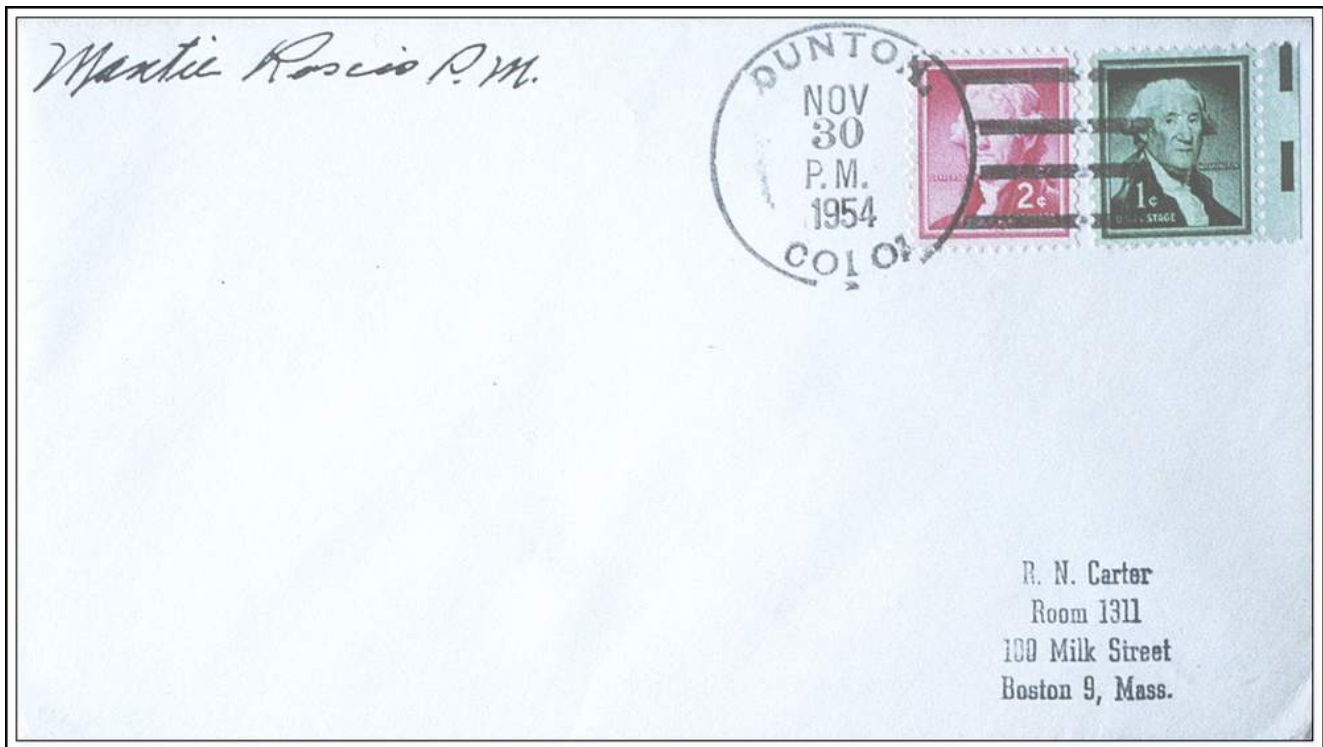
Latitude = 37:46:22 North Longitude = 108:05:36 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 9 1892	Established
Aug 9 1892	Dunton, Horatio
Nov 8 1895	Discontinued Mail to Rico
Feb 27 1896	---- NW/4 Sec 32 T41N R11W 100 yards south of the West Dolores River 1/2 mile southwest of Coal Creek
	Proposed postmaster - George F. Haight
Mar 19 1896	Re-established

DUNTON – Continued

Mar 19 1896	Haight, George L.	
Jun 20 1898	Formby, Sarah	Order rescinded Jun 20 1898
Oct 6 1899	Formby, Sarah	
Mar 27 1903	Rogers, Sterling A.	
Apr 26 1905	Matthews, Jennie A.	
Dec 30 1905	Reading, Sara E.	
Aug 6 1910	Allerton, Sarah E.	
Dec 9 1911	Anderway, Lottie J.	
Mar 6 1914 ----	E/2 NW/4 Sec 33 T41N R11W	50 feet west of West Dolores River
Oct 31 1925	Jacobson, Mrs. Ellen	Acting
Nov 30 1925	Jacobson, Mrs. Ellen	Appointed
Sep 1 1933	Roscio, Mrs. Mantie	Assumed charge
Oct 30 1933	Roscio, Mrs. Mantie	Acting
Nov 1 1933	Roscio, Mrs. Mantie	Confirmed
Nov 17 1933	Roscio, Mrs. Mantie	Commissioned
Oct 22 1941 ----	NE/4 Sec 33 T41N R11W	West Fork of Dolores River 100 feet northwest of Post Office
Nov 3 1954	Ordered closed	
Nov 30 1954	Discontinued	Mail to Dolores



DUNTON, / COLO.

November 30, 1954

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	DUNTON / COLO.	Jul 1 1893	Mar 1 1897
	CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring	18mm
1.1	DUNTON, / COLO.	Dec 21 1899	
	CI 10P 24.0	Hstp Target, 5-ring	15mm
1.2	DUNTON / COLO.	Jul 15 1907	
	CI 10P 28.0	Grid, 9-bar oval	

DUNTON – Continued

2	DUNTON, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-??x20mm	Jul 16 1913 Nov 25 1929
3	DUNTON, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Sep 13 1939 Nov 30 1954



EGNAR

The Egnar Post Office has been located at a number of sites along what is now Colorado Highway 141. One of the sites was in Dolores County, but most were to the north in San Miguel County.

Modern Egnar is a small community with minimal services two miles north of the Dolores-San Miguel County line. The location in Dolores County was two miles south of the county line and on the east side of the highway. In 1994 there was an abandoned store at the location. Conceivably it could have been the location of the post office in the 1917-1918 time period. The post office moved to this site from a location on the county line and then moved back north to a location a short distance west of the present day community of Egnar. The site is on a branch of Chico Creek and the Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report indicates that there was a request to open a post office here to be known as Chico. Apparently it was decided to move the Egnar Post Office two miles south to a place known locally as Chico Wells.

The name Egnar is an example of reverse spelling, being Range spelled backwards. The community was first established when the surrounding land was opened for homesteading.

The locations in San Miguel County will be discussed in a future chapter of this project.

Chronology of the Post Office

- Mar 26 1917 ---- SE/4 Sec 22 T42N R19W 100 feet south of Chico Creek
Also known as Chico Wells
Applicant for postmaster - Mrs. Ruth E. Westcott
- May 28 1917 Established
- Jun 29 1918 ---- SW/4 Sec 35 T42N R19W

See San Miguel County for postmasters and postmarks

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM EGNAR DURING THIS TIME PERIOD

HERMITAGE

This was the second and final place in Colorado to bear the name Hermitage. The earlier Hermitage was in Grand County from 1878 to 1884.

The location of Hermitage is open to some speculation. Ray Newburn in *Postal History of the Colorado San Juan* presents evidence that it was located at the junction of Fish Creek and Little Fish Creek. This would be a little more than two miles from the main road from/to Dunton that follows along the West Dolores River. That site is within a wildlife refuge and although Jim Ozment and I drove into the area we found nothing to indicate that there had been a settlement of any sort there.

However, approximately a half mile from the main road, there are two fairly good-sized log buildings. That seems a more logical site for Hermitage and lacking better information it is the one I choose to accept. The turnoff to Hermitage is about twelve miles from Colorado Highway 145 in Montezuma County and eight miles from Dunton to the northeast.

Ray Newburn hypothesizes that Hermitage might have been associated with an attempt at mining. That is logical for his chosen site, but the one I choose would more likely have been a ranch post office serving the surrounding area.

It is interesting that the first postmaster for Hermitage was the same Horatio Dunton for whom Dunton was named. Perhaps it was indeed an unsuccessful attempt at mining.

Chronology of the Post Office

Sep 19 1904	---	NW/4 Sec 12 T40N R13W 1-1/2 miles north of the West Dolores River 150 feet north of Fish Creek Proposed postmaster - Horatio Dunton
Oct 17 1904		Established
Oct 17 1904		Dunton, Horatio
Dec 14 1906		Ordered closed effective Jan 2 1907 Mail to Dunton
Dec 24 1906		Closing order rescinded
Jan 21 1907		Eggers, Jack C.
Mar 31 1907		Ordered closed
Jun 29 1907		Discontinued Mail to Dunton

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM HERMITAGE

JUAL

The Jual Post Office was open for only eleven months. It was located on the tableland between Bed Creek Canyon and Monument Creek Canyon about one mile east of the Colorado-Utah State line.

The area surrounding the site of Jual is farm and ranch land. It seems unlikely that it was more than a ranch post office intended to serve the nearby farms and ranches.

Established only three years after Dove Creek it is possible that the growth of Dove Creek and the expansion of Rural Free Delivery services would have eliminated the need for a post office at Jual and the other small offices of the same time period in this area.

From Dove Creek, drive west on Dolores County Road H. Two miles west of Dove Creek the road drops into the Monument Creek Canyon. When it leaves the canyon on the west side and turns due west it has become County Road J (There is no Road I). Go west two miles to County Road 2, then south one mile to Road K, then west one mile to Road 1. Jual was in the northwest quadrant of this intersection. In 1994 the only things at the intersection were a cattle loading chute and the remnants of a windmill. About a quarter mile north and perhaps 200 yards west of the fence line there is something that might be the remains of an old log building.

JUAL – Continued

Chronology of the Post Office

Oct 31 1917	----	SE/4 Sec 11 T40N R20W
		Applicant for postmaster - Mrs. Hazel M. Tucker
Jan 28 1918		Established
Jan 28 1918		Tucker, Hazel M.
Sep 14 1918		Discontinued Mail to Dove Creek

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM JUAL

LAVENDER

Lavender was the first post office to be established along Disappointment Creek in Dolores County. Including a four-year hiatus (1909-1913) its life spanned nearly twenty-seven years. Neither of its successors, Disappointment nor Willow Gulch, lasted more than six years.

Ray Newburn in *Postal History of the Colorado San Juan* states that in 1900 the population of Lavender was ten. Newburn also theorizes that the place was named for Edgar Lavender a pioneer cattleman in western San Miguel County. Edgar Lavender was the stepfather of David Lavender, noted historian and author.



The Lavender School, now a community center
Photograph by William H. Bauer August 20, 2003

LAVENDER – Continued

From the east, the site of Lavender is eleven miles from the junction of Disappointment Road with the Norwood-Dolores Road. At that location there is a group of buildings a couple hundred yards north of the road. Some of these buildings appear to be quite old but there are newer structures and a considerable accumulation of junk.

To somewhat confuse the picture, as you drive along the Disappointment Road from the Norwood Dolores Road, a half-mile from the junction you will find a small, well kept building on the north side of the road. This was the Lavender School and seems to be used as a community center. Some further investigation is required to determine if the building has always been at this location or if it was moved there from another site, closer to the Lavender Post Office site.

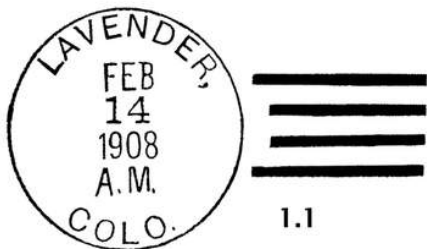
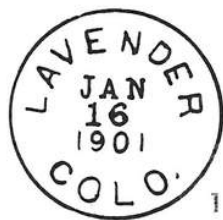
If you come from the west the Lavender site is eight and one-half miles east of the Dolores-San Miguel County line.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jul 23 1888	---	NE/4 Sec 35 T42N R15W
Aug 10 1888		Established
Aug 10 1888		Knight, Henry M.
Dec 31 1909		Discontinued Mail to Cedar
Nov 5 1913		Re-established
Nov 5 1913		Doss, Estella
Feb 27 1915		Discontinued Mail to Cedar

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	LAVENDER / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Cork, Smudge	Jan 16 1901 Nov 14 1905
1.1	LAVENDER, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-14x23mm	Feb 14 1908
2	LAVENDER, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-??x20mm	May 21 1914



LIZARD HEAD

The Lizard Head Post Office was at the summit of Lizard Head Pass. It seems likely that it was in the depot station building of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad. The railroad had a wye at the summit that was completely protected by snowsheds. The San Miguel-Dolores County line is at the summit of the pass and the post office was on the Dolores County side of the line.

There was no organized community of Lizard Head, but for its short life it did serve those working on the railroad. Trout Lake and San Bernardo, a few miles to the north and at a much lower elevation did develop small communities and supplanted Lizard Head in providing mail service to the area.

LIZARD HEAD – Continued

The name Lizard Head is certainly unusual. It is a reference to a double mountain peak to the west of the pass that had a vague resemblance to a lizard’s head. One of the peaks was quite large and would form the head and upper jaw. The other pinnacle was rather slender and would be viewed as the lower jaw of the lizard. My first visit to this area was in July 1958 and both pinnacles were still standing. The pinnacles are composed of relatively soft volcanic rocks. Unfortunately, sometime in the later part of the twentieth century the slender pinnacle collapsed and the fanciful resemblance to a lizard’s head no longer exists.

Lizard Head is at the summit of the Lizard Head Pass, reached by Colorado Highway 145, the road from the Telluride resort area to Rico and Dolores. The site was in the relatively level area to the east of the highway.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jun 13 1892	---	NW/4 Sec 19 T39N R10W Rio Grande Southern, 15 feet from track, Lizard Head Station Proposed postmaster - James Walter Burch
Jul 23,1892		Established
Jul 23 1892		Burch, James W. Not commissioned
Aug 31 1892		Rice, Phidelah A.
Jul 5 1895	---	SW/4 Sec 19 T41N R9W (??) On the south side of the Rio Grande Southern, about 200 yards
Oct 31 1895		Discontinued Mail to San Bernardo

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM LIZARD HEAD

MOLDING

Molding was a ranch or farm post office northwest of Dove Creek. It was only two miles northeast of the Northdale Post Office so the reason for its establishment is open to question. However, in this part of the county airline distance is often misleading when steep-walled canyons intervene.

To reach the site, begin at the intersection of Colorado 141 and US 491. Drive north four miles to Dolores County Road C; turn west two miles to Road 4 and then south one mile. In 1994 there was a large Quonset hut in a clump of trees on the west side of Road 4, some 200-300 yards north of Road D. This fits with the stated location for Molding.

Again, the Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report shows that Molding was not the first choice for the post office name. Magnet was the requested name. There is no information as to the source of the name Molding.

Chronology of the Post Office

Sep 16 1919		Established
Sep 16 1919		Cook, Effie B.
Sep 20 1919	---	SE/4 Sec 8 T41N R19W 1 mile southeast of Chico Creek Applicant for postmaster - Effie B. Cook
Feb 9 1924		Ordered closed
Feb 29 1924		Discontinued Mail to Dove Creek

Confirmed types of postal markings

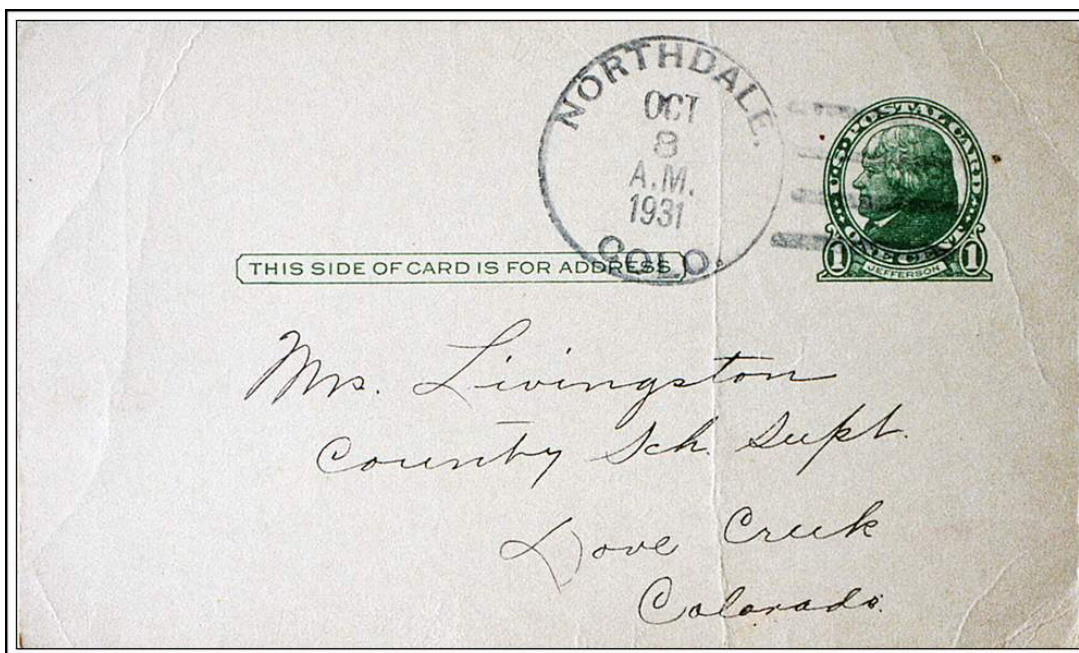
NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM MOLDING

NORTHDALE

Northdale was another farm or ranch post office in the westernmost part of Dolores County. It was located about six miles northwest of Dove Creek in the vicinity of the intersection of US Highway 491 (formerly US 666) and Dolores County Road 2. This is less than two miles east of the Utah-Colorado State line. Initially the location was about a mile south of US 491. [SRM: The Site Report places it in extreme NW corner of the county, only half mile east of Utah State line and right on the San Miguel.] Nothing remains at that location. Later the location was in the northwest corner of the US 491-Road 2 intersection and then in the northeast corner of the intersection. There are three clusters of buildings in the area: two occupied, one unoccupied.

According to the Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report the name requested for this office was Cedarhill. That choice was rejected and Northdale selected as the name.

Latitude = 37:48:34 North Longitude = 109:00:58 West



NORTHDALE, / COLO.

October 8, 1931

Chronology of the Post Office

May 23 1918	Established	
May 23 1918	Mellott, George F.	
Jun 28 1918	---	SW/4 Sec 24 T42N R20W 3/4 mile east of Piute Creek
		Applicant for postmaster - George M. Elliott
Aug 19 1920	Discontinued	
Nov 29 1920	----	SW/4 Sec 18 T41N R19W 1/2 mile east of Coal Bed Creek
Dec 17 1920	Re-established	
Dec 17 1920	Shutt, Leone V.	Confirmed
Jun 23 1935	Carpenter, Eldorado A.	Assumed charge
Jul 24 1935	Carpenter, Eldorado A.	Acting
Aug 13 1935	Carpenter, Eldorado A.	Confirmed
Sep 13 1935	Carpenter, Eldorado A.	Commissioned
Mar 6 1937	Shutt, Mrs. Irma F.	Assumed charge
Mar 24 1937	Shutt, Mrs. Irma F.	Acting
Apr 10 1937	Shutt, Mrs. Irma F.	Confirmed

NORTHDALE – Continued

Apr 30 1937	Shutt, Mrs. Irma F.	Commissioned
Oct 21 1941	---- SE/4 Sec 13 T41N R20W On US 160	
Aug 27 1946	Ordered closed	
Aug 31 1946	Discontinued Mail to Dove Creek	

Confirmed types of postal markings

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | NORTHDALE, / COLO.
CI 10P 31.5 | 4bars S-24x19mm | Oct 29 1929 Jun 16 1938 |
| 2 | NORTHDALE. / COLO.
CI 10P 34.0 | 4bars S-24x19mm | Jul 25 1940 Oct 24 1943 |



RICO

The first prospectors entered the upper Dolores River Valley in 1869. They found indications of mineral presence and staked some claims, one they named the Pioneer. When development did occur, the district would copy the name Pioneer. They built a cabin and worked the claim through the winter, but by spring they moved on seeking a better place to make their fortune. In 1872, R. C. Darling, financed by army officers and capitalists from Washington, D. C., led a larger party into the area. With the approach of winter they abandoned their claims and returned to Santa Fe.

In 1877 prospecting in the area resumed. The Ute Indians had yielded the territory and were no longer a threat to the prospectors. Mining activity began to increase in 1878 under the leadership of John Glasgow, Sandy Campbell, David Swickheimer and others. In the spring of 1879 rich, oxidized silver ore was discovered on Nigger Baby Hill and there was a rush of prospectors into the new district.

The new settlement had a myriad of names before a final choice was made. Among the names were Carbonate City, Carbonateville, Dolores City, Doloresville and Lead City. Several other names were suggested such as Wilson, Belford, Patterson, Glasgow and Lovejoy. None of these were acceptable. Some of the names were already in use for other mining camps in Colorado and perhaps the people who would have been honored by the use of their name were not that popular, or may have moved on to another camp.

In any event, William Weston suggested the name Rico. Rico is Spanish for “rich,” and after all, that is why the prospectors were there – to get rich!

Initially, travel and mail service came either from the north by way of Ophir, or the south up the Dolores Valley. Soon a mail contract was given to the firm of Meserole and Blake and two daily mails were established. One came from Silverton by way of Ophir, the other from Rockwood to the east. In truth, both of these were difficult routes and would be supplanted by more roundabout, but easier routes of travel that eventually became the route of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad and now Colorado Highway 145.

RICO – Continued



RICO, OURAY CO. / COLO.

June 19, 1880

In spite of difficult transportation Rico did flourish and into the early twentieth century was the only significant town in the county. The silver crash of 1893 hurt, but Rico was able to sustain itself with the production of other minerals: lead, gold, zinc, copper. The production of tin was important in the period leading up to World War I. The final boom was in uranium.

By 1960, the production of precious metals was nearly over. A large mill, the Rico Argentine, was built to process iron pyrites for sulfur, lead and zinc. Eventually the ore body was depleted, the mill closed and mining at Rico virtually ceased.

With mining no longer the basis of its economy, the population of Rico dropped to only a handful. The new economy began to focus on tourism with a number of guest ranches and hunting and fishing camps. Although not a great distance from the Telluride resort, winter conditions on the road over Lizard Head Pass have so far deterred major development at Rico. However, as property near Telluride becomes increasingly expensive, Rico and environs are becoming more attractive for development. There are a few active businesses in Rico and they serve the tourists and a few hardy souls who choose to pass the winter in Rico.

The road to Rico is Colorado Highway 145, either south from Telluride or north from Dolores in Montezuma County.

Latitude = 37:41:34 North Longitude = 108:01:47 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Sep 26 1879	---	Unsurveyed	On east side of the Dolores River, on the south side of Silver Creek
			Document filed under Ouray County
Aug 25 1879		Established	
Aug 25 1879		Prescott, Alonzo K.	
May 5 1881		Prescott, Alonzo K.	P&S [Apptd by President & Confirmed by Senate]
Jul 1 1882		McGraw, Delos A.	P&S
May 29 1982		Thompson, Filer L.	P&S

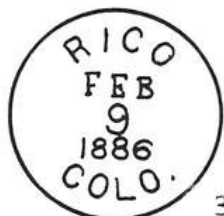
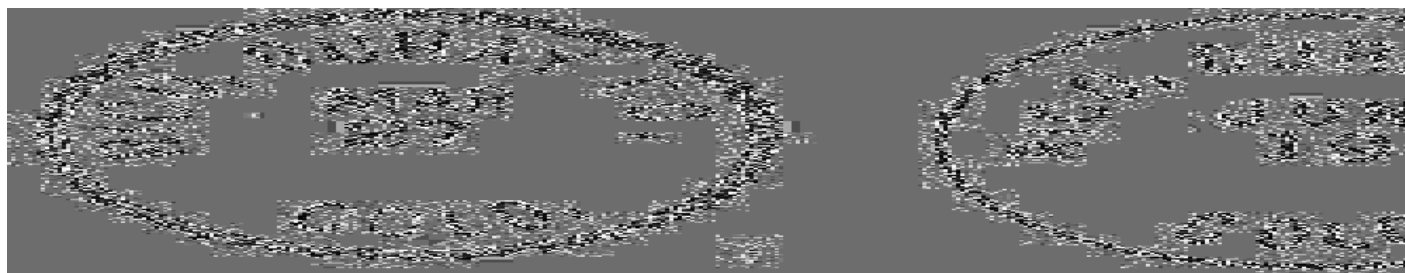
RICO - Continued

Feb 2 1887	Floersch, Hill	
Jan 17 1889	Meredith, Joseph	
Jan 9 1891	Meredith, Joseph	P&S
Feb 11 1892	----	NW/4 Sec 36 T40N R11W 1,530 feet east of Dolores River 525 feet south of Silver Creek 1,230 feet east of Rico Station of the Rio Grande Southern
Feb 14 1895	Adams, Jefferson D.	P&S
Mar 2 1899	Ellis, Clarence R.	P&S
Jun 16 1900?	Ellis, Clarence R.	P&S
Feb 9 1906	Engel, Charles	
Feb 26 1914	----	NE/4 Sec 35 T40N R11W 500 yards east of Dolores River 300 yards south of Silver Creek
Sep 10 1914	Koenig, John F.	
Dec 26 1919	----	SE/4 Sec 36 T40N R11W 500 feet east of the Dolores River 1000 feet south of Silver Creek
Jun 11 1919	Breden, Ruby R.	
Jul 1 1921		Office made Presidential
Aug 24 1921	Breden, Ruby R.	
Jul 1 1922		Relegated
Dec 9 1922	Breden, Ruby R.	
Oct 1 1924	Baker, Miss Clare	Acting
Oct 9 1924	Baker, Miss Clare	Appointed
Jan 1 1925		Office made Presidential
Jan 22 1925	Baker, Miss Clare	
Jan 22 1925	Bloomingkemper, Clare B.	Name changed by marriage
Mar 17 1926	Muckey, Charley N.	
Jul 31 1929	McKee, Albert G.	Acting
Feb 25 1930	McKee, Albert G.	Appointed
Oct 25 1933	Butler, Herbert S.	Acting
Nov 1 1933	Butler, Herbert S.	Assumed charge
Apr 18 1934	Butler, Herbert S.	Nominated
Apr 25 1934	Butler, Herbert S.	Confirmed
May 28 1934	Butler, Herbert S.	Commissioned
Sep 7 1934	Butler, Herbert S.	Confirmed
Oct 15 1934	Butler, Herbert S.	Commissioned
Apr 26 1940	Lutener, John Oral	Nominated
May 2 1940	Lutener, John Oral	Confirmed
May 8 1940	Lutener, John Oral	Appointed Presidential
Jun 14 1940	Lutener, John Oral	Commissioned
Jul 1 1940	Lutener, John Oral	Assumed charge
Nov 7 1941	----	NW/4 Sec 36 T40N R11W East Branch Dolores River 800 feet west Silver Creek is 350 feet north of Post Office
Mar 11 1942	Stevens, Mary Winifred	Acting
Mar 12 1942	Stevens, Mary Winifred	Assumed charge
Jun 25 1942	Laube, Mary Winifred	Name changed by marriage
Apr 7 1943	Laube, Mary Winifred	Nominated
Apr 29 1943	Laube, Mary Winifred	Confirmed
Apr 30 1943	Laube, Mary Winifred	Appointed Presidential
May 29 1943	Laube, Mary Winifred	Commissioned
Jun 30 1943	Laube, Mary Winifred	Assumed charge
Dec 2 1943	Lee, Mrs. Irene E.	Acting
Dec 3 1943	Lee, Mrs. Irene E.	Assumed charge
Sep 21 1944	Lee, Mrs. Irene E.	Nominated
Nov 30 1944	Lee, Mrs. Irene E.	Confirmed
Dec 1 1944	Lee, Mrs. Irene E.	Appointed & Commissioned
Apr 18 1945	Lee, Mrs. Irene E.	Assumed charge
Dec 11 1971	Ferando, Mrs. Mary E.	Appointed & Assumed charge
Aug 31 1977	Johnson, Mrs. Betty E.	Officer in charge
Aug 12 1978	Johnson, Mrs. Betty E.	Appointed

RICO - Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	RICO, OURAY CO. / COLO. CI 20T 32.5/29.5	Dec 2 1879 Dec 21 1880 Hstp Fancy, Maltese Cross
2	RICO, OURAY CO. / COLO. CI 10H 33.0	Jun 19 1880 Aug 23 1880 Hstp Fancy, Maltese Cross
2.1	RICO, / COLO. CI 10P 28.5	Aug 1 188-
3	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Oct 17 1881 Apr 15 1883 Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads
3.1	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Feb 17 1885 Dec 9 1887 Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads
4	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Jun 7 1890 Jun 19 1896 Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads
4.1	RICO, COLO. / M.O.B. CI 20P 29.0/27.5	Jun 18 1894 Hstp No killer
5	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	May 20 1897 May 2 1899 Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads
6	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	May 5 1900 Feb - 1907 Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval
6.1	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	May 18 1927 4bars S-??x20mm
7	RICO, COLO. CI 11P 32.0/20.5	Mar 1 1928 Aug 3 1928 4bars S-25x20mm
8	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Feb 4 1933 Apr 6 1962 Dplx Grid, pointed oval with 1
9	RICO / COLO. CI 10P 22.0	Nov 14 1940 Jan 20 1942 Mach 7 wavy lines
10	RICO, COLO. / REGISTERED CI 11P 29.0/18.0	Sep 15 1943 Hstp No killer
10.1	RICO / COLO. RC 10P 38.0X17.5	1950s Hstp No killer, Parcel Post Box
11	RICO, CO / 81332 CI 10P 33.0	Nov 13 1967 Nov 15 1979 4bars S-25x20mm
12	RICO, CO / 81332 CI 10P 31.0	Jun 16 1973 Apr 20 1993 4bars S-23x18mm
13	RICO, CO / 81322 CI 10P 22.5	Sep 11 1990 Mar 30 1993 Mach 7 wavy lines
14	RICO, CO / 81322 CI 10P 29.0	Sep 20 2000 4bars S-23x17mm



3.1



4

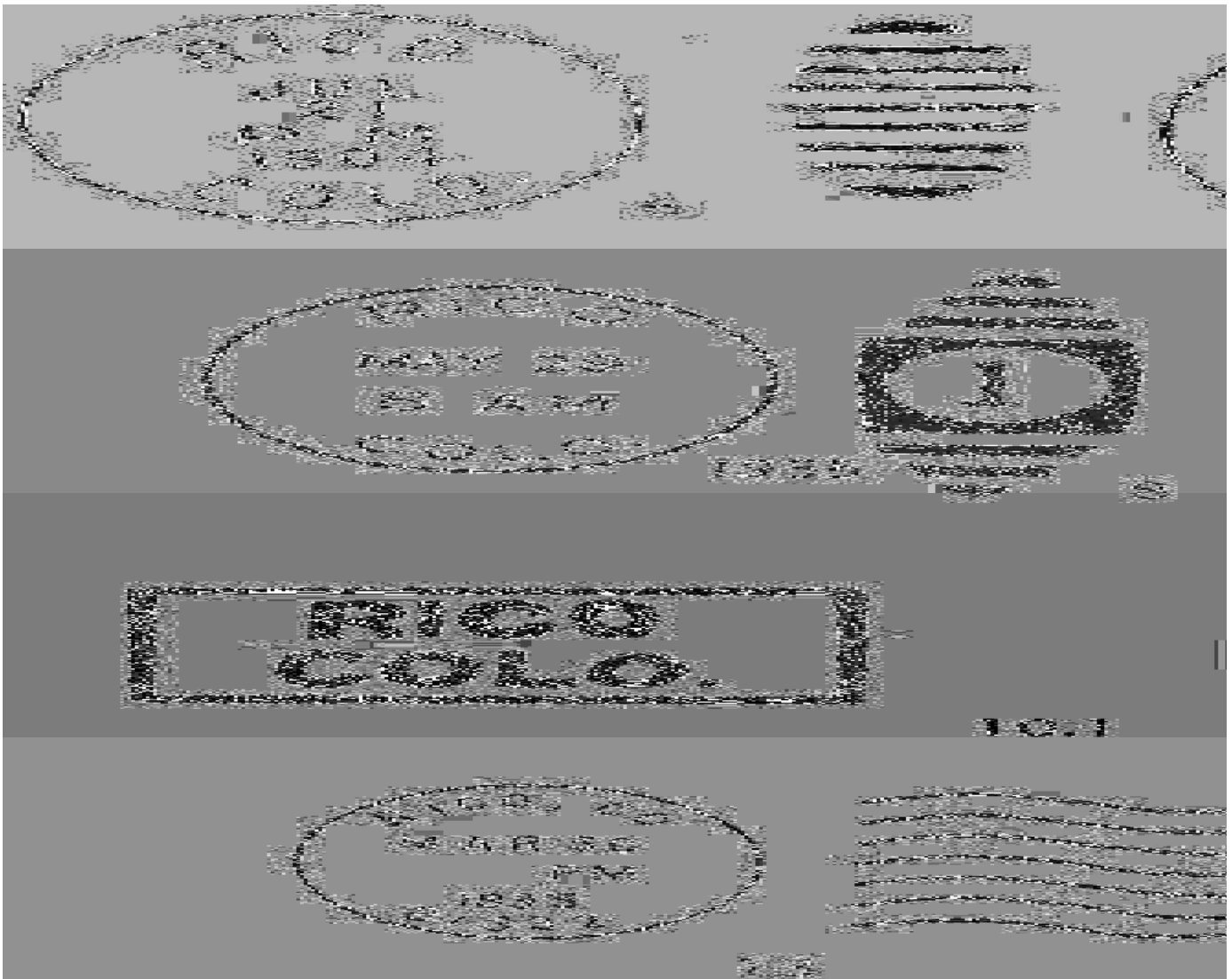


4.1



5

RICO – Continued



RICO STATION

Chronology of the Post Office

Sep 22 1990 Operated as a special commemorative station

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 Rico, Co. 81332 // Rico Co. Sta.
SL 00R 34.0x17.0

Sep 22 1990
Pict Masonic emblem; Rico Lodge #79 A F A M /
Sept. 16th "100" 1890-1990



SAGO

Sago was a small post office that served homesteaders in a remote corner of Dolores County. Actually, when the post office was in operation it was in the jurisdiction of Montezuma County. However in 1972 a triangular section of Montezuma County north and west of Cross Canyon and covering about thirty square miles was trimmed from Montezuma County and added to Dolores County. This change gave the few residents access to a county government a few minutes drive away at Dove Creek instead of an hour or more, lengthy drive to Cortez. There are no roads over Cross Canyon.

To reach the site of Sago, begin at Dove Creek and drive west on Dolores County Road H. Turn south on Road 6 five and one-half miles to Road P. Jog west a short distance and then continue south on Road 6. One and a half miles south, the road stairsteps southwest across Section 9 to Road 5. Go south one mile to Road T, west one mile to Road 4 and then south two miles to Road V. Sago was to the southwest of the intersection of Roads 4 and V. In 1994, the only thing at the site was an oil company compressor station in the middle of a plowed field. Perhaps that was the location of the farmhouse-post office. A short distance north of the intersection and on the east side of the road are the remnants of an old log building. It would have been one of the homesteads served by the Sago Post Office.

Chronology of the Post Office

Apr 8 1922	----	NE/4 Sec 31 T39N R19W 1-1/4 miles east of Squaw Creek Document filed under Montezuma County Applicant for postmaster - Mrs. Eva May Hampton
Jul 20 1922		Established
Jul 20 1922		Hampton, Eva M.
Mar 31 1924		Hunter, Mrs. Martha J.
Nov 20 1925		Ordered closed
Dec 15 1925		Discontinued Mail to Dove Creek

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM SAGO

SQUAW POINT

Squaw Point was four miles north of Sago but separated from it by Squaw Canyon. To the north, Monument Creek Canyon prevented access to the post office at Jual. So, as a post office it would serve ranchers and farmers isolated from the other offices. There is no evidence that this was anything but a ranch or homestead operation.

To reach this location, begin at Dove Creek and drive west on Dolores County Road H. Turn south on Road 6 five and one-half miles to Road P. Instead of making the quick turn south (towards Sago) on the continuation of Road 6, continue west 2.3 miles from that point to an unmarked dirt road to the south. Somewhat over a mile south you will be in amongst some oil field equipment. There is a dirt track to the east that in 1994 took us to where it appeared there had been an unsuccessful attempt to drill an oil well. This is on the edge of Squaw Canyon and though we searched, we could find nothing to indicate the past presence of any buildings. On the way back to the dirt road, we stopped to investigate a little wash that leads down to the south. After a few minutes prowling around, we discovered three or four places where there were growing clumps of domestic iris. Such plants could only be in this remote location if they had been associated with a residence of some sort. Also, in the same area were some modest sized elm trees, also out of place amongst the typical pinon and cedar. From this evidence Jim and I concluded that we were either at or very close to the place once known as Squaw Point. Sometimes, finding the lost site of a habitation requires careful examination of the area and understanding what should or should not be there.

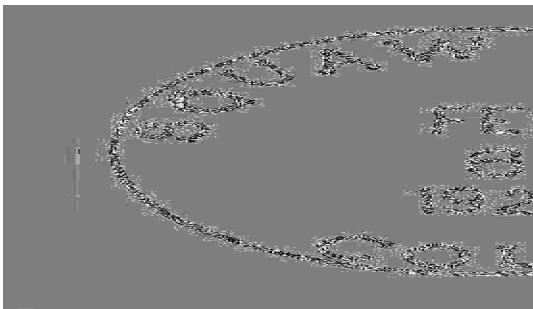
SQUAW POINT – Continued

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 2 1920	----	NW/4 Sec 8 T39N R19W Applicant for postmaster - Ethyl Dunn
Nov 3 1920		Established
Nov 3 1920		Dunn, Ethyl
Sep 30 1925		Thomasson, Mrs. Dora
May 1 1926		Ordered closed
May 15 1926		Discontinued Mail to Dove Creek

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	SQUAW POINT, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	Feb 6 1922 Jan 18 1926 4bars S-24x19mm
---	-------------------------------------	---



WILLOW GULCH

Driving west along Disappointment Road and Disappointment Creek the first site encountered is that of Willow Creek. The location was at a small ranch complex on the north side of the road, four miles from the junction of Disappointment Road with the Norwood-Dolores Road. In the fall of 2003 the ranch was still occupied. This is thirteen and one-half miles east from the Dolores-San Miguel County line.

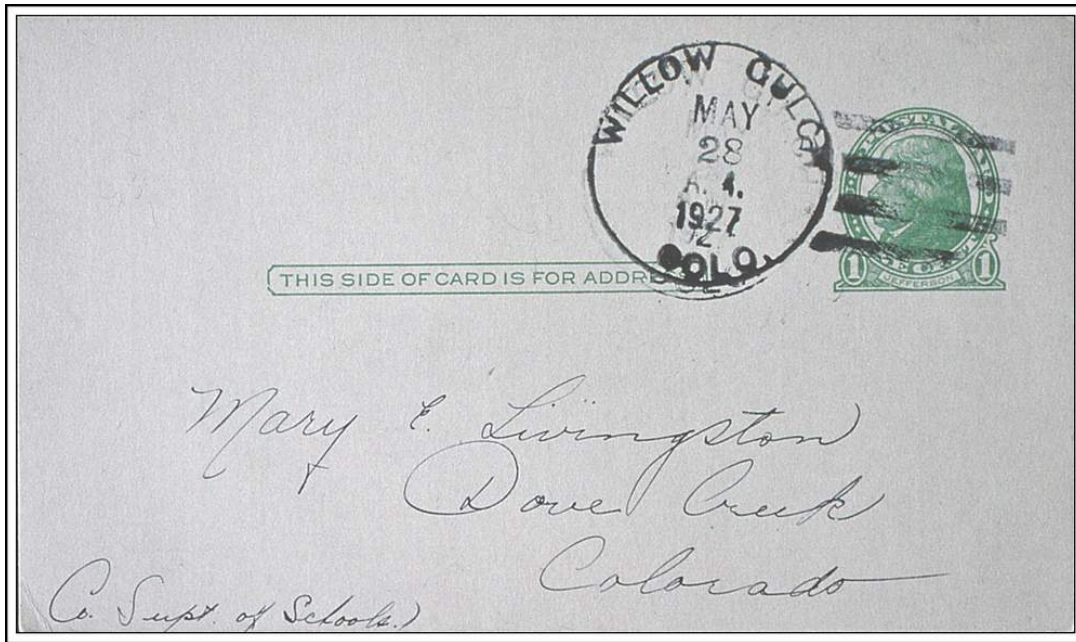
The sequential history of the three Dolores County Post Offices along Disappointment Creek begs a conclusion that they were all rural or ranch post offices and did not involve anything that could be considered a town. The recorded chronology for the Willow Gulch Post Office raises some questions. The Records of Postmaster Appointments indicate an establishment date of March 28, 1921. Ray Newburn in *Postal History of the Colorado San Juan* believes that the office opened in March 1925. He bases this on the absence of a listing for Willow Gulch in the 1924 U. S. Postal Guide but the presence of a listing in the 1925 Guide.

That date would fit with the Geographic Site Location Report (the only one present in the file) dated February 20, 1925. The proposed postmaster named on that document was Catherine M. Burwell. Could this be the same lady, Katherine M. Westcott who was the postmaster appointed in 1921? Absent any contradictory evidence, I have accepted the March 28, 1921 date as the opening of the Willow Gulch Post Office.

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 28 1921		Established
Mar 28 1921		Westcott, Mrs. Katherine M.
Feb 20 1925	----	SW/4 Sec 34 T42N R14W 1/2 mile from head of Disappointment Creek, on the west side Applicant for postmaster - Catherine M. Burwell
Dec 15 1927		Ordered closed
Dec 31 1927		Discontinued Mail to Norwood

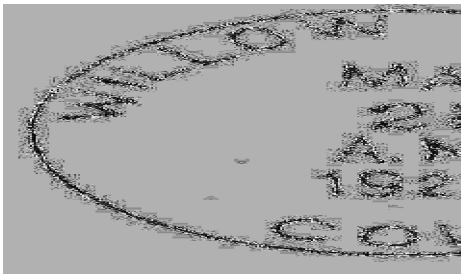
WILLOW GULCH – Continued



WILLOW GULCH, / COLO. May 28, 1927

Confirmed types of postal markings

- 1 WILLOW GULCH / COLO. May 28 1927
- CI 10P 32.0 4bars S-24x19mm



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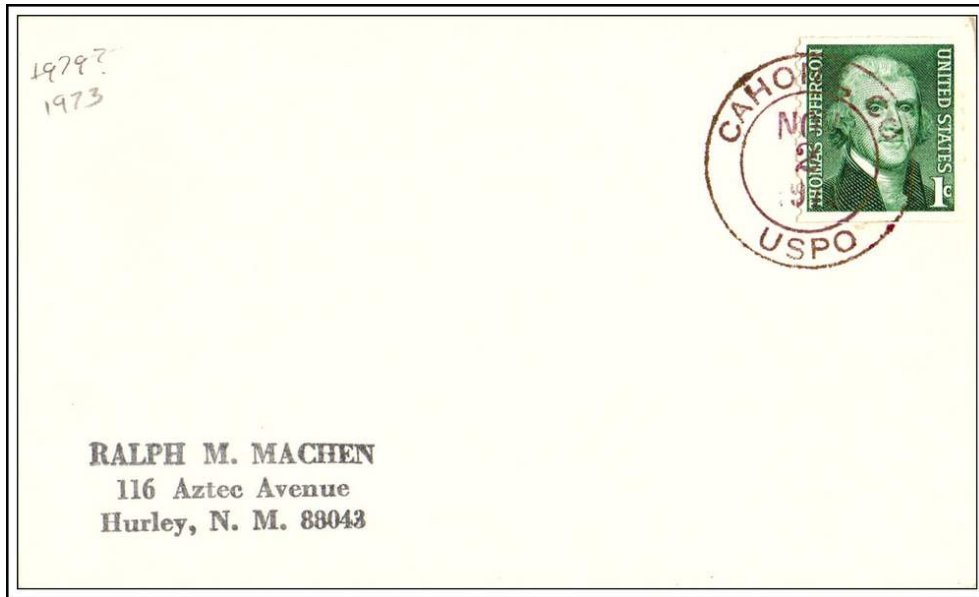
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- CUMMINS, D. H. and BEARD, Marguerite *Rico and the Creation of Dolores County*; April 1955; Vol. 30, No. 2, pp 81-91
- HUSBAND, Michael B. editor *The Recollections of a School Teacher in the Disappointment Creek Valley*; Spring 1974; Vol. 51, No. 2, pp 141-156; illus.; maps
- MATTHEWS, Carl F. *Rico, Colorado - Once a Roaring Camp*; January 1951; Vol. 28, No. 1, pp 37-47
Place Names in Colorado [Alternate Title: *The Names of Colorado Towns*]
Prepared by the Colorado Writers Project; *Colorado Magazine*; Serialized in Volumes 17-20

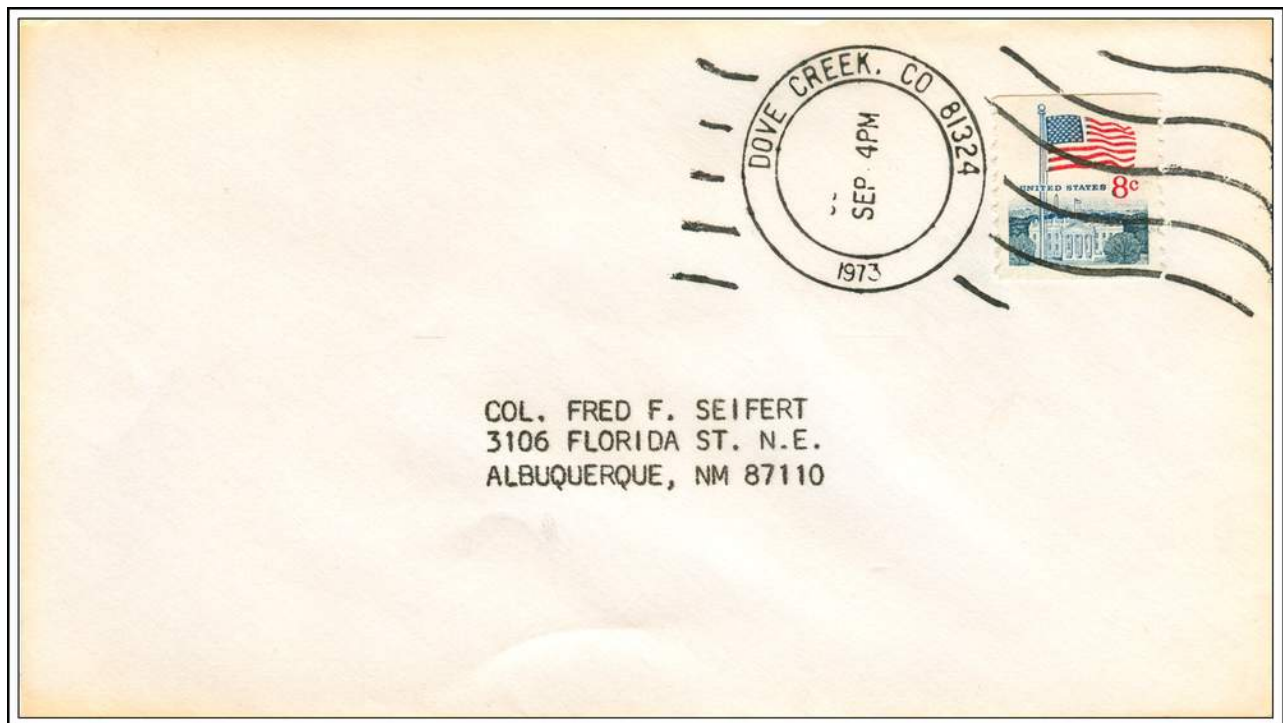
GEOGRAPHIC SITE LOCATION REPORTS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

These are documents filed with applications for the approval of a new post office, at the time of a move of a post office and upon periodic requests of the Post Office Department. The documents may include a detailed location using the Federal Land Survey System, reference of distances to local streams and rivers, to railroads and to nearby existing post offices.

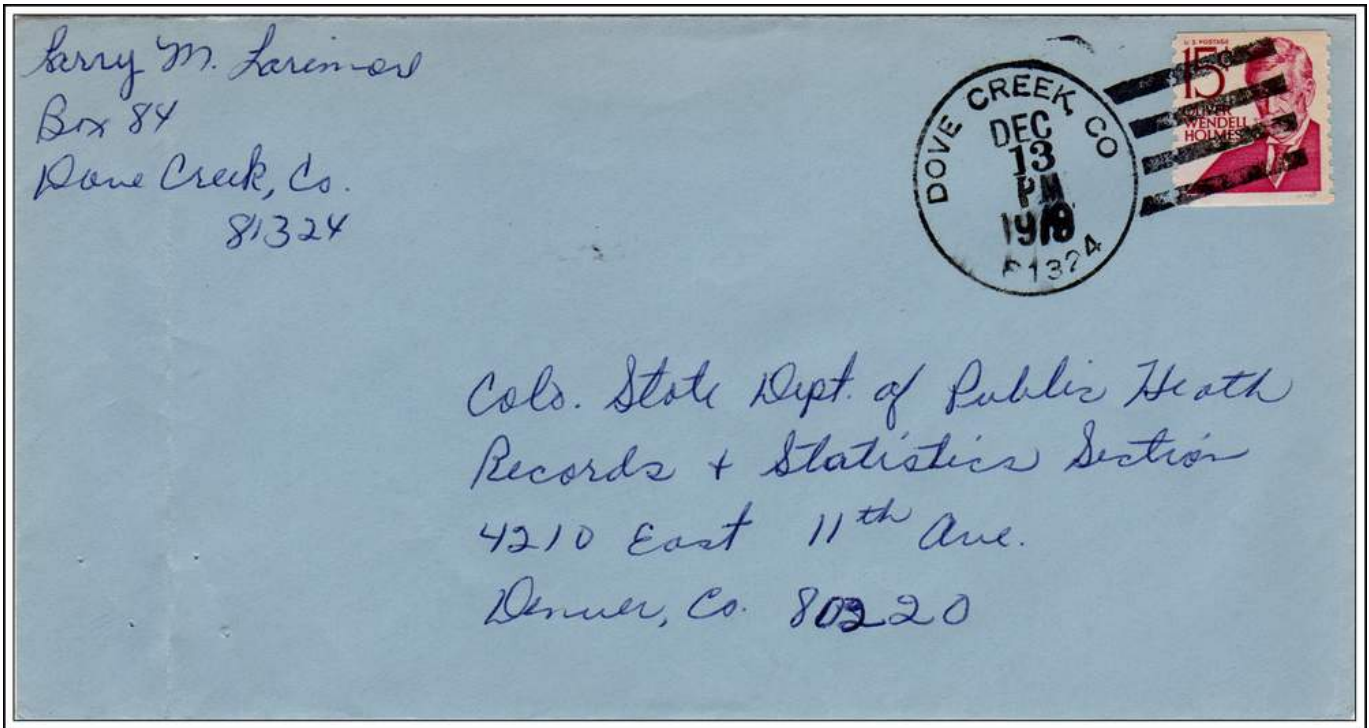
A GALLERY OF DOLORES COUNTY COVERS



CAHONE, CO / USPO November 2, 1971

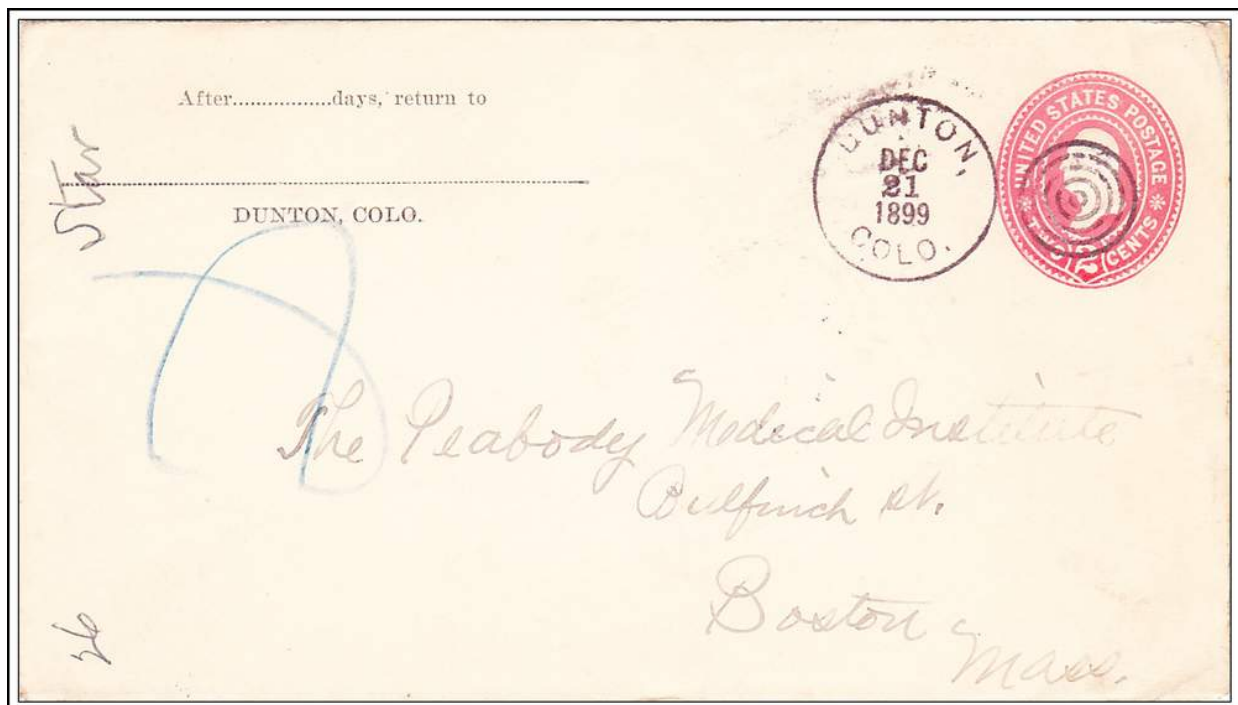


DOVE CREEK, CO 81324 September --, 1973



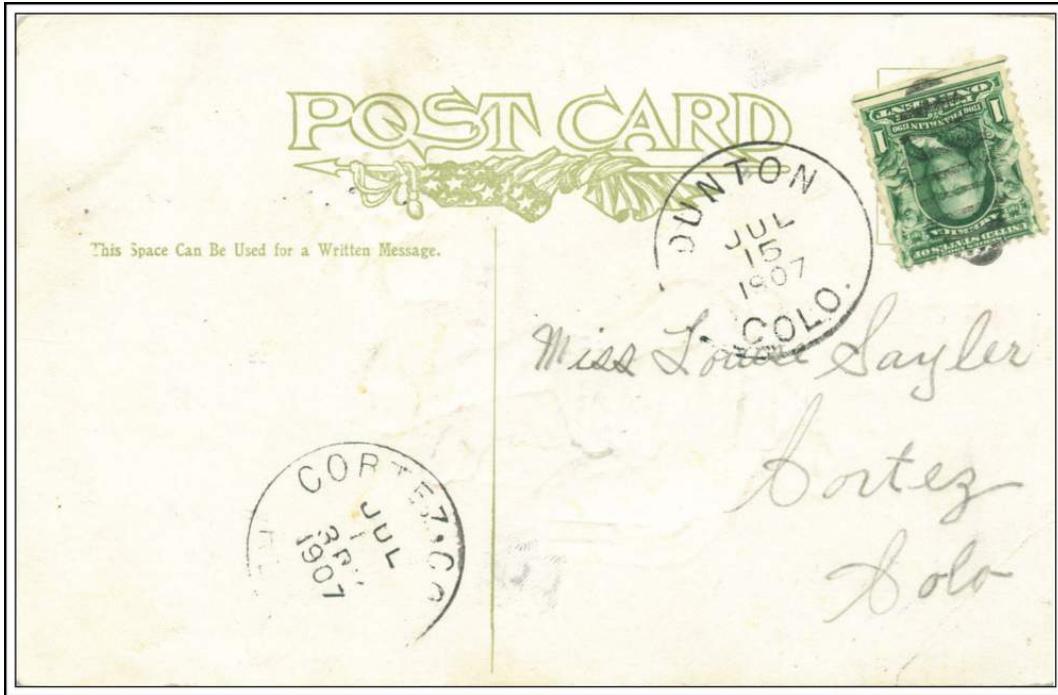
DOVE CREEK, CO / 81324

December 13, 1979



DUNTON, / COLO.

December 21, 1899 (Front only)



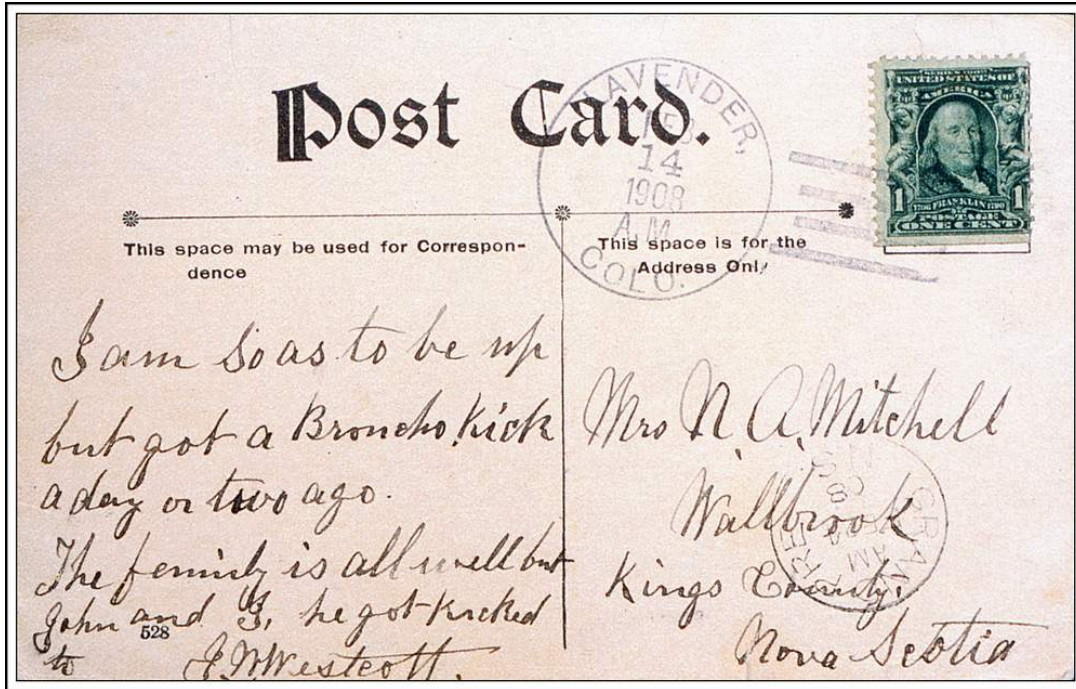
DUNTON / COLO.

July 15, 1907



LAVENDER / COLO.

November 14, 1905



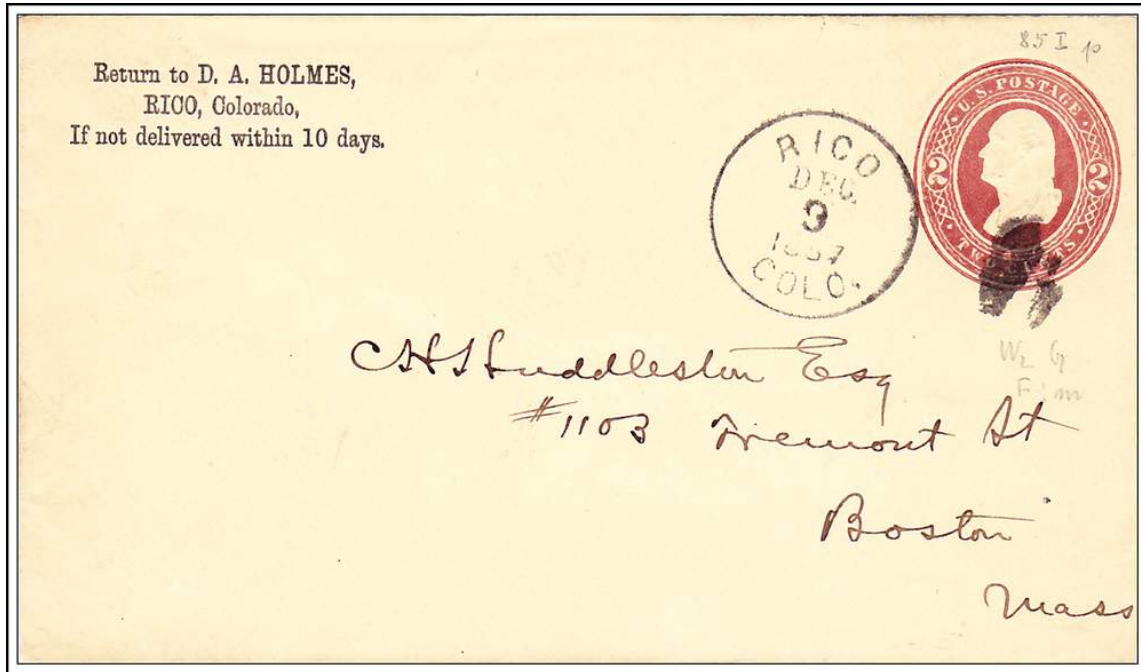
LAVENDER, / COLO.

February 14, 1908



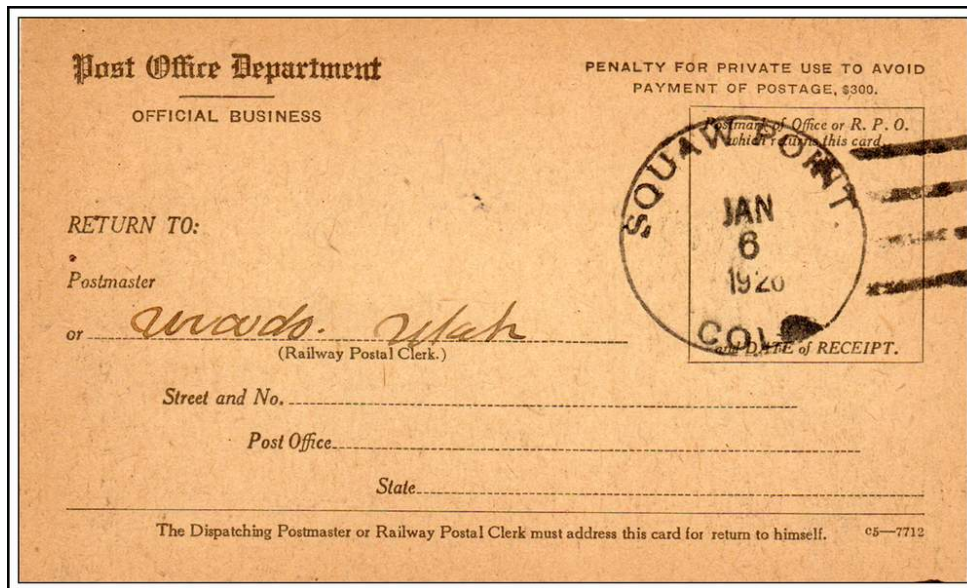
RICO, / COLO.

August 1, (188-)



RICO / COLO.

December 9, 1887



SQUAW POINT, COLO.

January 6, 1926