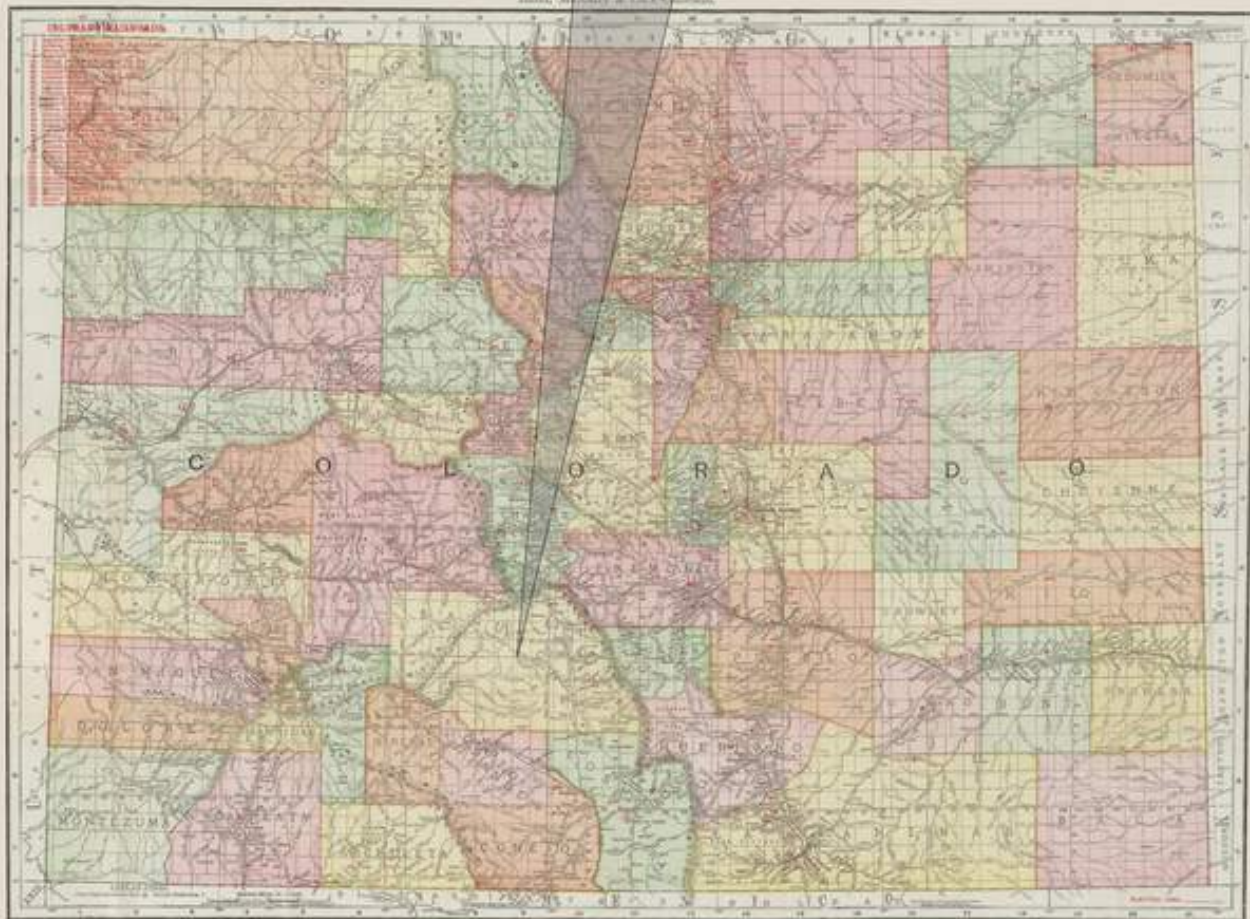


Saguache County



Map courtesy of <http://www.davidrumsey.com>

Established: December 29, 1866

County Seat: Saguache



SAGUACHE COUNTY

By William H. Bauer

Saguache County lies in the south-central portion of Colorado. It is bounded on the east by the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range, on the north by the southern end of the Saguache Range and on the west by the eastern portion of the San Juan Mountains. The dominant feature of the eastern half of the county is a broad, nearly level basin - the San Luis Valley. The Continental Divide cuts Saguache County from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. North of the Divide the drainage is to the Gunnison River; south of the Divide the drainage is to the Rio Grande River. A number of streams drain from the mountains into the San Luis Valley but they quickly sink into the valley floor.

The San Luis Valley is a northern extension of the Rio Grande Rift and as part of that tectonic feature the area has a not so distant history of volcanic activity. This is still expressed in the form of thermal springs such as the ones at Mineral Hot Springs and near Orient. Well water is often geothermally heated and it is from one such well that the Colorado Alligator Farm is able to keep its reptiles happy.

The area of Saguache County was the territory of the Ute Indians. In the eighteenth century, Spanish exploration parties passed through the area. In 1806 the exploration party, under the command of Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike came over Music Pass and into the valley. Subsequently, fur trappers frequented the area or passed through it on the way into the western portion of Colorado. John C. Fremont crossed the county on one expedition but on another was trapped in the San Juans, and barely escaped alive. In 1863 the Gunnison Party came through, going over Cochetopa Pass, searching for practical route for a transcontinental railroad.

Settlement began in the late 1850's with immigration from New Mexico. With the departure of the Ute Indians the area was open to white settlement and gradually sheep and cattle ranching spread throughout the area.

There were some early mineral discoveries but it was not until the later part of the nineteenth century that significant mining began. Even then the mining activity was short-lived. The best mines were on the eastern side of the valley, from Crestone south to the northern edge of the Great Sand Dunes. However, most of those mines were on the Luis Maria Baca Land Grant and when the courts upheld the legality of the grant, the miners were dispossessed. Mining did continue but under lease.

One major mining activity that lasted for more than fifty years was not gold or silver but iron. The iron mine was at Orient in the northeastern corner of the Saguache County. For most of its active life the Orient Mine was under the control of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company of Pueblo and was served by a branch railroad from Villa Grove.

When Colorado Territory was formed in 1861 the future Saguache County was included in Costilla and Lake Counties. Saguache County came into existence on December 29, 1866 as an independent entity. In 1874 there were minor adjustments to the southwestern corner of the county when Hinsdale and Rio Grande Counties were formed. Since then there have been some slight adjustments as surveys penetrated the rugged western portion of the county.

Today the eastern boundary is along the crest of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains shared with Fremont, Custer and Huerfano Counties. The southern, east-west boundary is shared with Alamosa and Rio Grande County and an irregular portion with Mineral County. On the west Hinsdale and Gunnison County form the boundary. On the north Gunnison and Chaffee are the bordering counties.

The San Luis Valley was a major avenue of travel for the Native Americans. They followed the Rio Grande or came through the passes in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, principally La Veta, Music and Medano Passes, and to a lesser extent Hayden Pass. From the north, Poncha Pass gave access to the

valley and Cochetopa Pass and North Cochetopa Pass gave access to and from the Gunnison River and Western Colorado. Today only North Cochetopa Pass and Poncha Pass are prime travel routes over the mountains.

In the 1870's the Rio Grande Railroad built over La Veta Pass and on to Durango but it did not enter Saguache County. It was not until the 1890's that the Rio Grande built south from Salida, over Poncha Pass and down the valley to Alamosa. That segment of railroad earned fame for its 51-mile long tangent through the San Luis Valley, the longest stretch of perfectly straight railroad track in the United States. With the development of extensive farming, the San Luis Valley Railway built north from Monte Vista to Center.

In the twenty-first century, Saguache County depends largely on a network of county roads. However they neither cross the Sangre de Cristos nor penetrate very deep into the western mountains. US Highway 285 enters the county by way of Poncha Pass, curves west around the northern end of the valley to Saguache, the county seat, and then runs due south to Monte Vista and US 160. Colorado 114 begins at Saguache and climbs over North Cochetopa Pass to join US 50 near Parlin. A few miles south of Villa Grove, Colorado Highway 17 branches from US 285 and runs south to Alamosa.

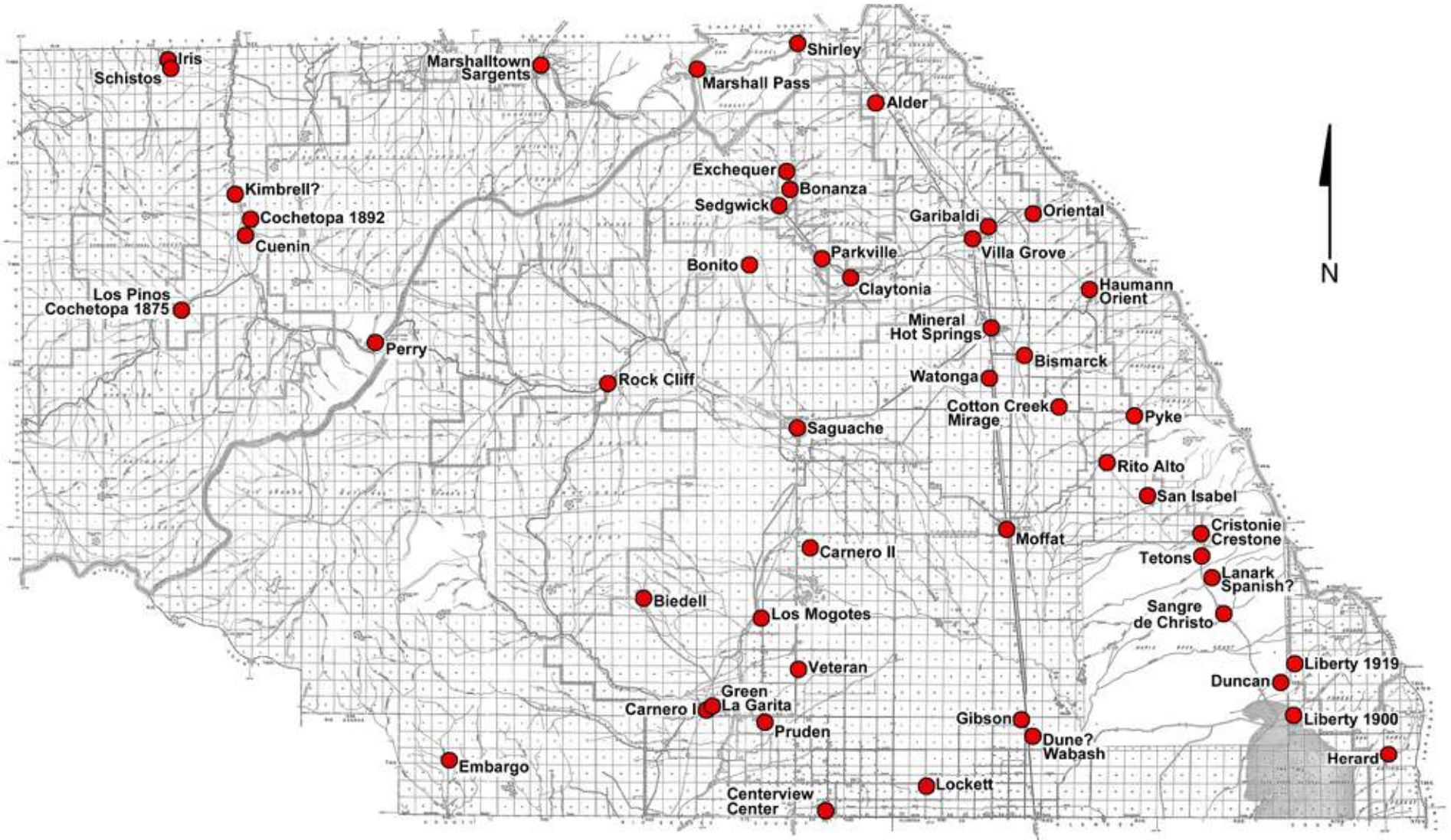
Other than mining, industry has played almost no part in the economy of Saguache County. Sheep and cattle ranching have been important since the first settlers arrived. Farming has had an up and down history but is still a major factor in the county's economy. Potatoes have been a big crop but other vegetables are also grown.

The major obstacle to farming is water. The climate is semi-arid in the best years, so irrigation is essential. Stream flow is intermittent and there is some irrigation from the Rio Grande System. Well water supplies much of the irrigation. However, the near level surface of the valley often works against irrigation. Where there is poor subsurface drainage, the irrigation water brings alkali and other salts to the surface, turning the land unproductive.

For the tourist, Saguache County offers the broad scenic vistas of the San Luis Valley, the rugged panorama of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation. And, if your imagination is in high gear or the evening's margaritas are potent, you might even see a UFO in the sky over the San Luis Valley.



This is all that reminds [sic] in Exchequer, Colorado
Photograph by [Scrubhiker \(USCdver\)](#) July 27, 2019



Post Office Location Map – Saguache County

ALDER

Initially this location was known as Emmet's Station and was on the Barlow and Sanderson stage road from Canon City to Saguache. When the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was constructed over Poncha Pass in 1881, the railroad placed a station and watering tank at Emmet's Station. To the railroad the site was best known as Round Hill but in that same year, when a post office was obtained, it took the name Alder. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report shows that the name for the post office was proposed as Emmet. The new name was appropriate, as the site was located on Alder Creek near its junction with San Luis Creek.

Alder was never a large community. It provided some supplies for the ranches and the mining activity in the surrounding territory. Alder continued to serve that purpose until well into the twentieth century. Today there remains only a small group of ranch buildings on the east side of US Highway 285. The site is about four miles from the summit of Poncha Pass and eight miles north of Villa Grove.

Latitude = 38:22:10 North Longitude = 106:02:20 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 16 1881	---	SE/4 Sec 35 T48N R8E One mile west of San Luis Creek, 100 yards west of D&RG depot Name proposed as EMMET Proposed postmaster - Jacob H. Pickens	
Aug 29 1881		Established	
Aug 29 1881		Pickens, Jacob H.	
Sep 11 1882		Downman, Joseph B.	
May 1 1883		Byfield, Horace	
Sep 25 1890		Malcom, Margaretta	
Mar 17 1896		Donnell, Lizzie B.	
Feb 9 1901		Warner, Joseph V.	
Sep 14 1901		McKeehan, John S.	
Oct 10 1902		Warner, Joseph V.	
Oct 4 1905		Drott, John H.	
Aug 31 1910		Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove	
Nov 11 1911		Re-established	
Nov 11 1911		Castle, James E.	
Mar 7 1913		Crawmer, M. D.	
Apr 4 1917		Bruner, Anna P.	
Jul 22 1918		Bruner, Robert W.	
Jul 31 1920		Stoddart, George G.	
Apr 13 1921		Carothers, Cora M.	
Oct 6 1924		Elarton, Mrs. Edna M.	Acting
Oct 16 1924		Elarton, Mrs. Edna M.	Appointed
Oct 29 1927		Ordered closed	
Nov 30 1927		Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove	

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	ALDER / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm	Apr 11 1908 Jun 11 1909
2	ALDER, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Aug 31 1911
3	ALDER, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-24x19mm	May 18 1914 Apr 8 1918
4	ALDER, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x19mm	May 31 1921 Nov 12 1927

ALDER – Continued

**BIEDELL**

It is understood that Mark Biedell, a Frenchman, was a rancher in the area where the mining camp of Biedell came into existence about 1883. There is also a claim that Mark Biedell was a merchant in Del Norte who often grubstaked prospectors.

Gold was discovered in 1883 and Biedell assisted in laying out the town that was named for him. The principal mines were the Esperanza, which has been worked off and on for nearly a century since its discovery in 1883, and the Buckhorn. Although rich strikes were made, they were soon involved in litigation. By the time the legal actions concluded in the 1890's, the town was nearly deserted and it never recovered. Biedell has also been referred to as Crystal Hill.

The location is near the headwaters of Biedell Creek beyond where Lime Creek joins Biedell Creek. To reach the site begin at the junction of Saguache County Roads 45 and G, just east of the La Garita Cash Store. Drive north a bit more than two miles to a road junction. Turn northwest on County Road 42K. Four and a half miles from the junction there is a mine on the hill to the north of the road. The mine is large and very visible from the road.

After going a mile or so further beyond the mine, and finding nothing more of interest, I returned to the area below the mine. In looking around the level area along the creek, I found a few scattered boards that were remnants of some sort of a structure. I feel reasonably certain that this was the location for Biedell.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jun 12 1883	--	Sec 28, 33 & 34 T43N R6E 9 miles southeasterly from Carnero Creek Name proposed as BELLVUE. Rejected in favor of Biedell NOTE: "ch n to "Carnero" Apl 28/94 (or 84?)" Has an elaborate accompanying sketch map
Jun 25 1883		Established
Jun 25 1883		Prior, Henry K.
Dec 28 1883		Weiss, Henry
Apr 28 1884		Moved to Carnero

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BIEDELL

BISMARCK

The ranch belonging to Martin Rominger was the centrally located one of a group of ranches in the upper portion of the San Luis Valley. Rominger ran a dairy and at times his supply room served as a store for neighbors needing supplies. As such, it became a meeting place for the ranchers and in 1872 acquired a post office. There was never an organized community but simply a group of ranch buildings.

It is believed that Martin Rominger named the place for Prince Otto Eduard Von Bismarck, the chancellor of Prussia. There was a minor alteration in the spelling by dropping the "c." [SRM: The Site Location Report is for Bismarck with the "c" written and signed by Martin Rominger. I have chosen to use that spelling.]

From Mineral Hot Springs on Colorado Highway 17, drive south one and a half miles to Saguache County Road DD2 and turn east. The site of Bismarck was a little more than a mile east of Highway 17 and on the north side of Road DD2. About a quarter mile north of the road is a group of scattered buildings that are in the proper location for Bismarck. Unfortunately there seems to be a lot of junk in the area.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 7 1872	Established
Feb 7 1872	Rominger, Martin
Mar 14 1872 ---	SW/4 Sec 17 T45N R10E ("I think") Half mile east of San Luis Creek 8 miles southeast of Villa Grove
Oct 10 1879	Discontinued

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BISMARCK

BONANZA

Bonanza was the principal mining town on the upper reaches of Kerber Creek. The first discovery was made on July 9, 1880 by a group of prospectors: C. W. Kelly, I. J. Penny, A. C. Babcock, W. T. Ford, George W. Cline and Charles Taylor. The town grew rapidly and was incorporated on November 1, 1880 with a 280-acre plan of streets and avenues. The population eventually grew to as many as 1,300.

The ores at Bonanza produced silver with copper, lead and zinc. Gold was not significant to the mining in the Kerber Creek District. At its peak, Bonanza had four smelters and nineteen mills. The ores found at Bonanza were not exceptionally rich and the town slowly declined. The Silver Crash of 1893 accelerated the decline. Subsequently there were brief resurgences. In 1917 the Rawley Mine re-opened and a mill was returned to operation. In 1947 the Empress Josephine Mine was re-opened but after a few years it too closed for good.

The following article, describing the woes of Bonanza, appeared in the January 16, 1989 issue of the *Rocky Mountain News*.

FORGOTTEN BUT NOT GONE

EX-BOOM TOWN BONANZA, POP 4 FIGHTS TO STAY ALIVE, HOPES TO GROW

Bonanza (AP) --

The glory years of a century ago saw 40,000 (sic) people in this Colorado mining town. But today, with a population of four, it is just trying to survive.

In just recent weeks its population has been cut nearly in half and the man tabbed as the town's next mayor spends most of his time in Pueblo.

So bleak are the times that the Saguache County commissioners have decided it's not worth the trouble to disincorporate Bonanza.

BONANZA – Continued

The rigors of life in a small town are familiar to Bonanza residents; they drill their own wells, put in septic systems and travel 16 miles to reach the nearest highway.

Then in December, an alert rural mail carrier noticed that Bill and Segrid Costello, town board members in their 80's, had not picked up their mail. He contacted Sheriff Larry Zimmer.

Zimmer found Costello dead of an apparent heart attack. Segrid Costello was unable to get up from the floor where she had fallen. She moved from the area after her release from the hospital.

Then, on Jan. 8, Mayor Mary Taylor, 85, was found dead at her home. She died of natural causes.

Gail Holbrook, voluntary town clerk and married to town treasurer, trustee, and road maintenance man Ed Carpenter, called Taylor "a wonderful mayor and a very colorful person."

Carpenter wants to keep the town alive, just in case anyone should want to move here.

The town's two other residents are Carpenter's son Lewis, who also is on the town board, and the mayor pro tem, the Rev. Richard Becker. He works at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Pueblo.

The Carpenters' said they hope to persuade the priest to take Taylor's place as mayor. Carpenter, 46, says he thinks the town is "better off governed by ourselves. The county really is not interested in us."

The town's income – from the highway users trust fund, cigarette taxes, and a small mill (sic) levy -- is \$2,300 a year, Carpenter said. As the town's part-time maintenance and road worker, Carpenter receives minimum wage for his efforts. He doubles as a truck driver.

He said the town's residents have a "few ideas about how to bring people in," but the town board has not met to discuss them.

Despite obvious drawbacks, Bonanza has some drawing cards, Holbrook said. For example, town trustees persuaded a number of property owners to donate land at the edge of town for a wildlife area.

Bonanza has "solitude and peace and wildlife" to offer, Holbrook said. Bonanza was incorporated at the beginning of its boom days in 1880. Now the town virtually has been forgotten by all but a handful of hardy residents.

But, that's OK. "We love the town and we want to keep it," Carpenter said.

I have twice visited Bonanza, first in 1991 and again in 2001. My observations are not as bleak as the above description might indicate. True, the population is small but a long row of mailboxes at an intersection in Bonanza is an indication of at least a modest number of summer or weekend residents in the vicinity. There are a number of older buildings in the town, some are abandoned but on the south end there are several small homes that have been renovated and form an attractive grouping.

Bonanza is 15 miles west from US Highway 285 at Villa Grove via Saguache County Road LL56 and two miles beyond the site of Sedgwick.

Latitude = 38:17:41 North Longitude = 106:08:30 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 2 1880	---	On the upper fork of Kerber Creek (It is not surveyed).	
		Proposed postmaster - Samuel K. Paxton	
Jul 29 1896	---	SW/4 Sec 25 T47N R7E	
Aug 12 1880		Established	
Aug 12 1880		Paxton, Samuel K.	
Jul 18 1882		Paxton, Samuel K.	P&S [Apptd. by President & confirmed by Senate]
Dec 31 1883		Dicker, James W.	
Mar 18 1885	---	SE/4 Sec 25 T47N R7E	100 yards east of Kerber Creek
Oct 28 1885		Hannegan, William J.	
Dec 2 1889		Coombs, Mrs. Emma S.	
Nov 24 1891		Correll, Richard W.	
Dec 19 1891		White, Norman P.	

BONANZA – Continued



Abandoned building in Bonanza, Colorado

This appears to have been a store and perhaps the post office.

Photograph by William H. Bauer

September 3, 2001

Oct 12 1894	McFarland, Arthur H.	Failed to qualify
Apr 27 1895	Discontinued Papers to Villa Grove	
May 24 1895	Re-established	
May 24 1895	Kenny, James	
Sep 23 1896	Correll, Lillian F.	
Sep 10 1908	Wilson, John L.	
Jul 8 1909	Smith, George W.	
Jun 29 1912	Cartwell, Ben T.	
May 4 1914 ---	SW/4 Sec 25 T47N R7E 85 feet east of Kerber Creek	
Mar 18 1920	Kenney, Robert D.	
Nov 17 1920	Ashley, Reba W.	
May 31 1921	Discontinued Not effected, operation was continuous	
--- -- ----	Closing order rescinded, no date given	
Jun 7 1921	Eck, Theodore	Acting
Jun 27 1921	Re-established (Officially)	
Aug 3 1921	Eck, Theodore	Appointed
Jul 26 1923	Christy, John D.	Acting
Aug 6 1923	Christy, John D.	Appointed
Feb 14 1925	Wirrick, Ralph B.	
Jul 1 1928		Office made Presidential
Aug 1 1928	Williams, Martha E.	Acting
Feb 27 1929	Williams, Martha E.	Appointed
Jul 1 1931		Office relegated
Sep 21 1931	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Possession

BONANZA – Continued

Sep 29 1931	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Acting
Feb 18 1932	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Confirmed
Apr 1 1932	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Commissioned
--- -- ----	Costello, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Name changed by marriage
Apr 25 1938	Ordered closed	
May 14 1938	Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove	

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	BONANZA, / COLORADO CI 21P 31.0/29.0/18.0	Hstp Fancy, Indian Head	Feb 22 1881 Oct 10 1881
2	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Cork, smudge	Dec 23 1883 Jan 10 1887
2.1	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Hstp Target ?	Sep 19 1898
3	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp No killer	Jul 8 1905
4	BONANZA, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x14mm	Feb 5 1908 Jan 15 1910
5	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Nov 2 1912 Jul 3 1936
6	BONANZA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Dec 29 1936 May 13 1938

**BONITO**

About six miles southwest of Bonanza there were two remote mining camps: Bonito and Spook City. Most of what has been written about these two camps deals with Spook City, likely because of that exotic name and it is possible that it was the larger of the two camps. However, Spook City never had a post office and Bonito did. But, there is the possibility that they were really one and the same place.

The USGS Topographic Map for Saguache County does locate both places, less than a mile apart on Ford Creek. In September 2001 Jim Ozment and I headed into the wilderness in search of Bonito. Frankly, I am not certain we found Bonito. More likely we found Spook City.

BONITO – Continued

We began our excursion at Saguache on Colorado Highway 114. Two and seven-tenth miles west of Saguache we turned north from Colorado 114 on to Saguache County Road 43WBB. Five miles later we entered the Rio Grande National Forest and were on Road 880.2. Four miles later we stopped to try and figure out where we were. From some hunters we got a map, which we then attempted to follow. My notes indicate that we turned around and were then on Road 880 from its junction with Road 857. Three miles later we finally found signs of mining activity. Some prospect holes with cribbing. These were on the downhill side and close to the road. It appeared that the Forest Service brought in a dozer and filled the holes to prevent accidents. The question remains: Were we at Bonito or at Spook City? I would like to believe it was Bonito but in any event we decided to call it a day and go back to Highway 114.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 15 1881	---	NW/4 Sec 22 T46N R7E On both sides of Ford Creek Proposed postmaster - Thomas F. Montgomery
Mar 7 1881		Established
Mar 7 1881		Montgomery, Thomas
Aug 8 1881		Rowlee, Frank R.
Jun 20 1882		Stephenson, Cyrus R.
Aug 28 1883		Discontinued Mail to Sedgwick

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BONITO

CARNERO (I)

The original Carnero was located on Carnero Creek a short distance east from where that creek exits from the mountains that form the west side of the San Luis Valley. The settlement began in 1870, perhaps a bit earlier. There is a possibility that there was some mining nearby but I doubt that it was of any importance. It is more reasonable to consider Carnero (I) as a small community of sheep and cattle ranchers and as a stage stop on the route down the east side of the San Luis Valley from Poncha Pass to the settlements along the Rio Grande River.

Several of the brief mentions of Carnero do include references to mining activity; however, I believe that the mining was more likely associated with Biedell, which was some ten miles to the northwest.

There also are references to a station on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. That is not possible. The Rio Grande did not build down the San Luis Valley until much later and it was never closer than twenty miles. Perhaps there was a Carnero Station on the railroad but that would likely be near the site of Gibson-Wabash.

The name Carnero is a translation of the Spanish word for mutton and is an indication of the early business of the local ranchers.

To reach the original site of Carnero, drive seventeen miles south from Saguache on US Highway 285 to Saguache County Road G. Five miles west from US 285, turn north for one mile. There is a well-kept, active ranch on the west side of the highway. I believe this was the location of the original Carnero.

When the Carnero (I) Post Office was closed, it was moved a mile or so to the southwest and the name was changed to Green. At the same time the Biedell Post Office closed and was moved east from the mountains to a location in the San Luis Valley, becoming Carnero (II).

CARNERO (I) – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

May 29 1870 ---	Unsurveyed Two miles north of Garita and Carnero Creeks Also has note of name changed to Green
Jun 16 1870	Established
Jun 16 1870	Montoya, Donaciano
Oct 7 1872	Felton, Willard B.
May 17 1875 ---	SW/4 SW/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E On the west side of one branch of Carnero Creek NOTE: "ch n to Green"
Jul 11 1876	Discontinued
Feb 25 1880 ---	SE/4 Sec 30 T42N R7E On south side of Carnero Creek Sketch map shows it on the north side of the creek NOTE: "ch n. to Green March 18/84" Proposed postmaster - Margaret Edith Green
Mar 8 1880	Re-established
Mar 8 1880	Green, Margaret E.
Sep 25 1882	Espinosa, Savina
Feb 2 1883	Green, Miss Margaret E.
Mar 18 1884	Moved to Green

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM CARNERO (I)

CARNERO (II)

As previously mentioned the Carnero Post Office was at two widely separated locations. The second Carnero Post Office opened when the Biedell Post Office closed in March 1884, and little more than a month after the original Carnero Post Office was moved to Green.

It seems obvious that any activity here would have been related to the raising of sheep and cattle. The post office was first open for a bit more than two years. It closed but reopened eight years later in 1894 for a run that lasted until 1911.

This version of Carnero is on the east side of US Highway 285, seven miles south of the town of Saguache. There is nothing to be seen other than a flat, sagebrush covered landscape. I must also wonder why the name Carnero was chosen for this place, as it is a considerable distance from Carnero Creek, the name sake for the original Carnero. It should also be noted that Henry Weiss was the last postmaster at Biedell and the first postmaster at Carnero (II).

One writer claims Carnero became a stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Not true. There was never a railroad at either the original or the second Carnero. Perhaps there was a Carnero Station on the railroad, which was more than twelve miles to the east.

Chronology of the Post Office

Apr 28 1884	Moved from Biedell
Apr 28 1884	Weiss, Henry
Nov 30 1886	Discontinued Papers to Del Norte
Nov 28 1894 ---	E/2 SE/4 Sec 7 T43N R8E Proposed postmaster - Evaline A. Mitchell
Dec 7 1894	Re-established
Dec 7 1894	Mitchell, Evaline A.
Jun 11 1895	Powell, Harry C.
Aug 31 1911	Discontinued Mail to La Garita

CARNERO (II) – Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 CARNERO / COLO.
CI 10P 27.5

Jan 2 1909 Jun 5 1909

Hstp Cork, smudge



CENTER

Center began its existence as Centerview. In 1899 the name was shortened to Center. The town is on the boundary between Saguache County and Rio Grande County, two miles east of US Highway 285.

From its beginnings, the economy of Center has been based on agriculture. It was, and still is, the supply center for a large portion of the northern San Luis Valley and has rail access for shipment via the San Luis Valley Railway. Please refer to the discussion of Centerview for more information about this town.

Latitude = 37:45:11 North Longitude = 106:06:29 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Jul 1 1899	Formerly named Centerview	
Jul 1 1899	Ickes, Theodore E.	
Aug 10 1899 ---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E	
Jan 10 1911	Ickes, Theodore E.	
May 24 1914 ---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E 95 rods north of the San Luis Central Station 84 rods from track	
Sep 22 1922	Dietrich, John M.	P&S
May 22 1923	Sutley, M. M.	P&S
Jul 21 1923	Sutley, M. M.	P&S
Dec 21 1926	Dietrich, John M.	P&S
Feb 25 1931	Dietrich, John M.	P&S
Dec 19 1932	Bennington, George	Acting
Dec 31 1932	Bennington, George	Assumed charge
Nov 25 1933	Sutley, William B.	Acting
Dec 2 1933	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Jan 23 1934	Sutley, William B.	Nominated
Feb 1 1934	Sutley, William B.	Confirmed & Appointed
Feb 26 1934	Sutley, William B.	Commissioned
Mar 6 1934	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Apr 5 1938	Sutley, William B.	Nominated
Apr 8 1938	Sutley, William B.	Confirmed
Apr 12 1938	Sutley, William B.	Appointed Presidential
May 11 1938	Sutley, William B.	Commissioned
May 15 1938	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Nov 7 1941 ---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E	
Jul 13 1942	Sutley, William B.	Nominated
Jul 30 1942	Sutley, William B.	Confirmed
Jul 31 1942	Sutley, William B.	Appointed Presidential
Sep 18 1942	Sutley, William B.	Commissioned

CENTER – Continued

Sep 30 1942	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Jan 15 1955	Fisher, George R.	Assumed charge
Feb 15 1955	Fisher, George R.	Acting
Mar 23 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Nominated
Apr 11 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Acting
Jun 4 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Confirmed, Appd Presid. & Commissioned
Jun 29 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Assumed charge
Sep 7 1970	Ware, Roger	Officer in charge
Jan 26 1980	Tucker, Mrs. Phyllis A.	Appointed
Feb 22 1980	Ware, Roger	Officer in charge
Mar 11 1980	Bloxsom, Kurt	Officer in charge
Aug 9 1980	Lovato, Manuel T.	Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

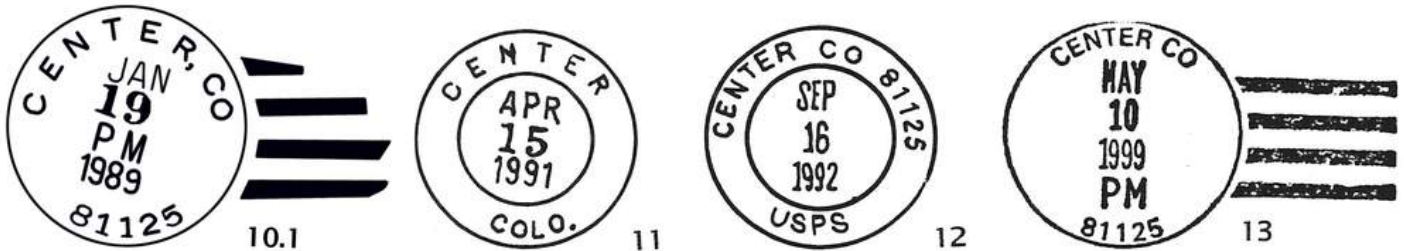
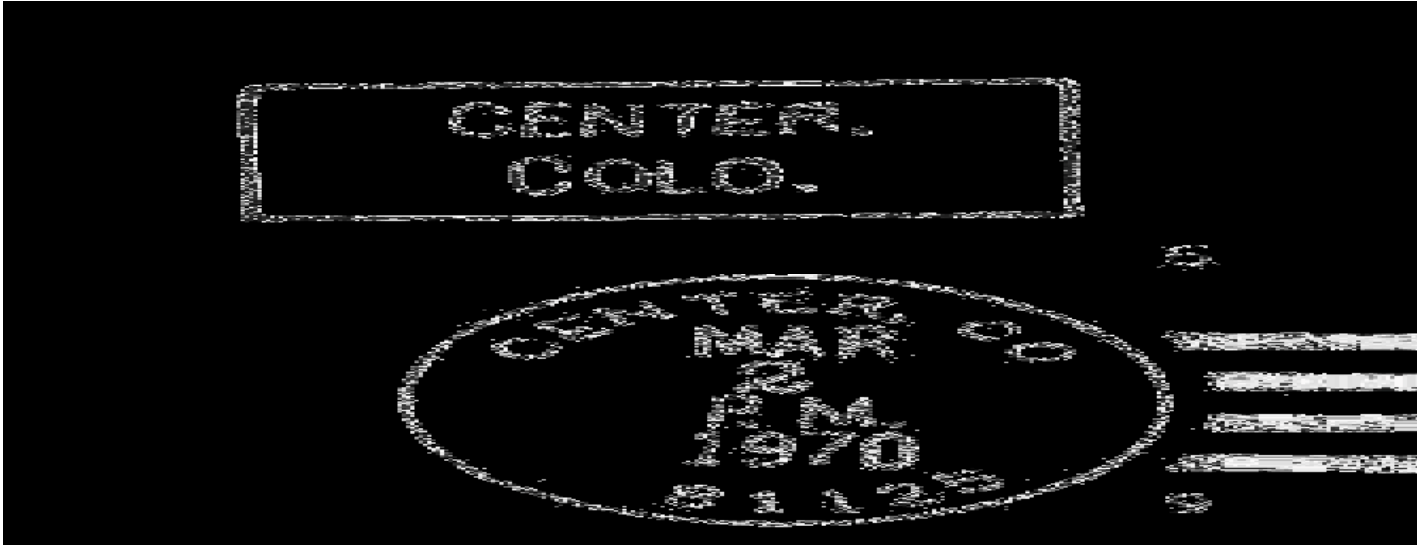
1	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Oct 26 1903 Aug 27 1923
2	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Feb 15 1917
3	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 22.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	Apr 30 1931 Feb 11 1932
3.1	CENTER / COLO. RC 10P 37.0x17.0	Hstp No killer Parcel Post Box style	1930s
4	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 22.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	Oct 16 1935 Jun 16 1948
5	CENTER, COLO. / REGISTERED CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Sep 15 1937 Jan 10 1946



6	CENTER, / COLO. RC 10P 35.0/18.0	Hstp No killer; Parcel Post box style	--- -- 1940s
7	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, oval with 1	Sep 14 1938 Apr 27 1955
8	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 20.5	Mach 7 wavy lines	May 15 1947 Jan 11 1966
9	CENTER, CO / 81125 CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Mar 2 1970 Mar 13 1978
10	CENTER, CO / 81125 CI 10P 21.0	Mach 6 wavy lines	Aug 21 1969 Jun 3 1991
10.1	CENTER, CO / 81125 CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-??x18mm	Jun 19 1989

CENTER – Continued

11	CENTER / COLO. CI 11P 28.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 15 1991
12	CENTER CO 81125 / USPS CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 14 1992 Sep 16 1992
13	CENTER CO / 81125 CI 10P 30.0	4bars S-21x16mm	May 10 1999



AUXILLARY MARKING

**A1 center, colo.
IR 001 43.0x15.0**

**Dec -- 1909
RETURN TO WRITER in Pointing hand
[NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]**

CENTERVIEW

James L. Hunt, the owner of the land, founded Centerview in 1898. The town was platted the same year. The name was a logical choice as the town is located near the center of the broad San Luis Valley. From there the mountains that rim the valley are visible on the west, north and east.

The San Luis Valley became an area devoted to the large-scale cultivation of vegetables, potatoes being the major crop. Grain and hay were also major crops in the area. Although the area is semi-arid, irrigation from wells made agriculture feasible.

As time passed, a problem developed. The near level valley floor did not allow good drainage from the irrigated fields. Unless drainage ditches could be cut – an expensive effort – there would be a build-up of alkali and the land would become unproductive. With that developing situation, agriculture in the San Luis Valley has slowly shifted from produce to livestock. Potatoes are still important to the Valley’s economy.

CENTERVIEW – Continued

In 1899 the name of the community was shortened from Centerview to Center. This may have been another example of the Post Office Department's efforts to simplify post office names.

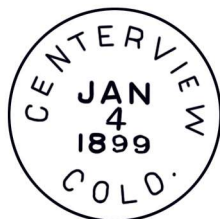
Centerview (Center) is located two miles east of US Highway 285 and is on the boundary between Saguache County and Rio Grande County.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 9 1898	---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E 600 feet south of the new railroad NOTE : "ch. n. to "Center" Aug 2/99" Proposed postmaster - William H. Cochran
Apr 22 1898		Established
Apr 22 1898		Clapp, Robert E.
Feb 10 1899		Ickes, Theodore E.
Jul 1 1899		Name changed to Center

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CENTERVIEW / COLO.	Jan 4 1899
	CI 10P 28.5	Hstp 17mm 4 ring Target



1

CLAYTONIA

Claytonia was a small camp that developed on Kerber Creek during the early days of the mining boom at Bonanza in the upper reaches of Kerber Creek.

The location is about two miles west of Clayton Cone. One report states that it is on what was known as the Clayton Ranch. Thus it seems possible that an early settler by the name of Clayton gave his name to the mountain and later to the small settlement.

Claytonia was about halfway between Villa Grove and Bonanza and was likely a way station and rest stop along the road. At one time there may have been as many as sixty residents at Claytonia.

The site is also where, from the south, Little Kerber Creek joins the main stream of Kerber Creek. There are roads to the south that were at one time used to reach the sites of Bonita and Spook City. Today those roads are poorly maintained, confusing and not recommended unless you have detailed maps and an excellent sense of direction.

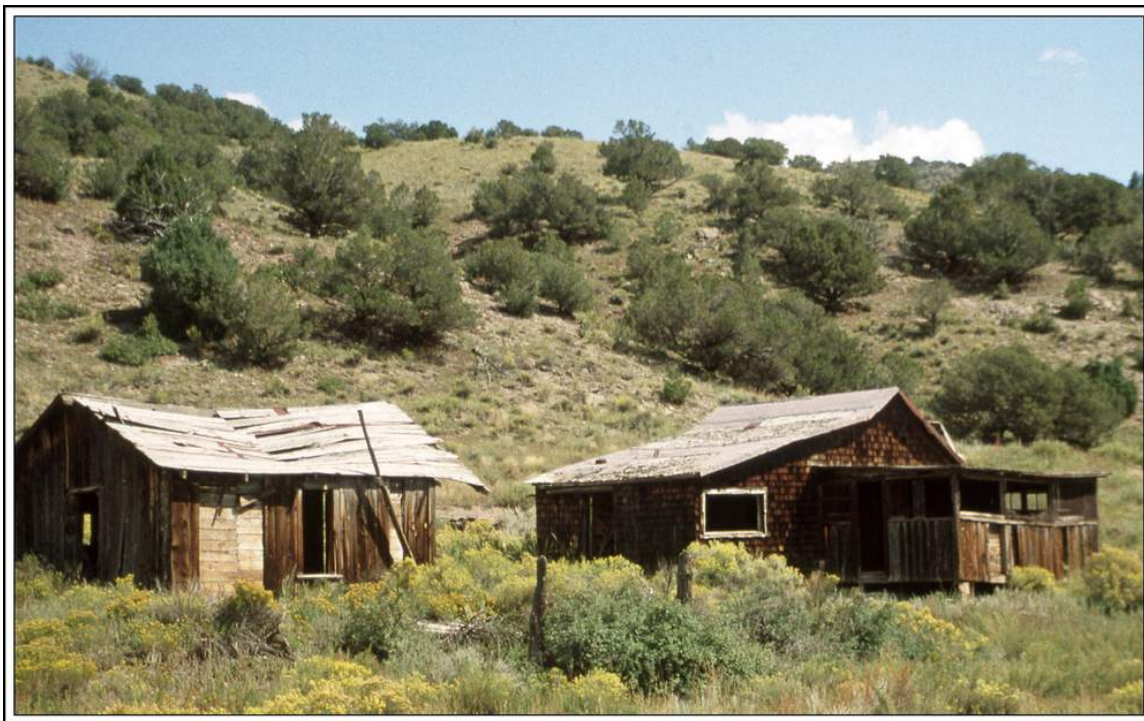
To reach the site of Claytonia (and continue on to Bonanza) from US Highway 285 turn west onto Saguache County Road LL56. The turn is about a quarter mile north of Villa Grove. Drive west approximately eight miles to where the road to Ute Pass and Columbia Gulch branches to the south. On the north side of the road are the ruins of three buildings, all that remains of Claytonia.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 25 1881	---	NW/4 Sec 27 T46N R8E 1/4 mile south of Kerber Creek Proposed postmaster - Michael S. Crane
Mar 11 1881		Established
Mar 11 1881		Crane, Michael S.

CLAYTONIA – Continued

Oct 12 1881	Jones, David S.
Jan 12 1883	Decker, Henry
Jul 10 1883	Collins, Isabelle
Mar 10 1892	Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove



Abandoned buildings at the site of Claytonia, Colorado
Located on the north side of the road from Villa Grove to Bonanza
Photograph by William H. Bauer
September 3, 2001

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CLAYTONIA, / COLORADO.	Jan 17 1882	Oct 22 1882
	CI 20PH 30.0/ 28.5	Hstp Fancy 5 point star	



1

COCHETOPA

The initial location given for the Cochetopa Post Office plots at the location that was the Los Pinos Post Office at the former Ute Indian Agency. This could be correct as the name of the Los Pinos Post Office was changed to Cochetopa and at the same time a new Los Pinos Post Office opened some seventy miles west on the Uncompaghre River. Possibly the office was not “moved” as previously thought. This would explain why the Cuenin Post Office opened in February 1884, several miles to the east but only a short distance from the later (1892) site of Cochetopa.

COCHETOPA – Continued

George a Crofutt in *Crofutt's Gripsack Guide of Colorado* (1885) states that Cochetopa was at the Old Indian Agency.

Duane Vandenbusche, writing in *The Gunnison Country*, equates Cochetopa with the mining activity at Kimbrell. However, the Kimbrell Post Office existed briefly in 1881, while the original Cochetopa Post Office was still in operation. And, the information relative to Kimbrell places it on Cochetopa Creek, fourteen miles south of Parlin, a considerable distance from the old Indian Agency.

The original Cochetopa Post Office closed in 1885. When a new Cochetopa Post Office opened in 1892 it was definitely in the eastern end of the Los Pinos Valley and it was the successor to the Cuenin Post Office. In 1892 there was still some mining activity a few miles north along Cochetopa Creek and the post office would have served that activity as well as the ranchers in the Los Pinos Valley.

The locations given for the "new" Cochetopa are on the west side of Saguache County Road NN14, south of the intersection with Colorado Highway 114. At that point, on the west side and below the road, is the modern Flying M Ranch, a large, active ranch complex and it includes a number of older buildings. The entrance to the Flying M Ranch is a few yards north of the intersection. In 1913, after a short closure, the Cochetopa Post Office reopened, the proposed name was Flying M Ranch. That proposal was not accepted but it does confirm the location of Cochetopa at that ranch.

The name Cochetopa is derived from a word or words in the Ute language that have been interpreted to mean, "Pass of the Buffalo," a reference to the use of the pass by herds of migrating bison.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jun 6 1875	---	SE/4 Sec 35 T46N R1E 1/8 mile north of Los Pinos Creek Local name is "Los Pinos" Appears to be a name change from LOS PINOS (crossed out)
Feb 23 1877		Name changed from Los Pinos
Feb 23 1877		Bond, Charles E.
Jul 17 1877		Wales, Henry H.
May 3 1878		Hardman, George
Jun 5 1878		Sanderson, Mrs. Bina E.
Jul 27 1885		Discontinued Mail to Cuenin
May 21 1892		Moved from Cuenin
May 21 1892		Craig, Harry C.
Jul 5 1892	---	NE/4 Sec 4 T46N R2E 1/4 mile east of Cochetopa Creek
Apr 20 1898		Roberts, Thomas
Jun 26 1906		McDonough, William C.
Dec 28 1910		Hack, Albert J.
Oct 31 1911		Discontinued Mail to Parlin
Jul 7 1913	---	NE/4 NE/4 Sec 4 T46N R2E 150 feet east of Pass Creek (Cochetopa Creek) Proposed name FLYING M RANCH (site place name) Applicant for postmaster - Albert J. Hack
Aug 1 1913		Establishment rescinded
Aug 1 1913		Everish, Bessie M.
Nov 4 1914		Re-established
Nov 4 1914		Williams, Maud
Apr 15 1916		Discontinued Mail to Parlin

Confirmed types of postal markings

0.1	Cochetopa, Colo.		Sep 29 1881
	MS	Mscp Pen cancel	
1	COCHETOPA / COLO.		Feb 6 1893
	CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Not present	

COCHETOPA – Continued

- 2 COCHETOPA, / COLO.
CI 10P 33.0
- 3 COCHETOPA, / COLO.
CI 10P 32.0

Dec 20 1907 Feb 23 1910
Doane Type 3, with 1

Dec 8 1915

4bars S-24x20mm

[NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]

*Cochetopa, Colo.
9/29/87*

0.1



1



2



COTTON CREEK

The first to settle along Cotton Creek are believed to have been a group of soldiers that were discharged when Fort Garland was closed. Stock raising was the principal activity with a small amount of farming along Cotton Creek.

There were two Cotton Creek settlements - Upper Cotton Creek and Lower Cotton Creek. Lower Cotton Creek was the one that eventually had a post office. Upper Cotton Creek was about three miles northeast of Lower Cotton Creek. There are references that claim that one or the other community was a "small mining camp," but having been to the area I saw no evidence to support that claim.

Another suspect statement is that the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company constructed a "mile long" flume to divert water from Cotton Creek to the mine at Orient and that this diversion of water put an end to the agricultural communities on Cotton Creek. However, the closest point on Cotton Creek to the Orient Mine is five miles, so that claim seems unlikely or the distance is in error.

After twenty years of existence, the Cotton Creek Post Office became the Mirage Post Office. This may have been a simple name change or a move of a few hundred yards. The Geographic Site Location Reports for Cotton Creek and Mirage are in the same land survey section.

From Mineral Hot Springs, drive four and one-half miles south on Colorado Highway 17 to Saguache County Road AA. Turn east on Road AA three miles to Road 62. The Cotton Creek Post office was in the northeast corner of this intersection. East of the intersection there is a grove of trees with a modern trailer home. That seems to be the logical site for Cotton Creek and perhaps Mirage. However, on the south side of the road, there is a much older ranch with a large two-story log building. This was certainly a part of the Cotton Creek-Mirage community. North of Road AA, on the west side of Road 61 is a large ranch complex identified as The Cotton Creek Ranch.

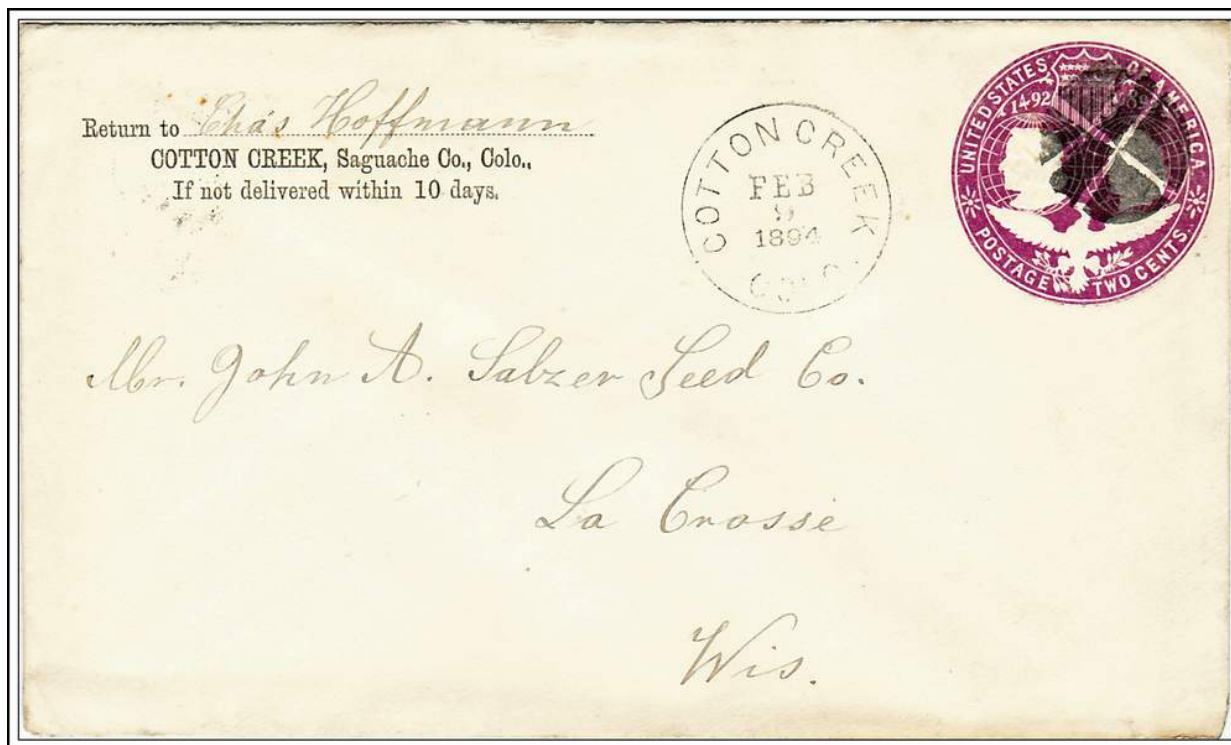
Latitude = 38:07:58 North Longitude = 105:49:37 West COTTON CREEK CEMETERY

Chronology of the Post Office

- Jul 24 1875 --- SW/4 Sec 34 T45N R10E 1/4 mile south of Cotton Creek
Sketch map shows it where road from Villa Grove crosses the creek.
- Aug 9 1875 Established
- Aug 9 1875 Allen, Francis C.
- Apr 5 1878 Ross, Frank A.
- May 6 1878 Voekel, Robert
- May 1 1883 Winkler, A.

COTTON CREEK – Continued

Aug 3 1883 Winkler, Emil A.
Feb 13 1895 Name changed to Mirage

**COTTON CREEK / COLO.****February 9, 1894****Confirmed types of postal markings**

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | COTTON CREEK / COLO.
CI 10P 25.0 | Jun 19 188- |
| 2 | COTTON CREEK / COL.
CI 10P 27.0 | Hstp Fancy, ? may be scrollwork
Mar 5 188- Nov 1 1886 |
| 3 | COTTON CREEK / COLO.
CI 10P 27.0 | Hstp Target, 3 ring 17mm
Feb 7 1894 Feb 9 1894
Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads, Extra line in cross-roads |

**CRESTONE**

Settlement here began in 1868 when the Hopkins family constructed a home at the site. This evolved into a way station on the wagon road from Poncha Pass south along the east side of the San Luis Valley. For a brief time in 1872-1873 there was a post office here by the name of Cristonie.

CRESTONE – Continued

There may have been some early attempts at mining but none were successful until 1879. The discoveries brought prospectors into the area and resulted in the establishment of a post office at Tetons in August 1880. George Adams and A. H. Major opened a store in an old adobe building and in November 1880 Crestone received a post office. Less than two miles separated these two post offices and communities. By June 1881 Crestone had become the dominant town and the only post office in the area.

The miners faced a major problem: Crestone was located on the northern edge of The Luis Maria Baca Grant No. 4. In 1886, rancher George H. Adams was the only legal tenant on the grant. Adams purchased the entire property and won a court battle that recognized his mineral rights to the land within the grant. In 1900, with the help of U. S. Marshals the squatters were evicted from the grant. This action affected several places: Lanark, Spanish, Sangre de Christo (Cottonwood) and Duncan.

Mining did continue within the Baca Grant but the mines were taken over by private companies.

In 1901 the Denver & Rio Grande formed a subsidiary railroad. It was called the Rio Grande Sangre de Cristo Railroad Company. A narrow gauge line was completed from Moffat to Crestone. At Crestone, the rails turned south along the base of the mountains and ended with a turntable at Cottonwood. The line was abandoned in 1926 and the rails were removed in 1929. The portion of the old railroad grade south of Crestone is within the development presently known as Baca Grande, Chalet Grants. It can be driven to the end at Cottonwood, which was the location for the Sangre de Christo Post Office. In 2002 the road ended there.

Crestone is no longer a mining community. My first visit to Crestone was in 1972. At that time the post office was in an old store building showing its age and the community looked like it would soon disappear.

Thirty years later when Jim Ozment and I returned to Crestone, we found a number of new buildings, many older ones that had been renovated and a new, brick post office building. Crestone and the surrounding area have become a tourist and summer home destination. It has also attracted a number of Buddhist, Catholic and New Age religious establishments, which give the area an unusual flavor.

Latitude = 37:59:47 North Longitude = 105:41:57 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 25 1880	---	SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E 1/4 mile south of Crestone Creek	
		Proposed postmaster - Alexander Holmes Major	
Nov 16 1880		Established	
Nov 16 1880		Major, Alexander H.	
Aug 16 1892		Brother, Annie H.	
Jun 24 1898		Coleman, Charles D.	
Aug 31 1901		Warnock, James J.	
May 22 1902		Eastman, Charles B.	
Jun 21 1902	---	New site: NW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E	Old site: SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E
Apr 11 1903		Murphy, Mamie A.	
Apr 18 1903		Cook, Rose M.	
Mar 24 1904		Dunlap, Marie B.	
Jan 14 1905		Coleman, Charles D.	
Jul 9 1909		Mccomac, Charles	
Jul 13 1914	---	NW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E	460 feet south of North Crestone Creek
Jul 7 1923	---	S/2 NW/4, N/2 SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E	100 feet south of Crestone Creek
Dec 12 1923		Perkins, Walter E.	Confirmed
Jan 4 1924		Perkins, Walter E.	Commissioned
Jan 15 1934		Perkins, Walter E.	Assumed charge
Feb 1 1940		Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Assumed charge

CRESTONE – Continued

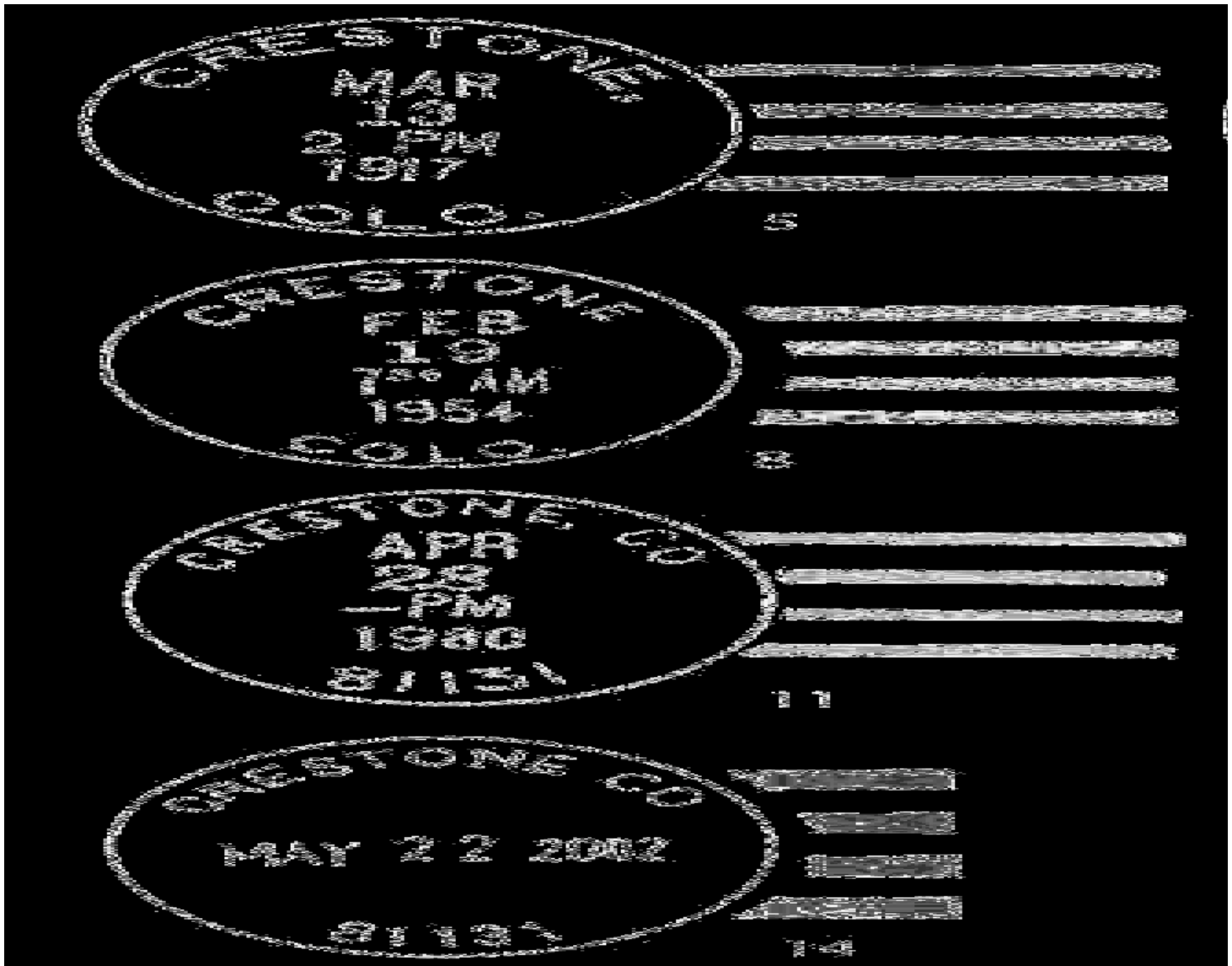
Feb 19 1940	Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Acting
Jul 13 1940	Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Confirmed
Aug 6 1940	Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Commissioned
Oct 24 1941 ---	NW/4 SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E 200 feet south of North Crestone Creek 3/4 mile north of South Crestone Creek	
Mar 15 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Possession, Acting
Mar 26 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Assumed charge
Apr 1 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Acting
Sep 27 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Appointed & Confirmed
Jan 31 1944	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Possession
Oct 21 1944	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Commissioned
Mar 20 1954	Williams, Mrs. Margaret S.	Name changed by marriage
Jun 29 1972	Williams, Earl E.	Officer in charge
Oct 14 1972	Williams, Earl E.	Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm	Mar 2 1881 Feb 17 1882
2	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm	Dec 13 1898
3	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Feb 11 1901 Jun 30 1908
4	CRESTONE, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x14mm	Jan 5 1914
5	CRESTONE, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Mar 13 1917
6	CRESTONE, COLO. CI 10H 33.0	4bars P-25x19mm	Dec 4 1933 Jun 3 1939
7	CRESTONE, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Jun 21 1940 May 2 1947
8	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-22x18mm	Oct 18 1949 Apr 14 1959
8.1	CRESTONE, / COLO. RC 10P 35.0x17.0	Hstp No killer Parcel Post Box style	1950s [NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]
9	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-25x20mm	Jan 4 1968 Oct 16 1972
10	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Nov 4 1975
11	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Apr 28 1980 Feb 11 1982
12	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x19mm	Jan 19 1989 Feb 21 1995
13	CRESTONE, CO / USPO CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 15 1993
14	CRESTONE CO / 81131 CI 10P 34.0	4bars S-12x23mm	May 22 2002



CRESTONE – Continued



CRISTONIE

Cristonie, or Christonie, was the first of three post offices that have existed in the area at the eastern end of modern-day Saguache County Road T.

George Harlan in *Postmarks and Places* makes the following reference to Cristonie. “The grant [Baca] cowboys, land squatters, and mineral prospectors in the vicinities of North Crestone Creek, and the long narrow Burnt Gulch were the recipients of the Cristonie Post Office.” Accepting Harlan’s reference to the two streams, places Cristonie in the immediate vicinity of present day Crestone.

It would appear that the early attempts at mining were not successful and the early community soon faded. There would be a revival of activity in 1880 that resulted in the establishment of Crestone, and briefly of the Tetons Post Office.

Cristonie is a variant on Crestone, a Spanish word meaning, “cockscornb” or “crest of a helmet” and is a reference to the skyline profile of the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range.

CRISTONIE – Continued

The road to Crestone, and to Cristonie and Tetons, begins at the intersection of Colorado Highway 17 and Saguache County Road T. Drive east on Road T to Crestone, about twelve miles.

Chronology of the Post Office

No entry in the Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County

Feb 7 1872	Established
Feb 7 1872	Kelley, Samuel
Oct 29 1873	Discontinued

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM CRISTONIE

CUENIN

The Cuenin Post Office was mainly in operation during a period in which the Cochetopa Post Office was not in operation. There was a period of a few months overlap after Cuenin was established, and before the Cochetopa Post Office closed. Please refer back to the discussion of Cochetopa for more on this situation.

Cuenin was at the eastern end of the broad Los Pinos Valley, near where Los Pinos Creek joins with Cochetopa Creek. This was also somewhat of a road junction for the roads from the Saguache over the Continental Divide.

The area around Cuenin was devoted to farming and stock raising. Its position at the road junction is an indication that it was also a way and rest stop for travel over the Continental Divide to and from the San Luis Valley.

Today it is difficult to precisely locate the site of Cuenin. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report places Cuenin in the area of Moss Lake. This is on the west side of Saguache County Road NN14, about two miles from that road's intersection with Colorado Highway 114. There is a ranch near the south end of the lake and quite probably that was the location of Cuenin.

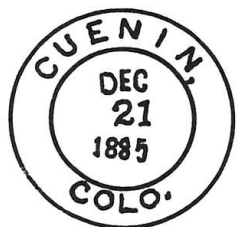
Chronology of the Post Office

Jan 17 1884	---	NE/4 Sec 9 T46N R2E 1/2 mile east of Cochetopa Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Joseph H. Russell
Feb 4 1884		Established
Feb 4 1884		Russell, Joseph H.
Jun 19 1886		Crary, Noah F.
Jan 11 1887		Strachan, George
May 19 1887		Richardson, Joseph H.
Dec 23 1889		Crary, Harry C.
May 21 1892		Moved to Cochetopa

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CUENIN, / COLO. CI 21P 29.0/26.0/17.0	Mar 3 1885 Dec 21 1885
2	CUENIN / COLO. CI 10P 27.5	Mar 3 1892

Hstp Grid, 10-bar circular
Hstp 4 ring target



1



2

DUNCAN

Duncan was a mining camp located just inside the eastern boundary of the Louis Maria Baca Grant. It was on the north side of Pole Creek and the southwest flank of Milwaukee Hill. The camp began in 1890 and the town was platted by Mr. John Duncan, a native of Indiana, and the obvious source of the name for the settlement.

At its peak the population of Duncan was claimed to be 1,000. There was a newspaper, a school, several businesses and many residences. In 1900 when the provisions of the Baca Grant were upheld in court the miners were forced to move from Duncan and the Grant. They moved about a mile and a half southeast to a location at the forks of Short Creek and there established the town of Liberty.

Access to Duncan had been by means of the wagon road from Crestone through Cottonwood. That road is now closed, so until development spreads into the southern portion of the Baca Grande the site of Duncan is off limits. It has been stated that when the miners were evicted from Duncan all the buildings with the exception of John Duncan's cabin were torn down and moved to Liberty. The USGS Topographic Map of Saguache County (1979) locates the site of Duncan and indicates the presence of a single building.

Latitude = 37:52:27 North Longitude = 105:36:50 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Oct 31 1882	---	Unsurveyed South side of Pole Creek Crestone 12 miles northerly Garrison 20 miles westerly from site Proposed postmaster - Thomas H. Miles
Nov 21 1892		Established
Nov 21 1892		Miles, Thomas
Aug 27 1897		Crouch, Charles R.
Sep 4 1900		Ordered closed
Sep 15 1900		Discontinued Mail to Hooper

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DUNCAN

DUNE

The Dune Post Office poses a bit of a puzzle. Supposedly the post office was open for four years, but it was never listed in the annual Postal Guides. I suspect that the Dune Post Office was never in operation.

Dune has been listed as a siding and stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. It is also mentioned in tandem with Gibson. The station and post office would have served ranchers and farmers in the area.

There is no Geographic Site Location Report on file for Dune. The Site Location Report for Wabash appears to equate the post office with the Dune Siding. From that it is likely that there was a close relationship of the three "post offices" in this area.

For some reason, I initially located Dune on the east side of Colorado Highway 17, four miles north of the county line. Jim Ozment and I visited that site and found scattered traces of junk but it was not possible to say that it was not from recent trash disposal.

If indeed Dune and Dune Siding were at the location of the later Wabash Post Office, that location is five miles north of the Saguache-Alamosa County line, and also on the east side of Highway 17. Once again, the only thing we found was some scattered trash.

Please refer to the discussions of Gibson and Wabash for more information about this location.

DUNE – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

No entry in the Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County
See document for Wabash.

Apr 24 1891	Established
Apr 24 1891	Collins, Charles
Jun 10 1895	Discontinued No papers sent Was not listed in Postal Guides

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DUNE

EMBARGO

Initial prospecting in this area began in 1878; however, it was not until 1882 that any development took place. The town was platted and a number of cabins were built along a main street. A hotel, livery stable, and feed barn were the principal businesses. There was a general store of sorts, operated out of one of the cabins. The best mines were the Little Ray, Golden Income and Tornado.

At first the mine prospects seemed good but the promise was not met and the town was soon nearly deserted. There was a brief revival after the turn of the century and at that time a post office was placed at Embargo. The revival was brief and the post office closed. There was some activity for a few more years but by 1959 only a single cabin was reported at the site. In 2001 only the mine dumps on the east side of Baughman Creek remain.

Begin at Del Norte and drive nine miles west on US Highway 160 to the Embargo Creek Road (Colorado Highway 18). Turn north, cross the Rio Grande River to Rio Grande County Road 15. Go a short distance east and then turn north onto County Road 65. This junction is a mile and a half from US 160. At the junction with the road to Cathedral Park Campground, keep right on Forest Service Road 660, the road to Groundhog Park. Eight and a half miles from where we turned onto County Road 65 we came to an open area on the west side of Baughman Creek. On the east side of the creek we observed some mine dumps and the remains of a small mine. Although there was no positive evidence we felt that the open area could have once been the location for some buildings. The area is sometimes used for camping. This is the location given in the Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report for Embargo.

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 3 1903	--	SW/4 Sec 15 T41N R4E Three miles north of Myers or Embargo Creek From sketch map, it may be on Embargo Creek, 3 miles north of Myers Creek. Proposed postmaster - Albert H. Clark
Sep 25 1903	Established	Clark, Albert A.
Sep 25 1903	Established	Clark, Albert A.
Feb 18 1905	Ordered closed	
Mar 15 1905	Discontinued	Mail to Del Norte

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 EMBARGO, / COLO.
 CI 10P 30.0 ?

Feb 18 1904

Doane Type 2 with 1 (reproduced from Ebay scan)



EXCHEQUER

Exchequer was another of the satellite mining camps that were eventually absorbed into Bonanza.

In the spring of 1880 Peter McCardo and John Stansbury, working in the upper reaches of Kerber Creek, discovered good silver ore that became the Exchequer Mine. That discovery was quickly followed by other discoveries, including the Bonanza. Exchequer was located about a mile north of Bonanza where Squirrel Creek and Rawley Gulch join Kerber Creek. The town was never incorporated and within three years was nearly indistinguishable from Bonanza.

The town consisted of a dozen or so cabins along Squirrel Creek, a smelter and two mills.

To reach the site, drive west from US Highway 285 on Saguache County Road LL56 to Bonanza and continue through the town and about a mile beyond. A number of mine dumps are visible on the slopes to the east of Kerber Creek. A single, restored cabin is a hundred or so feet from the road along what I believe was Rawley Gulch.

The road from Villa Grove to Exchequer presents no problems for a standard automobile. It is a gravel road. For the most part it is a gentle grade following the creek. Kerber Creek itself is evidence of the extensive mining that occurred in the Kerber Creek District. In 1991 the rocks in the streambed were heavily stained with iron oxides from the tailing piles. By 2001 this seemed to not be as obvious, so perhaps some cleanup is taking place. There are frequent posted warnings to not drink the water!

Chronology of the Post Office

May 13 1881	---	E/2 SW/4 Sec 24 T47N R7E On both sides of Kerber Creek 1-1/2 miles from Bonanza Proposed postmaster - Newlin M. Ritner
Jul 8 1881	---	NE/4 Sec 24 T4 R7 ??? On both sides of Kerber Creek Proposed postmaster - William J. Hannegan
Jul 22 1881		Established
Jul 22 1881		Hannegan, William J.
Oct 16 1882		Rathvon, William R.
Jun 6 1883		Discontinued Mail to Bonanza

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM EXCHEQUER

GARIBALDI

Garibaldi was the first post office in the upper portion of the San Luis Valley, near where the roads began the ascent to Poncha Pass. It was a short distance west of San Luis Creek.

In his book, *Postmarks and Places* George Harlan states: "...Ernest Dietrich on August 23, 1870 petitioned for a post office to be called Garibaldi. (Note: it never boasted of a store or school, just a letter distributing desk which stood in the Dietrich front room.)...Mr. Dietrich's home sat near the junction of the old government road to Fort Garland and the Saguache-Poncha road."

There are some discrepancies in this account. The Garibaldi Post Office opened June 13, 1870, and although Ernst Dietrich was a postmaster at Garibaldi he did not assume that position until March of 1871.

From Harlan's description it seems likely that Garibaldi was little more than a rest stop on the roads to Saguache and to Fort Garland.

The Post Office Department records state that Garibaldi was renamed Villa Grove. However, the Garibaldi site is approximately two miles east of present day Villa Grove. Perhaps the post office had moved to a new, unreported location at Villa Grove prior to the change in name.

GARIBALDI – Continued

To reach the site of Garibaldi, begin in Villa Grove. Go east from US Highway 285 on the road to Hayden Pass. On the edge of Villa Grove there is a fork. The right hand fork leads to “The Colorado Pheasant.” At the end of that road is a ranch complex that seems to be a breeding farm for pheasants. I believe that is where Garibaldi was first located.

Chronology of the Post Office

May 7 1870	---	Unknown survey 200 yards west of San Luis River 5 miles south (?) of Cottonwood Creek (shown as that) There appears to be more than one Cottonwood Creek in eastern Saguache County.
Jun 13 1870		Established
Jun 13 1870		Godfrey, William J.
Jun 18 1870		Powell, Robert P.
Dec 7 1870		Luengen, Peter W.
Mar 8 1871		Dietrich, Ernst
Aug 25 1871	---	Unknown survey 1/4 mile west of San Luis Creek Sketch map shows it at junction of roads to Fort Garland, Saguache and north.
Jan 19 1872		Name changed to Villa Grove

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM GARIBALDI

GIBSON

The community of Gibson was created in late 1911 in connection with a project to drain the farmland in the area. Initially the name was Wabash. In 1912 the Gibson Company platted the town. There was a General Store – Reed’s – that also housed the Gibson Post Office. Mary Reed was the first postmaster of Gibson.

It is claimed that Gibson was on the same site as Dune; however, I am not certain of that claim. It seems more correct that Gibson was near the former Dune Siding,

The connection between Wabash and Gibson seems solid. The postmaster at Wabash for its seven month life was a Mary E. Read. And the first postmaster at Gibson was Mary E. Reed. There is a difference in spelling, but that may be an error in the records.

The location from the Geographic Site Location Report is six miles north of the Saguache-Rio Grande County line and one mile west of Colorado Highway 17 on the south side of Saguache County Road G.

Please refer to the discussions of Dune and Wabash for a little more information on this complex of sites.

Chronology of the Post Office

Dec 1 1911		Formerly named Wabash
Dec 1 1911		Reed, Mary E.
Jul 15 1914	---	NE/4 Sec 5 T41N R10E 3 miles west of the San Luis River 950 feet west of D&RG tracks, shown in SE/4 of NE/4
Jun 7 1915		Laursen, Nellie
Jul 8 1916		Gibson, Charles E. Jr.
Aug 14 1924		Ordered closed Aug 14 1923 Mail to Hooper effective Sep 15 1926 (sic) The discrepancy in year dates is unexplained
Aug 14 1923		Discontinued

GIBSON – Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 GIBSON, / COLO.
CI 10P 32.0

Jun 20 1914 May 15 1916

4bars S-24x19mm



GREEN

In March 1884 the Carnero Post Office was moved a mile east and renamed Green. Under that name it lasted less than six months before it was discontinued. There is a brief reference in a discussion of Biedell that states: “Mail came in from Green as the La Garita Post Office was then called.”

With only that information, it is my supposition that Green was somewhere in Section 31 where the La Garita Cash Store was still running in September 2000.

Section 31 occupies the northeast corner of the intersection of Saguache County Roads G and 42. There are perhaps a dozen small buildings scattered around in that section.

Margaret Green was the only postmaster for this office, thus I assume the place took her family name.

Ten years later the name of Green Mountain Falls in El Paso County would be shortened to Green from 1894 to 1901 when it once again became Green Mountain Falls.

Chronology of the Post Office

	No separate entry in Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County See documents for Carnero (I).
Mar 18 1884	Moved from Carnero
Mar 18 1884	Green, Mrs. Margaret E.
Sep 30 1884	Discontinued Mail to Carnero

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM GREEN

HAUMANN

In the late 1870's Frank Haumann recorded several claims around a deposit of limonite iron ore that had been discovered at the western base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. A small community developed but significant production did not begin until 1881, after the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built a spur from Villa Grove to the mine.

A post office was opened, with the name of Haumann but it lasted only a few years. When it reopened it was under the name of Orient, for the Orient Mine.

In addition to Orient, Haumann is associated with the Valley View Hot Springs. It is not clear whether or not Haumann was at the springs or if it was at the iron mine, a short distance from the springs.

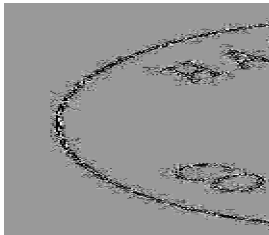
The Valley View Hot Springs is still an active resort near the remains of the Orient Mine. For directions to this site and the later history of the site, please refer to the discussion of Orient.

HAUMANN – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

Nov 5 1881	---	SE/4 Sec 25 T46N R10E 1 mile north of Hot Springs Creek At terminus of the Iron Mine Branch of the D&RG Proposed postmaster - Winfield S. Omertz
Jan 9 1882		Established
Jan 9 1882		Omertz, Winfield S.
Nov 20 1882		Jewell, Samuel
Apr 15 1884		Kirk, George W.
Aug 25 1885		Discontinued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	HAUMANN / COLORADO ?	Sep 2- 1883
	CI 10P 27.5 ?	Pen cancel Very weak, blurry strike cds
	Tracing is approximation	

**HERARD**

In 1875 Ulysses Herard and his family settled on Medano Creek below Medano Pass. It has been reported that there was a fish hatchery there and that the Herard Ranch raised thoroughbred cattle.

From 1905 to 1912 there was a Herard Post Office at this place but it is unknown what was there to support a post office or why one was placed in such a remote location.

The site of Herard was on Medano Creek about a mile west of the eastern boundary of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. According to Ken Jessen, writing in *Ghost Towns Colorado Style - Volume Three - Southern Region* there is a Jeep road to the site. Ken gives the following description of the road and the site. "The road up Medano Creek starts from the campground entrance in the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. The Herard site requires four-wheel drive to reach, and in the soft sand, a number of vehicles have become stuck. The National Park Service, however, has placed plastic mats in the worst sand holes. In addition, three stream crossings are necessary to reach the site. At 6.2 miles beyond the end of the paved road is a place the Park Service calls Frenchman's Cabin. The ruins of a fireplace sit in a meadow, and this is where Herard was located. Farther up Medano Creek near the pass are the remains of three log cabins, presumably an old homestead."

With that description it would be best not to attempt this trip alone. In this case I exercised good judgement and I have not visited the site of Herard.

Chronology of the Post Office

Oct 7 1905	---	NW/4 Sec 7 T26S R72W On the right side of Medano Creek Southeast of Liberty
Nov 13 1905		Established
Nov 13 1905		Herard, Mary F.
Dec 15 1912		Discontinued Mail to Liberty

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM HERARD

IRIS

The mining town of Iris was first called Union Hill but for some reason the name was changed to Iris, perhaps for the daughter of the J. I. Heimer, county land office registrar. Another explanation of the name is that wild iris, *Iris missouriensis*, is common in the area.

In 1894 two men named Daniel J. Lehan (the first postmaster of Iris) and Turner, made a gold discovery in the Cochetopa Hills of southern Gunnison and northern Saguache Counties. Within a year the town had a number of stores and saloons and was connected to Gunnison by telephone. As did Chance, its neighbor to the north, the mining at Iris quickly faded. There was a brief revival of activity in 1901-1902 but then the town died.

I have not attempted to visit Iris so I can not describe what might remain. The site should be recognizable by the presence of some mine dumps. An attempt to reach Iris would begin about two miles west of where Colorado Highway 114, the road to Cochetopa Pass, intersects US Highway 50, the same starting point as I described when discussing the road to Chance in Gunnison County. From there it is about seven miles south to the location. If you attempt this trip, be sure to have a good road map as the USGS maps show an interwoven complex of roads (trails) through the area. In 1961 it was said that there were a few log cabins still standing with a few summer residents.

From Chance the road continues south across the Gunnison-Saguache County line and then a short distance to Iris. Recent reports indicate that it would be difficult to visit the site of Iris and its near neighbor Schistos, not only because of the confusing network of ranch roads and trails but also because many of the roads are blocked by locked gates. If anyone tries to go to Iris, I would appreciate knowing if they had success and what they found.

Latitude = 38:24:58 North Longitude = 106:49:42 West

Latitude = 38:24:58 North Longitude = 106:49:18 West IRIS CEMETERY

Chronology of the Post Office

- Sep 4 1894 --- SE/4 Sec 14 T48N R1E 3-1/2 miles west of Cochetopa Creek
Name proposed as UNION Rejected
Proposed postmaster - Daniel J. Lehan
- Oct 30 1894 Established
- Oct 30 1894 Lehan, Daniel J.
- Apr 8 1895 Discontinued Mail to Gunnison
- May 7 1895 Re-established
- May 7 1895 Kittell, Minnie B.
- Jun 3 1895 --- SW/4 Sec 14 T48N R1E 2 miles southeast of Chance
- Oct 30 1900 Elliott, Eugene E.
- Dec 12 1901 Koogle, George W.
- Feb 25 1902 Ordered closed
- Mar 15 1902 Discontinued Mail to Gunnison

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 IRIS / COLO.
CI 10P 27.5

Jan 19 1898 Mar 3 1900

Hstp Cork, Smudge



KIMBRELL

Not a great deal has been written about the settlement of Kimbrell. What has been reported indicates that it was associated with some mining activity in the upper portion of the Cochetopa Creek Canyon near where Los Pinos Creek joins Cochetopa Creek.

The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report is not precise as it states that Kimbrell was fourteen miles south of Parlin. Another source claims that Kimbrell was located across the river from the Flying M Ranch (see Cochetopa). And yet another source discusses Kimbrell and Cochetopa in the same paragraph.

In examining the countryside, there is a little visible evidence for some activity on the hillside, about a mile north of the Flying M Ranch and on the western side of Cochetopa Creek. There is another possibility some two miles further north on Colorado Highway 114. In that area there was more extensive mining activity and there are some occupied buildings along the creek. That location is also close to Mile Post 14 (as measured from US 50) and thus approximates the distance given from Parlin in the Site Location Report. This second location would be my preferred site but it does not fit with the other information relative to Kimbrell. Therefore, I have to leave the exact location of Kimbrell open for later resolution.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 23 1881	---	Not given	On west side of Cochetopa Creek	About 14 miles south of Parlin
			Proposed postmaster - Frederick P Mesick	
Mar 11 1881		Established		
Feb 11 1881		Mesick, Frederick P.		
Jul 13 1881		Sprout, George E.		
Oct 14 1881		Discontinued		

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM KIMBRELL

LA GARITA

The La Garita Post Office has had an on again, off again history. It has been at three different locations on the west side of the San Luis Valley and the eastern edge of the La Garita Mountains. The name, La Garita, is Spanish for “the lookout” or loosely “the signal.” Reportedly Indians sent smoke signals from La Garita Peak to the Sangre de Cristo Range on the east side of the valley.

The first location of La Garita in 1874, was about two miles southwest of the final site of La Garita. This original La Garita lasted less than a year. It was located on the south side of La Garita Creek where the wagon road to the Rio Grande River crossed the creek. Crescencio Torres built a trading post and the location was sometimes referred to as Torres.

When the post office reopened in 1886 it was in a new location about a half-mile south of where, after another hiatus, it would relocate in 1897. The second La Garita Post Office would, like its predecessor, serve travelers on the wagon and stage road from Saguache to the now prominent Del Norte.

In 1897 the La Garita Post Office was once again open and again at a new site, about a half mile north of the 1886 location and where it would remain until the final closing in 1972. As travel on the wagon road declined and traffic shifted east to what became US Highway 285 La Garita settled into existence as a small rural community with a store and post office that served the surrounding ranchers and farmers. Even from its earliest days the La Garita Region was primarily agricultural in nature. There were some attempts at mining in the mountains to the west but they never lasted for very long or amounted to very much.

LA GARITA – Continued

To visit the sites of La Garita, follow the directions to Carnero (I), Green and Pruden. That is, go south on US Highway 285 from Saguache to Saguache County Road G, then west to La Garita.

Less than a half-mile west of County Road 45 you will find the La Garita Cash Store on the north side of the road. In 1972 the post office was in this log store building. In 2000 the store was still there but was for sale.

A quarter mile beyond the La Garita Cash Store there is a side road south to an old log building, in reasonably good condition, along with a modern trailer and some sheds. This was the site for the La Garita Post Office from 1886-1894.

From this second location of La Garita, return to the main road and continue west. At the fork, keep left on the road that will eventually lead to Del Norte. I believe this is Saguache County Road 38A. Two and three-quarter miles after returning to the main road you cross La Garita Creek. On the east side of the road and the south side of La Garita Creek there is a roughly square mound that could be the remains of a decayed adobe building. This is where La Garita was first established and the post office operated in 1874-1875.

A point of interest is located a short distance west of the La Garita Cash Store and a hundred yards or so from the road. The article reprinted below describes the historic building at that location.

The following appeared in the October 2000 issue of *Colorado History Now* Under the title *Do You Know This Building?*

The Capilla de San Juan Bautista, also known as La Iglesia de la Garita is located in Saguache County at the mouth of the Carnero Canyon, about eight miles west of US Highway 285. The church was named after Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of the town of La Garita. Construction began in 1912 to replace a log and adobe church that had burned earlier that year. After more than a decade of effort, the structure was completed in 1923. The building is an example of Territorial Adobe (which combines elements of Hispanic and Euro-American building traditions) utilizing influences from the Gothic Revival style. A steeply pitched roof crowns the one-and-a-half story church. White stuccoed adobe walls ascend from a twenty-inch thick base. A two-story bell tower rises from the main entrance of this T-shaped building. The church's most notable features, typical of Gothic architecture, are the sharply pointed windows trimmed in red brick. The vertical emphasis displayed by the bell tower and the steeply pitched roof are also characteristic of the Gothic Revival style. Abandoned in 1957, the vacant church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. It has since been converted into the San Juan Art Center and has received State Historical Fund grants to aid in its restoration and rehabilitation. It now houses handcrafted items made by members of Artes del Valle, a nonprofit Hispanic Women's Craft Co-operative founded to retain, preserve, and promote Hispanic folk art in the San Luis Valley.

Latitude = 37:50:27 North Longitude = 106:14:46 West

Chronology of the Post Office

May 12 1874	---	NW/4 Sec 11 T41N R6E At crossing of La Garita Creek, south side
Jun 24 1874		Established
Jun 24 1874		Eastman, Erastus E.
May 18 1875		Discontinued
Jun 7 1886	---	NW/4 NW/4 Sec 6 T41N R7E On south side of Carnero Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Joseph S. Gay
Nov 13 1886		Re-established
Nov 13 1886		Gay, Joseph S.
Dec 7 1894		Discontinued Papers to Del Norte
Apr 7 1897		Re-established

LA GARITA – Continued



The La Garita Cash Store, last location of the La Garita, Colorado Post Office
Photograph by William H. Bauer September 13, 2000

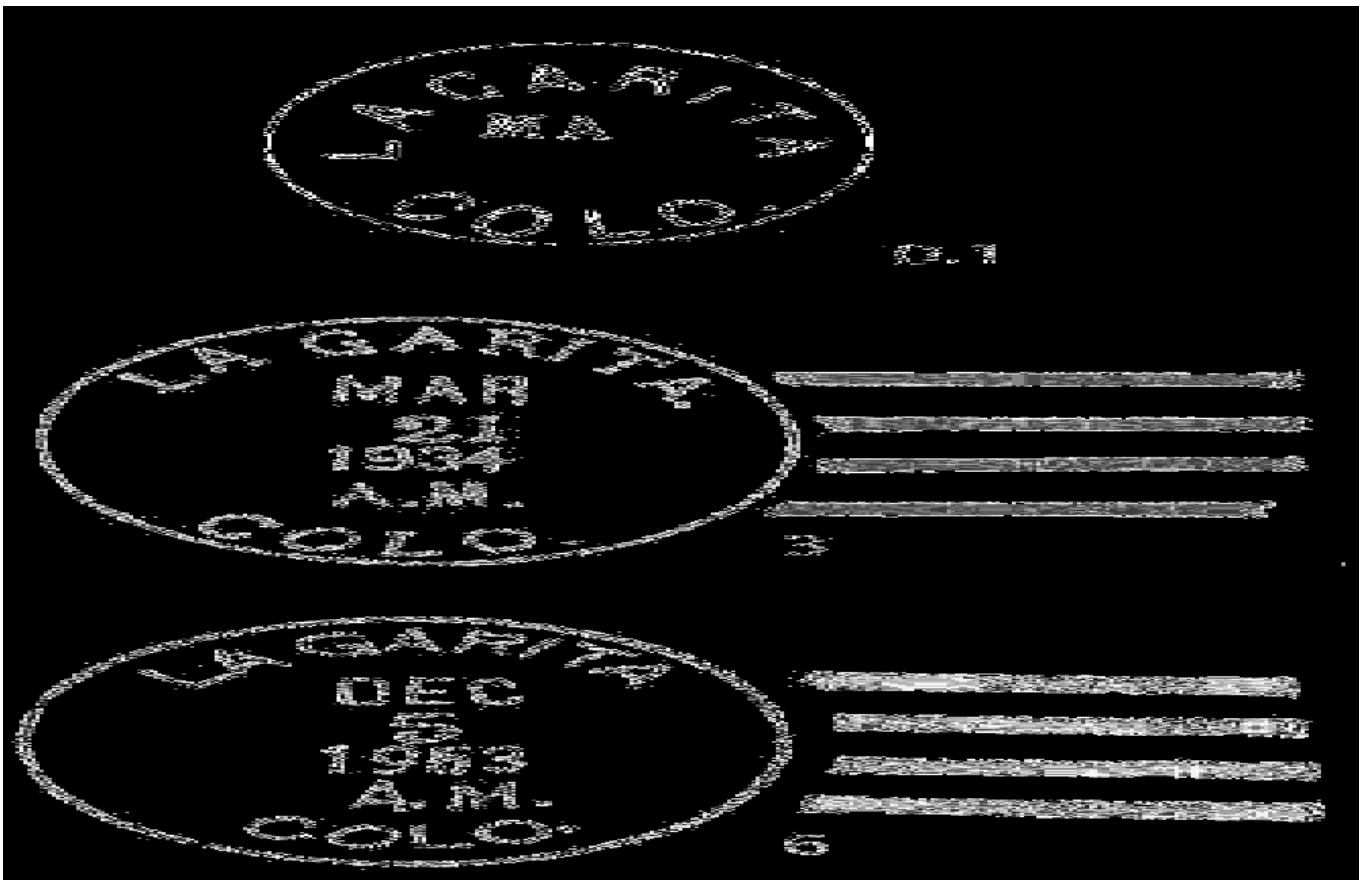
Feb 18 1899	---	SW/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E On south side of Carnero Creek	
		Proposed postmaster - Harry S. Little	
Apr 7 1899		Little, Harry S.	
Jul 14 1910		McCarthy, Harry E.	
May 2 1914	---	SW/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E 40 yards south of Carnero Creek	
Oct 8 1914		Medina, James	
Dec 4 1915		Terry, Noah M.	
Mar 31 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	
May 31 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	Confirmed
Jun 25 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	Commissioned
Jul 2 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	Assumed charge
Jul 19 1920	---	SE/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E Move 1/4 mile east of old location	
Jul 22 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Assumed charge
Jul 23 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Possession, Acting
Sep 16 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Acting
Oct 19 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Appointed & Confirmed
Nov 15 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Commissioned
Nov 21 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Possession
Nov 6 1934		Gibson, Mrs. Rhoda M.	Name changed by marriage
Nov 8 1934		Gibson, Mrs. Rhoda M.	Name changed by marriage
May 31 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Possession, Acting
Jun 1 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Assumed charge
Jun 7 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Acting
Jul 30 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Appointed & Confirmed
Sep 11 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Commissioned

LA GARITA – Continued

Sep 30 1941	Alley, Henry M.	Possession
Oct 21 1941 ---	SE/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E 1/4 mile west of	Carnero Creek
Feb 3 1945	Watts, Mrs. Dorothy Doris	Appointed
Apr 4 1945	Watts, Mrs. Dorothy Doris	Commissioned
Apr 8 1945	Watts, Mrs. Dorothy Doris	Possession
Nov 11 1972	Discontinued Mail to Del Norte	

Confirmed types of postal markings

0.1	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Cork smudge	Jul 23 1889 May -- 1894
1	LA GARITA, / COLO. CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-??x20mm	Jul 20 1914
2	LA GARITA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x13mm	Nov 7 1927
3	LA GARITA. / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x18mm	Mar 21 1934 Jan 12 1939
4	LA GARITA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Jun 2 1940 Mar 1 1941
5	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Mar 11 1946 Sep 15 1949
6	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-??x19mm	Dec 5 1953
7	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Apr 14 1959 Dec 26 1962
8	LA GARITA, CO / 81139 CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-23x19mm	May 26 1969 Oct 18 1972



LANARK

There is a puzzle here yet to be resolved. The Lanark and Spanish Post Offices were both in existence for a few months in 1898. The Geographic Site Location Reports for these two offices are almost identical and place them both on the north side of Spanish Creek. Spanish Creek is approximately a mile and a half north of Cottonwood Creek.

George Harlan, in his book *Postmarks and Places*, quite unequivocally identifies Lanark with Cottonwood and Sangre de Cristo. This does make sense, as it is unlikely the Post Office Department would establish a second post office (Spanish) “next door” to an existing one. That still leaves a question about the Federal Land Survey Grid given in the Site Location Report for Lanark. A possible explanation is that since the site was within the Baca Grant, which was not surveyed, the location was an incorrect estimate of the position.

I will conclude with an assumption that Lanark was at the same location as the earlier Sangre de Cristo, or as it was better known, Cottonwood. [SRM: The location of Sangre de Cristo seems correct based on the Geographic Site Location Reports. The locations of Lanark and Spanish are contradictory. Although both were on Spanish Creek per the site reports, Lanark appears south of Spanish on the map accompanying the Spanish report.]

Mining began at Cottonwood in 1893 and the most notable mines were the Irvin, Independent and Bonanza. Judge Kellog constructed the first mill at Cottonwood.

The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report indicates that the application was for a post office to be named Lucky. That choice was rejected. It is probable that the name Cottonwood was also rejected because of the similarity to the Cottonwood Creek Post Office in Chaffee County.

Daniel Seger is credited with selecting the name for the post office, after his birthplace, Lanark, Illinois. The post office served 175 people and was located in the Cottonwood General Store. The post office lasted only a few months and after it closed the residents had to go several miles south to Duncan to get their mail.

Given the size of the population, the short life of the Lanark Post Office is another mystery. Quite likely the demise is connected to the legal actions that took place in 1898. That year a court ruling gave the owners of Baca Grant No. 4 all mineral rights and the miners who lived at Cottonwood were evicted. Mining activity did continue until 1900 when it briefly ceased. A Philadelphia company took over the operations, under lease. A new mill was constructed and it is claimed that shipments reached nearly a million dollars a month.

To reach the site of Lanark, from Saguache County Road T, enter the Baca Grande Chalet Grants development and drive south four and one half miles on Camino Baca Grande to the end of the road. There are foundations of the old mills along the road and below the road on the west side.

Chronology of the Post Office

Apr 1 1898	---	NW/4 Sec 28 T43N R12E North side of Spanish Creek
		Name proposed as LUCKY Rejected
		Proposed postmaster - Wilbur Fisk Horn
Mar 29 1898		Established
Mar 29 1898		Martin George J.
Dec 27 1898		Discontinued Papers to Duncan

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM LANARK

LIBERTY

In 1900, when the miners at Duncan were forced to move from the Luis Maria Baca Grant, they moved to a site about a mile and a half to the southeast at the forks of Short Creek and just beyond the eastern border of the Grant. The buildings at Duncan were dismantled and moved to Liberty.

The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report provided the department with a choice of names: Prospect, Reliance or Liberty. Liberty was chosen.

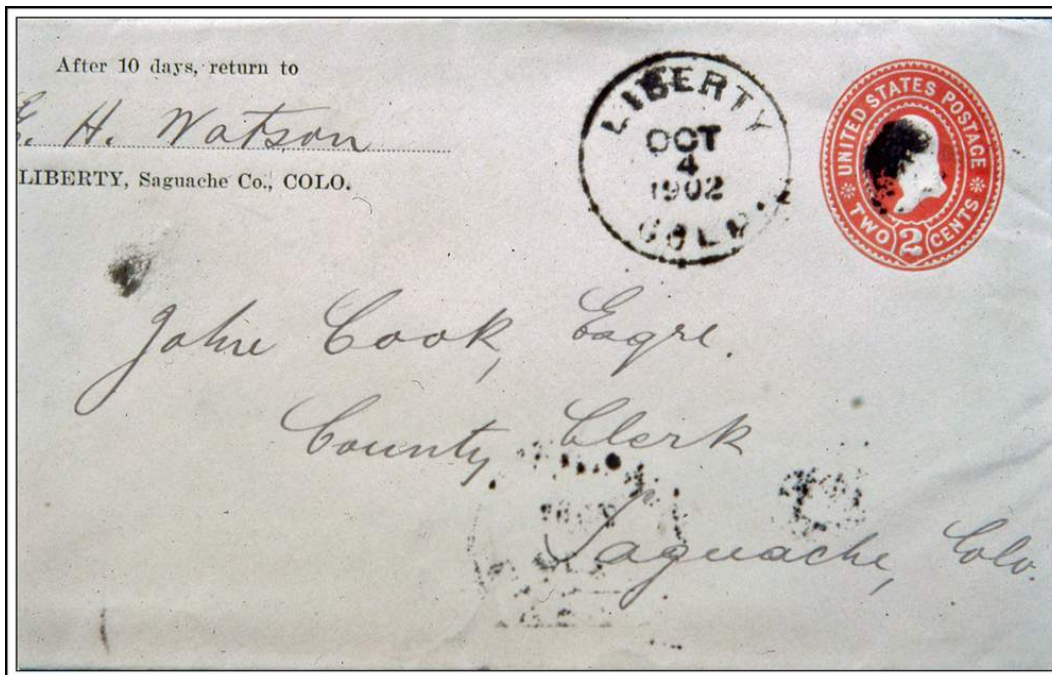
Unfortunately, the ore deposits that were near Liberty and outside of the grant were not as rich as those that were being exploited at Duncan and Liberty slowly faded. In 1919 the Liberty Post Office was moved north to a group of mines in the upper reaches of Pole Creek. These mines also proved unprofitable and the Liberty Post Office at the new location quickly closed. Liberty reopened briefly in late 1920 but closed for the last time at the end of March 1921. There is no indication as to where the reopened post office was located.

The locations given in the Site Location Reports require careful interpretation. The eastern boundary of the Baca Grant is also the boundary between two different land grids. To the east is Township 25 South, Range 73 West. To the west is Township 42 North, Range 12 East, and possibly a small portion of Range 13 East. Since the Baca Grant was not surveyed, locations within its boundaries are approximate.

Currently there is no access to the site of Liberty. The 1979 USGS Map of Saguache County does show a lengthy Jeep trail along the northern edge of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument but I seriously doubt that it can be accessed, even with permission from the current landowners. The aforementioned USGS map does indicate the presence of some buildings at the original site of Liberty.

Be aware that from 1887 to 1898 there was a Liberty Post Office in Rio Grande County.

Latitude = 37:51:37 North Longitude = 105:35:43 West



LIBERTY / COLO.

October 4, 1902

LIBERTY – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

Oct 9 1900	---	SW/4 Sec 30 T42N R13E (if sectioned) Situated on Short Creek, at or near mouth between forks of same Name proposed as LIBERTY or PROSPECT or RELIANCE Proposed postmaster - John N. Norviel
Nov 1 1900		Established
Nov 1 1900		Norviel, John N.
Apr 12 1905		Dix, Caleb H.
Dec 7 1910		Mayer, Noah Z. C.
Nov 28 1911		Perkins, Walter E.
Oct 7 1919	---	SW/4 Sec 7 T25S R73W Move to new site 1-3/4 miles northeast of old site 100 feet north of Pole Creek Sketch map indicates a move north from a site on Short Creek.
Oct 31 1919		Discontinued Mail to Crestone
Oct 14 1920		Re-established
Oct 14 1920		Rolason, Byron A.
Mar 31 1921		Discontinued Mail to Crestone

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	LIBERTY / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Oct 4 1902 Dec 10 1911 Hstp Cork, smudge; Target, 4 ring 17mm
2	LIBERTY, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	Jan 8 1914 Jul 29 1914 4bars S-24x20mm

**LOCKETT**

Lockett was one of several short-lived communities in the southern portion of Saguache County and east of Center. Very little has been recorded about Lockett but it seems likely that it was a small supply center for the surrounding farms. The post office did last for nearly fifteen years and likely the post office was discontinued when the Rural Free Delivery System removed the need for many of the small, remote post offices.

It is believed that Lockett was founded by a Dr. Lockett and was named for him. Dr. Lockett is reported to have been a County Judge.

To visit the site of Lockett, begin at the border of Saguache and Alamosa Counties and drive north on Colorado Highway 17 to Saguache County Road B. Turn west on Road B and go a half-mile to Road 61. Go north one mile to Road C and turn west. Go six miles to the intersection with County Road 55.

Lockett was in the southeast corner of this intersection. No structures remain at the site but there is evidence of activity at the location and some scattered debris.

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 18 1889	---	NW/4 Sec 28 T41N R9E Proposed postmaster - William M. Asher
May 22 1889		Established

LOCKETT – Continued

May 22 1889	Fullinwiler, John H.
Mar 18 1890	Foster, Charles R.
Nov 30 1894	Buckley, Rueben R.
Mar 25 1895 ---	SW/4 Sec 21 T41N R9E
Dec 19 1900	Zink, Morris W.
Sep 17 1903	Stott, David W.
Dec 12 1904	Ordered closed
Jan 14 1905	Discontinued Mail to Hooper

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 **LOCKETT / COLO.**
 CI 10P 27.5

Apr -- 1894 Sep 27 1902

Hstp Cork, smudge



LOS MOGOTES

I have not found any historical reference to a place by this name in Saguache County. In addition to Los Mogotes, there was a later office in Conejos County by the simpler name of Mogote.

The location is on the western edge of the San Luis Valley at the foot of the mountains. Los Mogotes was most likely a ranch post office and perhaps a rest stop on the roads from Saguache to the Rio Grande Valley. Ranching and farming are the present-day activities in the area.

To visit this site, drive eleven miles south from Saguache on US Highway 285 to Saguache County Road N. Turn west and go two miles to County Road 45, a T intersection. According to the Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report, the Los Mogotes Post Office was in the southwestern corner of this intersection. That location is open fields but there are buildings visible some distance to the north.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jul 14 1888 ---	NE/4 Sec 3 T42N R7E
	Proposed postmaster - Eugene E. Elliott
Jul 28 1888	Established
Jul 28 1888	Elliott, Eugene E.
Jan 8 1890	Discontinued Papers to La Garita

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM LOS MOGOTES

LOS PINOS

Los Pinos in Saguache County began in the late 1860's. It was the southern of the two agencies created to serve the Ute Indians. Officially it was called The Southern Agency but do not confuse this with the present-day Southern Ute Agency in Southwestern Colorado. Eventually the name Los Pinos was adapted and was the name assigned when a post office opened in 1872.

LOS PINOS – Continued

If you have come over Cochetopa Pass on County Road NN14, from the site of Perry, continue twelve and one-half miles down grade to the junction with Saguache County Road KK14. It is another six miles to the ranch at Los Pinos.

If your direction of travel is from the north, on Colorado 114, then shortly after emerging from the Cochetopa Creek Canyon, turn west on County Road NN14. It is a little less than four miles to the junction with Road KK14.

Chronology of the Post Office

Nov 20 1872	Established
Nov 20 1872	Dole, Stephen A.
Dec 17 1874	Bond, Charles E.
Jan 24 1876	Herbert, Arthur M.
Aug 8 1876	Mack, David Jr.
Sep 7 1876	Harris, E. R.
Nov 27 1876	Bond, Charles E.
Feb 23 1877	Moved to Cochetopa



LOS PINOS / COLO.

June 22, 187-

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	Los Pinos Col	Feb 24 1873	Jan 5 1877
	MS	Mscp	Pen cancel
2	LOS PINOS / COLO.	Jun 22 187-	Sep 1 187-
	CI 10P 24.0	Hstp	Target, 4-ring 18mm,



MARSHALL PASS

Marshall Pass, at 10,846 feet altitude, was the location of the highest railroad crossing of the Continental Divide in the United States. The pass was named for Lieutenant William L. Marshall who, legend has it, traversed the pass in 1873 or 1874 en route to a dentist. Marshall was a member of the Wheeler Survey working in southwestern Colorado.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad chose Marshall Pass for its main line route to cross the Continental Divide from the Arkansas River Valley to the Gunnison River Valley. Reaching the top of the pass in 1882, the railroad constructed facilities that included water tanks, turn-tables, a brick boarding house, brick privies and a lookout tower attached to the brick station house, which in turn was connected to the trains with a wooden snow shed. A post office operated at the pass to serve the resident railroaders and was very popular with tourists as an unusual place from which to mail postcards to friends. The railroad over Marshall Pass was officially abandoned December 31, 1954 and was torn up in 1955. All that remains at the summit are some deteriorating foundations.

During the Second World War, the U. S. Army operated a signal and weather station at the pass and the postmaster frequently included patriotic slogans within the Marshall Pass postmark, or added patriotic handstamps to envelopes sent to receive the Marshall Pass postmark.

The road to Marshall Pass begins at US Highway 285, six miles south of the junction of US 285 and US 50 in Poncha Springs. There, Chaffee County Road 200 to the left, goes through the site of Mears and at two and a half miles reaches the site of Shirley. From Shirley, you begin the ascent to the summit of Marshall Pass. There are two roads on which to begin. The first (from the east) goes to the campgrounds at O'Haver Lake. The second road, which begins near the small parking lot at the Shirley site, follows the railroad grade and at about one mile intersects the road to O'Haver Lake. Be sure to go straight ahead at this intersection. It is twelve miles to the summit of the pass. The road is good, however at times narrow, and can be rough. A four-wheel drive vehicle is not necessary. You will have no trouble recognizing the site when you reach the summit of the pass. The road down the west side to Sargents on US Highway 50 is wider and, in August 2003, was smoother than the road on the east side of the pass. It is a little less than sixteen miles from the summit to Sargents. The trip over Marshall Pass, in good weather, is highly recommended.

It should be noted that one reference "promotes" Lieutenant Marshall to the rank of General.

Chronology of the Post Office

Dec 20 1918	---	SE/4 Sec 24 T48N R6E 10 feet on south side of D&RG tracks	
		Applicant for postmaster - Edward Haley (telegraph operator)	
Mar 6 1919		Established	
Mar 6 1919		Haley, Edward	
Oct 17 1923		Jones, Carl C.	Confirmed
Jul 22 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Assumed charge
Aug 11 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Acting
Oct 1 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Confirmed
Nov 15 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Commissioned
Aug 27 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Assumed charge
Oct 8 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Acting
Sep 31 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Confirmed
Oct 12 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Commissioned
Nov 20 1939		Latham, Gustavus A.	Assumed charge
Jan 2 1940		Latham, Gustavus A.	Acting
Feb 13 1940		Thornburgh, Frank A.	Confirmed
Mar 15 1940		Thornburgh, Frank A.	Commissioned
Apr 1 1940		Thornburgh, Frank A.	Assumed charge
Dec 3 1940		Ordered closed	

MARSHALL PASS – Continued

Dec 31 1940	Discontinued Mail to Sargents	
Feb 10 1942	Re-established	
Feb 10 1942	Baker, Willard K.	Confirmed
Feb 20 1942 ---	SE/4 Sec 24 T48N R6E 1 mile west of Poncha Creek	
	Applicant for postmaster - Willard K. Baker	
Feb 25 1942	Baker, Willard K.	Commissioned
Feb 10 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Acting
Feb 25 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Assumed charge
Apr 10 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Confirmed
Apr 30 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Commissioned
Nov 18 1952	Ordered closed	
Sep 30 1952	Discontinued Mail to Sargents	



MARSHALL PASS / COLO.

August 21, 1942

“REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR” added below the bars

With handstamped tourist cachet and signed by postmaster

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	MARSHALL PASS, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x14mm	Jun 30 1924 Oct 11 1938
2	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Nov 3 1940 Oct 1 1952
2.1	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x19mm, "REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR" below bars	Aug 21 1942
2.2	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x19mm, "REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR" within bars	Dec 7 1942 Jan 25 1943
3	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 11P 29.0/18.0	Htsp No killer	Nov 11 1942

MARSHALL PASS – Continued



2.2



3

MARSHALLTOWN

Marshalltown, established in 1880, was a small settlement that developed on the ranch of Joseph Sargent at the western foot of Marshall Pass. Sargent was a former employee at the original Los Pinos Indian Agency. The name was chosen for the pass that had been discovered in 1873 or 1874 by Lieutenant William L. Marshall, a member of the Wheeler Survey Party.

The community provided services to travelers on the toll road, built by Otto Mears that, from the east, came up Poncha Creek to the pass and then down Marshall Creek to the Tomichi River.

In 1882 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built over Marshall Pass, eliminating most of the traffic on the toll road. When the railroad reached Marshalltown, the community became a railroad town that would serve as a base for helper engines assisting eastbound trains on the steep grades to the summit of the pass. At that time the name of the post office was changed to Sargents and Joseph Sargent continued as the postmaster of the renamed community.

It seems likely that the change in name was to avoid any confusion between the railroad stations at Marshall Pass and Marshalltown.

Marshalltown, now Sargents, is at the foot of the road over Marshall Pass, on the east side of US 50. The Marshall Pass Road joins US 50 about 200 feet east of the left turn into Sargents from US 50.

Chronology of the Post Office

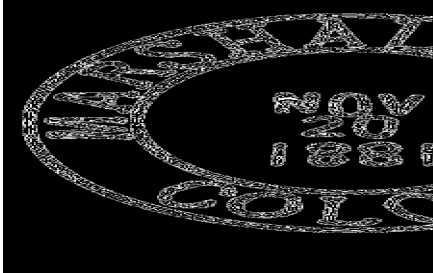
Jun 26 1880	---	Not Surveyed On the east bank of Tomichi Creek 40 rods southwest of Marshall Creek NOTE: Marshalltown is crossed out, and SARGENTS written in Proposed postmaster - Joseph Sargent
Jul 13 1880		Established
Jul 13 1880		Sargent, Joseph
Jul 31 1881		Blackley, Andrew T.
Nov 10 1881		Knight, J. C.
Jan 26 1882		Name changed to Sargents

**MARSHALLTOWN – Continued
Confirmed types of postal markings**

**1 MARSHALLTOWN / COLO
CI 11P 28.5/19.0**

Nov 20 1881

Hstp Grid, 6 Bar?



MINERAL HOT SPRINGS

In 1880 Sylvester A. Jenks filed a homestead on the land around a group of thirty-seven hot springs in the northern part of the San Luis Valley. Over the next few years the springs had different names: Chamberlin Hot Springs, San Luis Hot Springs. Orient Hot Springs and Valley View Hot Springs were other names used but these may have been applied to some springs much closer to the Orient Mine on the east side of the San Luis Valley.

In 1892 under the direction of George Adams, president of the Mineral Hot Springs & Land Company, development of the springs as a resort began. For some reason the name Mineral Hot Springs was not in general use until 1912 when Robert Dunshee Sr. held a controlling interest in the springs.

Mineral Hot Springs enjoyed a run of prosperity during the time that the Orient Mine was in full production. As production from the mine declined, so did the traffic to the hot springs. After all, the springs are in a rather sparsely inhabited area and in Colorado there were other larger and more attractive hot spring resorts to attract the health-seeking public.

My first visit to this place was in 1988. At that time there seemed to be no activity. One could walk among the group of buildings without attracting attention. On a return visit in 2000, activity had returned to the springs. The building next to the highway was freshly painted and was being used as a billboard to attract travelers. The signs read: “Open to the Public,” “Free Tours” and “Wraps/Massage.” The buildings were fenced off from a small parking lot and the complex had been somewhat cleaned up.

My third visit was in 2002. Not a great deal had changed other than that the signs on the building had been painted over and a new sign installed next to the road. The name of the establishment was now the Oh Be Joyful Hot Springs. Yes, there is activity there but I wonder what kind of a massage one can get at the Mineral Hot Springs?

Mineral Hot Springs is located on the east side of Colorado Highway 17 about a mile south of the intersection of Highway 17 with US Highway 285. If you pass by the place, I would be interested in hearing about any changes to the above description.

The August 1947 Geographic Site Location Report, included in the tabulation below, is a bit of a puzzle. George Harlan, in *Postmarks and Places* states: “For two months [1946] until the Mineral Hot Springs postoffice could be closed out, business was conducted in the home of Louise Hoffman McDaniel, the old Martin Rominger place, the site of the territorial post office of Bismark.” Except for the year, this sounds reasonable; however, when I plot the 1947 location, it coincides with the location of the Mirage Post Office not Bismarck. Bismarck was much closer to Mineral Hot Springs.

MINERAL HOT SPRINGS – Continued



The main “resort” building at Mineral Hot Springs, Colorado
 Photograph by William H. Bauer
 May 22, 2002

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 1 1911	---	NE/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 1 mile west of San Luis Creek 250 feet east of D&RG	
May 9 1911		Established	
May 8 1911		Dunshee, Robert G.	
May 2 1914	---	NE/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 1-1/2 miles west of San Luis Creek 400 feet east of D&RG	
Oct 14 1922		Smith, Mary E.	
Mar 15 1926		Collins, Ada W.	Acting
Jul 15 1926		Collins, Ada W.	Appointed
Aug 7 1926		Collins, Ada W.	Commissioned
Oct 13 1927	---	NE/cor SW/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 300 feet east of D&RG	
Oct 24 1941	---	NE/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 250 feet east of D&RG tracks	
Dec 1 1943		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Assumed charge
Dec 15 1943		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Acting
Sep 14 1945		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Confirmed
Dec 28 1945		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Commissioned
Aug 12 1947		McDaniel, Mrs. Ethel L.	Assumed charge
Aug 26 1947	---	New site 4.65 miles south and east of old site 3.35 miles east of highway 17	
Dec 8 1947		Ordered closed	
Dec 15 1947		Discontinued Mail to Moffat	

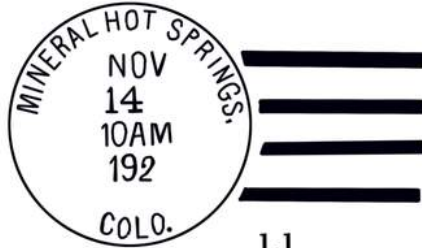
MINERAL HOT SPRINGS – Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

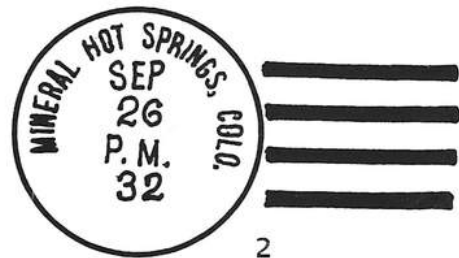
1	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, / COLO. CI 10H 31.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Oct 1 1914 Mar 22 1917
1.1	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Nov 14 192-
2	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, COLO. CI 10H 31.0	4bars P-25x19mm	Sep 26 1932
3	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Jun 25 1937 Nov 8 1943



1



1.1



2



MIRAGE

There have been several statements made about Mirage that I find hard to reconcile with the existing location of the site. The Mirage Post Office was the successor to the Cotton Creek Post Office and it obviously provided postal services to a considerable area east of Colorado Highway 17 and between Moffat and Villa Grove. However, there is little evidence to support the existence of a sizeable community.

On the south side of Saguache County Road AA there is a small ranch with a large two-story log building that may have been the Mirage schoolhouse. The community also had a dance hall or community building. Other than that Mirage was mainly ranches scattered over the Cotton Creek drainage.

The source of the name is open to question. One claim is that it was named for a nearby sand formation that can appear to be a body of water. In the dry, clear air of the San Luis Valley mirages are not uncommon phenomena. Tongue in cheek, I wonder if the name was not selected when the residents concluded that it was a mirage that they could make a good living in this area.

For directions to the site of Mirage and a description of the present day situation, please refer to the discussion of Cotton Creek.

Latitude = 38:06:10 North Longitude = 105:51:50 West

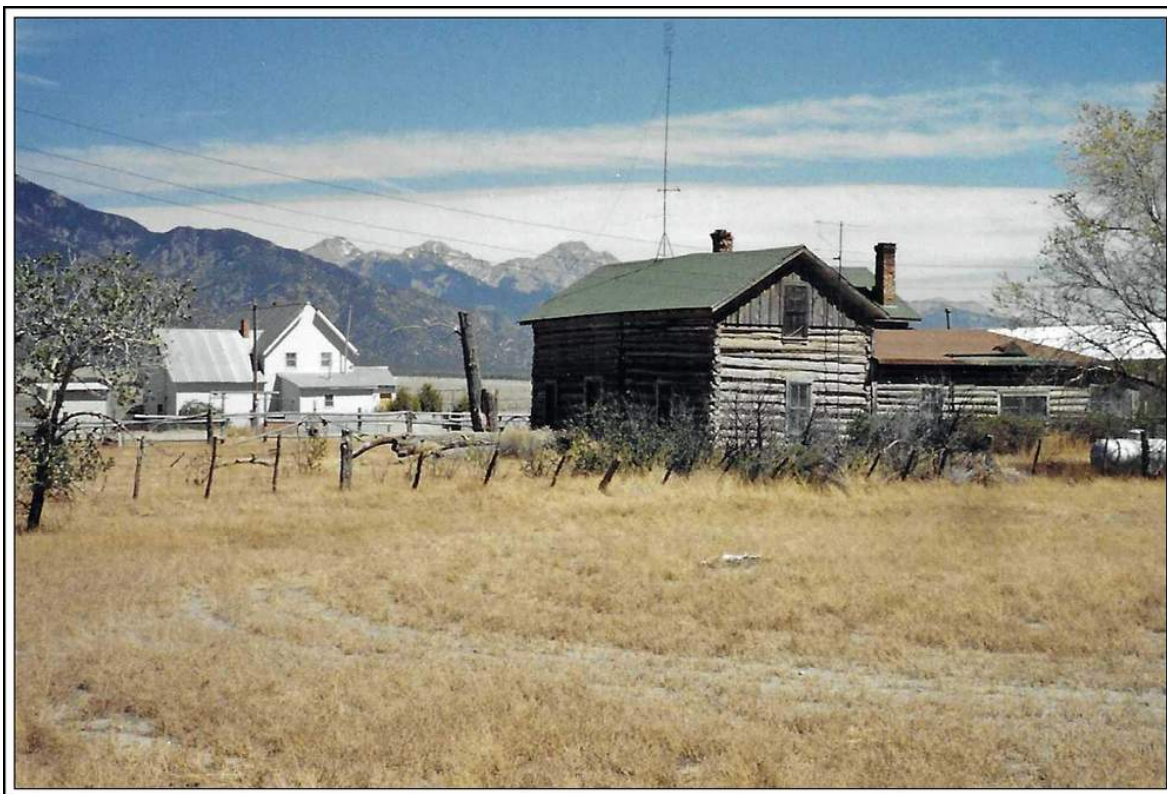
Latitude = 38:07:05 North Longitude = 105:51:50 West MIRAGE CEMETERY

Chronology of the Post Office

- Mar 26 1895 --- SE/4 Sec 34 T45N R10E 1-1/4 miles south of Cotton Creek 4-1/2 miles east of D&RG
- Feb 13 1895 Formerly named Cotton Creek

MIRAGE – Continued

Feb 13 1895	Bennett, James W.	
Apr 20 1898	Winkler, Emil A.	
Feb 28 1902	Kuehnlein, Milton A.	
May 2 1903	Ordered closed Mail to Villa Grove effective May 15 1903	
May 13 1903	Snyder, Clinton B.	
May 14 1903	Closing order rescinded	
Jan 25 1916	Gariss, Margaret	
Mar 6 1918	Tobler, Edwin	
Apr 21 1920	Cox, George R.	
Nov 16 1921	Gullett, Virgil	
Aug 21 1924	Sharp, John A.	
Mar 31 1925	Hayes, Mary J.	Acting
Dec 2 1925	Hayes, Mary J.	Appointed
Dec 31 1926	Ordered closed	
Jan 31 1927	Discontinued Mail to Mineral Hot Springs	

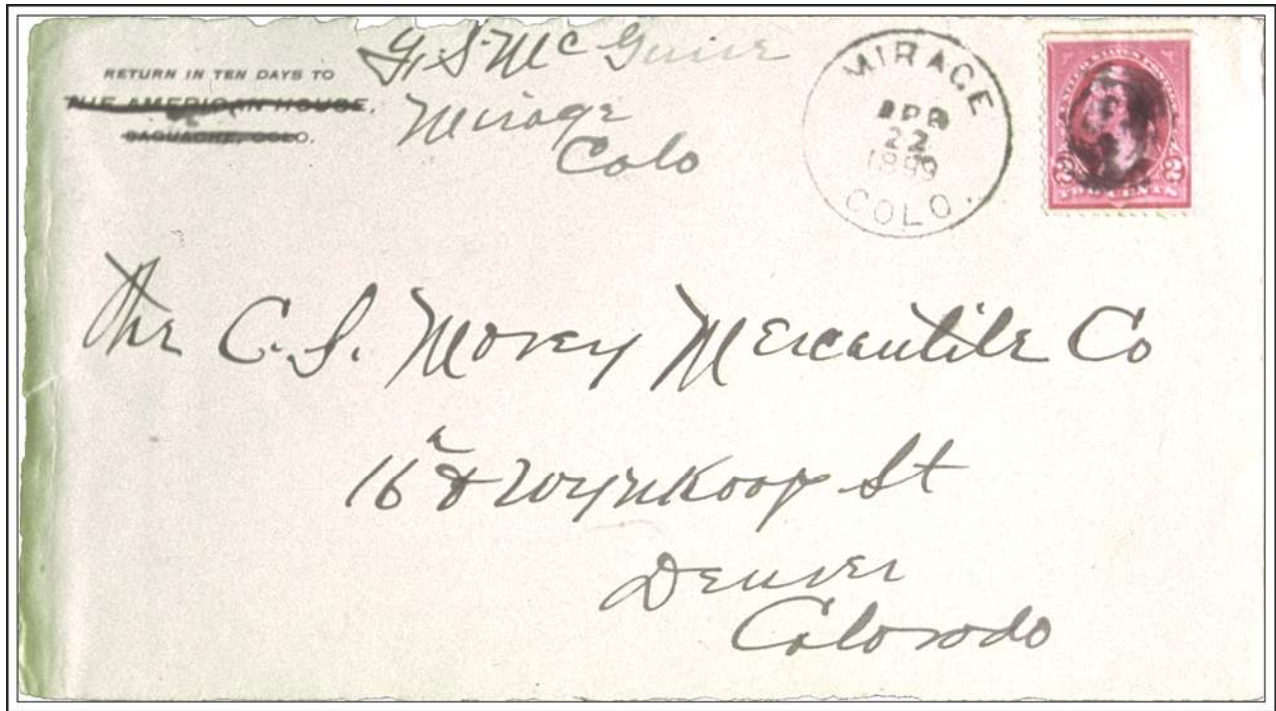
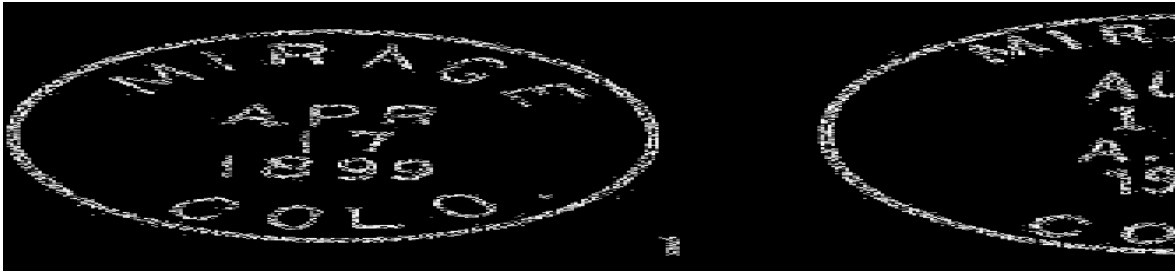


Ranch buildings at or near the site of Mirage, Colorado
 Photograph by James L. Ozment May 22, 2002

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	MIRAGE / COLO. CI 10P 27.5	Hstp Target	Apr 17 1899	Apr 22 1899
2	MIRAGE, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x13mm	May 14 1908	Dec 21 1914
3	MIRAGE / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Mar 14 1923	

MIRAGE – Continued



MIRAGE / COLO.

April 22, 1899

MOFFAT

In 1890 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad continued building south from Villa Grove to Alamosa. Once the railroad reached the floor of the San Luis Valley the tracks were laid in a straight line, without a single curve, to Alamosa. This was once one of the longest railroad “tangents” in the world.

At the time of the railroad’s construction, David H. Moffat was president of the D&RG. The town of Moffat, named in his honor, was established at a new siding on the railroad, one of several sidings along the route to Alamosa.

The San Luis Town & Improvement Association laid out the town. George H. Adams, S. N. Wood, Otto Mears, J. W. Gilluly and other railroad officials promoted the town. At one time Moffat was ranked first in Colorado as a stock loading site. The depot at Moffat was also the point from which freight was offloaded to wagons for transport to the town of Saguache, twelve miles to the northwest.

MOFFAT – Continued

The soil around Moffat was fertile but the problem was water. There were plans for a large irrigation district but the system never materialized. Without sufficient water the land boom faded and Moffat settled into a life as a small supply center and shipping point.

The railroad is gone but Moffat still exists on Colorado Highway 17. There are a number of residences, an architecturally interesting church and a few agriculture related businesses. Moffat is at the junction with the road east to Crestone. The post office is on the west side of Highway 17.

Latitude = 37:59:56 North Longitude = 105:54:34 West

Chronology of the Post Office

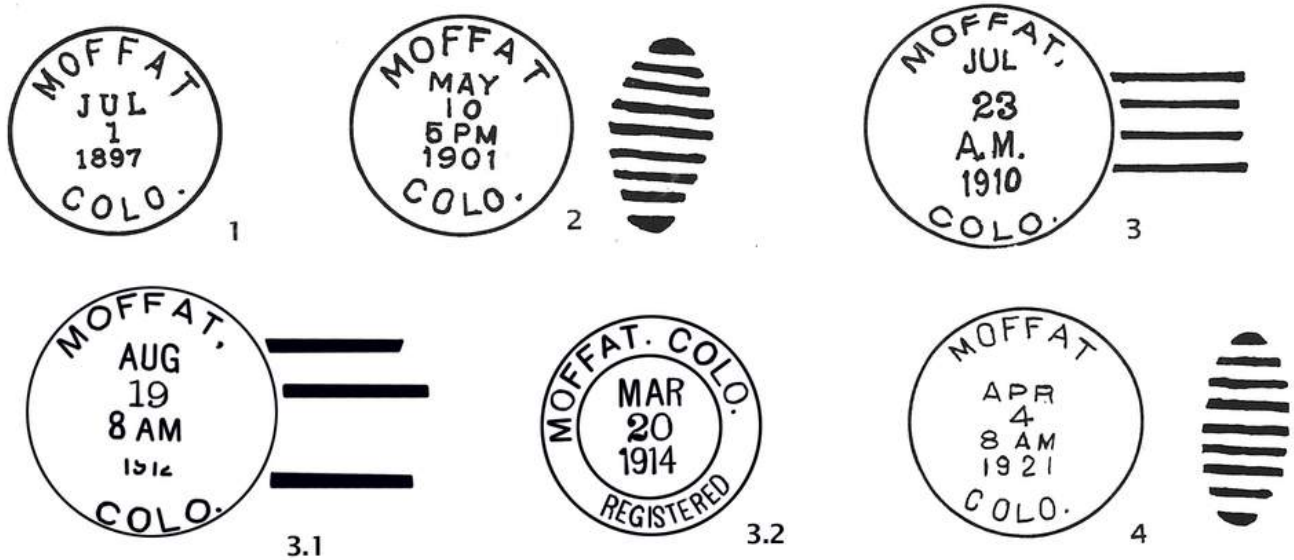
Aug 9 1890	---	SE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E 180 feet west of D&RG tracks Proposed postmaster - James W. Rambo	
Aug 20 1890		Established	
Aug 20 1890		Rambo, James W.	
Dec 9 1890	---	SE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E 350 feet from Moffat Depot of D&RG	
Oct 12 1894		Holcomb, Orville W.	
Aug 22 1901		Feast, Samuel	
Apr 3 1903		Coleman, James N.	
May 2 1914	---	SE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E 320 feet east of D&RG tracks	
Jan 5 1915		Phillips, James E.	
Feb 28 1916	---	NE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E	
Jun 11 1929		Morris, Flora E.	Acting
Sep 25 1929		Morris, Flora E.	Appointed & Confirmed
Oct 12 1929		Morris, Flora E.	Commissioned
Oct 20 1941	---	SW/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E (Fifth St.) 150 yards east of railroad station D&RG 1 mile west of San Luis Creek	
Jun 30 1951		Garner, Mrs. Cora E.	Assumed charge
Jul 19 1951		Garner, Mrs. Cora E.	Confirmed
Nov 30 1951		Gray, Mrs. Ruby M.	Assumed charge
Dec 18 1951		Gray, Mrs. Ruby M.	Acting
Feb 8 1952		Biggs, Kenneth L.	Appointed & Confirmed
Feb 20 1952		Biggs, Kenneth L.	Commissioned
Feb 29 1952		Biggs, Kenneth L.	Assumed charge
Jun 17 1978		Biggs, Mrs. Doris O.	Officer in charge
Jan 13 1979		Biggs, Mrs. Doris O.	Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Not present	Jul 1 1897 Dec 13 1898
2	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval	May 10 1901 Aug 19 1908
3	MOFFAT, / COLO. CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-??x13mm	Jul 23 1910
3.1	MOFFAT, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-??x20mm	Aug 19 1912
3.2	MOFFATT. COLO. / REGISTERED CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Mar 20 1914
4	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval	Apr 4 1921
5	MOFFAT, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Sep 29 1931 Nov 14 1936
6	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 11P 28.0/18.0	4bars S-23x15mm	Oct 24 1938

MOFFAT – Continued

7	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Jan 8 1938 Sep 17 1964
8	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-19x19mm	Jul 29 1948
9	MOFFAT, CO / 81143 CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-24x19mm	Nov 10 1966 Apr 29 1976
10	MOFFAT, CO / 81143 CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-25x18mm	Apr 13 1983 Mar 26 1993



Auxiliary Marking

A1 MOFFAT, CO 81143-9998
SL 00R 56.0x4.0

Feb 27 1990

Hstp No killer



ORIENT

Orient was a mining community, but it was limonite iron ore, not gold and silver, that was produced at Orient. The iron ore at Orient was shipped to Pueblo to feed the blast furnaces of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company at the Minnequa Works.

Frank Haumann discovered the iron deposits in 1870. Haumann recorded a half-dozen claims and a small community bearing his name was established. The claims were sold to The Colorado Coal & Iron Company, later Colorado Fuel & Iron, and the Orient Mine was opened. In 1881 the Denver & Rio Grande built over Poncha Pass to Villa Grove and constructed a railroad spur line to the Orient Mine.

At its peak the Orient Mine was shipping 200 tons of ore per day to Pueblo and the town had some 400 residents. In 1905 the CF&I lost the lease on the mine and operations ceased. In 1920, CF&I again took over operation of the mine. A new town developed but it was located below the railroad grade and well removed from the original site up the canyon at the mine. There was no post office at the new location of Orient.

To reach the site of Orient, begin just north of the junction of US Highway 285 with Colorado Highway 17. Go six and one-half miles east on Saguache County Road GG. At the fork, keep to the left on the road to Valley View Hot Springs for another mile. Valley View Hot Springs is an active resort and there is a welcome center and a gate. Jim Ozment and I visited the place in May 2002. We were given a token for the gate, a key to another gate and allowed to go on to the Orient Mine, which is about a mile beyond the resort. No buildings remain at the mine but there are many foundations and large tailing piles so it is worth the visit if you are given permission to enter. Be aware, the Valley View Hot Springs Resort is at the least a “clothing optional” resort.



Mine dumps and foundation remnants at the site of Orient, Colorado

Photograph by William H. Bauer

May 22, 2002

ORIENT – Continued

Chronology of the Post Office

- Sep 29 1894 --- SE/4 Sec 25 T46N R10E Sketch map shows it at the end of the Orient Branch of the D&RG (NE/4 of SE/4)
Proposed postmaster - Albert L. Munkres
- Oct 15 1894 Established
- Oct 15 1894 Munkres, Albert S. [SRM: signature on Site Report clearly is not S.]
- Feb 1 1898 Buckland, Charles S.
- Apr 4 1902 Chambers, John E.
- Jul 10 1903 Wilson, Charles P.
- Jun 16 1904 Clancy, Herbert C.
- Apr 21 1905 Ordered closed
- May 15 1905 Discontinued Mail to Villagrove



ORIENT / COLO.

June 25, 1901

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 **ORIENT / COLO.**
CI 10P 27.5

Jun 25 1901

Hstp Cork, smudge



ORIENTAL

Oriental was located at the western tollgate for the toll road over Hayden Pass to the Westcliffe area. There was some mining in the vicinity but it was not profitable and soon ended. The road over Hayden Pass was difficult and it still is. When the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad reached the site of Villa Grove, traffic on the Hayden Pass Toll Road nearly ceased and the Oriental community did not survive. The common statement is that the name Oriental was chosen because of the numbers of Chinese that were working the nearby mines.

The site is not an easy one to locate. Begin at Villa Grove on US Highway 285. Take the road east towards Hayden Pass. This road drops into the valley, crosses San Luis Creek and begins the climb towards the pass. A little over two miles from the creek there is a somewhat more level area. Oriental may have been there or possibly down the slope to the south on Silver Creek. It is not clear that the present Hayden Pass Road is on the same track as the original road. In any event, no structures remain in the area.

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 10 1881	---	NW/4 Sec 4 T46N R10E On Silver Creek 4-1/2 miles east of San Luis Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Perry H. Bertschy
Mar 25 1881		Established
Mar 25 1881		Bertschy, Perry H.
Jul 20 1883		Rice, Martin L.
Feb 25 1884		Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	Oriental Colo MS	Mscp Pen cancel	Apr 25 1881
2	ORIENTAL, COLORADO. CI 20P 33.0/31.5	Hstp Positive 5 point star	Jun 10 1881 Jan 24 1884

**PARKVILLE**

Parkville, first known as Amity Camp, was one of the mining communities along the upper portion of Kerber Creek. There were a number of mining claims to the south in US Gulch and a mill was built at the mouth of the gulch. Cabins for the miners and the workers at the mill were scattered around the mill and in the gulch.

When the post office at Sedgwick was closed, it was moved to Parkville. The Parkville Post Office was open for a little more than one year before it too closed and Claytonia was left as the only post office serving the middle portion of the Kerber Creek Valley.

The site of Parkville is a little more than a mile west of the site of Claytonia. It was on the south side of Kerber Creek, and the remnants of the mill are clearly visible from Saguache County Road LL56. There are also some recent buildings and a couple of older buildings near the old mill site.

Parkville is nine miles west from US Highway 285.

PARKVILLE – Continued

Latitude = 38:13:38 North Longitude = 106:06:00 West

Chronology of the Post Office

No separate entry in the Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County.
See Sedgwick

Jan 12 1885	Formerly named Sedgwick
Jan 12 1885	Hurt, James L.
Mar 2 1886	Discontinued Papers to Claytonia

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PARKVILLE

PERRY

Almost nothing has been reported about this post office location. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report leaves an impression that Abraham Perry was doubtful as to the county where he was located. That same report poses the possibility that there was some attempt at mining in the area. The dates that the office existed, 1896-1898, are in line with the excitement generated by the near turn-of-the-century discoveries in the so-called Gunnison Gold Belt that produced the mines at Vulcan and Iris. By that time, major traffic over Cochetopa Pass had ceased.

The Site Location Report provides a location, which if correct, would place Perry close to or on the Continental Divide at Cochetopa Pass (10,032 feet).

Jim Ozment and I visited Cochetopa Pass in September 2002. There is a small, relatively level area near the summit and some evidence of human activity. We found nothing that we could confirm as the remains of a building, so the precise location of Perry is subject to revision.

From the site of Rock Cliff, continue six and one-half miles west to Saguache County Road NN14. This should be marked as the road to Cochetopa Pass. Colorado Highway 114 crosses the Divide at North Pass. From the point of departure at Colorado 114 it is ten miles to Cochetopa Pass, the Continental Divide, and the supposed site of Perry.

Chronology of the Post Office

Nov 5 1896	---	Document filed under Rio Grande County NE/4 Sec 14 T45N R3E About 15 miles southeast of Cochetopa Office and 28 miles northwest of Saguache Proposed postmaster - Abraham Perry Note: NE quarter Sec 14 Township 45 N Range 3 E was claimed by Rio Grande County until after Mineral County was established about the year 1894. There has been patents issued for certain mineral lands in Sec 14 T45N R3E Saguache County in the last year 1895. As to any further information I am not posted. You might gain the required information by looking over the latest maps and charts in Washington Land Office. Yours truly P.M. at Perry
Dec 16 1896		Established
Dec 16 1896		Perry, Abraham
Nov 16 1898		Discontinued Papers to Cochetopa

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PERRY

PRUDEN

Pruden is another of the short-lived post offices in the area northwest of Center that has escaped mention in the Colorado historical literature. The post office lasted for only five years and it is likely best described as a ranch post office.

From Saguache, drive south on US 85 seventeen miles to Saguache County Road G. Turn west and go two miles to the intersection with County Road 45. According to the Geographic Site Location Report, Pruden was in the southeast corner of the intersection. Today that is an open field but there is a good-sized active ranch on the opposite side of Road 45, partially hidden in a grove of cottonwood trees. The ranch has been there for a long time and might date from the time of the Pruden Post Office.

The first postmaster was Elizabeth Pruden so it is logical that the office was named for her family.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 22 1895	---	NW/4 Sec 2 T41N R7E 1-1/2 miles north of La Garita Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Elizabeth Pruden
Mar 5 1895		Established
Mar 5 1895		Pruden, Elizabeth
Nov 22 1898		Collins, Charles F.
Apr 19 1899		Scott, Arthur T.
Dec 18 1900		Ordered closed
Dec 31 1900		Discontinued Papers to Carnero

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PRUDEN

PYKE

Pyke was a short-lived mining camp on Wild Cherry Creek at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The community began in 1896 when Jim and Elmer Dickerson filed a mining claim for the Broken Tree Mine. The settlement was first known as Dickerson. In 1897 Judge Pyke, of Hooper, became interested in the mine and contributed financing for development, hence the source of the post office name. A few other mines were opened but none of them proved to be of sufficient value to sustain continued development and production. Within a very few years the mining ceased and the community was abandoned.

To reach the site of Pyke, drive four and one-half miles south on Colorado Highway 17 from Mineral Hot Springs to Saguache County Road AA. Turn east on Road AA and go due east past the sites of Cotton Creek and Mirage. At Road 64 continue east to just short of the Horan Ranch. At that point the road curves somewhat northward and enters the hills. The remainder of the road is unimproved and not suitable for normal automobiles. About a mile beyond the ranch the road crosses Wild Cherry Creek. There is a building and some abandoned vehicles on the south side of the creek. A short distance before the crossing a side road leads up to a small level area where in 2002 there was a modest sized, canvas covered structure resembling a Mongolian yurt. The yurt appeared to have been abandoned but from the debris we found inside it may have been used for some sort of religious meetings or religious school. Any other evidence of Pyke is well hidden in the brush or long gone.

Chronology of the Post Office

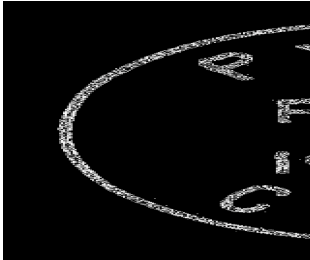
Oct 1 1900	---	NW/4 Sec 4 T44N R11E On the south side of Wild Cherry Creek
		Name proposed as DICKERSON, COVE or PYKE
		Proposed postmaster - Mrs. Nellie F. McGuire
Nov 8 1900		Established

PYKE – Continued

Nov 8 1900	McGuire, Nellie F.
Nov 23 1901	Ferguson, Mrs. Ida C.
Aug 22 1902	Ordered closed
Sep 15 1902	Discontinued Papers to Moffat

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	PYKE / COLO.	Feb 21 1901
	CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, smudged



RITO ALTO

Rito Alto was an early settlement on the wagon road down the east side of the San Luis Valley near the western foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The name was taken from the stream on which it is situated - Rito Alto Creek. The name of the creek is a bit redundant as Rito Alto translates as “High Creek”. The surrounding area was, and still is, ranchland, both cattle and sheep.

A map that accompanies the Geographic Site Location Report for Rito Alto locates the settlements along the wagon road beginning with Villa Grove on the north, then Bismarck, Rito Alto, San Isabel and lastly Christonie (now Crestone).

In the 1860’s several families from Illinois settled along Rito Alto Creek below where the stream emerges from the mountains. The first post office was in a log cabin belonging to Harrison Wales. His son, Edwin, was the postmaster.

The easiest way to visit the site of Rito Alto is to begin on the south side of Moffat at Colorado Highway 17. Take Saguache County Road T a little more than five miles east to County Road 65. Turn north and stay with the main road through several forced turns for a total of seven miles to County Road X. Turn east on County Road X, which within a mile will bring you to the Rito Alto Church and Cemetery. Just beyond the church, the road turns south and crosses Rito Alto Creek to an active and well kept ranch complex at the end of the road. The church and cemetery are well kept and appear to be in use, at least on occasion. A visit to Rito Alto is worth the effort.

After visiting Rito Alto, return to the Road 65 and continue north to Road AA. From there you can go east to the site of Pyke, or west past the site of Cotton Creek and Mirage and back to Highway 17.

Latitude = 39:03:28 North Longitude = 105:48:09 West RITO ALTO CHURCH

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 7 1872	Established
Feb 7 1872	Wales, Edwin M.
Mar 15 1872 ---	SE/4 Sec 18 T44N R11E On south side of Rito Alto Creek
Feb 18 1884	Discontinued Mail to Cotton Creek

RITO ALTO – Continued**Confirmed types of postal markings**

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Rito Alto Col
MS | Aug 13 1872
Mscp Pen cancel |
| 2 | RITO ALTO. / COL'O.
CI 10P 25.0 | May -- 188- Nov 30 188-
Hstp No killer, Small stars at sides of CDS |



The Rito Alto Church and entrance to the Rito Alto Cemetery

Photograph by William H. Bauer

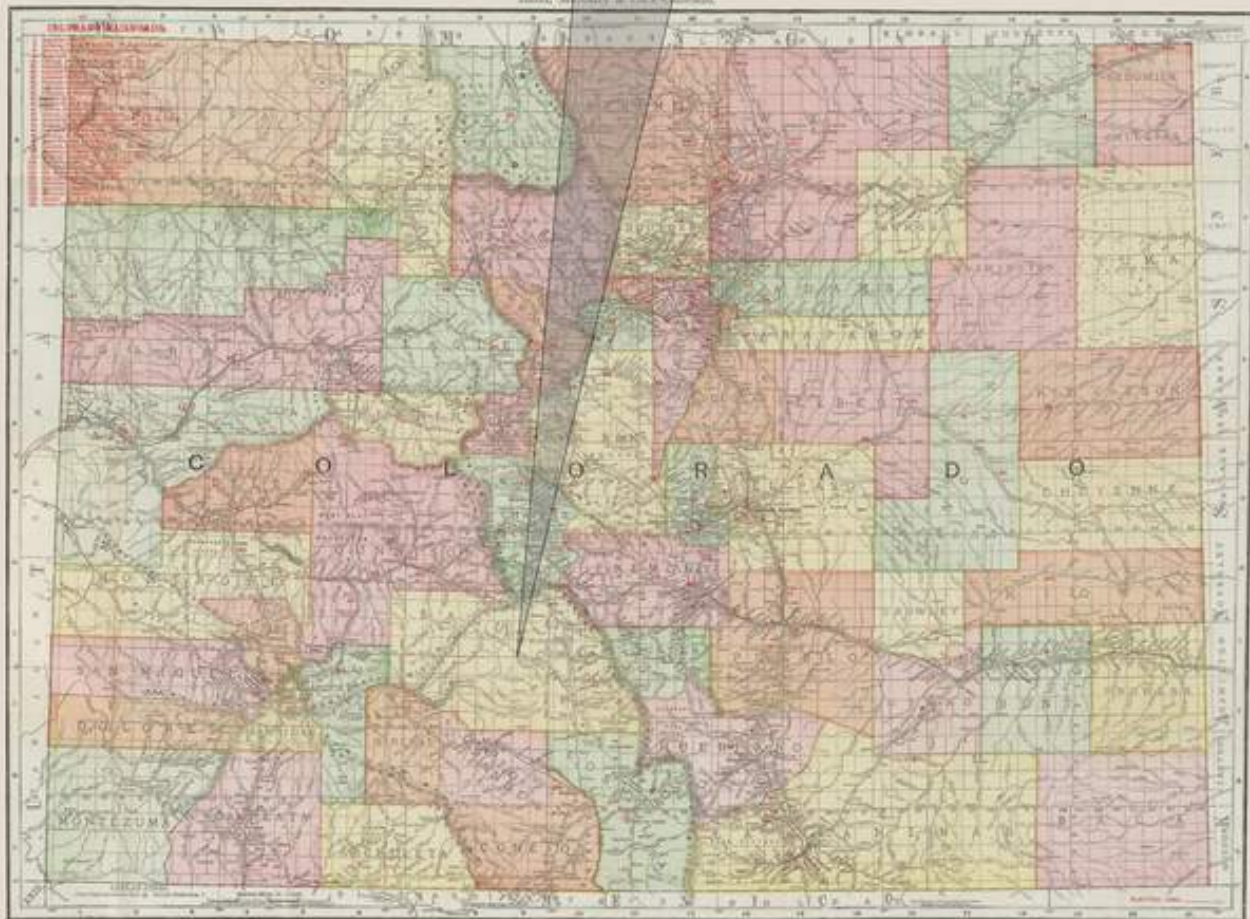
May 22, 2002

ROCK CLIFF

Rock Cliff was located on Saguache Creek in a park-like area some fifteen miles west of Saguache. It was on the wagon road to Cochetopa Pass and the Gunnison Country.

Captain G. V. Gideon, Major Monk, Lieutenant Hemming and Mssrs. Henderson and Hodding were among the early settlers. These men were reportedly retired British merchant mariners. They combined to acquire 2,000 acres of land along the creek. Samuel Houghland was another prominent rancher in the area.

Saguache County



Map courtesy of <http://www.davidrumsey.com>

Established: December 29, 1866

County Seat: Saguache



SAGUACHE COUNTY

By William H. Bauer

Saguache County lies in the south-central portion of Colorado. It is bounded on the east by the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range, on the north by the southern end of the Saguache Range and on the west by the eastern portion of the San Juan Mountains. The dominant feature of the eastern half of the county is a broad, nearly level basin - the San Luis Valley. The Continental Divide cuts Saguache County from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. North of the Divide the drainage is to the Gunnison River; south of the Divide the drainage is to the Rio Grande River. A number of streams drain from the mountains into the San Luis Valley but they quickly sink into the valley floor.

The San Luis Valley is a northern extension of the Rio Grande Rift and as part of that tectonic feature the area has a not so distant history of volcanic activity. This is still expressed in the form of thermal springs such as the ones at Mineral Hot Springs and near Orient. Well water is often geothermally heated and it is from one such well that the Colorado Alligator Farm is able to keep its reptiles happy.

The area of Saguache County was the territory of the Ute Indians. In the eighteenth century, Spanish exploration parties passed through the area. In 1806 the exploration party, under the command of Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike came over Music Pass and into the valley. Subsequently, fur trappers frequented the area or passed through it on the way into the western portion of Colorado. John C. Fremont crossed the county on one expedition but on another was trapped in the San Juans, and barely escaped alive. In 1863 the Gunnison Party came through, going over Cochetopa Pass, searching for practical route for a transcontinental railroad.

Settlement began in the late 1850's with immigration from New Mexico. With the departure of the Ute Indians the area was open to white settlement and gradually sheep and cattle ranching spread throughout the area.

There were some early mineral discoveries but it was not until the later part of the nineteenth century that significant mining began. Even then the mining activity was short-lived. The best mines were on the eastern side of the valley, from Crestone south to the northern edge of the Great Sand Dunes. However, most of those mines were on the Luis Maria Baca Land Grant and when the courts upheld the legality of the grant, the miners were dispossessed. Mining did continue but under lease.

One major mining activity that lasted for more than fifty years was not gold or silver but iron. The iron mine was at Orient in the northeastern corner of the Saguache County. For most of its active life the Orient Mine was under the control of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company of Pueblo and was served by a branch railroad from Villa Grove.

When Colorado Territory was formed in 1861 the future Saguache County was included in Costilla and Lake Counties. Saguache County came into existence on December 29, 1866 as an independent entity. In 1874 there were minor adjustments to the southwestern corner of the county when Hinsdale and Rio Grande Counties were formed. Since then there have been some slight adjustments as surveys penetrated the rugged western portion of the county.

Today the eastern boundary is along the crest of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains shared with Fremont, Custer and Huerfano Counties. The southern, east-west boundary is shared with Alamosa and Rio Grande County and an irregular portion with Mineral County. On the west Hinsdale and Gunnison County form the boundary. On the north Gunnison and Chaffee are the bordering counties.

The San Luis Valley was a major avenue of travel for the Native Americans. They followed the Rio Grande or came through the passes in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, principally La Veta, Music and Medano Passes, and to a lesser extent Hayden Pass. From the north, Poncha Pass gave access to the

valley and Cochetopa Pass and North Cochetopa Pass gave access to and from the Gunnison River and Western Colorado. Today only North Cochetopa Pass and Poncha Pass are prime travel routes over the mountains.

In the 1870's the Rio Grande Railroad built over La Veta Pass and on to Durango but it did not enter Saguache County. It was not until the 1890's that the Rio Grande built south from Salida, over Poncha Pass and down the valley to Alamosa. That segment of railroad earned fame for its 51-mile long tangent through the San Luis Valley, the longest stretch of perfectly straight railroad track in the United States. With the development of extensive farming, the San Luis Valley Railway built north from Monte Vista to Center.

In the twenty-first century, Saguache County depends largely on a network of county roads. However they neither cross the Sangre de Cristos nor penetrate very deep into the western mountains. US Highway 285 enters the county by way of Poncha Pass, curves west around the northern end of the valley to Saguache, the county seat, and then runs due south to Monte Vista and US 160. Colorado 114 begins at Saguache and climbs over North Cochetopa Pass to join US 50 near Parlin. A few miles south of Villa Grove, Colorado Highway 17 branches from US 285 and runs south to Alamosa.

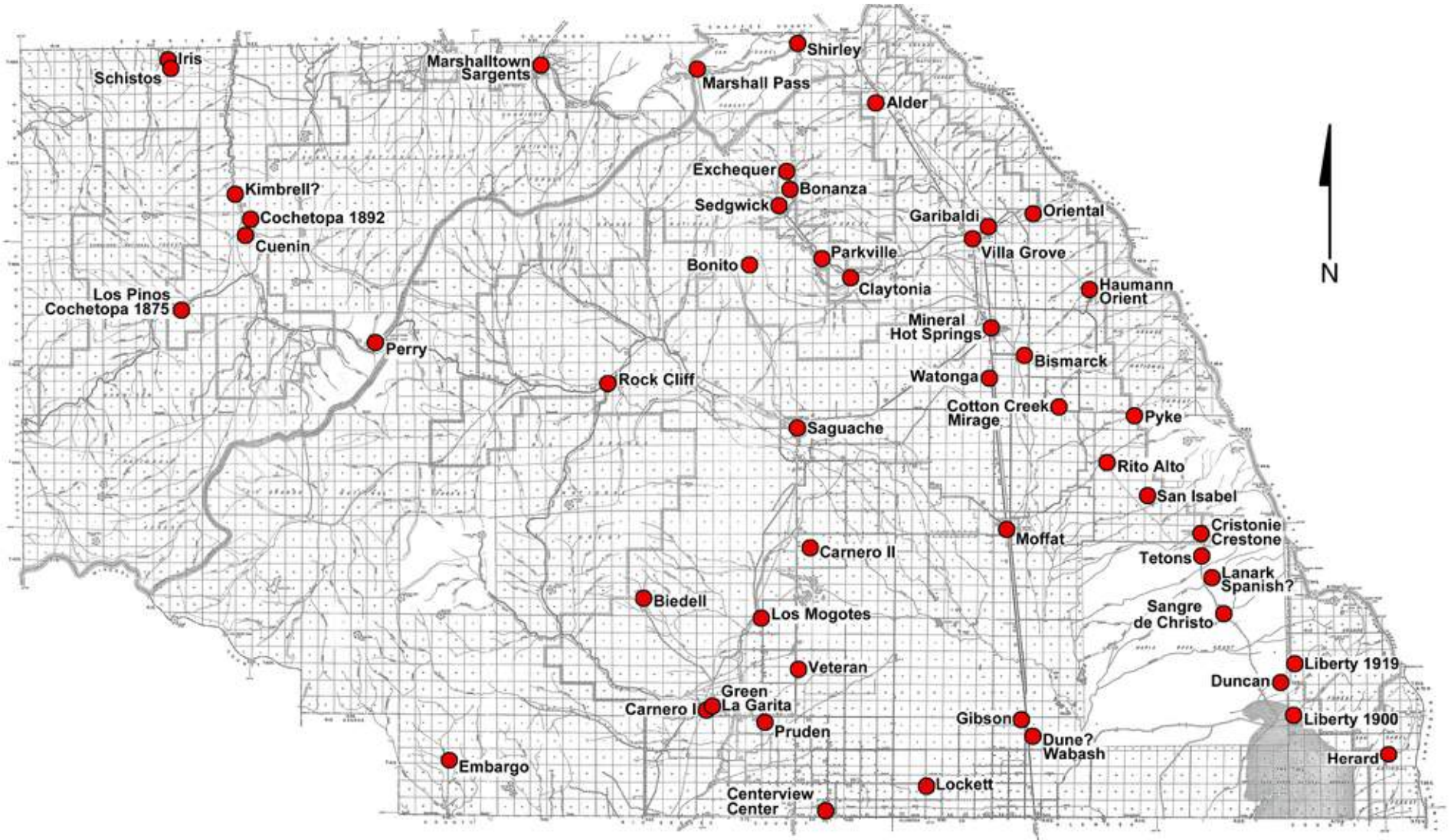
Other than mining, industry has played almost no part in the economy of Saguache County. Sheep and cattle ranching have been important since the first settlers arrived. Farming has had an up and down history but is still a major factor in the county's economy. Potatoes have been a big crop but other vegetables are also grown.

The major obstacle to farming is water. The climate is semi-arid in the best years, so irrigation is essential. Stream flow is intermittent and there is some irrigation from the Rio Grande System. Well water supplies much of the irrigation. However, the near level surface of the valley often works against irrigation. Where there is poor subsurface drainage, the irrigation water brings alkali and other salts to the surface, turning the land unproductive.

For the tourist, Saguache County offers the broad scenic vistas of the San Luis Valley, the rugged panorama of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation. And, if your imagination is in high gear or the evening's margaritas are potent, you might even see a UFO in the sky over the San Luis Valley.



This is all that reminds [sic] in Exchequer, Colorado
Photograph by [Scrubbhiker \(USCdver\)](#) July 27, 2019



Post Office Location Map – Saguache County

ALDER

Initially this location was known as Emmet's Station and was on the Barlow and Sanderson stage road from Canon City to Saguache. When the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was constructed over Poncha Pass in 1881, the railroad placed a station and watering tank at Emmet's Station. To the railroad the site was best known as Round Hill but in that same year, when a post office was obtained, it took the name Alder. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report shows that the name for the post office was proposed as Emmet. The new name was appropriate, as the site was located on Alder Creek near its junction with San Luis Creek.

Alder was never a large community. It provided some supplies for the ranches and the mining activity in the surrounding territory. Alder continued to serve that purpose until well into the twentieth century. Today there remains only a small group of ranch buildings on the east side of US Highway 285. The site is about four miles from the summit of Poncha Pass and eight miles north of Villa Grove.

Latitude = 38:22:10 North Longitude = 106:02:20 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 16 1881	---	SE/4 Sec 35 T48N R8E One mile west of San Luis Creek, 100 yards west of D&RG depot Name proposed as EMMET Proposed postmaster - Jacob H. Pickens	
Aug 29 1881		Established	
Aug 29 1881		Pickens, Jacob H.	
Sep 11 1882		Downman, Joseph B.	
May 1 1883		Byfield, Horace	
Sep 25 1890		Malcom, Margaretta	
Mar 17 1896		Donnell, Lizzie B.	
Feb 9 1901		Warner, Joseph V.	
Sep 14 1901		McKeehan, John S.	
Oct 10 1902		Warner, Joseph V.	
Oct 4 1905		Drott, John H.	
Aug 31 1910		Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove	
Nov 11 1911		Re-established	
Nov 11 1911		Castle, James E.	
Mar 7 1913		Crawmer, M. D.	
Apr 4 1917		Bruner, Anna P.	
Jul 22 1918		Bruner, Robert W.	
Jul 31 1920		Stoddart, George G.	
Apr 13 1921		Carothers, Cora M.	
Oct 6 1924		Elarton, Mrs. Edna M.	Acting
Oct 16 1924		Elarton, Mrs. Edna M.	Appointed
Oct 29 1927		Ordered closed	
Nov 30 1927		Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove	

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	ALDER / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm	Apr 11 1908 Jun 11 1909
2	ALDER, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Aug 31 1911
3	ALDER, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-24x19mm	May 18 1914 Apr 8 1918
4	ALDER, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x19mm	May 31 1921 Nov 12 1927

ALDER – Continued

**BIEDELL**

It is understood that Mark Biedell, a Frenchman, was a rancher in the area where the mining camp of Biedell came into existence about 1883. There is also a claim that Mark Biedell was a merchant in Del Norte who often grubstaked prospectors.

Gold was discovered in 1883 and Biedell assisted in laying out the town that was named for him. The principal mines were the Esperanza, which has been worked off and on for nearly a century since its discovery in 1883, and the Buckhorn. Although rich strikes were made, they were soon involved in litigation. By the time the legal actions concluded in the 1890's, the town was nearly deserted and it never recovered. Biedell has also been referred to as Crystal Hill.

The location is near the headwaters of Biedell Creek beyond where Lime Creek joins Biedell Creek. To reach the site begin at the junction of Saguache County Roads 45 and G, just east of the La Garita Cash Store. Drive north a bit more than two miles to a road junction. Turn northwest on County Road 42K. Four and a half miles from the junction there is a mine on the hill to the north of the road. The mine is large and very visible from the road.

After going a mile or so further beyond the mine, and finding nothing more of interest, I returned to the area below the mine. In looking around the level area along the creek, I found a few scattered boards that were remnants of some sort of a structure. I feel reasonably certain that this was the location for Biedell.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jun 12 1883	--	Sec 28, 33 & 34 T43N R6E 9 miles southeasterly from Carnero Creek Name proposed as BELLVUE. Rejected in favor of Biedell NOTE: "ch n to "Carnero" Apl 28/94 (or 84?)" Has an elaborate accompanying sketch map
Jun 25 1883		Established
Jun 25 1883		Prior, Henry K.
Dec 28 1883		Weiss, Henry
Apr 28 1884		Moved to Carnero

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BIEDELL

BISMARCK

The ranch belonging to Martin Rominger was the centrally located one of a group of ranches in the upper portion of the San Luis Valley. Rominger ran a dairy and at times his supply room served as a store for neighbors needing supplies. As such, it became a meeting place for the ranchers and in 1872 acquired a post office. There was never an organized community but simply a group of ranch buildings.

It is believed that Martin Rominger named the place for Prince Otto Eduard Von Bismarck, the chancellor of Prussia. There was a minor alteration in the spelling by dropping the "c." [SRM: The Site Location Report is for Bismarck with the "c" written and signed by Martin Rominger. I have chosen to use that spelling.]

From Mineral Hot Springs on Colorado Highway 17, drive south one and a half miles to Saguache County Road DD2 and turn east. The site of Bismarck was a little more than a mile east of Highway 17 and on the north side of Road DD2. About a quarter mile north of the road is a group of scattered buildings that are in the proper location for Bismarck. Unfortunately there seems to be a lot of junk in the area.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 7 1872	Established
Feb 7 1872	Rominger, Martin
Mar 14 1872 ---	SW/4 Sec 17 T45N R10E ("I think") Half mile east of San Luis Creek 8 miles southeast of Villa Grove
Oct 10 1879	Discontinued

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BISMARCK

BONANZA

Bonanza was the principal mining town on the upper reaches of Kerber Creek. The first discovery was made on July 9, 1880 by a group of prospectors: C. W. Kelly, I. J. Penny, A. C. Babcock, W. T. Ford, George W. Cline and Charles Taylor. The town grew rapidly and was incorporated on November 1, 1880 with a 280-acre plan of streets and avenues. The population eventually grew to as many as 1,300.

The ores at Bonanza produced silver with copper, lead and zinc. Gold was not significant to the mining in the Kerber Creek District. At its peak, Bonanza had four smelters and nineteen mills. The ores found at Bonanza were not exceptionally rich and the town slowly declined. The Silver Crash of 1893 accelerated the decline. Subsequently there were brief resurgences. In 1917 the Rawley Mine re-opened and a mill was returned to operation. In 1947 the Empress Josephine Mine was re-opened but after a few years it too closed for good.

The following article, describing the woes of Bonanza, appeared in the January 16, 1989 issue of the *Rocky Mountain News*.

FORGOTTEN BUT NOT GONE

EX-BOOM TOWN BONANZA, POP 4 FIGHTS TO STAY ALIVE, HOPES TO GROW

Bonanza (AP) --

The glory years of a century ago saw 40,000 (sic) people in this Colorado mining town. But today, with a population of four, it is just trying to survive.

In just recent weeks its population has been cut nearly in half and the man tabbed as the town's next mayor spends most of his time in Pueblo.

So bleak are the times that the Saguache County commissioners have decided it's not worth the trouble to disincorporate Bonanza.

BONANZA – Continued

The rigors of life in a small town are familiar to Bonanza residents; they drill their own wells, put in septic systems and travel 16 miles to reach the nearest highway.

Then in December, an alert rural mail carrier noticed that Bill and Segrid Costello, town board members in their 80's, had not picked up their mail. He contacted Sheriff Larry Zimmer.

Zimmer found Costello dead of an apparent heart attack. Segrid Costello was unable to get up from the floor where she had fallen. She moved from the area after her release from the hospital.

Then, on Jan. 8, Mayor Mary Taylor, 85, was found dead at her home. She died of natural causes.

Gail Holbrook, voluntary town clerk and married to town treasurer, trustee, and road maintenance man Ed Carpenter, called Taylor "a wonderful mayor and a very colorful person."

Carpenter wants to keep the town alive, just in case anyone should want to move here.

The town's two other residents are Carpenter's son Lewis, who also is on the town board, and the mayor pro tem, the Rev. Richard Becker. He works at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Pueblo.

The Carpenters' said they hope to persuade the priest to take Taylor's place as mayor. Carpenter, 46, says he thinks the town is "better off governed by ourselves. The county really is not interested in us."

The town's income – from the highway users trust fund, cigarette taxes, and a small mill (sic) levy -- is \$2,300 a year, Carpenter said. As the town's part-time maintenance and road worker, Carpenter receives minimum wage for his efforts. He doubles as a truck driver.

He said the town's residents have a "few ideas about how to bring people in," but the town board has not met to discuss them.

Despite obvious drawbacks, Bonanza has some drawing cards, Holbrook said. For example, town trustees persuaded a number of property owners to donate land at the edge of town for a wildlife area.

Bonanza has "solitude and peace and wildlife" to offer, Holbrook said. Bonanza was incorporated at the beginning of its boom days in 1880. Now the town virtually has been forgotten by all but a handful of hardy residents.

But, that's OK. "We love the town and we want to keep it," Carpenter said.

I have twice visited Bonanza, first in 1991 and again in 2001. My observations are not as bleak as the above description might indicate. True, the population is small but a long row of mailboxes at an intersection in Bonanza is an indication of at least a modest number of summer or weekend residents in the vicinity. There are a number of older buildings in the town, some are abandoned but on the south end there are several small homes that have been renovated and form an attractive grouping.

Bonanza is 15 miles west from US Highway 285 at Villa Grove via Saguache County Road LL56 and two miles beyond the site of Sedgwick.

Latitude = 38:17:41 North Longitude = 106:08:30 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 2 1880	---	On the upper fork of Kerber Creek (It is not surveyed).	
		Proposed postmaster - Samuel K. Paxton	
Jul 29 1896	---	SW/4 Sec 25 T47N R7E	
Aug 12 1880		Established	
Aug 12 1880		Paxton, Samuel K.	
Jul 18 1882		Paxton, Samuel K.	P&S [Apptd. by President & confirmed by Senate]
Dec 31 1883		Dicker, James W.	
Mar 18 1885	---	SE/4 Sec 25 T47N R7E	100 yards east of Kerber Creek
Oct 28 1885		Hannegan, William J.	
Dec 2 1889		Coombs, Mrs. Emma S.	
Nov 24 1891		Correll, Richard W.	
Dec 19 1891		White, Norman P.	

BONANZA – Continued



Abandoned building in Bonanza, Colorado

This appears to have been a store and perhaps the post office.

Photograph by William H. Bauer

September 3, 2001

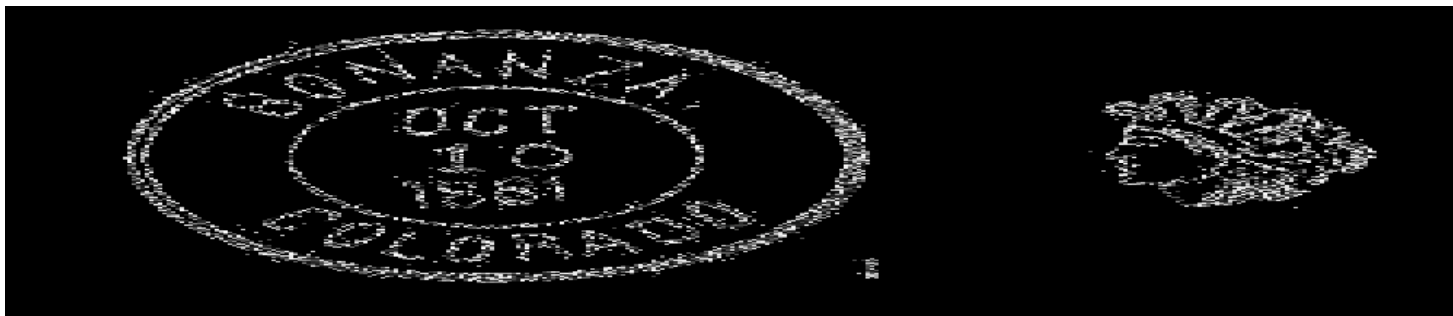
Oct 12 1894	McFarland, Arthur H.	Failed to qualify
Apr 27 1895	Discontinued Papers to Villa Grove	
May 24 1895	Re-established	
May 24 1895	Kenny, James	
Sep 23 1896	Correll, Lillian F.	
Sep 10 1908	Wilson, John L.	
Jul 8 1909	Smith, George W.	
Jun 29 1912	Cartwell, Ben T.	
May 4 1914 ---	SW/4 Sec 25 T47N R7E 85 feet east of Kerber Creek	
Mar 18 1920	Kenney, Robert D.	
Nov 17 1920	Ashley, Reba W.	
May 31 1921	Discontinued Not effected, operation was continuous	
--- -- ----	Closing order rescinded, no date given	
Jun 7 1921	Eck, Theodore	Acting
Jun 27 1921	Re-established (Officially)	
Aug 3 1921	Eck, Theodore	Appointed
Jul 26 1923	Christy, John D.	Acting
Aug 6 1923	Christy, John D.	Appointed
Feb 14 1925	Wirrick, Ralph B.	
Jul 1 1928		Office made Presidential
Aug 1 1928	Williams, Martha E.	Acting
Feb 27 1929	Williams, Martha E.	Appointed
Jul 1 1931		Office relegated
Sep 21 1931	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Possession

BONANZA – Continued

Sep 29 1931	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Acting
Feb 18 1932	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Confirmed
Apr 1 1932	Midwinter, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Commissioned
--- -- ----	Costello, Mrs. Sigrid E.	Name changed by marriage
Apr 25 1938	Ordered closed	
May 14 1938	Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove	

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	BONANZA, / COLORADO CI 21P 31.0/29.0/18.0	Hstp Fancy, Indian Head	Feb 22 1881 Oct 10 1881
2	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Cork, smudge	Dec 23 1883 Jan 10 1887
2.1	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Hstp Target ?	Sep 19 1898
3	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp No killer	Jul 8 1905
4	BONANZA, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x14mm	Feb 5 1908 Jan 15 1910
5	BONANZA / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Nov 2 1912 Jul 3 1936
6	BONANZA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Dec 29 1936 May 13 1938

**BONITO**

About six miles southwest of Bonanza there were two remote mining camps: Bonito and Spook City. Most of what has been written about these two camps deals with Spook City, likely because of that exotic name and it is possible that it was the larger of the two camps. However, Spook City never had a post office and Bonito did. But, there is the possibility that they were really one and the same place.

The USGS Topographic Map for Saguache County does locate both places, less than a mile apart on Ford Creek. In September 2001 Jim Ozment and I headed into the wilderness in search of Bonito. Frankly, I am not certain we found Bonito. More likely we found Spook City.

BONITO – Continued

We began our excursion at Saguache on Colorado Highway 114. Two and seven-tenth miles west of Saguache we turned north from Colorado 114 on to Saguache County Road 43WBB. Five miles later we entered the Rio Grande National Forest and were on Road 880.2. Four miles later we stopped to try and figure out where we were. From some hunters we got a map, which we then attempted to follow. My notes indicate that we turned around and were then on Road 880 from its junction with Road 857. Three miles later we finally found signs of mining activity. Some prospect holes with cribbing. These were on the downhill side and close to the road. It appeared that the Forest Service brought in a dozer and filled the holes to prevent accidents. The question remains: Were we at Bonito or at Spook City? I would like to believe it was Bonito but in any event we decided to call it a day and go back to Highway 114.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 15 1881	---	NW/4 Sec 22 T46N R7E	On both sides of Ford Creek
			Proposed postmaster - Thomas F. Montgomery
Mar 7 1881		Established	
Mar 7 1881		Montgomery, Thomas	
Aug 8 1881		Rowlee, Frank R.	
Jun 20 1882		Stephenson, Cyrus R.	
Aug 28 1883		Discontinued	Mail to Sedgwick

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BONITO

CARNERO (I)

The original Carnero was located on Carnero Creek a short distance east from where that creek exits from the mountains that form the west side of the San Luis Valley. The settlement began in 1870, perhaps a bit earlier. There is a possibility that there was some mining nearby but I doubt that it was of any importance. It is more reasonable to consider Carnero (I) as a small community of sheep and cattle ranchers and as a stage stop on the route down the east side of the San Luis Valley from Poncha Pass to the settlements along the Rio Grande River.

Several of the brief mentions of Carnero do include references to mining activity; however, I believe that the mining was more likely associated with Biedell, which was some ten miles to the northwest.

There also are references to a station on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. That is not possible. The Rio Grande did not build down the San Luis Valley until much later and it was never closer than twenty miles. Perhaps there was a Carnero Station on the railroad but that would likely be near the site of Gibson-Wabash.

The name Carnero is a translation of the Spanish word for mutton and is an indication of the early business of the local ranchers.

To reach the original site of Carnero, drive seventeen miles south from Saguache on US Highway 285 to Saguache County Road G. Five miles west from US 285, turn north for one mile. There is a well-kept, active ranch on the west side of the highway. I believe this was the location of the original Carnero.

When the Carnero (I) Post Office was closed, it was moved a mile or so to the southwest and the name was changed to Green. At the same time the Biedell Post Office closed and was moved east from the mountains to a location in the San Luis Valley, becoming Carnero (II).

CARNERO (I) – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

May 29 1870 ---	Unsurveyed Two miles north of Garita and Carnero Creeks Also has note of name changed to Green
Jun 16 1870	Established
Jun 16 1870	Montoya, Donaciano
Oct 7 1872	Felton, Willard B.
May 17 1875 ---	SW/4 SW/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E On the west side of one branch of Carnero Creek NOTE: "ch n to Green"
Jul 11 1876	Discontinued
Feb 25 1880 ---	SE/4 Sec 30 T42N R7E On south side of Carnero Creek Sketch map shows it on the north side of the creek NOTE: "ch n. to Green March 18/84" Proposed postmaster - Margaret Edith Green
Mar 8 1880	Re-established
Mar 8 1880	Green, Margaret E.
Sep 25 1882	Espinosa, Savina
Feb 2 1883	Green, Miss Margaret E.
Mar 18 1884	Moved to Green

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM CARNERO (I)

CARNERO (II)

As previously mentioned the Carnero Post Office was at two widely separated locations. The second Carnero Post Office opened when the Biedell Post Office closed in March 1884, and little more than a month after the original Carnero Post Office was moved to Green.

It seems obvious that any activity here would have been related to the raising of sheep and cattle. The post office was first open for a bit more than two years. It closed but reopened eight years later in 1894 for a run that lasted until 1911.

This version of Carnero is on the east side of US Highway 285, seven miles south of the town of Saguache. There is nothing to be seen other than a flat, sagebrush covered landscape. I must also wonder why the name Carnero was chosen for this place, as it is a considerable distance from Carnero Creek, the name sake for the original Carnero. It should also be noted that Henry Weiss was the last postmaster at Biedell and the first postmaster at Carnero (II).

One writer claims Carnero became a stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Not true. There was never a railroad at either the original or the second Carnero. Perhaps there was a Carnero Station on the railroad, which was more than twelve miles to the east.

Chronology of the Post Office

Apr 28 1884	Moved from Biedell
Apr 28 1884	Weiss, Henry
Nov 30 1886	Discontinued Papers to Del Norte
Nov 28 1894 ---	E/2 SE/4 Sec 7 T43N R8E Proposed postmaster - Evaline A. Mitchell
Dec 7 1894	Re-established
Dec 7 1894	Mitchell, Evaline A.
Jun 11 1895	Powell, Harry C.
Aug 31 1911	Discontinued Mail to La Garita

CARNERO (II) – Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 CARNERO / COLO.
CI 10P 27.5

Jan 2 1909 Jun 5 1909

Hstp Cork, smudge



CENTER

Center began its existence as Centerview. In 1899 the name was shortened to Center. The town is on the boundary between Saguache County and Rio Grande County, two miles east of US Highway 285.

From its beginnings, the economy of Center has been based on agriculture. It was, and still is, the supply center for a large portion of the northern San Luis Valley and has rail access for shipment via the San Luis Valley Railway. Please refer to the discussion of Centerview for more information about this town.

Latitude = 37:45:11 North Longitude = 106:06:29 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Jul 1 1899	Formerly named Centerview	
Jul 1 1899	Ickes, Theodore E.	
Aug 10 1899 ---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E	
Jan 10 1911	Ickes, Theodore E.	
May 24 1914 ---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E 95 rods north of the San Luis Central Station 84 rods from track	
Sep 22 1922	Dietrich, John M.	P&S
May 22 1923	Sutley, M. M.	P&S
Jul 21 1923	Sutley, M. M.	P&S
Dec 21 1926	Dietrich, John M.	P&S
Feb 25 1931	Dietrich, John M.	P&S
Dec 19 1932	Bennington, George	Acting
Dec 31 1932	Bennington, George	Assumed charge
Nov 25 1933	Sutley, William B.	Acting
Dec 2 1933	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Jan 23 1934	Sutley, William B.	Nominated
Feb 1 1934	Sutley, William B.	Confirmed & Appointed
Feb 26 1934	Sutley, William B.	Commissioned
Mar 6 1934	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Apr 5 1938	Sutley, William B.	Nominated
Apr 8 1938	Sutley, William B.	Confirmed
Apr 12 1938	Sutley, William B.	Appointed Presidential
May 11 1938	Sutley, William B.	Commissioned
May 15 1938	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Nov 7 1941 ---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E	
Jul 13 1942	Sutley, William B.	Nominated
Jul 30 1942	Sutley, William B.	Confirmed
Jul 31 1942	Sutley, William B.	Appointed Presidential
Sep 18 1942	Sutley, William B.	Commissioned

CENTER – Continued

Sep 30 1942	Sutley, William B.	Assumed charge
Jan 15 1955	Fisher, George R.	Assumed charge
Feb 15 1955	Fisher, George R.	Acting
Mar 23 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Nominated
Apr 11 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Acting
Jun 4 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Confirmed, Appd Presid. & Commissioned
Jun 29 1956	Newmeyer, George R.	Assumed charge
Sep 7 1970	Ware, Roger	Officer in charge
Jan 26 1980	Tucker, Mrs. Phyllis A.	Appointed
Feb 22 1980	Ware, Roger	Officer in charge
Mar 11 1980	Bloxsom, Kurt	Officer in charge
Aug 9 1980	Lovato, Manuel T.	Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

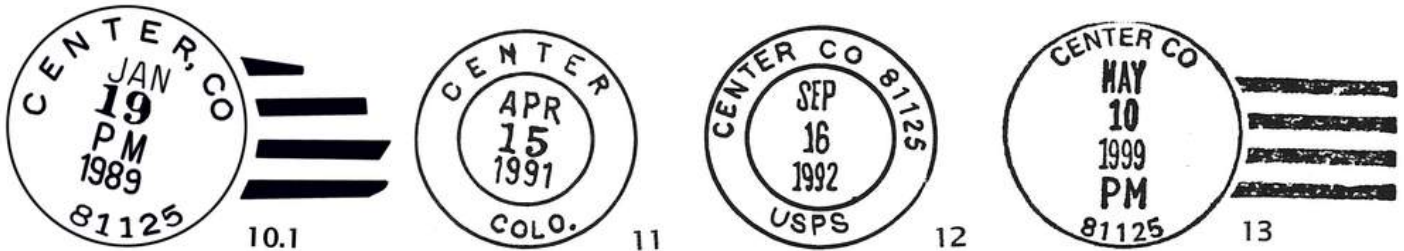
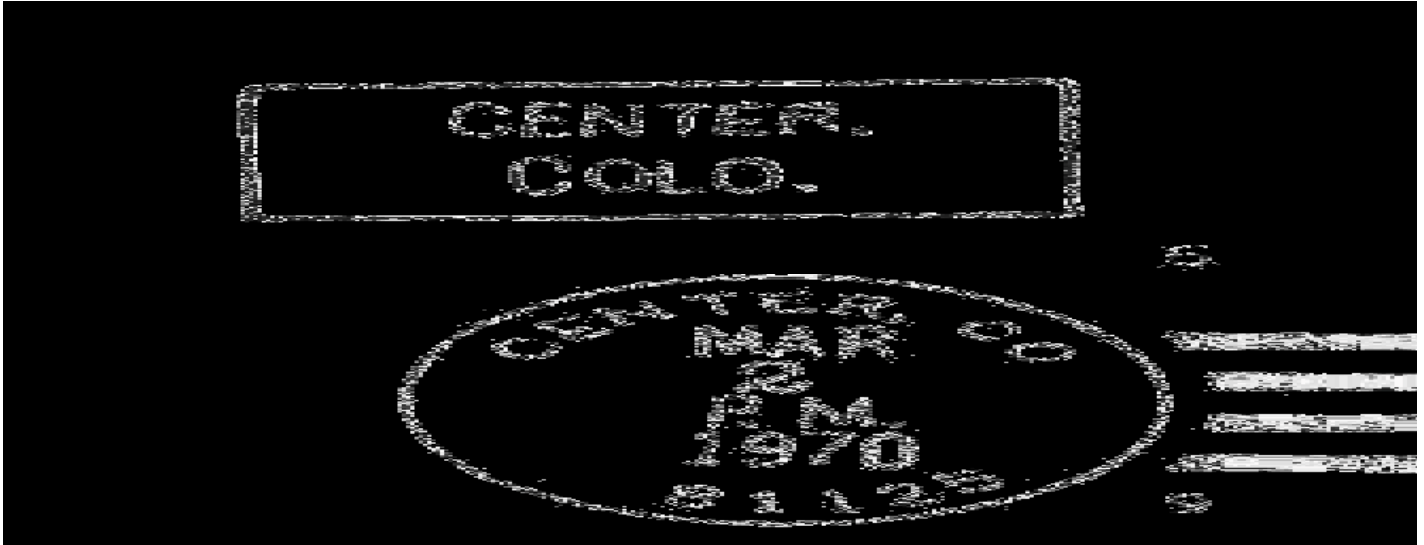
1	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Oct 26 1903 Aug 27 1923
2	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Feb 15 1917
3	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 22.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	Apr 30 1931 Feb 11 1932
3.1	CENTER / COLO. RC 10P 37.0x17.0	Hstp No killer Parcel Post Box style	1930s
4	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 22.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	Oct 16 1935 Jun 16 1948
5	CENTER, COLO. / REGISTERED CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Sep 15 1937 Jan 10 1946



6	CENTER, / COLO. RC 10P 35.0/18.0	Hstp No killer; Parcel Post box style	--- -- 1940s
7	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, oval with 1	Sep 14 1938 Apr 27 1955
8	CENTER / COLO. CI 10P 20.5	Mach 7 wavy lines	May 15 1947 Jan 11 1966
9	CENTER, CO / 81125 CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Mar 2 1970 Mar 13 1978
10	CENTER, CO / 81125 CI 10P 21.0	Mach 6 wavy lines	Aug 21 1969 Jun 3 1991
10.1	CENTER, CO / 81125 CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-??x18mm	Jun 19 1989

CENTER – Continued

11	CENTER / COLO. CI 11P 28.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 15 1991
12	CENTER CO 81125 / USPS CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 14 1992 Sep 16 1992
13	CENTER CO / 81125 CI 10P 30.0	4bars S-21x16mm	May 10 1999



AUXILLARY MARKING

**A1 center, colo.
IR 001 43.0x15.0**

**Dec -- 1909
RETURN TO WRITER in Pointing hand
[NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]**

CENTERVIEW

James L. Hunt, the owner of the land, founded Centerview in 1898. The town was platted the same year. The name was a logical choice as the town is located near the center of the broad San Luis Valley. From there the mountains that rim the valley are visible on the west, north and east.

The San Luis Valley became an area devoted to the large-scale cultivation of vegetables, potatoes being the major crop. Grain and hay were also major crops in the area. Although the area is semi-arid, irrigation from wells made agriculture feasible.

As time passed, a problem developed. The near level valley floor did not allow good drainage from the irrigated fields. Unless drainage ditches could be cut – an expensive effort – there would be a build-up of alkali and the land would become unproductive. With that developing situation, agriculture in the San Luis Valley has slowly shifted from produce to livestock. Potatoes are still important to the Valley’s economy.

CENTERVIEW – Continued

In 1899 the name of the community was shortened from Centerview to Center. This may have been another example of the Post Office Department's efforts to simplify post office names.

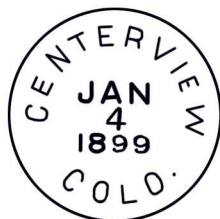
Centerview (Center) is located two miles east of US Highway 285 and is on the boundary between Saguache County and Rio Grande County.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 9 1898	---	SW/4 Sec 33 T41N R8E 600 feet south of the new railroad NOTE : "ch. n. to "Center" Aug 2/99" Proposed postmaster - William H. Cochran
Apr 22 1898		Established
Apr 22 1898		Clapp, Robert E.
Feb 10 1899		Ickes, Theodore E.
Jul 1 1899		Name changed to Center

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 CENTERVIEW / COLO. Jan 4 1899
CI 10P 28.5 Hstp 17mm 4 ring Target



1

CLAYTONIA

Claytonia was a small camp that developed on Kerber Creek during the early days of the mining boom at Bonanza in the upper reaches of Kerber Creek.

The location is about two miles west of Clayton Cone. One report states that it is on what was known as the Clayton Ranch. Thus it seems possible that an early settler by the name of Clayton gave his name to the mountain and later to the small settlement.

Claytonia was about halfway between Villa Grove and Bonanza and was likely a way station and rest stop along the road. At one time there may have been as many as sixty residents at Claytonia.

The site is also where, from the south, Little Kerber Creek joins the main stream of Kerber Creek. There are roads to the south that were at one time used to reach the sites of Bonita and Spook City. Today those roads are poorly maintained, confusing and not recommended unless you have detailed maps and an excellent sense of direction.

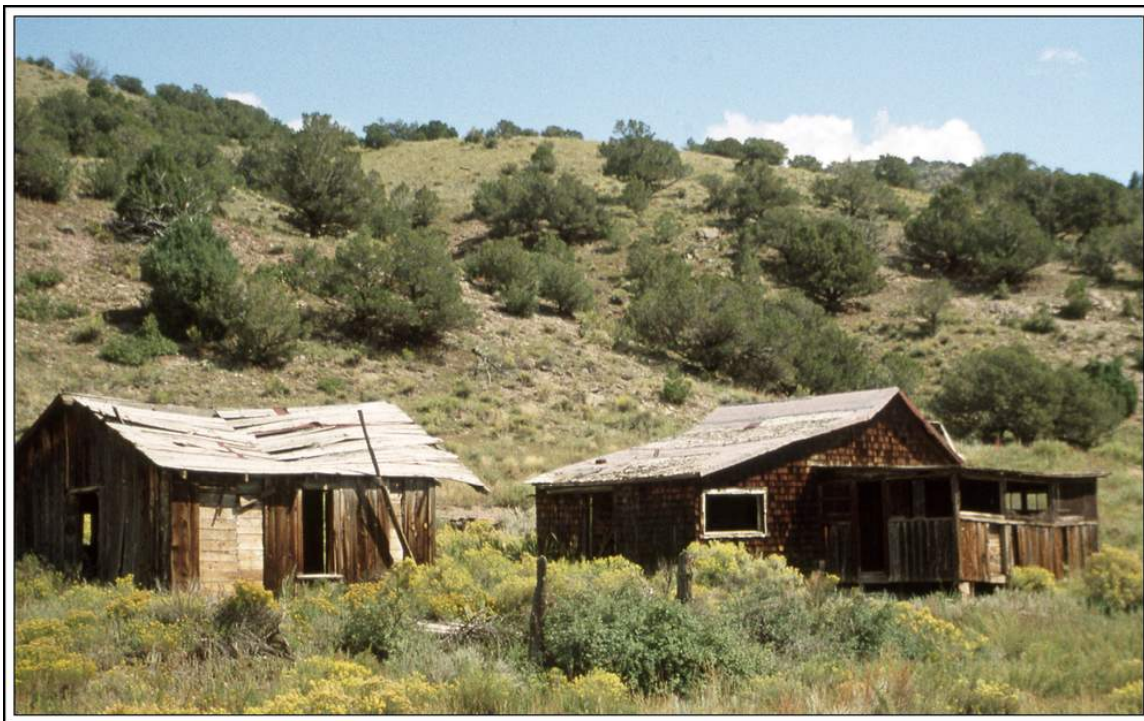
To reach the site of Claytonia (and continue on to Bonanza) from US Highway 285 turn west onto Saguache County Road LL56. The turn is about a quarter mile north of Villa Grove. Drive west approximately eight miles to where the road to Ute Pass and Columbia Gulch branches to the south. On the north side of the road are the ruins of three buildings, all that remains of Claytonia.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 25 1881	---	NW/4 Sec 27 T46N R8E 1/4 mile south of Kerber Creek Proposed postmaster - Michael S. Crane
Mar 11 1881		Established
Mar 11 1881		Crane, Michael S.

CLAYTONIA – Continued

Oct 12 1881	Jones, David S.
Jan 12 1883	Decker, Henry
Jul 10 1883	Collins, Isabelle
Mar 10 1892	Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove



Abandoned buildings at the site of Claytonia, Colorado
Located on the north side of the road from Villa Grove to Bonanza
Photograph by William H. Bauer
September 3, 2001

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CLAYTONIA, / COLORADO.	Jan 17 1882	Oct 22 1882
	CI 20PH 30.0/ 28.5	Hstp Fancy 5 point star	



1

COCHETOPA

The initial location given for the Cochetopa Post Office plots at the location that was the Los Pinos Post Office at the former Ute Indian Agency. This could be correct as the name of the Los Pinos Post Office was changed to Cochetopa and at the same time a new Los Pinos Post Office opened some seventy miles west on the Uncompaghre River. Possibly the office was not “moved” as previously thought. This would explain why the Cuenin Post Office opened in February 1884, several miles to the east but only a short distance from the later (1892) site of Cochetopa.

COCHETOPA – Continued

George a Crofutt in *Crofutt's Gripsack Guide of Colorado* (1885) states that Cochetopa was at the Old Indian Agency.

Duane Vandenbusche, writing in *The Gunnison Country*, equates Cochetopa with the mining activity at Kimbrell. However, the Kimbrell Post Office existed briefly in 1881, while the original Cochetopa Post Office was still in operation. And, the information relative to Kimbrell places it on Cochetopa Creek, fourteen miles south of Parlin, a considerable distance from the old Indian Agency.

The original Cochetopa Post Office closed in 1885. When a new Cochetopa Post Office opened in 1892 it was definitely in the eastern end of the Los Pinos Valley and it was the successor to the Cuenin Post Office. In 1892 there was still some mining activity a few miles north along Cochetopa Creek and the post office would have served that activity as well as the ranchers in the Los Pinos Valley.

The locations given for the "new" Cochetopa are on the west side of Saguache County Road NN14, south of the intersection with Colorado Highway 114. At that point, on the west side and below the road, is the modern Flying M Ranch, a large, active ranch complex and it includes a number of older buildings. The entrance to the Flying M Ranch is a few yards north of the intersection. In 1913, after a short closure, the Cochetopa Post Office reopened, the proposed name was Flying M Ranch. That proposal was not accepted but it does confirm the location of Cochetopa at that ranch.

The name Cochetopa is derived from a word or words in the Ute language that have been interpreted to mean, "Pass of the Buffalo," a reference to the use of the pass by herds of migrating bison.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jun 6 1875	---	SE/4 Sec 35 T46N R1E 1/8 mile north of Los Pinos Creek Local name is "Los Pinos" Appears to be a name change from LOS PINOS (crossed out)
Feb 23 1877		Name changed from Los Pinos
Feb 23 1877		Bond, Charles E.
Jul 17 1877		Wales, Henry H.
May 3 1878		Hardman, George
Jun 5 1878		Sanderson, Mrs. Bina E.
Jul 27 1885		Discontinued Mail to Cuenin
May 21 1892		Moved from Cuenin
May 21 1892		Craig, Harry C.
Jul 5 1892	---	NE/4 Sec 4 T46N R2E 1/4 mile east of Cochetopa Creek
Apr 20 1898		Roberts, Thomas
Jun 26 1906		McDonough, William C.
Dec 28 1910		Hack, Albert J.
Oct 31 1911		Discontinued Mail to Parlin
Jul 7 1913	---	NE/4 NE/4 Sec 4 T46N R2E 150 feet east of Pass Creek (Cochetopa Creek) Proposed name FLYING M RANCH (site place name) Applicant for postmaster - Albert J. Hack
Aug 1 1913		Establishment rescinded
Aug 1 1913		Everish, Bessie M.
Nov 4 1914		Re-established
Nov 4 1914		Williams, Maud
Apr 15 1916		Discontinued Mail to Parlin

Confirmed types of postal markings

0.1	Cochetopa, Colo.		Sep 29 1881
	MS	Mscp Pen cancel	
1	COCHETOPA / COLO.		Feb 6 1893
	CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Not present	

COCHETOPA – Continued

2 COCHETOPA, / COLO.
CI 10P 33.0

Dec 20 1907 Feb 23 1910

Doane Type 3, with 1

3 COCHETOPA, / COLO.
CI 10P 32.0

Dec 8 1915

4bars S-24x20mm

[NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]

*Cochetopa, Colo.
9/29/87*

0.1



1



2



COTTON CREEK

The first to settle along Cotton Creek are believed to have been a group of soldiers that were discharged when Fort Garland was closed. Stock raising was the principal activity with a small amount of farming along Cotton Creek.

There were two Cotton Creek settlements - Upper Cotton Creek and Lower Cotton Creek. Lower Cotton Creek was the one that eventually had a post office. Upper Cotton Creek was about three miles northeast of Lower Cotton Creek. There are references that claim that one or the other community was a "small mining camp," but having been to the area I saw no evidence to support that claim.

Another suspect statement is that the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company constructed a "mile long" flume to divert water from Cotton Creek to the mine at Orient and that this diversion of water put an end to the agricultural communities on Cotton Creek. However, the closest point on Cotton Creek to the Orient Mine is five miles, so that claim seems unlikely or the distance is in error.

After twenty years of existence, the Cotton Creek Post Office became the Mirage Post Office. This may have been a simple name change or a move of a few hundred yards. The Geographic Site Location Reports for Cotton Creek and Mirage are in the same land survey section.

From Mineral Hot Springs, drive four and one-half miles south on Colorado Highway 17 to Saguache County Road AA. Turn east on Road AA three miles to Road 62. The Cotton Creek Post office was in the northeast corner of this intersection. East of the intersection there is a grove of trees with a modern trailer home. That seems to be the logical site for Cotton Creek and perhaps Mirage. However, on the south side of the road, there is a much older ranch with a large two-story log building. This was certainly a part of the Cotton Creek-Mirage community. North of Road AA, on the west side of Road 61 is a large ranch complex identified as The Cotton Creek Ranch.

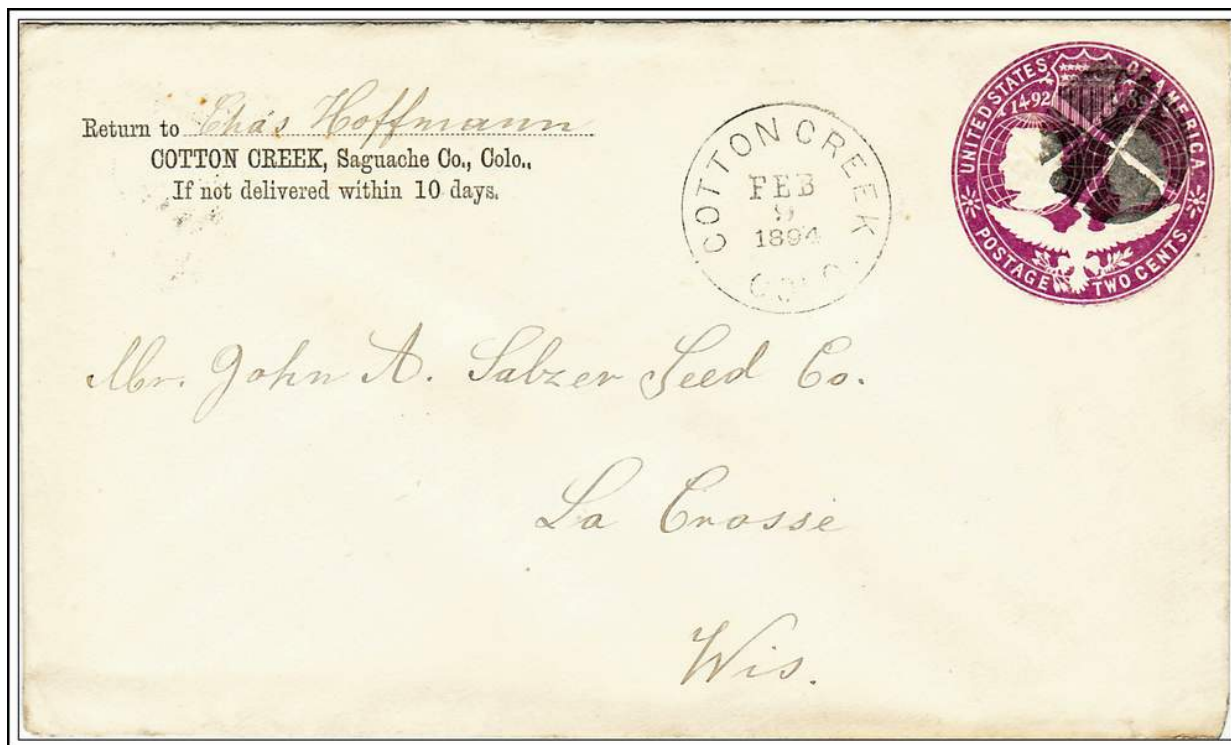
Latitude = 38:07:58 North Longitude = 105:49:37 West COTTON CREEK CEMETERY

Chronology of the Post Office

- Jul 24 1875 --- SW/4 Sec 34 T45N R10E 1/4 mile south of Cotton Creek
Sketch map shows it where road from Villa Grove crosses the creek.
- Aug 9 1875 Established
- Aug 9 1875 Allen, Francis C.
- Apr 5 1878 Ross, Frank A.
- May 6 1878 Voekel, Robert
- May 1 1883 Winkler, A.

COTTON CREEK – Continued

Aug 3 1883 Winkler, Emil A.
Feb 13 1895 Name changed to Mirage



COTTON CREEK / COLO.

February 9, 1894

Confirmed types of postal markings

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 | COTTON CREEK / COLO.
CI 10P 25.0 | Jun 19 188- |
| 2 | COTTON CREEK / COL.
CI 10P 27.0 | Hstp Fancy, ? may be scrollwork
Mar 5 188- Nov 1 1886 |
| 3 | COTTON CREEK / COLO.
CI 10P 27.0 | Hstp Target, 3 ring 17mm
Feb 7 1894 Feb 9 1894
Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads, Extra line in cross-roads |



CRESTONE

Settlement here began in 1868 when the Hopkins family constructed a home at the site. This evolved into a way station on the wagon road from Poncha Pass south along the east side of the San Luis Valley. For a brief time in 1872-1873 there was a post office here by the name of Cristonie.

CRESTONE – Continued

There may have been some early attempts at mining but none were successful until 1879. The discoveries brought prospectors into the area and resulted in the establishment of a post office at Tetons in August 1880. George Adams and A. H. Major opened a store in an old adobe building and in November 1880 Crestone received a post office. Less than two miles separated these two post offices and communities. By June 1881 Crestone had become the dominant town and the only post office in the area.

The miners faced a major problem: Crestone was located on the northern edge of The Luis Maria Baca Grant No. 4. In 1886, rancher George H. Adams was the only legal tenant on the grant. Adams purchased the entire property and won a court battle that recognized his mineral rights to the land within the grant. In 1900, with the help of U. S. Marshals the squatters were evicted from the grant. This action affected several places: Lanark, Spanish, Sangre de Cristo (Cottonwood) and Duncan.

Mining did continue within the Baca Grant but the mines were taken over by private companies.

In 1901 the Denver & Rio Grande formed a subsidiary railroad. It was called the Rio Grande Sangre de Cristo Railroad Company. A narrow gauge line was completed from Moffat to Crestone. At Crestone, the rails turned south along the base of the mountains and ended with a turntable at Cottonwood. The line was abandoned in 1926 and the rails were removed in 1929. The portion of the old railroad grade south of Crestone is within the development presently known as Baca Grande, Chalet Grants. It can be driven to the end at Cottonwood, which was the location for the Sangre de Cristo Post Office. In 2002 the road ended there.

Crestone is no longer a mining community. My first visit to Crestone was in 1972. At that time the post office was in an old store building showing its age and the community looked like it would soon disappear.

Thirty years later when Jim Ozment and I returned to Crestone, we found a number of new buildings, many older ones that had been renovated and a new, brick post office building. Crestone and the surrounding area have become a tourist and summer home destination. It has also attracted a number of Buddhist, Catholic and New Age religious establishments, which give the area an unusual flavor.

Latitude = 37:59:47 North Longitude = 105:41:57 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 25 1880	---	SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E 1/4 mile south of Crestone Creek Proposed postmaster - Alexander Holmes Major
Nov 16 1880		Established
Nov 16 1880		Major, Alexander H.
Aug 16 1892		Brother, Annie H.
Jun 24 1898		Coleman, Charles D.
Aug 31 1901		Warnock, James J.
May 22 1902		Eastman, Charles B.
Jun 21 1902	---	New site: NW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E Old site: SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E
Apr 11 1903		Murphy, Mamie A.
Apr 18 1903		Cook, Rose M.
Mar 24 1904		Dunlap, Marie B.
Jan 14 1905		Coleman, Charles D.
Jul 9 1909		Mccomac, Charles
Jul 13 1914	---	NW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E 460 feet south of North Crestone Creek
Jul 7 1923	---	S/2 NW/4, N/2 SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E 100 feet south of Crestone Creek
Dec 12 1923		Perkins, Walter E. Confirmed
Jan 4 1924		Perkins, Walter E. Commissioned
Jan 15 1934		Perkins, Walter E. Assumed charge
Feb 1 1940		Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V. Assumed charge

CRESTONE – Continued

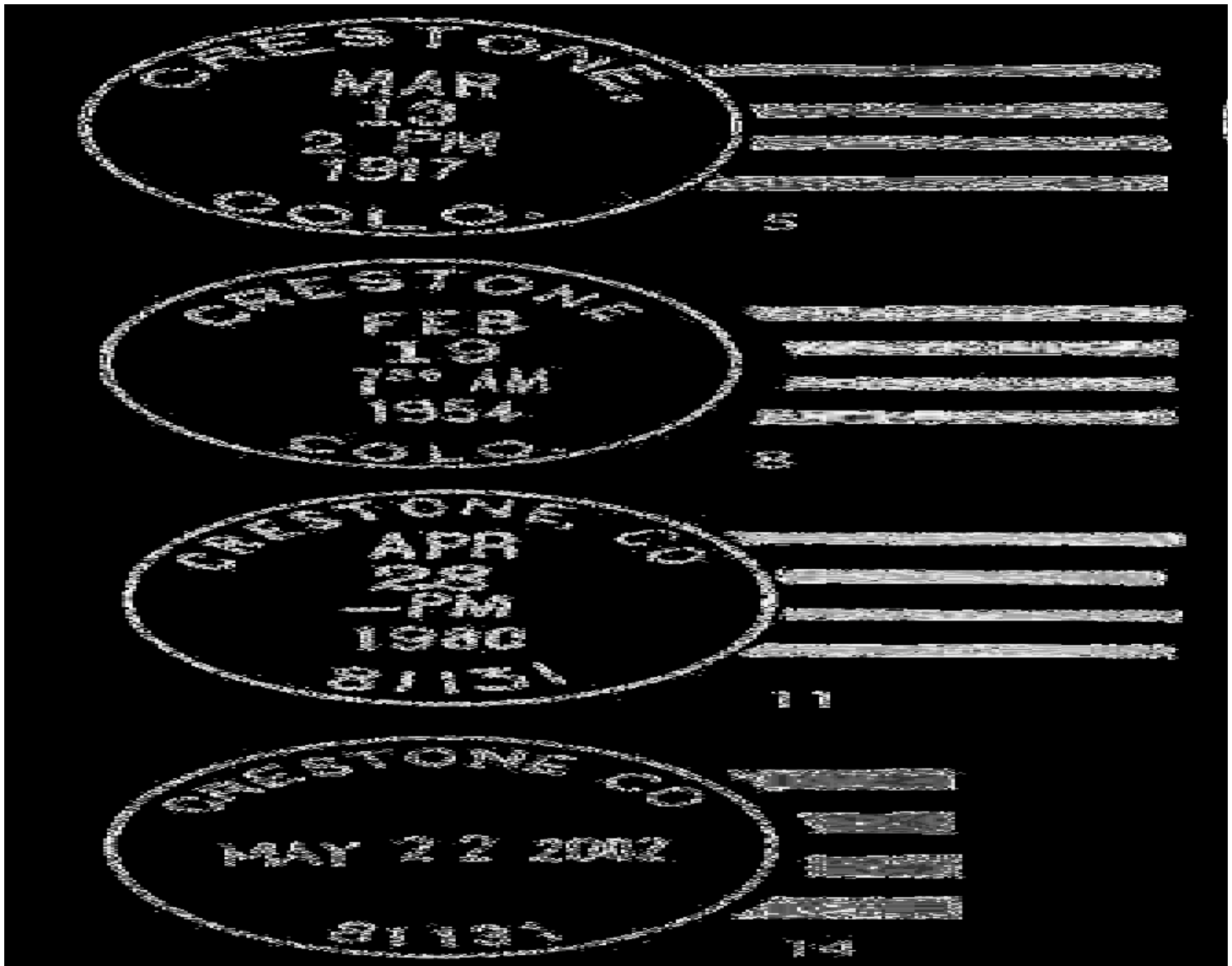
Feb 19 1940	Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Acting
Jul 13 1940	Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Confirmed
Aug 6 1940	Fisher, Mrs. Beatrice V.	Commissioned
Oct 24 1941 ---	NW/4 SW/4 Sec 7 T43N R12E 200 feet south of North Crestone Creek 3/4 mile north of South Crestone Creek	
Mar 15 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Possession, Acting
Mar 26 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Assumed charge
Apr 1 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Acting
Sep 27 1943	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Appointed & Confirmed
Jan 31 1944	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Possession
Oct 21 1944	Hayes, Mrs. Margaret S.	Commissioned
Mar 20 1954	Williams, Mrs. Margaret S.	Name changed by marriage
Jun 29 1972	Williams, Earl E.	Officer in charge
Oct 14 1972	Williams, Earl E.	Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm	Mar 2 1881 Feb 17 1882
2	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm	Dec 13 1898
3	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Feb 11 1901 Jun 30 1908
4	CRESTONE, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x14mm	Jan 5 1914
5	CRESTONE, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Mar 13 1917
6	CRESTONE, COLO. CI 10H 33.0	4bars P-25x19mm	Dec 4 1933 Jun 3 1939
7	CRESTONE, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Jun 21 1940 May 2 1947
8	CRESTONE / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-22x18mm	Oct 18 1949 Apr 14 1959
8.1	CRESTONE, / COLO. RC 10P 35.0x17.0	Hstp No killer Parcel Post Box style	1950s [NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]
9	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-25x20mm	Jan 4 1968 Oct 16 1972
10	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Nov 4 1975
11	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Apr 28 1980 Feb 11 1982
12	CRESTONE, CO / 81131 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x19mm	Jan 19 1989 Feb 21 1995
13	CRESTONE, CO / USPO CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 15 1993
14	CRESTONE CO / 81131 CI 10P 34.0	4bars S-12x23mm	May 22 2002



CRESTONE – Continued



CRISTONIE

Cristonie, or Christonie, was the first of three post offices that have existed in the area at the eastern end of modern-day Saguache County Road T.

George Harlan in *Postmarks and Places* makes the following reference to Cristonie. “The grant [Baca] cowboys, land squatters, and mineral prospectors in the vicinities of North Crestone Creek, and the long narrow Burnt Gulch were the recipients of the Cristonie Post Office.” Accepting Harlan’s reference to the two streams, places Cristonie in the immediate vicinity of present day Crestone.

It would appear that the early attempts at mining were not successful and the early community soon faded. There would be a revival of activity in 1880 that resulted in the establishment of Crestone, and briefly of the Tetons Post Office.

Cristonie is a variant on Crestone, a Spanish word meaning, “cockscorb” or “crest of a helmet” and is a reference to the skyline profile of the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range.

CRISTONIE – Continued

The road to Crestone, and to Cristonie and Tetons, begins at the intersection of Colorado Highway 17 and Saguache County Road T. Drive east on Road T to Crestone, about twelve miles.

Chronology of the Post Office

No entry in the Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County

Feb 7 1872	Established
Feb 7 1872	Kelley, Samuel
Oct 29 1873	Discontinued

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM CRISTONIE

CUENIN

The Cuenin Post Office was mainly in operation during a period in which the Cochetopa Post Office was not in operation. There was a period of a few months overlap after Cuenin was established, and before the Cochetopa Post Office closed. Please refer back to the discussion of Cochetopa for more on this situation.

Cuenin was at the eastern end of the broad Los Pinos Valley, near where Los Pinos Creek joins with Cochetopa Creek. This was also somewhat of a road junction for the roads from the Saguache over the Continental Divide.

The area around Cuenin was devoted to farming and stock raising. Its position at the road junction is an indication that it was also a way and rest stop for travel over the Continental Divide to and from the San Luis Valley.

Today it is difficult to precisely locate the site of Cuenin. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report places Cuenin in the area of Moss Lake. This is on the west side of Saguache County Road NN14, about two miles from that road's intersection with Colorado Highway 114. There is a ranch near the south end of the lake and quite probably that was the location of Cuenin.

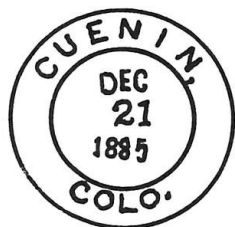
Chronology of the Post Office

Jan 17 1884	---	NE/4 Sec 9 T46N R2E 1/2 mile east of Cochetopa Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Joseph H. Russell
Feb 4 1884		Established
Feb 4 1884		Russell, Joseph H.
Jun 19 1886		Crary, Noah F.
Jan 11 1887		Strachan, George
May 19 1887		Richardson, Joseph H.
Dec 23 1889		Crary, Harry C.
May 21 1892		Moved to Cochetopa

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	CUENIN, / COLO. CI 21P 29.0/26.0/17.0	Mar 3 1885 Dec 21 1885
2	CUENIN / COLO. CI 10P 27.5	Mar 3 1892

Hstp Grid, 10-bar circular
Hstp 4 ring target



1



2

DUNCAN

Duncan was a mining camp located just inside the eastern boundary of the Louis Maria Baca Grant. It was on the north side of Pole Creek and the southwest flank of Milwaukee Hill. The camp began in 1890 and the town was platted by Mr. John Duncan, a native of Indiana, and the obvious source of the name for the settlement.

At its peak the population of Duncan was claimed to be 1,000. There was a newspaper, a school, several businesses and many residences. In 1900 when the provisions of the Baca Grant were upheld in court the miners were forced to move from Duncan and the Grant. They moved about a mile and a half southeast to a location at the forks of Short Creek and there established the town of Liberty.

Access to Duncan had been by means of the wagon road from Crestone through Cottonwood. That road is now closed, so until development spreads into the southern portion of the Baca Grande the site of Duncan is off limits. It has been stated that when the miners were evicted from Duncan all the buildings with the exception of John Duncan's cabin were torn down and moved to Liberty. The USGS Topographic Map of Saguache County (1979) locates the site of Duncan and indicates the presence of a single building.

Latitude = 37:52:27 North Longitude = 105:36:50 West

Chronology of the Post Office

Oct 31 1882	---	Unsurveyed South side of Pole Creek Crestone 12 miles northerly Garrison 20 miles westerly from site Proposed postmaster - Thomas H. Miles
Nov 21 1892		Established
Nov 21 1892		Miles, Thomas
Aug 27 1897		Crouch, Charles R.
Sep 4 1900		Ordered closed
Sep 15 1900		Discontinued Mail to Hooper

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DUNCAN

DUNE

The Dune Post Office poses a bit of a puzzle. Supposedly the post office was open for four years, but it was never listed in the annual Postal Guides. I suspect that the Dune Post Office was never in operation.

Dune has been listed as a siding and stop on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. It is also mentioned in tandem with Gibson. The station and post office would have served ranchers and farmers in the area.

There is no Geographic Site Location Report on file for Dune. The Site Location Report for Wabash appears to equate the post office with the Dune Siding. From that it is likely that there was a close relationship of the three "post offices" in this area.

For some reason, I initially located Dune on the east side of Colorado Highway 17, four miles north of the county line. Jim Ozment and I visited that site and found scattered traces of junk but it was not possible to say that it was not from recent trash disposal.

If indeed Dune and Dune Siding were at the location of the later Wabash Post Office, that location is five miles north of the Saguache-Alamosa County line, and also on the east side of Highway 17. Once again, the only thing we found was some scattered trash.

Please refer to the discussions of Gibson and Wabash for more information about this location.

DUNE – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

No entry in the Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County
See document for Wabash.

Apr 24 1891	Established
Apr 24 1891	Collins, Charles
Jun 10 1895	Discontinued No papers sent Was not listed in Postal Guides

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DUNE

EMBARGO

Initial prospecting in this area began in 1878; however, it was not until 1882 that any development took place. The town was platted and a number of cabins were built along a main street. A hotel, livery stable, and feed barn were the principal businesses. There was a general store of sorts, operated out of one of the cabins. The best mines were the Little Ray, Golden Income and Tornado.

At first the mine prospects seemed good but the promise was not met and the town was soon nearly deserted. There was a brief revival after the turn of the century and at that time a post office was placed at Embargo. The revival was brief and the post office closed. There was some activity for a few more years but by 1959 only a single cabin was reported at the site. In 2001 only the mine dumps on the east side of Baughman Creek remain.

Begin at Del Norte and drive nine miles west on US Highway 160 to the Embargo Creek Road (Colorado Highway 18). Turn north, cross the Rio Grande River to Rio Grande County Road 15. Go a short distance east and then turn north onto County Road 65. This junction is a mile and a half from US 160. At the junction with the road to Cathedral Park Campground, keep right on Forest Service Road 660, the road to Groundhog Park. Eight and a half miles from where we turned onto County Road 65 we came to an open area on the west side of Baughman Creek. On the east side of the creek we observed some mine dumps and the remains of a small mine. Although there was no positive evidence we felt that the open area could have once been the location for some buildings. The area is sometimes used for camping. This is the location given in the Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report for Embargo.

Chronology of the Post Office

Aug 3 1903	---	SW/4 Sec 15 T41N R4E Three miles north of Myers or Embargo Creek From sketch map, it may be on Embargo Creek, 3 miles north of Myers Creek. Proposed postmaster - Albert H. Clark
Sep 25 1903		Established
Sep 25 1903		Clark, Albert A.
Feb 18 1905		Ordered closed
Mar 15 1905		Discontinued Mail to Del Norte

Confirmed types of postal markings

**1 EMBARGO, / COLO.
CI 10P 30.0 ?**

Feb 18 1904

Doane Type 2 with 1 (reproduced from Ebay scan)



EXCHEQUER

Exchequer was another of the satellite mining camps that were eventually absorbed into Bonanza.

In the spring of 1880 Peter McCardo and John Stansbury, working in the upper reaches of Kerber Creek, discovered good silver ore that became the Exchequer Mine. That discovery was quickly followed by other discoveries, including the Bonanza. Exchequer was located about a mile north of Bonanza where Squirrel Creek and Rawley Gulch join Kerber Creek. The town was never incorporated and within three years was nearly indistinguishable from Bonanza.

The town consisted of a dozen or so cabins along Squirrel Creek, a smelter and two mills.

To reach the site, drive west from US Highway 285 on Saguache County Road LL56 to Bonanza and continue through the town and about a mile beyond. A number of mine dumps are visible on the slopes to the east of Kerber Creek. A single, restored cabin is a hundred or so feet from the road along what I believe was Rawley Gulch.

The road from Villa Grove to Exchequer presents no problems for a standard automobile. It is a gravel road. For the most part it is a gentle grade following the creek. Kerber Creek itself is evidence of the extensive mining that occurred in the Kerber Creek District. In 1991 the rocks in the streambed were heavily stained with iron oxides from the tailing piles. By 2001 this seemed to not be as obvious, so perhaps some cleanup is taking place. There are frequent posted warnings to not drink the water!

Chronology of the Post Office

May 13 1881	---	E/2 SW/4 Sec 24 T47N R7E On both sides of Kerber Creek 1-1/2 miles from Bonanza Proposed postmaster - Newlin M. Ritner
Jul 8 1881	---	NE/4 Sec 24 T4 R7 ??? On both sides of Kerber Creek Proposed postmaster - William J. Hannegan
Jul 22 1881		Established
Jul 22 1881		Hannegan, William J.
Oct 16 1882		Rathvon, William R.
Jun 6 1883		Discontinued Mail to Bonanza

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM EXCHEQUER

GARIBALDI

Garibaldi was the first post office in the upper portion of the San Luis Valley, near where the roads began the ascent to Poncha Pass. It was a short distance west of San Luis Creek.

In his book, *Postmarks and Places* George Harlan states: "...Ernest Dietrich on August 23, 1870 petitioned for a post office to be called Garibaldi. (Note: it never boasted of a store or school, just a letter distributing desk which stood in the Dietrich front room.)...Mr. Dietrich's home sat near the junction of the old government road to Fort Garland and the Saguache-Poncha road."

There are some discrepancies in this account. The Garibaldi Post Office opened June 13, 1870, and although Ernst Dietrich was a postmaster at Garibaldi he did not assume that position until March of 1871.

From Harlan's description it seems likely that Garibaldi was little more than a rest stop on the roads to Saguache and to Fort Garland.

The Post Office Department records state that Garibaldi was renamed Villa Grove. However, the Garibaldi site is approximately two miles east of present day Villa Grove. Perhaps the post office had moved to a new, unreported location at Villa Grove prior to the change in name.

GARIBALDI – Continued

To reach the site of Garibaldi, begin in Villa Grove. Go east from US Highway 285 on the road to Hayden Pass. On the edge of Villa Grove there is a fork. The right hand fork leads to “The Colorado Pheasant.” At the end of that road is a ranch complex that seems to be a breeding farm for pheasants. I believe that is where Garibaldi was first located.

Chronology of the Post Office

May 7 1870	---	Unknown survey 200 yards west of San Luis River 5 miles south (?) of Cottonwood Creek (shown as that) There appears to be more than one Cottonwood Creek in eastern Saguache County.
Jun 13 1870		Established
Jun 13 1870		Godfrey, William J.
Jun 18 1870		Powell, Robert P.
Dec 7 1870		Luengen, Peter W.
Mar 8 1871		Dietrich, Ernst
Aug 25 1871	---	Unknown survey 1/4 mile west of San Luis Creek Sketch map shows it at junction of roads to Fort Garland, Saguache and north.
Jan 19 1872		Name changed to Villa Grove

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM GARIBALDI

GIBSON

The community of Gibson was created in late 1911 in connection with a project to drain the farmland in the area. Initially the name was Wabash. In 1912 the Gibson Company platted the town. There was a General Store – Reed’s – that also housed the Gibson Post Office. Mary Reed was the first postmaster of Gibson.

It is claimed that Gibson was on the same site as Dune; however, I am not certain of that claim. It seems more correct that Gibson was near the former Dune Siding,

The connection between Wabash and Gibson seems solid. The postmaster at Wabash for its seven month life was a Mary E. Read. And the first postmaster at Gibson was Mary E. Reed. There is a difference in spelling, but that may be an error in the records.

The location from the Geographic Site Location Report is six miles north of the Saguache-Rio Grande County line and one mile west of Colorado Highway 17 on the south side of Saguache County Road G.

Please refer to the discussions of Dune and Wabash for a little more information on this complex of sites.

Chronology of the Post Office

Dec 1 1911		Formerly named Wabash
Dec 1 1911		Reed, Mary E.
Jul 15 1914	---	NE/4 Sec 5 T41N R10E 3 miles west of the San Luis River 950 feet west of D&RG tracks, shown in SE/4 of NE/4
Jun 7 1915		Laursen, Nellie
Jul 8 1916		Gibson, Charles E. Jr.
Aug 14 1924		Ordered closed Aug 14 1923 Mail to Hooper effective Sep 15 1926 (sic) The discrepancy in year dates is unexplained
Aug 14 1923		Discontinued

GIBSON – Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 GIBSON, / COLO.
CI 10P 32.0

Jun 20 1914 May 15 1916

4bars S-24x19mm



GREEN

In March 1884 the Carnero Post Office was moved a mile east and renamed Green. Under that name it lasted less than six months before it was discontinued. There is a brief reference in a discussion of Biedell that states: “Mail came in from Green as the La Garita Post Office was then called.”

With only that information, it is my supposition that Green was somewhere in Section 31 where the La Garita Cash Store was still running in September 2000.

Section 31 occupies the northeast corner of the intersection of Saguache County Roads G and 42. There are perhaps a dozen small buildings scattered around in that section.

Margaret Green was the only postmaster for this office, thus I assume the place took her family name.

Ten years later the name of Green Mountain Falls in El Paso County would be shortened to Green from 1894 to 1901 when it once again became Green Mountain Falls.

Chronology of the Post Office

No separate entry in Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County
See documents for Carnero (I).

Mar 18 1884	Moved from Carnero
Mar 18 1884	Green, Mrs. Margaret E.
Sep 30 1884	Discontinued Mail to Carnero

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM GREEN

HAUMANN

In the late 1870's Frank Haumann recorded several claims around a deposit of limonite iron ore that had been discovered at the western base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. A small community developed but significant production did not begin until 1881, after the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built a spur from Villa Grove to the mine.

A post office was opened, with the name of Haumann but it lasted only a few years. When it reopened it was under the name of Orient, for the Orient Mine.

In addition to Orient, Haumann is associated with the Valley View Hot Springs. It is not clear whether or not Haumann was at the springs or if it was at the iron mine, a short distance from the springs.

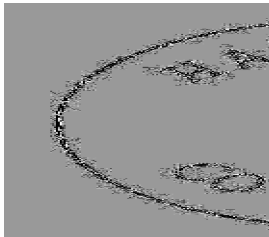
The Valley View Hot Springs is still an active resort near the remains of the Orient Mine. For directions to this site and the later history of the site, please refer to the discussion of Orient.

HAUMANN – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

Nov 5 1881	---	SE/4 Sec 25 T46N R10E 1 mile north of Hot Springs Creek At terminus of the Iron Mine Branch of the D&RG Proposed postmaster - Winfield S. Omertz
Jan 9 1882		Established
Jan 9 1882		Omertz, Winfield S.
Nov 20 1882		Jewell, Samuel
Apr 15 1884		Kirk, George W.
Aug 25 1885		Discontinued

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	HAUMANN / COLORADO ?	Sep 2- 1883
	CI 10P 27.5 ?	Pen cancel Very weak, blurry strike cds
	Tracing is approximation	

**HERARD**

In 1875 Ulysses Herard and his family settled on Medano Creek below Medano Pass. It has been reported that there was a fish hatchery there and that the Herard Ranch raised thoroughbred cattle.

From 1905 to 1912 there was a Herard Post Office at this place but it is unknown what was there to support a post office or why one was placed in such a remote location.

The site of Herard was on Medano Creek about a mile west of the eastern boundary of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. According to Ken Jessen, writing in *Ghost Towns Colorado Style - Volume Three - Southern Region* there is a Jeep road to the site. Ken gives the following description of the road and the site. "The road up Medano Creek starts from the campground entrance in the Great Sand Dunes National Monument. The Herard site requires four-wheel drive to reach, and in the soft sand, a number of vehicles have become stuck. The National Park Service, however, has placed plastic mats in the worst sand holes. In addition, three stream crossings are necessary to reach the site. At 6.2 miles beyond the end of the paved road is a place the Park Service calls Frenchman's Cabin. The ruins of a fireplace sit in a meadow, and this is where Herard was located. Farther up Medano Creek near the pass are the remains of three log cabins, presumably an old homestead."

With that description it would be best not to attempt this trip alone. In this case I exercised good judgement and I have not visited the site of Herard.

Chronology of the Post Office

Oct 7 1905	---	NW/4 Sec 7 T26S R72W On the right side of Medano Creek Southeast of Liberty
Nov 13 1905		Established
Nov 13 1905		Herard, Mary F.
Dec 15 1912		Discontinued Mail to Liberty

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM HERARD

IRIS

The mining town of Iris was first called Union Hill but for some reason the name was changed to Iris, perhaps for the daughter of the J. I. Heimer, county land office registrar. Another explanation of the name is that wild iris, *Iris missouriensis*, is common in the area.

In 1894 two men named Daniel J. Lehan (the first postmaster of Iris) and Turner, made a gold discovery in the Cochetopa Hills of southern Gunnison and northern Saguache Counties. Within a year the town had a number of stores and saloons and was connected to Gunnison by telephone. As did Chance, its neighbor to the north, the mining at Iris quickly faded. There was a brief revival of activity in 1901-1902 but then the town died.

I have not attempted to visit Iris so I can not describe what might remain. The site should be recognizable by the presence of some mine dumps. An attempt to reach Iris would begin about two miles west of where Colorado Highway 114, the road to Cochetopa Pass, intersects US Highway 50, the same starting point as I described when discussing the road to Chance in Gunnison County. From there it is about seven miles south to the location. If you attempt this trip, be sure to have a good road map as the USGS maps show an interwoven complex of roads (trails) through the area. In 1961 it was said that there were a few log cabins still standing with a few summer residents.

From Chance the road continues south across the Gunnison-Saguache County line and then a short distance to Iris. Recent reports indicate that it would be difficult to visit the site of Iris and its near neighbor Schistos, not only because of the confusing network of ranch roads and trails but also because many of the roads are blocked by locked gates. If anyone tries to go to Iris, I would appreciate knowing if they had success and what they found.

Latitude = 38:24:58 North Longitude = 106:49:42 West

Latitude = 38:24:58 North Longitude = 106:49:18 West IRIS CEMETERY

Chronology of the Post Office

- Sep 4 1894 --- SE/4 Sec 14 T48N R1E 3-1/2 miles west of Cochetopa Creek
Name proposed as UNION Rejected
Proposed postmaster - Daniel J. Lehan
- Oct 30 1894 Established
- Oct 30 1894 Lehan, Daniel J.
- Apr 8 1895 Discontinued Mail to Gunnison
- May 7 1895 Re-established
- May 7 1895 Kittell, Minnie B.
- Jun 3 1895 --- SW/4 Sec 14 T48N R1E 2 miles southeast of Chance
- Oct 30 1900 Elliott, Eugene E.
- Dec 12 1901 Koogle, George W.
- Feb 25 1902 Ordered closed
- Mar 15 1902 Discontinued Mail to Gunnison

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 IRIS / COLO.
CI 10P 27.5

Jan 19 1898 Mar 3 1900

Hstp Cork, Smudge



KIMBRELL

Not a great deal has been written about the settlement of Kimbrell. What has been reported indicates that it was associated with some mining activity in the upper portion of the Cochetopa Creek Canyon near where Los Pinos Creek joins Cochetopa Creek.

The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report is not precise as it states that Kimbrell was fourteen miles south of Parlin. Another source claims that Kimbrell was located across the river from the Flying M Ranch (see Cochetopa). And yet another source discusses Kimbrell and Cochetopa in the same paragraph.

In examining the countryside, there is a little visible evidence for some activity on the hillside, about a mile north of the Flying M Ranch and on the western side of Cochetopa Creek. There is another possibility some two miles further north on Colorado Highway 114. In that area there was more extensive mining activity and there are some occupied buildings along the creek. That location is also close to Mile Post 14 (as measured from US 50) and thus approximates the distance given from Parlin in the Site Location Report. This second location would be my preferred site but it does not fit with the other information relative to Kimbrell. Therefore, I have to leave the exact location of Kimbrell open for later resolution.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 23 1881	---	Not given	On west side of Cochetopa Creek	About 14 miles south of Parlin
			Proposed postmaster - Frederick P Mesick	
Mar 11 1881		Established		
Feb 11 1881		Mesick, Frederick P.		
Jul 13 1881		Sprout, George E.		
Oct 14 1881		Discontinued		

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM KIMBRELL

LA GARITA

The La Garita Post Office has had an on again, off again history. It has been at three different locations on the west side of the San Luis Valley and the eastern edge of the La Garita Mountains. The name, La Garita, is Spanish for "the lookout" or loosely "the signal." Reportedly Indians sent smoke signals from La Garita Peak to the Sangre de Cristo Range on the east side of the valley.

The first location of La Garita in 1874, was about two miles southwest of the final site of La Garita. This original La Garita lasted less than a year. It was located on the south side of La Garita Creek where the wagon road to the Rio Grande River crossed the creek. Crescencio Torres built a trading post and the location was sometimes referred to as Torres.

When the post office reopened in 1886 it was in a new location about a half-mile south of where, after another hiatus, it would relocate in 1897. The second La Garita Post Office would, like its predecessor, serve travelers on the wagon and stage road from Saguache to the now prominent Del Norte.

In 1897 the La Garita Post Office was once again open and again at a new site, about a half mile north of the 1886 location and where it would remain until the final closing in 1972. As travel on the wagon road declined and traffic shifted east to what became US Highway 285 La Garita settled into existence as a small rural community with a store and post office that served the surrounding ranchers and farmers. Even from its earliest days the La Garita Region was primarily agricultural in nature. There were some attempts at mining in the mountains to the west but they never lasted for very long or amounted to very much.

LA GARITA – Continued

To visit the sites of La Garita, follow the directions to Carnero (I), Green and Pruden. That is, go south on US Highway 285 from Saguache to Saguache County Road G, then west to La Garita.

Less than a half-mile west of County Road 45 you will find the La Garita Cash Store on the north side of the road. In 1972 the post office was in this log store building. In 2000 the store was still there but was for sale.

A quarter mile beyond the La Garita Cash Store there is a side road south to an old log building, in reasonably good condition, along with a modern trailer and some sheds. This was the site for the La Garita Post Office from 1886-1894.

From this second location of La Garita, return to the main road and continue west. At the fork, keep left on the road that will eventually lead to Del Norte. I believe this is Saguache County Road 38A. Two and three-quarter miles after returning to the main road you cross La Garita Creek. On the east side of the road and the south side of La Garita Creek there is a roughly square mound that could be the remains of a decayed adobe building. This is where La Garita was first established and the post office operated in 1874-1875.

A point of interest is located a short distance west of the La Garita Cash Store and a hundred yards or so from the road. The article reprinted below describes the historic building at that location.

The following appeared in the October 2000 issue of *Colorado History Now* Under the title *Do You Know This Building?*

The Capilla de San Juan Bautista, also known as La Iglesia de la Garita is located in Saguache County at the mouth of the Carnero Canyon, about eight miles west of US Highway 285. The church was named after Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of the town of La Garita. Construction began in 1912 to replace a log and adobe church that had burned earlier that year. After more than a decade of effort, the structure was completed in 1923. The building is an example of Territorial Adobe (which combines elements of Hispanic and Euro-American building traditions) utilizing influences from the Gothic Revival style. A steeply pitched roof crowns the one-and-a-half story church. White stuccoed adobe walls ascend from a twenty-inch thick base. A two-story bell tower rises from the main entrance of this T-shaped building. The church's most notable features, typical of Gothic architecture, are the sharply pointed windows trimmed in red brick. The vertical emphasis displayed by the bell tower and the steeply pitched roof are also characteristic of the Gothic Revival style. Abandoned in 1957, the vacant church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. It has since been converted into the San Juan Art Center and has received State Historical Fund grants to aid in its restoration and rehabilitation. It now houses handcrafted items made by members of Artes del Valle, a nonprofit Hispanic Women's Craft Co-operative founded to retain, preserve, and promote Hispanic folk art in the San Luis Valley.

Latitude = 37:50:27 North Longitude = 106:14:46 West

Chronology of the Post Office

May 12 1874	---	NW/4 Sec 11 T41N R6E At crossing of La Garita Creek, south side
Jun 24 1874		Established
Jun 24 1874		Eastman, Erastus E.
May 18 1875		Discontinued
Jun 7 1886	---	NW/4 NW/4 Sec 6 T41N R7E On south side of Carnero Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Joseph S. Gay
Nov 13 1886		Re-established
Nov 13 1886		Gay, Joseph S.
Dec 7 1894		Discontinued Papers to Del Norte
Apr 7 1897		Re-established

LA GARITA – Continued



The La Garita Cash Store, last location of the La Garita, Colorado Post Office
Photograph by William H. Bauer September 13, 2000

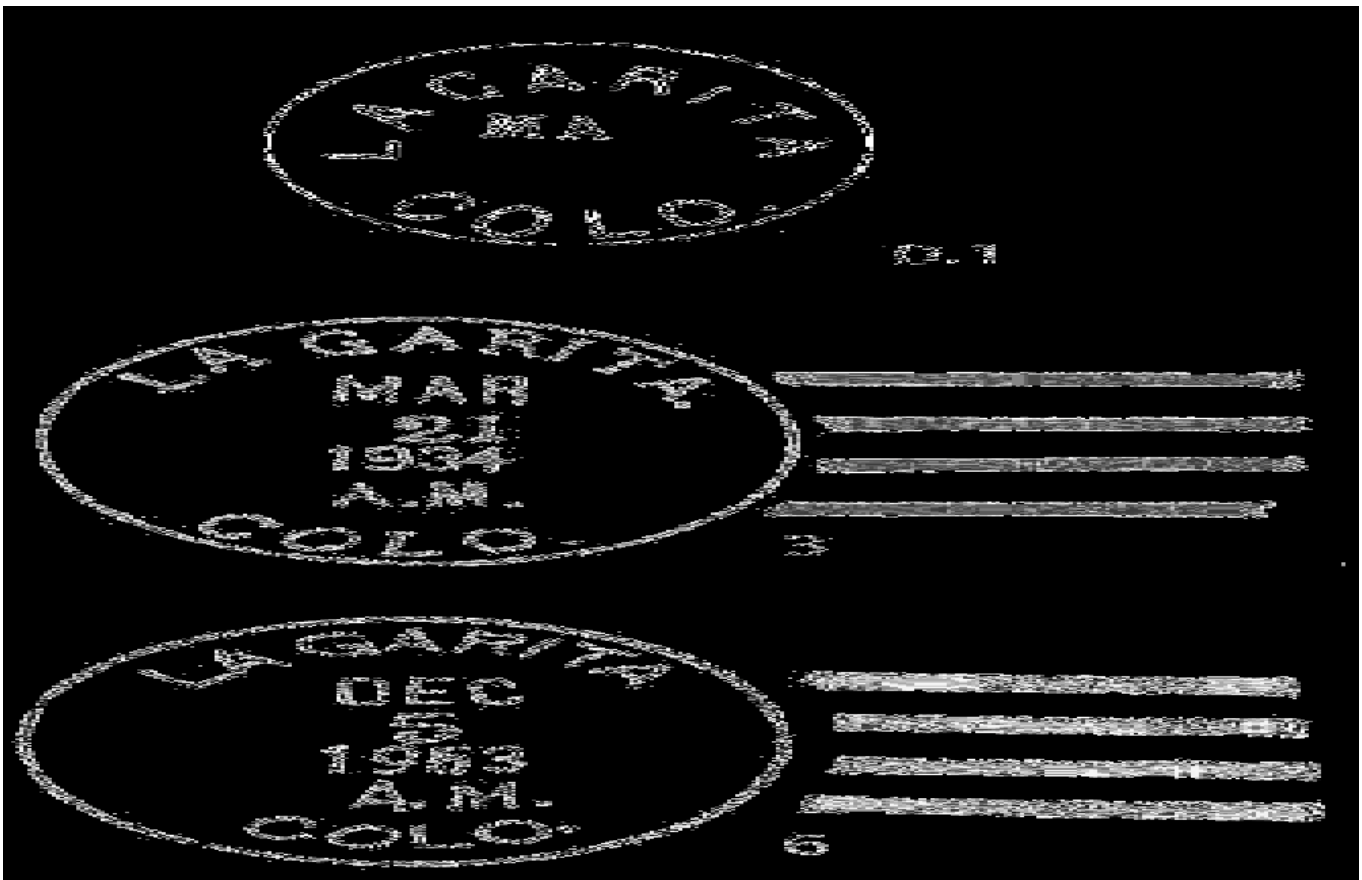
Feb 18 1899	---	SW/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E On south side of Carnero Creek	
		Proposed postmaster - Harry S. Little	
Apr 7 1899		Little, Harry S.	
Jul 14 1910		McCarthy, Harry E.	
May 2 1914	---	SW/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E 40 yards south of Carnero Creek	
Oct 8 1914		Medina, James	
Dec 4 1915		Terry, Noah M.	
Mar 31 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	
May 31 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	Confirmed
Jun 25 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	Commissioned
Jul 2 1917		Coolbroth, Arthur M.	Assumed charge
Jul 19 1920	---	SE/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E Move 1/4 mile east of old location	
Jul 22 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Assumed charge
Jul 23 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Possession, Acting
Sep 16 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Acting
Oct 19 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Appointed & Confirmed
Nov 15 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Commissioned
Nov 21 1932		Shown, Rhoda M.	Possession
Nov 6 1934		Gibson, Mrs. Rhoda M.	Name changed by marriage
Nov 8 1934		Gibson, Mrs. Rhoda M.	Name changed by marriage
May 31 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Possession, Acting
Jun 1 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Assumed charge
Jun 7 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Acting
Jul 30 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Appointed & Confirmed
Sep 11 1941		Alley, Henry M.	Commissioned

LA GARITA – Continued

Sep 30 1941	Alley, Henry M.	Possession
Oct 21 1941 ---	SE/4 Sec 31 T42N R7E 1/4 mile west of	Carnero Creek
Feb 3 1945	Watts, Mrs. Dorothy Doris	Appointed
Apr 4 1945	Watts, Mrs. Dorothy Doris	Commissioned
Apr 8 1945	Watts, Mrs. Dorothy Doris	Possession
Nov 11 1972	Discontinued Mail to Del Norte	

Confirmed types of postal markings

0.1	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Cork smudge	Jul 23 1889 May -- 1894
1	LA GARITA, / COLO. CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-??x20mm	Jul 20 1914
2	LA GARITA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x13mm	Nov 7 1927
3	LA GARITA. / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x18mm	Mar 21 1934 Jan 12 1939
4	LA GARITA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Jun 2 1940 Mar 1 1941
5	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Mar 11 1946 Sep 15 1949
6	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-??x19mm	Dec 5 1953
7	LA GARITA / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Apr 14 1959 Dec 26 1962
8	LA GARITA, CO / 81139 CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-23x19mm	May 26 1969 Oct 18 1972



LANARK

There is a puzzle here yet to be resolved. The Lanark and Spanish Post Offices were both in existence for a few months in 1898. The Geographic Site Location Reports for these two offices are almost identical and place them both on the north side of Spanish Creek. Spanish Creek is approximately a mile and a half north of Cottonwood Creek.

George Harlan, in his book *Postmarks and Places*, quite unequivocally identifies Lanark with Cottonwood and Sangre de Cristo. This does make sense, as it is unlikely the Post Office Department would establish a second post office (Spanish) “next door” to an existing one. That still leaves a question about the Federal Land Survey Grid given in the Site Location Report for Lanark. A possible explanation is that since the site was within the Baca Grant, which was not surveyed, the location was an incorrect estimate of the position.

I will conclude with an assumption that Lanark was at the same location as the earlier Sangre de Cristo, or as it was better known, Cottonwood. [SRM: The location of Sangre de Cristo seems correct based on the Geographic Site Location Reports. The locations of Lanark and Spanish are contradictory. Although both were on Spanish Creek per the site reports, Lanark appears south of Spanish on the map accompanying the Spanish report.]

Mining began at Cottonwood in 1893 and the most notable mines were the Irvin, Independent and Bonanza. Judge Kellog constructed the first mill at Cottonwood.

The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report indicates that the application was for a post office to be named Lucky. That choice was rejected. It is probable that the name Cottonwood was also rejected because of the similarity to the Cottonwood Creek Post Office in Chaffee County.

Daniel Seger is credited with selecting the name for the post office, after his birthplace, Lanark, Illinois. The post office served 175 people and was located in the Cottonwood General Store. The post office lasted only a few months and after it closed the residents had to go several miles south to Duncan to get their mail.

Given the size of the population, the short life of the Lanark Post Office is another mystery. Quite likely the demise is connected to the legal actions that took place in 1898. That year a court ruling gave the owners of Baca Grant No. 4 all mineral rights and the miners who lived at Cottonwood were evicted. Mining activity did continue until 1900 when it briefly ceased. A Philadelphia company took over the operations, under lease. A new mill was constructed and it is claimed that shipments reached nearly a million dollars a month.

To reach the site of Lanark, from Saguache County Road T, enter the Baca Grande Chalet Grants development and drive south four and one half miles on Camino Baca Grande to the end of the road. There are foundations of the old mills along the road and below the road on the west side.

Chronology of the Post Office

Apr 1 1898	---	NW/4 Sec 28 T43N R12E North side of Spanish Creek
		Name proposed as LUCKY Rejected
		Proposed postmaster - Wilbur Fisk Horn
Mar 29 1898		Established
Mar 29 1898		Martin George J.
Dec 27 1898		Discontinued Papers to Duncan

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM LANARK

LIBERTY

In 1900, when the miners at Duncan were forced to move from the Luis Maria Baca Grant, they moved to a site about a mile and a half to the southeast at the forks of Short Creek and just beyond the eastern border of the Grant. The buildings at Duncan were dismantled and moved to Liberty.

The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report provided the department with a choice of names: Prospect, Reliance or Liberty. Liberty was chosen.

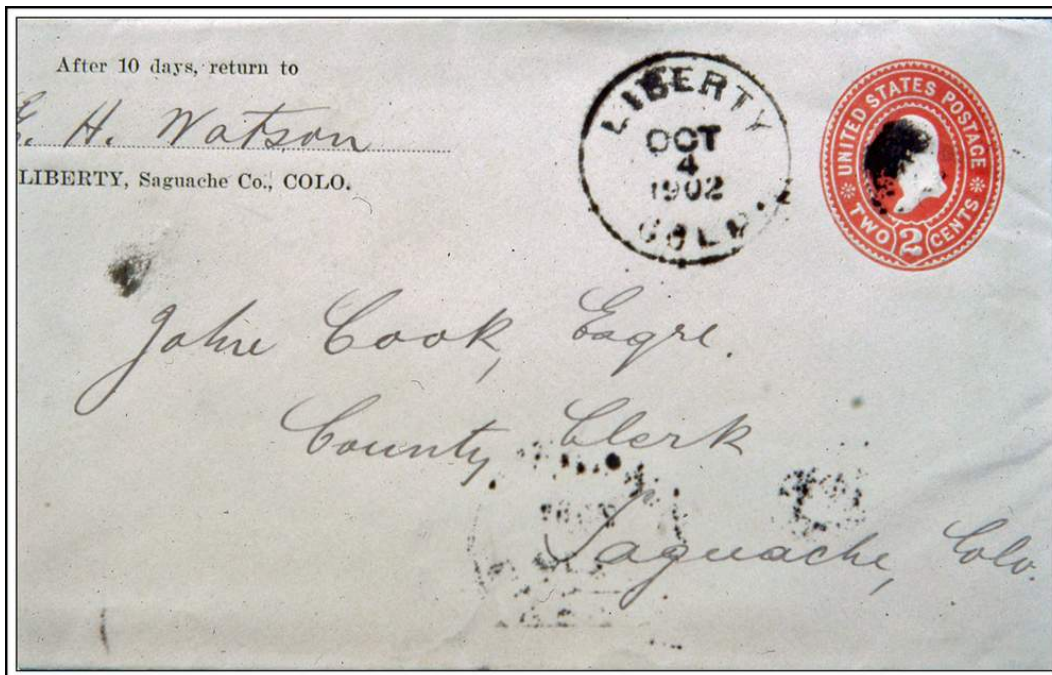
Unfortunately, the ore deposits that were near Liberty and outside of the grant were not as rich as those that were being exploited at Duncan and Liberty slowly faded. In 1919 the Liberty Post Office was moved north to a group of mines in the upper reaches of Pole Creek. These mines also proved unprofitable and the Liberty Post Office at the new location quickly closed. Liberty reopened briefly in late 1920 but closed for the last time at the end of March 1921. There is no indication as to where the reopened post office was located.

The locations given in the Site Location Reports require careful interpretation. The eastern boundary of the Baca Grant is also the boundary between two different land grids. To the east is Township 25 South, Range 73 West. To the west is Township 42 North, Range 12 East, and possibly a small portion of Range 13 East. Since the Baca Grant was not surveyed, locations within its boundaries are approximate.

Currently there is no access to the site of Liberty. The 1979 USGS Map of Saguache County does show a lengthy Jeep trail along the northern edge of the Great Sand Dunes National Monument but I seriously doubt that it can be accessed, even with permission from the current landowners. The aforementioned USGS map does indicate the presence of some buildings at the original site of Liberty.

Be aware that from 1887 to 1898 there was a Liberty Post Office in Rio Grande County.

Latitude = 37:51:37 North Longitude = 105:35:43 West



LIBERTY / COLO.

October 4, 1902

LIBERTY – Continued**Chronology of the Post Office**

Oct 9 1900	---	SW/4 Sec 30 T42N R13E (if sectioned) Situated on Short Creek, at or near mouth between forks of same Name proposed as LIBERTY or PROSPECT or RELIANCE Proposed postmaster - John N. Norviel
Nov 1 1900		Established
Nov 1 1900		Norviel, John N.
Apr 12 1905		Dix, Caleb H.
Dec 7 1910		Mayer, Noah Z. C.
Nov 28 1911		Perkins, Walter E.
Oct 7 1919	---	SW/4 Sec 7 T25S R73W Move to new site 1-3/4 miles northeast of old site 100 feet north of Pole Creek Sketch map indicates a move north from a site on Short Creek.
Oct 31 1919		Discontinued Mail to Crestone
Oct 14 1920		Re-established
Oct 14 1920		Rolason, Byron A.
Mar 31 1921		Discontinued Mail to Crestone

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	LIBERTY / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Oct 4 1902 Dec 10 1911 Hstp Cork, smudge; Target, 4 ring 17mm
2	LIBERTY, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	Jan 8 1914 Jul 29 1914 4bars S-24x20mm

**LOCKETT**

Lockett was one of several short-lived communities in the southern portion of Saguache County and east of Center. Very little has been recorded about Lockett but it seems likely that it was a small supply center for the surrounding farms. The post office did last for nearly fifteen years and likely the post office was discontinued when the Rural Free Delivery System removed the need for many of the small, remote post offices.

It is believed that Lockett was founded by a Dr. Lockett and was named for him. Dr. Lockett is reported to have been a County Judge.

To visit the site of Lockett, begin at the border of Saguache and Alamosa Counties and drive north on Colorado Highway 17 to Saguache County Road B. Turn west on Road B and go a half-mile to Road 61. Go north one mile to Road C and turn west. Go six miles to the intersection with County Road 55.

Lockett was in the southeast corner of this intersection. No structures remain at the site but there is evidence of activity at the location and some scattered debris.

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 18 1889	---	NW/4 Sec 28 T41N R9E Proposed postmaster - William M. Asher
May 22 1889		Established

LOCKETT – Continued

May 22 1889	Fullinwiler, John H.
Mar 18 1890	Foster, Charles R.
Nov 30 1894	Buckley, Rueben R.
Mar 25 1895 ---	SW/4 Sec 21 T41N R9E
Dec 19 1900	Zink, Morris W.
Sep 17 1903	Stott, David W.
Dec 12 1904	Ordered closed
Jan 14 1905	Discontinued Mail to Hooper

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 **LOCKETT / COLO.**
 CI 10P 27.5

Apr -- 1894 Sep 27 1902

Hstp Cork, smudge



LOS MOGOTES

I have not found any historical reference to a place by this name in Saguache County. In addition to Los Mogotes, there was a later office in Conejos County by the simpler name of Mogote.

The location is on the western edge of the San Luis Valley at the foot of the mountains. Los Mogotes was most likely a ranch post office and perhaps a rest stop on the roads from Saguache to the Rio Grande Valley. Ranching and farming are the present-day activities in the area.

To visit this site, drive eleven miles south from Saguache on US Highway 285 to Saguache County Road N. Turn west and go two miles to County Road 45, a T intersection. According to the Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report, the Los Mogotes Post Office was in the southwestern corner of this intersection. That location is open fields but there are buildings visible some distance to the north.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jul 14 1888 ---	NE/4 Sec 3 T42N R7E
	Proposed postmaster - Eugene E. Elliott
Jul 28 1888	Established
Jul 28 1888	Elliott, Eugene E.
Jan 8 1890	Discontinued Papers to La Garita

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM LOS MOGOTES

LOS PINOS

Los Pinos in Saguache County began in the late 1860's. It was the southern of the two agencies created to serve the Ute Indians. Officially it was called The Southern Agency but do not confuse this with the present-day Southern Ute Agency in Southwestern Colorado. Eventually the name Los Pinos was adapted and was the name assigned when a post office opened in 1872.

LOS PINOS – Continued

If you have come over Cochetopa Pass on County Road NN14, from the site of Perry, continue twelve and one-half miles down grade to the junction with Saguache County Road KK14. It is another six miles to the ranch at Los Pinos.

If your direction of travel is from the north, on Colorado 114, then shortly after emerging from the Cochetopa Creek Canyon, turn west on County Road NN14. It is a little less than four miles to the junction with Road KK14.

Chronology of the Post Office

Nov 20 1872	Established
Nov 20 1872	Dole, Stephen A.
Dec 17 1874	Bond, Charles E.
Jan 24 1876	Herbert, Arthur M.
Aug 8 1876	Mack, David Jr.
Sep 7 1876	Harris, E. R.
Nov 27 1876	Bond, Charles E.
Feb 23 1877	Moved to Cochetopa



LOS PINOS / COLO.

June 22, 187-

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	Los Pinos Col	Feb 24 1873	Jan 5 1877
	MS	Mscp	Pen cancel
2	LOS PINOS / COLO.	Jun 22 187-	Sep 1 187-
	CI 10P 24.0	Hstp	Target, 4-ring 18mm,



MARSHALL PASS

Marshall Pass, at 10,846 feet altitude, was the location of the highest railroad crossing of the Continental Divide in the United States. The pass was named for Lieutenant William L. Marshall who, legend has it, traversed the pass in 1873 or 1874 en route to a dentist. Marshall was a member of the Wheeler Survey working in southwestern Colorado.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad chose Marshall Pass for its main line route to cross the Continental Divide from the Arkansas River Valley to the Gunnison River Valley. Reaching the top of the pass in 1882, the railroad constructed facilities that included water tanks, turn-tables, a brick boarding house, brick privies and a lookout tower attached to the brick station house, which in turn was connected to the trains with a wooden snow shed. A post office operated at the pass to serve the resident railroaders and was very popular with tourists as an unusual place from which to mail postcards to friends. The railroad over Marshall Pass was officially abandoned December 31, 1954 and was torn up in 1955. All that remains at the summit are some deteriorating foundations.

During the Second World War, the U. S. Army operated a signal and weather station at the pass and the postmaster frequently included patriotic slogans within the Marshall Pass postmark, or added patriotic handstamps to envelopes sent to receive the Marshall Pass postmark.

The road to Marshall Pass begins at US Highway 285, six miles south of the junction of US 285 and US 50 in Poncha Springs. There, Chaffee County Road 200 to the left, goes through the site of Mears and at two and a half miles reaches the site of Shirley. From Shirley, you begin the ascent to the summit of Marshall Pass. There are two roads on which to begin. The first (from the east) goes to the campgrounds at O'Haver Lake. The second road, which begins near the small parking lot at the Shirley site, follows the railroad grade and at about one mile intersects the road to O'Haver Lake. Be sure to go straight ahead at this intersection. It is twelve miles to the summit of the pass. The road is good, however at times narrow, and can be rough. A four-wheel drive vehicle is not necessary. You will have no trouble recognizing the site when you reach the summit of the pass. The road down the west side to Sargents on US Highway 50 is wider and, in August 2003, was smoother than the road on the east side of the pass. It is a little less than sixteen miles from the summit to Sargents. The trip over Marshall Pass, in good weather, is highly recommended.

It should be noted that one reference "promotes" Lieutenant Marshall to the rank of General.

Chronology of the Post Office

Dec 20 1918	---	SE/4 Sec 24 T48N R6E 10 feet on south side of D&RG tracks	
		Applicant for postmaster - Edward Haley (telegraph operator)	
Mar 6 1919		Established	
Mar 6 1919		Haley, Edward	
Oct 17 1923		Jones, Carl C.	Confirmed
Jul 22 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Assumed charge
Aug 11 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Acting
Oct 1 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Confirmed
Nov 15 1932		Colson, Gustave H.	Commissioned
Aug 27 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Assumed charge
Oct 8 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Acting
Sep 31 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Confirmed
Oct 12 1937		Buckley, Wayne E.	Commissioned
Nov 20 1939		Latham, Gustavus A.	Assumed charge
Jan 2 1940		Latham, Gustavus A.	Acting
Feb 13 1940		Thornburgh, Frank A.	Confirmed
Mar 15 1940		Thornburgh, Frank A.	Commissioned
Apr 1 1940		Thornburgh, Frank A.	Assumed charge
Dec 3 1940		Ordered closed	

MARSHALL PASS – Continued

Dec 31 1940	Discontinued Mail to Sargents	
Feb 10 1942	Re-established	
Feb 10 1942	Baker, Willard K.	Confirmed
Feb 20 1942 ---	SE/4 Sec 24 T48N R6E 1 mile west of Poncha Creek	
	Applicant for postmaster - Willard K. Baker	
Feb 25 1942	Baker, Willard K.	Commissioned
Feb 10 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Acting
Feb 25 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Assumed charge
Apr 10 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Confirmed
Apr 30 1943	Latham, Gustavus A.	Commissioned
Nov 18 1952	Ordered closed	
Sep 30 1952	Discontinued Mail to Sargents	



MARSHALL PASS / COLO.

August 21, 1942

“REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR” added below the bars

With handstamped tourist cachet and signed by postmaster

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	MARSHALL PASS, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x14mm	Jun 30 1924 Oct 11 1938
2	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Nov 3 1940 Oct 1 1952
2.1	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x19mm, "REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR" below bars	Aug 21 1942
2.2	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x19mm, "REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR" within bars	Dec 7 1942 Jan 25 1943
3	MARSHALL PASS / COLO. CI 11P 29.0/18.0	Htsp No killer	Nov 11 1942

MARSHALL PASS – Continued



2.2



3

MARSHALLTOWN

Marshalltown, established in 1880, was a small settlement that developed on the ranch of Joseph Sargent at the western foot of Marshall Pass. Sargent was a former employee at the original Los Pinos Indian Agency. The name was chosen for the pass that had been discovered in 1873 or 1874 by Lieutenant William L. Marshall, a member of the Wheeler Survey Party.

The community provided services to travelers on the toll road, built by Otto Mears that, from the east, came up Poncha Creek to the pass and then down Marshall Creek to the Tomichi River.

In 1882 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built over Marshall Pass, eliminating most of the traffic on the toll road. When the railroad reached Marshalltown, the community became a railroad town that would serve as a base for helper engines assisting eastbound trains on the steep grades to the summit of the pass. At that time the name of the post office was changed to Sargents and Joseph Sargent continued as the postmaster of the renamed community.

It seems likely that the change in name was to avoid any confusion between the railroad stations at Marshall Pass and Marshalltown.

Marshalltown, now Sargents, is at the foot of the road over Marshall Pass, on the east side of US 50. The Marshall Pass Road joins US 50 about 200 feet east of the left turn into Sargents from US 50.

Chronology of the Post Office

Jun 26 1880	---	Not Surveyed On the east bank of Tomichi Creek 40 rods southwest of Marshall Creek NOTE: Marshalltown is crossed out, and SARGENTS written in Proposed postmaster - Joseph Sargent
Jul 13 1880		Established
Jul 13 1880		Sargent, Joseph
Jul 31 1881		Blackley, Andrew T.
Nov 10 1881		Knight, J. C.
Jan 26 1882		Name changed to Sargents

**MARSHALLTOWN – Continued
Confirmed types of postal markings**

**1 MARSHALLTOWN / COLO
CI 11P 28.5/19.0**

Nov 20 1881

Hstp Grid, 6 Bar?



MINERAL HOT SPRINGS

In 1880 Sylvester A. Jenks filed a homestead on the land around a group of thirty-seven hot springs in the northern part of the San Luis Valley. Over the next few years the springs had different names: Chamberlin Hot Springs, San Luis Hot Springs. Orient Hot Springs and Valley View Hot Springs were other names used but these may have been applied to some springs much closer to the Orient Mine on the east side of the San Luis Valley.

In 1892 under the direction of George Adams, president of the Mineral Hot Springs & Land Company, development of the springs as a resort began. For some reason the name Mineral Hot Springs was not in general use until 1912 when Robert Dunshee Sr. held a controlling interest in the springs.

Mineral Hot Springs enjoyed a run of prosperity during the time that the Orient Mine was in full production. As production from the mine declined, so did the traffic to the hot springs. After all, the springs are in a rather sparsely inhabited area and in Colorado there were other larger and more attractive hot spring resorts to attract the health-seeking public.

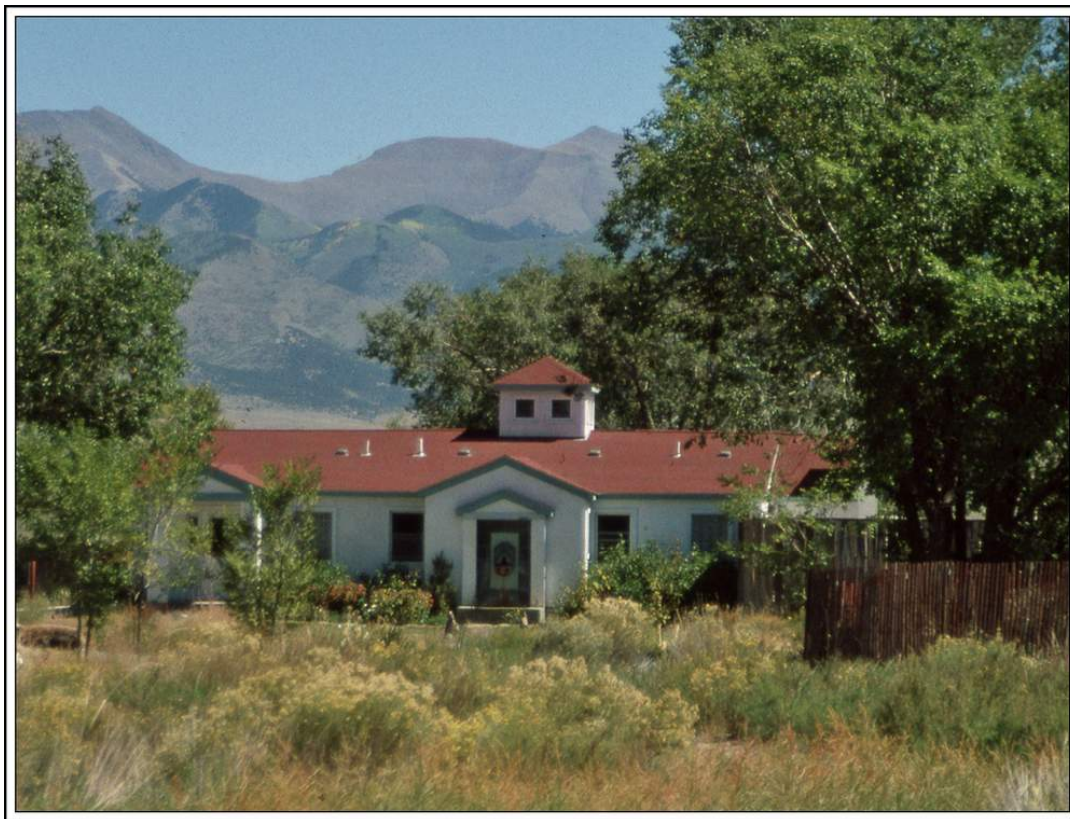
My first visit to this place was in 1988. At that time there seemed to be no activity. One could walk among the group of buildings without attracting attention. On a return visit in 2000, activity had returned to the springs. The building next to the highway was freshly painted and was being used as a billboard to attract travelers. The signs read: “Open to the Public,” “Free Tours” and “Wraps/Massage.” The buildings were fenced off from a small parking lot and the complex had been somewhat cleaned up.

My third visit was in 2002. Not a great deal had changed other than that the signs on the building had been painted over and a new sign installed next to the road. The name of the establishment was now the Oh Be Joyful Hot Springs. Yes, there is activity there but I wonder what kind of a massage one can get at the Mineral Hot Springs?

Mineral Hot Springs is located on the east side of Colorado Highway 17 about a mile south of the intersection of Highway 17 with US Highway 285. If you pass by the place, I would be interested in hearing about any changes to the above description.

The August 1947 Geographic Site Location Report, included in the tabulation below, is a bit of a puzzle. George Harlan, in *Postmarks and Places* states: “For two months [1946] until the Mineral Hot Springs postoffice could be closed out, business was conducted in the home of Louise Hoffman McDaniel, the old Martin Rominger place, the site of the territorial post office of Bismarck.” Except for the year, this sounds reasonable; however, when I plot the 1947 location, it coincides with the location of the Mirage Post Office not Bismarck. Bismarck was much closer to Mineral Hot Springs.

MINERAL HOT SPRINGS – Continued



The main “resort” building at Mineral Hot Springs, Colorado
 Photograph by William H. Bauer
 May 22, 2002

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 1 1911	---	NE/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 1 mile west of San Luis Creek 250 feet east of D&RG	
May 9 1911		Established	
May 8 1911		Dunshee, Robert G.	
May 2 1914	---	NE/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 1-1/2 miles west of San Luis Creek 400 feet east of D&RG	
Oct 14 1922		Smith, Mary E.	
Mar 15 1926		Collins, Ada W.	Acting
Jul 15 1926		Collins, Ada W.	Appointed
Aug 7 1926		Collins, Ada W.	Commissioned
Oct 13 1927	---	NE/cor SW/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 300 feet east of D&RG	
Oct 24 1941	---	NE/4 Sec 12 T45N R9E 250 feet east of D&RG tracks	
Dec 1 1943		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Assumed charge
Dec 15 1943		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Acting
Sep 14 1945		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Confirmed
Dec 28 1945		Seip, Mrs. Eva E.	Commissioned
Aug 12 1947		McDaniel, Mrs. Ethel L.	Assumed charge
Aug 26 1947	---	New site 4.65 miles south and east of old site 3.35 miles east of highway 17	
Dec 8 1947		Ordered closed	
Dec 15 1947		Discontinued Mail to Moffat	

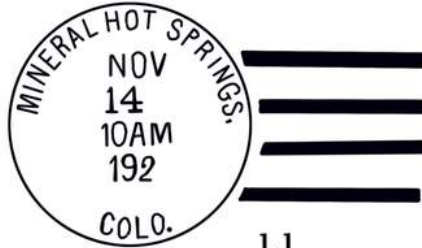
MINERAL HOT SPRINGS – Continued

Confirmed types of postal markings

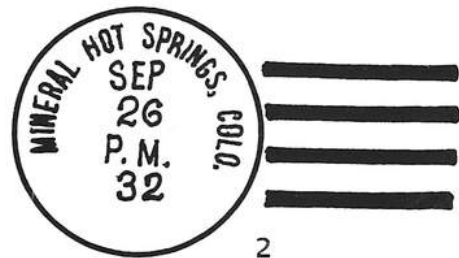
1	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, / COLO. CI 10H 31.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Oct 1 1914 Mar 22 1917
1.1	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Nov 14 192-
2	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, COLO. CI 10H 31.0	4bars P-25x19mm	Sep 26 1932
3	MINERAL HOT SPRINGS, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Jun 25 1937 Nov 8 1943



1



1.1



2



MIRAGE

There have been several statements made about Mirage that I find hard to reconcile with the existing location of the site. The Mirage Post Office was the successor to the Cotton Creek Post Office and it obviously provided postal services to a considerable area east of Colorado Highway 17 and between Moffat and Villa Grove. However, there is little evidence to support the existence of a sizeable community.

On the south side of Saguache County Road AA there is a small ranch with a large two-story log building that may have been the Mirage schoolhouse. The community also had a dance hall or community building. Other than that Mirage was mainly ranches scattered over the Cotton Creek drainage.

The source of the name is open to question. One claim is that it was named for a nearby sand formation that can appear to be a body of water. In the dry, clear air of the San Luis Valley mirages are not uncommon phenomena. Tongue in cheek, I wonder if the name was not selected when the residents concluded that it was a mirage that they could make a good living in this area.

For directions to the site of Mirage and a description of the present day situation, please refer to the discussion of Cotton Creek.

Latitude = 38:06:10 North Longitude = 105:51:50 West

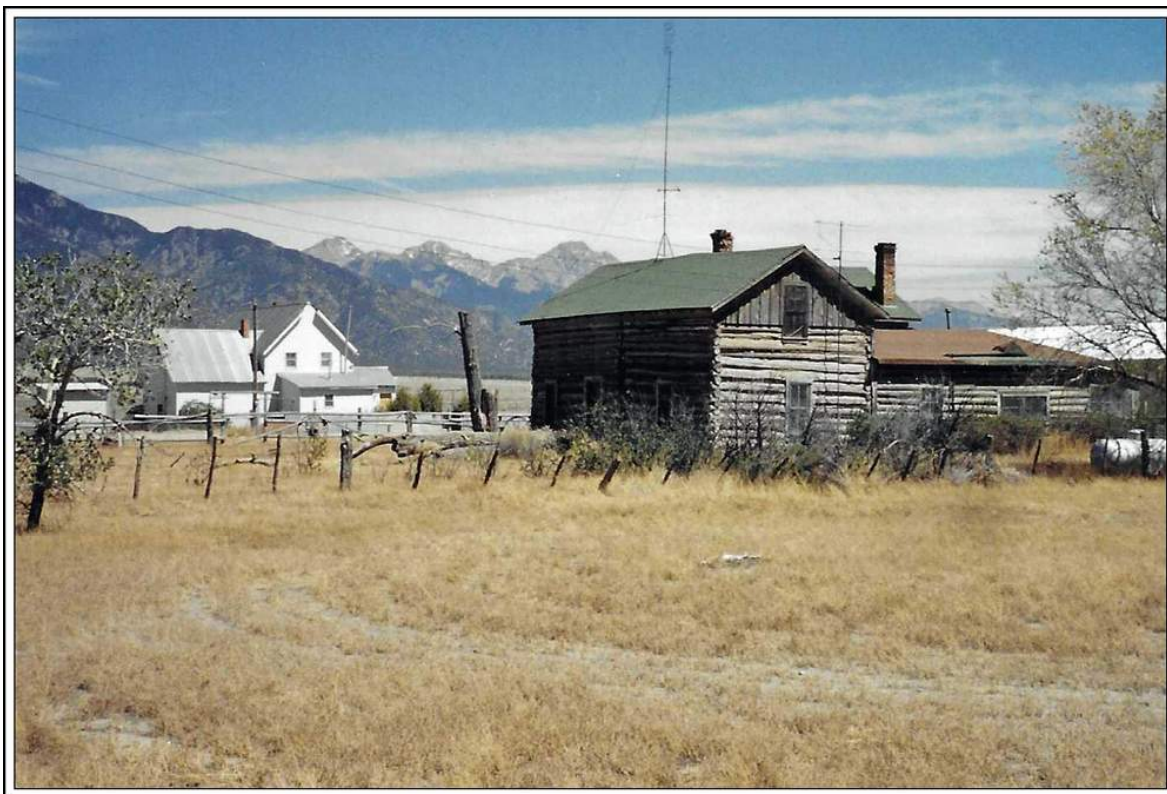
Latitude = 38:07:05 North Longitude = 105:51:50 West MIRAGE CEMETERY

Chronology of the Post Office

- Mar 26 1895 --- SE/4 Sec 34 T45N R10E 1-1/4 miles south of Cotton Creek 4-1/2 miles east of D&RG
- Feb 13 1895 Formerly named Cotton Creek

MIRAGE – Continued

Feb 13 1895	Bennett, James W.	
Apr 20 1898	Winkler, Emil A.	
Feb 28 1902	Kuehnlein, Milton A.	
May 2 1903	Ordered closed Mail to Villa Grove effective May 15 1903	
May 13 1903	Snyder, Clinton B.	
May 14 1903	Closing order rescinded	
Jan 25 1916	Gariss, Margaret	
Mar 6 1918	Tobler, Edwin	
Apr 21 1920	Cox, George R.	
Nov 16 1921	Gullett, Virgil	
Aug 21 1924	Sharp, John A.	
Mar 31 1925	Hayes, Mary J.	Acting
Dec 2 1925	Hayes, Mary J.	Appointed
Dec 31 1926	Ordered closed	
Jan 31 1927	Discontinued Mail to Mineral Hot Springs	

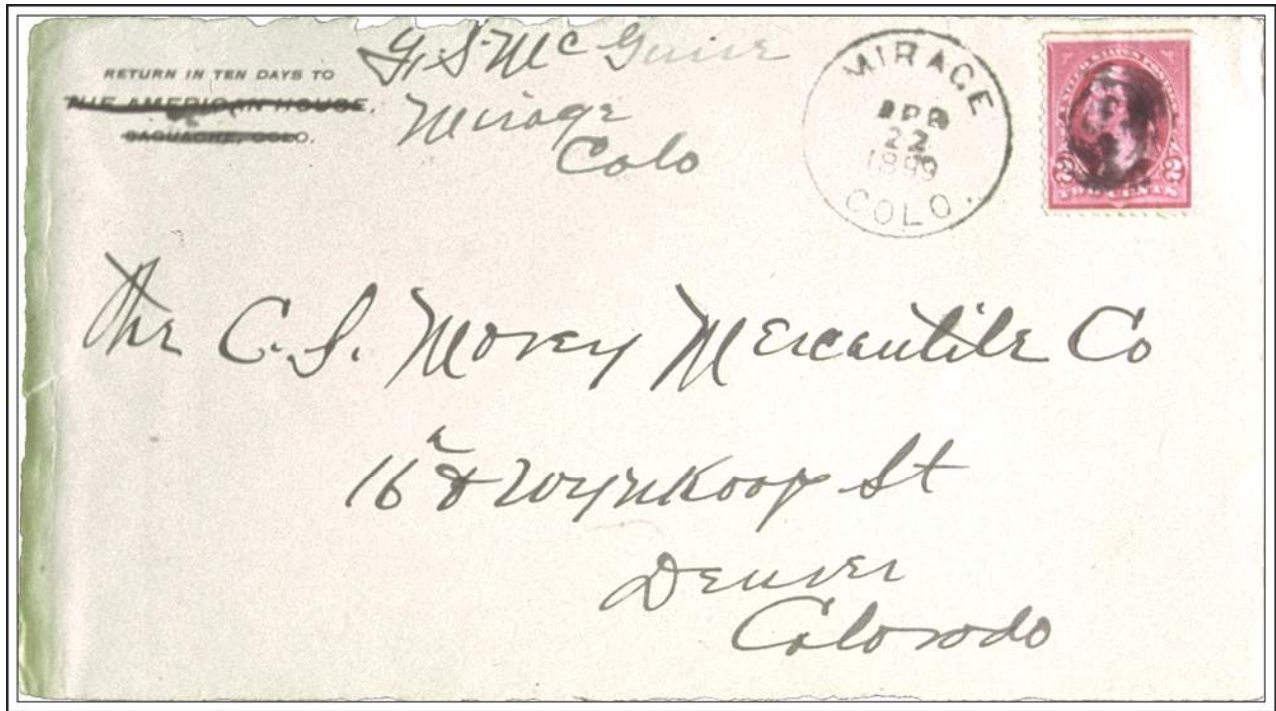
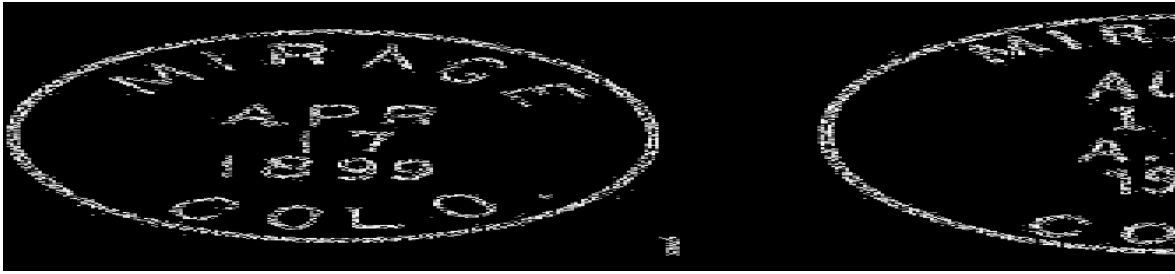


Ranch buildings at or near the site of Mirage, Colorado
 Photograph by James L. Ozment May 22, 2002

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	MIRAGE / COLO. CI 10P 27.5	Hstp Target	Apr 17 1899	Apr 22 1899
2	MIRAGE, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x13mm	May 14 1908	Dec 21 1914
3	MIRAGE / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Mar 14 1923	

MIRAGE – Continued



MIRAGE / COLO.

April 22, 1899

MOFFAT

In 1890 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad continued building south from Villa Grove to Alamosa. Once the railroad reached the floor of the San Luis Valley the tracks were laid in a straight line, without a single curve, to Alamosa. This was once one of the longest railroad “tangents” in the world.

At the time of the railroad’s construction, David H. Moffat was president of the D&RG. The town of Moffat, named in his honor, was established at a new siding on the railroad, one of several sidings along the route to Alamosa.

The San Luis Town & Improvement Association laid out the town. George H. Adams, S. N. Wood, Otto Mears, J. W. Gilluly and other railroad officials promoted the town. At one time Moffat was ranked first in Colorado as a stock loading site. The depot at Moffat was also the point from which freight was offloaded to wagons for transport to the town of Saguache, twelve miles to the northwest.

MOFFAT – Continued

The soil around Moffat was fertile but the problem was water. There were plans for a large irrigation district but the system never materialized. Without sufficient water the land boom faded and Moffat settled into a life as a small supply center and shipping point.

The railroad is gone but Moffat still exists on Colorado Highway 17. There are a number of residences, an architecturally interesting church and a few agriculture related businesses. Moffat is at the junction with the road east to Crestone. The post office is on the west side of Highway 17.

Latitude = 37:59:56 North Longitude = 105:54:34 West

Chronology of the Post Office

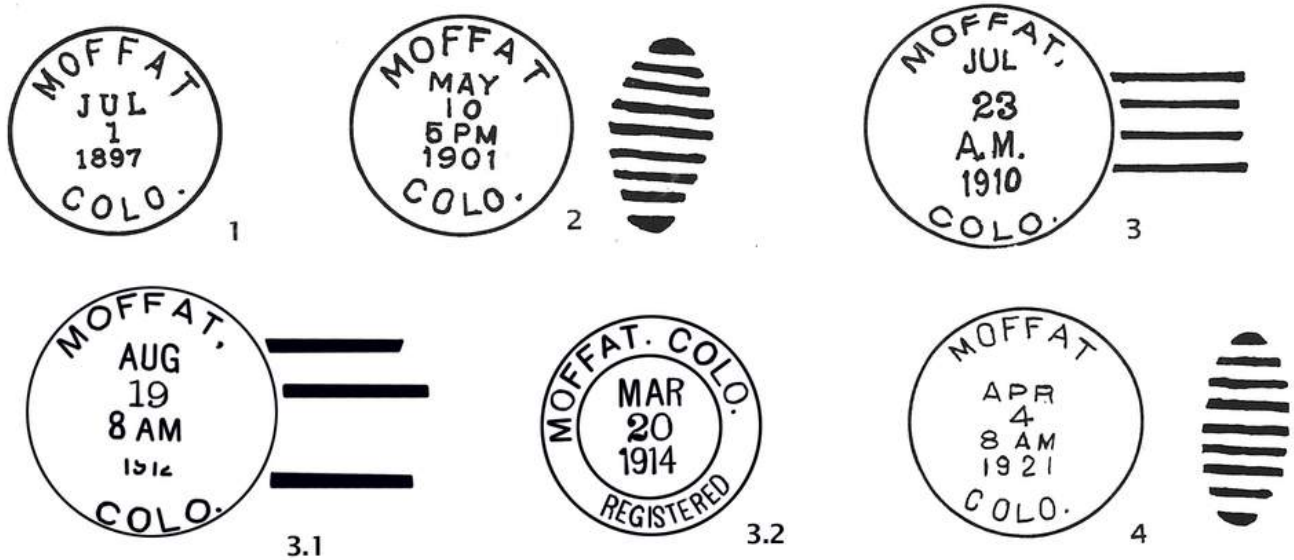
Aug 9 1890	---	SE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E 180 feet west of D&RG tracks Proposed postmaster - James W. Rambo	
Aug 20 1890		Established	
Aug 20 1890		Rambo, James W.	
Dec 9 1890	---	SE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E 350 feet from Moffat Depot of D&RG	
Oct 12 1894		Holcomb, Orville W.	
Aug 22 1901		Feast, Samuel	
Apr 3 1903		Coleman, James N.	
May 2 1914	---	SE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E 320 feet east of D&RG tracks	
Jan 5 1915		Phillips, James E.	
Feb 28 1916	---	NE/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E	
Jun 11 1929		Morris, Flora E.	Acting
Sep 25 1929		Morris, Flora E.	Appointed & Confirmed
Oct 12 1929		Morris, Flora E.	Commissioned
Oct 20 1941	---	SW/4 Sec 6 T43N R10E (Fifth St.) 150 yards east of railroad station D&RG 1 mile west of San Luis Creek	
Jun 30 1951		Garner, Mrs. Cora E.	Assumed charge
Jul 19 1951		Garner, Mrs. Cora E.	Confirmed
Nov 30 1951		Gray, Mrs. Ruby M.	Assumed charge
Dec 18 1951		Gray, Mrs. Ruby M.	Acting
Feb 8 1952		Biggs, Kenneth L.	Appointed & Confirmed
Feb 20 1952		Biggs, Kenneth L.	Commissioned
Feb 29 1952		Biggs, Kenneth L.	Assumed charge
Jun 17 1978		Biggs, Mrs. Doris O.	Officer in charge
Jan 13 1979		Biggs, Mrs. Doris O.	Appointed

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Not present	Jul 1 1897 Dec 13 1898
2	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval	May 10 1901 Aug 19 1908
3	MOFFAT, / COLO. CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-??x13mm	Jul 23 1910
3.1	MOFFAT, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-??x20mm	Aug 19 1912
3.2	MOFFATT. COLO. / REGISTERED CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Mar 20 1914
4	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval	Apr 4 1921
5	MOFFAT, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Sep 29 1931 Nov 14 1936
6	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 11P 28.0/18.0	4bars S-23x15mm	Oct 24 1938

MOFFAT – Continued

7	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Jan 8 1938 Sep 17 1964
8	MOFFAT / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-19x19mm	Jul 29 1948
9	MOFFAT, CO / 81143 CI 10P 32.5	4bars S-24x19mm	Nov 10 1966 Apr 29 1976
10	MOFFAT, CO / 81143 CI 10P 31.5	4bars S-25x18mm	Apr 13 1983 Mar 26 1993



Auxiliary Marking

A1 MOFFAT, CO 81143-9998
SL 00R 56.0x4.0

Feb 27 1990

Hstp No killer



ORIENT

Orient was a mining community, but it was limonite iron ore, not gold and silver, that was produced at Orient. The iron ore at Orient was shipped to Pueblo to feed the blast furnaces of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company at the Minnequa Works.

Frank Haumann discovered the iron deposits in 1870. Haumann recorded a half-dozen claims and a small community bearing his name was established. The claims were sold to The Colorado Coal & Iron Company, later Colorado Fuel & Iron, and the Orient Mine was opened. In 1881 the Denver & Rio Grande built over Poncha Pass to Villa Grove and constructed a railroad spur line to the Orient Mine.

At its peak the Orient Mine was shipping 200 tons of ore per day to Pueblo and the town had some 400 residents. In 1905 the CF&I lost the lease on the mine and operations ceased. In 1920, CF&I again took over operation of the mine. A new town developed but it was located below the railroad grade and well removed from the original site up the canyon at the mine. There was no post office at the new location of Orient.

To reach the site of Orient, begin just north of the junction of US Highway 285 with Colorado Highway 17. Go six and one-half miles east on Saguache County Road GG. At the fork, keep to the left on the road to Valley View Hot Springs for another mile. Valley View Hot Springs is an active resort and there is a welcome center and a gate. Jim Ozment and I visited the place in May 2002. We were given a token for the gate, a key to another gate and allowed to go on to the Orient Mine, which is about a mile beyond the resort. No buildings remain at the mine but there are many foundations and large tailing piles so it is worth the visit if you are given permission to enter. Be aware, the Valley View Hot Springs Resort is at the least a “clothing optional” resort.



Mine dumps and foundation remnants at the site of Orient, Colorado

Photograph by William H. Bauer

May 22, 2002

ORIENT – Continued

Chronology of the Post Office

- Sep 29 1894 --- SE/4 Sec 25 T46N R10E Sketch map shows it at the end of the Orient Branch of the D&RG (NE/4 of SE/4)
Proposed postmaster - Albert L. Munkres
- Oct 15 1894 Established
- Oct 15 1894 Munkres, Albert S. [SRM: signature on Site Report clearly is not S.]
- Feb 1 1898 Buckland, Charles S.
- Apr 4 1902 Chambers, John E.
- Jul 10 1903 Wilson, Charles P.
- Jun 16 1904 Clancy, Herbert C.
- Apr 21 1905 Ordered closed
- May 15 1905 Discontinued Mail to Villagrove



ORIENT / COLO.

June 25, 1901

Confirmed types of postal markings

1 **ORIENT / COLO.**
CI 10P 27.5

Jun 25 1901

Hstp Cork, smudge



ORIENTAL

Oriental was located at the western tollgate for the toll road over Hayden Pass to the Westcliffe area. There was some mining in the vicinity but it was not profitable and soon ended. The road over Hayden Pass was difficult and it still is. When the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad reached the site of Villa Grove, traffic on the Hayden Pass Toll Road nearly ceased and the Oriental community did not survive. The common statement is that the name Oriental was chosen because of the numbers of Chinese that were working the nearby mines.

The site is not an easy one to locate. Begin at Villa Grove on US Highway 285. Take the road east towards Hayden Pass. This road drops into the valley, crosses San Luis Creek and begins the climb towards the pass. A little over two miles from the creek there is a somewhat more level area. Oriental may have been there or possibly down the slope to the south on Silver Creek. It is not clear that the present Hayden Pass Road is on the same track as the original road. In any event, no structures remain in the area.

Chronology of the Post Office

Mar 10 1881	---	NW/4 Sec 4 T46N R10E On Silver Creek 4-1/2 miles east of San Luis Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Perry H. Bertschy
Mar 25 1881		Established
Mar 25 1881		Bertschy, Perry H.
Jul 20 1883		Rice, Martin L.
Feb 25 1884		Discontinued Mail to Villa Grove

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	Oriental Colo MS	Mscp Pen cancel	Apr 25 1881
2	ORIENTAL, COLORADO. CI 20P 33.0/31.5	Hstp Positive 5 point star	Jun 10 1881 Jan 24 1884

**PARKVILLE**

Parkville, first known as Amity Camp, was one of the mining communities along the upper portion of Kerber Creek. There were a number of mining claims to the south in US Gulch and a mill was built at the mouth of the gulch. Cabins for the miners and the workers at the mill were scattered around the mill and in the gulch.

When the post office at Sedgwick was closed, it was moved to Parkville. The Parkville Post Office was open for a little more than one year before it too closed and Claytonia was left as the only post office serving the middle portion of the Kerber Creek Valley.

The site of Parkville is a little more than a mile west of the site of Claytonia. It was on the south side of Kerber Creek, and the remnants of the mill are clearly visible from Saguache County Road LL56. There are also some recent buildings and a couple of older buildings near the old mill site.

Parkville is nine miles west from US Highway 285.

PARKVILLE – Continued

Latitude = 38:13:38 North Longitude = 106:06:00 West

Chronology of the Post Office

No separate entry in the Geographic Site Location Reports for Saguache County.
See Sedgwick
Jan 12 1885 Formerly named Sedgwick
Jan 12 1885 Hurt, James L.
Mar 2 1886 Discontinued Papers to Claytonia

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PARKVILLE

PERRY

Almost nothing has been reported about this post office location. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report leaves an impression that Abraham Perry was doubtful as to the county where he was located. That same report poses the possibility that there was some attempt at mining in the area. The dates that the office existed, 1896-1898, are in line with the excitement generated by the near turn-of-the-century discoveries in the so-called Gunnison Gold Belt that produced the mines at Vulcan and Iris. By that time, major traffic over Cochetopa Pass had ceased.

The Site Location Report provides a location, which if correct, would place Perry close to or on the Continental Divide at Cochetopa Pass (10,032 feet).

Jim Ozment and I visited Cochetopa Pass in September 2002. There is a small, relatively level area near the summit and some evidence of human activity. We found nothing that we could confirm as the remains of a building, so the precise location of Perry is subject to revision.

From the site of Rock Cliff, continue six and one-half miles west to Saguache County Road NN14. This should be marked as the road to Cochetopa Pass. Colorado Highway 114 crosses the Divide at North Pass. From the point of departure at Colorado 114 it is ten miles to Cochetopa Pass, the Continental Divide, and the supposed site of Perry.

Chronology of the Post Office

Nov 5 1896 --- Document filed under Rio Grande County
NE/4 Sec 14 T45N R3E About 15 miles southeast of Cochetopa
Office and 28 miles northwest of Saguache
Proposed postmaster - Abraham Perry
Note: NE quarter Sec 14 Township 45 N Range 3 E was claimed
by Rio Grande County until after Mineral County was established
about the year 1894. There has been patents issued for certain mineral lands
in Sec 14 T45N R3E Saguache County in the last year 1895.
As to any further information I am not posted. You might gain the
required information by looking over the latest maps and charts in
Washington Land Office.
Yours truly P.M. at Perry
Dec 16 1896 Established
Dec 16 1896 Perry, Abraham
Nov 16 1898 Discontinued Papers to Cochetopa

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PERRY

PRUDEN

Pruden is another of the short-lived post offices in the area northwest of Center that has escaped mention in the Colorado historical literature. The post office lasted for only five years and it is likely best described as a ranch post office.

From Saguache, drive south on US 85 seventeen miles to Saguache County Road G. Turn west and go two miles to the intersection with County Road 45. According to the Geographic Site Location Report, Pruden was in the southeast corner of the intersection. Today that is an open field but there is a good-sized active ranch on the opposite side of Road 45, partially hidden in a grove of cottonwood trees. The ranch has been there for a long time and might date from the time of the Pruden Post Office.

The first postmaster was Elizabeth Pruden so it is logical that the office was named for her family.

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 22 1895	---	NW/4 Sec 2 T41N R7E 1-1/2 miles north of La Garita Creek
		Proposed postmaster - Elizabeth Pruden
Mar 5 1895		Established
Mar 5 1895		Pruden, Elizabeth
Nov 22 1898		Collins, Charles F.
Apr 19 1899		Scott, Arthur T.
Dec 18 1900		Ordered closed
Dec 31 1900		Discontinued Papers to Carnero

Confirmed types of postal markings

NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PRUDEN

PYKE

Pyke was a short-lived mining camp on Wild Cherry Creek at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The community began in 1896 when Jim and Elmer Dickerson filed a mining claim for the Broken Tree Mine. The settlement was first known as Dickerson. In 1897 Judge Pyke, of Hooper, became interested in the mine and contributed financing for development, hence the source of the post office name. A few other mines were opened but none of them proved to be of sufficient value to sustain continued development and production. Within a very few years the mining ceased and the community was abandoned.

To reach the site of Pyke, drive four and one-half miles south on Colorado Highway 17 from Mineral Hot Springs to Saguache County Road AA. Turn east on Road AA and go due east past the sites of Cotton Creek and Mirage. At Road 64 continue east to just short of the Horan Ranch. At that point the road curves somewhat northward and enters the hills. The remainder of the road is unimproved and not suitable for normal automobiles. About a mile beyond the ranch the road crosses Wild Cherry Creek. There is a building and some abandoned vehicles on the south side of the creek. A short distance before the crossing a side road leads up to a small level area where in 2002 there was a modest sized, canvas covered structure resembling a Mongolian yurt. The yurt appeared to have been abandoned but from the debris we found inside it may have been used for some sort of religious meetings or religious school. Any other evidence of Pyke is well hidden in the brush or long gone.

Chronology of the Post Office

Oct 1 1900	---	NW/4 Sec 4 T44N R11E On the south side of Wild Cherry Creek
		Name proposed as DICKERSON, COVE or PYKE
		Proposed postmaster - Mrs. Nellie F. McGuire
Nov 8 1900		Established

PYKE – Continued

Nov 8 1900	McGuire, Nellie F.
Nov 23 1901	Ferguson, Mrs. Ida C.
Aug 22 1902	Ordered closed
Sep 15 1902	Discontinued Papers to Moffat

Confirmed types of postal markings

1	PYKE / COLO.	Feb 21 1901
	CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, smudged



RITO ALTO

Rito Alto was an early settlement on the wagon road down the east side of the San Luis Valley near the western foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The name was taken from the stream on which it is situated - Rito Alto Creek. The name of the creek is a bit redundant as Rito Alto translates as “High Creek”. The surrounding area was, and still is, ranchland, both cattle and sheep.

A map that accompanies the Geographic Site Location Report for Rito Alto locates the settlements along the wagon road beginning with Villa Grove on the north, then Bismarck, Rito Alto, San Isabel and lastly Christonie (now Crestone).

In the 1860’s several families from Illinois settled along Rito Alto Creek below where the stream emerges from the mountains. The first post office was in a log cabin belonging to Harrison Wales. His son, Edwin, was the postmaster.

The easiest way to visit the site of Rito Alto is to begin on the south side of Moffat at Colorado Highway 17. Take Saguache County Road T a little more than five miles east to County Road 65. Turn north and stay with the main road through several forced turns for a total of seven miles to County Road X. Turn east on County Road X, which within a mile will bring you to the Rito Alto Church and Cemetery. Just beyond the church, the road turns south and crosses Rito Alto Creek to an active and well kept ranch complex at the end of the road. The church and cemetery are well kept and appear to be in use, at least on occasion. A visit to Rito Alto is worth the effort.

After visiting Rito Alto, return to the Road 65 and continue north to Road AA. From there you can go east to the site of Pyke, or west past the site of Cotton Creek and Mirage and back to Highway 17.

Latitude = 39:03:28 North Longitude = 105:48:09 West RITO ALTO CHURCH

Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 7 1872	Established
Feb 7 1872	Wales, Edwin M.
Mar 15 1872 ---	SE/4 Sec 18 T44N R11E On south side of Rito Alto Creek
Feb 18 1884	Discontinued Mail to Cotton Creek

RITO ALTO – Continued**Confirmed types of postal markings**

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Rito Alto Col
MS | Aug 13 1872
Mscp Pen cancel |
| 2 | RITO ALTO. / COL'O.
CI 10P 25.0 | May -- 188- Nov 30 188-
Hstp No killer, Small stars at sides of CDS |



The Rito Alto Church and entrance to the Rito Alto Cemetery

Photograph by William H. Bauer

May 22, 2002

ROCK CLIFF

Rock Cliff was located on Saguache Creek in a park-like area some fifteen miles west of Saguache. It was on the wagon road to Cochetopa Pass and the Gunnison Country.

Captain G. V. Gideon, Major Monk, Lieutenant Hemming and Mssrs. Henderson and Hodding were among the early settlers. These men were reportedly retired British merchant mariners. They combined to acquire 2,000 acres of land along the creek. Samuel Houghland was another prominent rancher in the area.