CURECANTI RECREATION AREA

COLORADO
Historical Background Study

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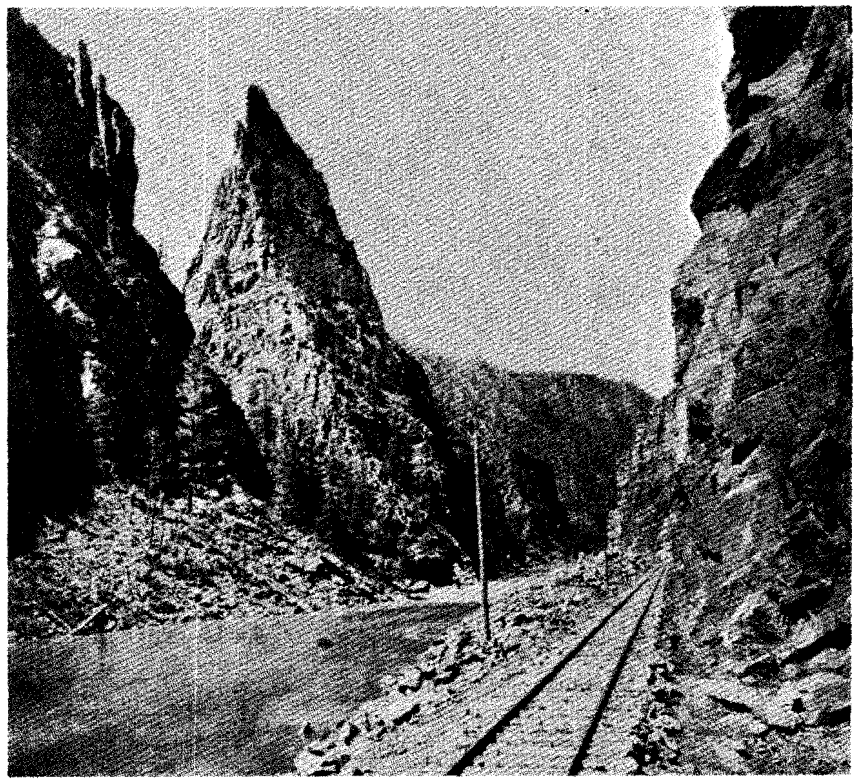

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FOREWORD

The object of this study is to provide the historical data necessary for the proper development of a Master Plan for Curecanti Recreation Area, Colorado. This study, authorized by Resource Study Proposal (RSP) CURE-H-1, seeks to identify historical resources and historic sites located within or closely associated with the recreation area. Such an undertaking will enable master planning teams to consider the use of historical data in interpretive and development programs and provide for the protection of historic sites and structures.

Ideally, the background study ought to precede the master plan team's field investigation. The urgency of the Curecanti plan required this investigation to be undertaken immediately at the beginning of the current fiscal year and compelled it to be done while the team was in the field. Hopefully, this report will have found its way into the team's hands prior to their completion report.

This report does not pretend to be a detailed or definitive study of the history of the Curecanti area. The urgency of the call of this document and the limited time assigned for its preparation permit little more than the examination of secondary sources, although little

published material exists on the history of that stretch of the Gunnison River from Montrose to Gunnison city.

The history contained here is based upon relevant published sources contained in the Library of Congress, on local sources in the vicinity of the Gunnison River, and on a personal examination of the grounds from August 19 to 23, 1968.

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THE BLACK CANYON: Today and Yesterday

Standing at Chasm Point on the south rim of Black Canyon, a visitor peers into the precipitous gorge cut by the river 1700 feet below. He utters one word, "Incredible." A mother is noticeably frightened by the steep and gray depths beneath her and rushes her children back from the guardrail. One visitor remarks, "We were here last year taking pictures later in the day and the canyon was pitch black.

Like these visitors, others can observe the Black Canyon with disinterested awe, be frightened by it without actual threat, and examine its inner bleakness without a personal foreboding. The gorge's river was called Tomichi by the Ute Indians, a word, some say, which means a place of rocks and water. The Spanish christened it the Gunnison in honor of the great explorer. Whatever its name, it carved out a fabulous defile forbidding to the Utes who undoubtedly cautioned travelers and explorers away from it. Those who ventured near were quick to retreat. To Capt. R.B. Marcy and his contingent the canyon spelled imminent disaster.

In 1857, Col. Albert Sidney Johnston was campaigning in the vicinity of Fort Bridger, Wyoming. Finding himself short on supplies, he detached forty enlisted men accompanied by twenty-five mountaineers, packers, and guides. Under the command of Captain Marcy the group was ordered to march to Fort Union, New Mexico, to secure adequate supplies. On November 24 they set out, taking a trappers' trail that ran mostly due south. For a time the route was easy but abruptly they discovered the chasm of the Gunnison. The contingent turned upstream in the hope of discovering a passage. But it was too late in the year to begin exploring the headwaters of the Gunnison. Elevation began to increase and the snows became thicker and deeper. Plodding on, nearly delirious from exertion, Marcy led his men over the mountains and to safety at Fort Massachusetts in the San Luis Valley.[1]

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1. LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., Colorado and Its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State (2 vols. New York, 1948), 1, 96-97.

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THE FIRST PEOPLE

Marcy's men were not the first to experience the threat of the Black Canyon. Lone before the appearance of the white man, the Ute Indians avoided its forlorn and sinister interior. These people were one of seven loosely-knit tribes which came to occupy western Colorado, Utah, northwestern New Mexico, and a small portion of northeastern Arizona. They are a Shoshonean-speaking people whose ancestors are believed to have inhabited western and southwestern Nevada. While there, they were in contact with Pueblo people who began to retract throughout the southwest, during which time the Utes and other Shoshoneans began to spread eastward. By the mid-1100s, Pueblo culture was replaced in the central mountain west by the Shoshonean, and entry of the Ute into southwestern Colorado is believed to have taken place by 1300.[2]

The Utes, believed to be the oldest residents of Colorado, occupied the western slope of the mountains. Of

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2. Albert H. Schroeder, "A Brief History of the Southern Utes," Southwestern Lore, 30 (1965), 53. J. A. Jones, "The Sun Dance of the Northern Ute", Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Bulletin 159, Anthropological Papers, No. 47 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 207-09.

the seven bands, the one most directly associated with the valley and canyons of the Gunnison River was the Tabeguache (pronounced Tabewatch) or Uncompahgre band which consisted of probably about 3000 people in the mid-nineteenth century. These people wintered along the Uncompahgre and Gunnison rivers between present-day Montrose and Grand Junction. During the summer they hunted in the higher elevations along these rivers toward the San Juan Mountains in the south, and east toward the headwaters of the Gunnison River and Tomichi Creek.[3] First European contact with the Utes is reported to have been made by the Spanish between 1630-40. The seventeenth century witnessed the development of these tribes from relatively peaceful roving bands to a loose confederation of more powerful and warlike tribes. That century marked the zenith of Ute strength and glory. The introduction of the horse enabled these people to cross the mountains eastward and effectively hunt the buffalo on the plains.[4]

During the seventeenth century, the frequency of contact with the Spanish increased but still remained

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3. Much of the general information on the Utes of the Gunnison country is drawn from Wilson Rockwell, The Utes: A Forgotten People (Denver, 1956), pp. 11-174.

4. Ralph Linton, Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, pp. 125-27.

marginal. The earliest documented expedition into the Colorado wilderness, that of Don Juan Rivera, undoubtedly contacted the Ute people. Father Silvestre Velez de Escalante recorded in a diary of his expedition of 1776 a number of meetings with the Utes.[5]

In the first half of the eighteenth century, settlement of the Colorado region gradually increased but was confined to the eastern slope. The Ute country remained a remote region. A few documented settlements were attempted but did not prosper. The French Canadian, Baptiste Brown, established himself in the northwest part of Colorado about 1830 in an area known today as Brown's Park. In 1837, Philip Thompson and William Craig built Fort Davy Crockett along the Green River. About the same time, Antoine Robidoux established his private post, "Fort Uncompahgre," near the present town of Delta at the junction of the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Rivers. This latter stockade was burned down by the Utes.[6] Occupation of the Ute country--the western slope--was tenuous indeed in those early years

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5. Herbert E. Bolton, Pageant in the Wilderness: The Story of the Escalante Expedition to the Interior Basin, 1776 (Salt Lake City, 1950), pp. 133-239. The diary and itinerary are included in this volume.

6. Rockwell, pp. 59-62.

of the last century. Contact with trappers, missionaries, and explorers was only occasional. As remote as the Utes were from western penetration at that time, the Uncompahgre band was even more so. Contact with them occurred along the lower reaches of the Gunnison River, but the upper elevations toward present-day Gunnison city in the regions occupied by the Recreation Area were avoided. That was country reserved for the summer hunt and most inhospitable the rest of the year. Prior to the Mexican War the Utes were virtually left to themselves.

With the conquest of New Mexico by General Kearny, August 18, 1846, steps were taken to meet with the Ute Indians. On October 13, sixty leaders taken from the San Luis Valley conferred with Colonel Doniphan in Santa Fe, promising to remain peaceful.[7] On December 30, 1849, the first official treaty with the Utes was signed; it did not establish boundaries and served primarily the Capote and Mouache bands with an agency established at Taos. This agency was far removed from the people of the Gunnison--the Uncompahgre Ute--and they felt slighted. In 1856, a number of them made a trip to the agency to receive a portion of the annual distribution of gifts. Kit Carson, then

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7. Ibid.

agent at Taos, recommended that a separate agency be established for the Tabeguache but his suggestion was ignored for some time.[8] The settlement of the San Luis Valley aggravated tensions, which exploded in 1855. Many settlers were driven out of the valley by the Utes and Col. Thomas T. Fauntleroy marched his troops into the Saguache Valley and on March 19, 1855, quelled the uprising. Tabeguache Utes probably participated in the hostilities.[9]

Increased settlement led inevitably to the formation of the Colorado Territory in 1861. The new Governor proclaimed an agency for the Tabeguache at Conejos and Lafayette Head was appointed its first agent. It was not long before he was complaining about insufficient funds to do his job.[10]

Gold discoveries on the western slope attracted covetous eyes to the land and increasing hostility of the Utes was generated by the proliferation of mining communities within their traditional homeland. To legitimize white expansionism, the Conejos conference was called for October 1, 1863. The

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8. James Warren Covington, "Federal Relations with the Colorado Utes," The Colorado Magazine, 28 (1951), 258.

9. Ibid., p. 260.

10. Ibid., pp. 257-258.

attempt was made to move the Utes from land surrounding developing communities and from regions of suspected mineral wealth. The Utes refused to move but did accept the first treaty specifying the boundaries of their reservation. The Mouache Utes were included within the boundaries. In effect, the known mining land was ceded and the Utes were legally confined, although they continued to maintain the right to hunt the buffalo on the plains and small game in the higher reaches outside the reservation. However, hostilities did not subside. The inevitable press of people and entrepreneurs continued to aggravate relations between the Indians and, particularly, the Latin American settlers of the San Luis Valley.[11]

The removal of the Utes from the San Luis Valley was legally engineered by the treaty of 1868. This document confined all Utes to a region west of the 107th meridian. The towns of Gunnison and Crested Butte were left somewhat east of the reservation line, leaving most of the Gunnison River and all of what is now the Recreation Area within the Tabeguache reservation. The Los Pinos Agency was to be established along Los Pinos River in La Platta County. However, in moving west, the Tabeguache refused to go farther than a tributary of Cochetopa Creek. It was decided to establish the

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11. Ibid., pp. 68-70.

agency at that point, which was just outside the reservation boundary. In order for the name to conform to the establishment, the creek was renamed Los Pinos.[12] While the Utes were being pushed further west they continued to hunt buffalo along the Platte River until the beasts were almost annihilated by 1876.

The agency's cow camp was established in the vicinity of Gunnison in 1871 under the supervision of James P. Kelley and, subsequently, Alonzo Hartman, Charles F. Holt and John Kerr drove the first livestock into camp--640 head of cattle and 1160 sheep.[13]

It was quickly realized that the Los Pinos agency was poorly located. Its elevation and situation made it difficult to reach, especially in the winter. Therefore, the decision was reached to create the Uncompahgre Agency, moving its offices to a preferable location. The new location was not easily determined and a decision was reached only after heated discussion. Ouray, most prominent of the Ute head men, contended that his people would balk at relocating any farther west than the confluence of the Gunnison

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12. Rockwell, p. 81.

13. Sidney Jocknick, Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado (Denver, 1913) p. 25.

River and Tomichi Creek, where the cow camp was located. A location within the Cebolla Valley, between the town of Gunnison and the spot where Sapinero was to be built, was considered. Nevertheless, a station farther west was selected. The agency was established in the Uncompahgre Valley where the town of Colona stands today. Removal to new agency quarters was accomplished by November 20, 1875. As part of the transaction, Ouray was given a 400-acre ranch in the vicinity of the present Ute Indian Museum along Route 50 east of Montrose. Just north of that location the government built and furnished a home for the Tabeguache Chief.[14]

The relocation of the agency influenced the extension of communication and transportation into another formerly untouched corner of wilderness. Up to this time, the only road west of Gunnison touched the Lake Fork and turned south to the mining town of Lake City. The presence of the new agency on the Uncompahgre attracted a branch from the Lake Fork to expedite the flow of mail. In 1876, the road was improved by Otto Mears, who received the mail contract for the agency that became the central mail headquarters for

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14. Rockwell, pp. 106-107. Also, Lois Borland, "Sale of the San Juan," Colorado Magazine, 28 (1851), 125-127.

the mines in the nearby San Juan area. Mears divided the road to the Lake Fork into three 25-mile sections, with a cabin constructed at each divide. During the winter months the section from the Cimarron River to the Lake City road was traversed by dog sled.[15] Today, a primitive road is all that remains of this route, which, while not within the proposed take-line of the Recreation Area, is not far distant. The road served as the first substantial route of commerce between the Montrose area and the town of Gunnison.

While major Indian raids and military confrontations did not occur along the Gunnison, they did serve to bring troops into that vicinity to prevent the spread of hostilities. Following the Meeker Massacre in the White River country, Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie marched out from Fort Garland on May 25, 1880, with four comapnies of the 23rd Infantry. They encamped on the Uncompahgre River eight miles south of the present town of Montrose and several miles north of the Agency. There they established a cantonment which became Fort Crawford in 1884. It was abandoned in 1890.[16]

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15. Jocknick, p. 81.

16. Rockwell, pp. 109-10.

The Utes increasingly resented the influx of miners and the proliferation of settlements. They were irritated by the Indian agents' constant attempts to convert them to a farming way of life. These tensions resulted in the Meeker Massacre and subsequent bloody battle at Milk Creek. Numerous scares were reported among the settlers, particularly in the San Juan Valley to the south and the White River country to the north.[17] The relative absence of hostilities along the Gunnison was undoubtedly due to a lack of interest in settling a region of little mineral wealth as well as the ominous presence of Chief Ouray, who exercised vigorous control over his tribe.

The rape of the Ute homeland was consummated in 1880 with yet another treaty,which, with the exception of the Southern Utes, removed Ouray's people from Colorado and forced them farther west. The White River Band was removed to Utah on the Uintah Reservation while the Southern Utes were permitted to remain on their narrow strip of land along the southern boundary of Colorado. The Tabeguache were to be set aside on a new reservation in Utah south of the Uintah reserve. They asked for several postponements of the final moment on their traditional homeland and did

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17. Ibid.

secure the right for one last solemn hunt to the valleys of the Cimarron River and Cow Creek. Finally, when further requested delays were denied, the last band of the Tabeguache crossed the western boundary on September 1, 1881.[18]

Summary and Conclusion: The country of the Gunnison River and, more particularly, that section of the river encompassed by the Curecanti Recreation Area, was inhabited by a succession of prehistoric peoples and most recently, beginning about 1100 to 1300 A.D., by the Ute Indians. This conclusion is born out by the general discovery of relevant artifacts thoroughout the area. No discoveries are known that would testify to the existence at any time of a permanent or semi-permanent settlement of Indians within the proposed boundaries of the Recreation Area.[19] There is no doubt that the area was traversed in the process of seasonal migration and in the pursuit of the hunt, but the lack of data suggesting actual settlement is supported by an understanding

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18. Rockwell, pp. 174-76.

19. Robert H. Lister, Archeological Survey of the Blue Mesa Reservoir, Colorado (National Park Service and University of Colorado, 1962). Lister reports that few archeological sites were located. These were campsites and workshops and one locality containing petroglyphs. Most of these sites are inundated. Sites GN-1 and GN-10 are above high water line and consist of a campsite, quarry, and workshops. The interpretive potential of these locations ought to be explored.

of the region's terrain and elevation. As one moves from Montrose to Gunnison the elevation increases to about 7700 feet. The growing season is hardly two months long. Whatever Ute occupation could be tied to those higher regions would be of short duration, such as small hunting campsites. The warmer region near the confluence of the Uncompahgre and Gunnison Rivers was more likely to serve during the remaining 10 months of the year. Indeed, the offices of the Agency serving the Tabeguache were finally established along the Uncompahgre near the site of present-day Montrose.

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COLONIALS ON THE GUNNISON

The Valley of the Gunnison proved to be at the remotest extent of a succession of frontiers. The earliest of European explorers into the region were, of course, the Spanish. The routes of the early expeditions cannot be traced with great accuracy and the regions of Colorado examined by these first adventurers cannot always be reasonably identified. The suggestion has been made that the 1541 expedition of Coronado may have touched remarkably close to the Curecanti area if it is true that Coronado followed the Cimarron River.[20] By the mid-seventeenth century, penetration of Colorado became more frequent with a number of documented forays and suggestions of the wanderings of a considerable number of unrecorded parties in search of mineral treasure and Indian slaves. In 1650, Juan Archuleta led an expedition to return fugitives from the New Mexico missions. His route took him north of the Arkansas River. Don Diego Vargas found himself in southern Colorado when he undertook the reconquest of the pueblos following the

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20. Hafen, 1, 14.

uprising of 1680. He penetrated the land of the Utes, calling them "Yuttas", and on July 8, 1694, he camped on the Culebra River in present Costilla County.[21]

When reports reached Spanish provincial authorities that the French were making incursions into the Colorado territory, Juan de Ulibarri was sent to reconnoiter the area. In 1706 he reached the area of present Trinidad and Walsenberg and struck the Arkansas River near the town of Pueblo. By proclamation he took firm possession of eastern Colorado. Not content in the face of continued reports of French presence and Ute and Comanche militancy, Governor Valverde of New Mexico led a punitive force into southern Colorado in 1719. The disastrous expedition of Pedro de Villasur passed 100 miles east of Pueblo at a place called El Cuartelejo in 1720.[22]

While the French reached Colorado earlier, the first recorded expedition for France took place in 1739 under the direction of Peter and Paul Mallet. On July 5 they met the Comanches near present-day Lamar and called them "Laitanes." The Verendrye brothers, Pierre and Chevalier, are not believed to have penetrated Colorado.[23]

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21. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

22. Ibid., pp. 18-25.

23. Ibid., pp. 26-31.

Even with this exploratory activity, it is not until 1765 that the first recorded expedition reached the Gunnison River, although the region was certainly visited by minor prospecting parties and fur traders. The merchants of New Mexico sought contact with the native tribes to the north in order to exchange Spanish goods for peltry. In response to this desire, Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin sent out an expedition in 1765 under Juan Maria de Rivera. The route took his party down the Uncompahgre River to its confluence with the Gunnison at which point he sent several men farther to make contact with the Utes while he and his main column returned to Santa Fe. Rivera's route became well worn during the following decade.[24]

In 1775, Pedro Mora, Gregoria Sandoval, and Andres Muniz, all of whom had accompanied Rivera ten years earlier, traveled both northeast and northwest from New Mexico to the Gunnison River and recorded that they had seen the cross that Rivera had carved on a cottonwood tree near the mouth of the Uncompahgre River. These were not the only three who covered the region of southwest Colorado. The Spaniards of New Mexico frequently traded in the area, in

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24. Bolton, pp. 6-7.

violation of the Governor's orders. After examining the period, Joseph J. Hill concluded that the region north of New Mexico as far as the Gunnison River was fairly well known to Spanish traders by 1776. He felt this was substantiated by the fact that "most of the more important physical features of the country were referred to in the diary of Escalante by names that are still on the map, and in a way that would lead one to think . . . those names were more or less in common use at that time. It was also definitely stated by Nicolas de la Flora, who accompanied the Marques de Rubi on his tour of inspection of the northern Spanish provinces in 1776-67, that the country to the north along the Cordillera de las Grullas [Rocky Mountains] was at that time known to the Spaniards for a hundred leagues above New Mexico." [25]

The truly epic venture of this time was the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, sent out in 1776. The Spanish authorities were searching for a direct route from New Mexico to California. However, their way was blocked by the hostility of the Apache and Hopi. Both leaders hoped to

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25. Ibid. pp. 7-8. Bolton quotes The Cranes by Hill. Also, Joseph J. Hill, "Spanish and Mexican Exploration and Trade Northwest from New Mexico into the Great Basin," Utah Historical Quarterly, 3 (January, 1930).

circumvent this threat by securing a more northern route. Father Francisco Atanasio Dominguez, Superior of the New Mexico Franciscans, was the official head of the expedition. However, the venture is commonly called the Escalante Expedition because it was Father Silvestre Velez de Escalante who left the remarkable diary of the trip, which was further illuminated by a map drafted by the engineer who accompanied the party, Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco.[26]

Even though the Esclante Expedition did not reach California, its penetration of the Great Basin was an achievment. The importance here, however, is the expedition's relevance to the Gunnison River region. The interpretation of the route extrapolated by Herbert E. Bolton, based upon the Escalante diary and Miera map, takes the contingent across the Uncompahgre Plateau to the Uncompahgre River at a point just below the site of present-day Montrose; down that river to a location called San Agustin near present Olathe; leaving the Uncompahgre at this point and striking out toward Santa Monica at present-day Austin; bending

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26. A copy of the Miera map can be found accompanying Bolton, Pageant in the Wilderness. Also, for a detailed treatment of this map and its contemporaneous and subsequent copies, see Carl I. Wheat, Mapping the Transmississippi West (5 vols. The Institute of Historical Cartography, San Francisco, 1957), 1, 93-116.

eastward and crossing the Gunnison above its mouth and striking in the direction of the present town of Hotchkiss and Paonia.[27]

Thus, direct confrontation with the wilderness of the Gunnison continued to be averted. Escalante had the slightest contact with the river and continued north and west. Thereafter, much of the Spanish interest centered to the east. Juan Bautista de Anza, when Governor of New Mexico, led an expedition against the Comanches under Cuerno Verde (Greenhorn). The force dispersed the Indians on Greenhorn Creek at the base of the Greenhorn Mountains. The contingent returned by way of the Culebra River in the San Luis Valley.[28]

The attempt to settle the region of Colorado by the Spanish was long delayed. By 1787 there was a Comanche settlement at San Carlos de los Jupes, east of the present town of Pueblo. By this time, Anglo-American traders were beginning to concern the Spanish authorities, even though they had not yet reached Colorado. Expeditions sent out to meet the threat from the east passed through Pueblo, Colorado, to secure the northeastern boundaries of the

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27. "The Escalante Trail," map compiled by Herbert E. Bolton and included in his Pageant in the Wilderness.

28. Hafen, pp. 34-38.

Spanish domain. Further expeditions were undertaken at the turn of the nineteenth century through southwest Colorado to press the Escalante route farther west.[29]

A more despicable reason for the presence of the Spanish was the slave trade. Forays struck out into lower Colorado to capture unwary Indians, and undoubtedly some of these press gangs reached the Valley of the Gunnison. In 1805, Manuel Mestas explored the western reaches of Colorado, as did Mauricio Arze and Lagos Garcia in 1813, the latter reaching Utah Lake. In 1829-30, Antonio Armijo led a trading venture south of the Escalante route through southwestern Colorado which came to be known as the Spanish Trail.[30]

Most of the very official or very businesslike forays avoided the Gunnison stretch. But there was a well-traveled route about which no emigrants seem to have left accounts. This was the route of the Old Spanish Trail blazed by a succession of traders and trappers who gradually penetrated the mountainous Ute country of Colorado. The northern branch of the Old Spansih Trail did follow the course of the Gunnison River. The Hafens describe this route and illuminate it

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29. Ibid., pp. 42-46.

30. Ibid., pp. 46-48.

with a map in their book on the famous trail.[31] According to them, the northern branch had two forks at its southeastern end above Santa Fe. They joined in the San Luis Valley and, once united, bent gradually to the northwest and crossed the continental divide at Cochetopa Pass. Once across, the trail descended Pass Creek to the Tomichi and then along the Gunnison River. In negotiating the Gunnison Valley the route ambled through the meadows of the bottomland along the upper reaches of the river and then followed a tortuous path around the forbidding depths of the Black Canyon, returning to the river once again and following its course to the Colorado. From there the route continued to the Green River, where it met the main branch of the Old Spanish Trail and as one road struck out across Utah towards California.

This trail was an important avenue of early exploration, prospecting, and fur-gathering serving the northern frontier of the Spanish domain. The caravan trade that developed upon it withered away after the war with Mexico. The advancing American empire and Mormon preemption of the Great Basin turned commerce away from southern Spanish centers. The circuitous Old Spanish Trail began to be re-

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31. LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafen, Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles (Glendale, Cal., 1954), pp. 100-01.

placed by more direct routes to the west coast. The eastern section of the trail lay dormant for a generation until enterprising prospectors uncovered several rich veins of silver in the Colorado mountains.

Summary and Conclusion: For the Spanish, the region of the Gunnison River was among the remotest segments of their frontier. Until the Escalante Expedition, there were few official words to be said about the country beyond the Gunnison. The Gunnison River could, therefore, be considered as a kind of frontier boundary. Of course, the lack of official and personal accounts relating to activity along the river does not entirely rule out the early presence of Europeans in that region. From the mid-seventeenth century on, there are marginal accounts strongly implying that minor bands of trappers, traders, prospectors, and explorers had made their way into the remote reaches of Colorado.

The first clear documented tie of history to the Gunnison River is the Rivera Expedition of 1765 and, of greater importance, the Escalante Expedition of 1776. Neither of these parties seem to have explored the Gunnison Valley to any extent, touching the river only immediately above its confluence with the Colorado.

On the other hand, the trail taken by those who have not left us the benefit of diaries and itineraries wore

itself into the earth and became known as the Old Spanish Trail. The general course of its northern branch followed the Gunnison river for some distance. Based on the Hafen extrapolation of that route, the Old Spanish Trail followed the south bank of the Gunnison river downstream and began to diverge southward at Cebolla Creek (certainly at the Lake Fork) in order to avoid the increasingly treacherous depths of the Black Canyon. In this case, ten to twelve miles of the trail would be within the boundaries of the Recreation Area.

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PURCHASE OR PRIZE? The American Occupation

The Louisiana Purchase delivered eastern Colorado to the United States and sparked the expedition of Zebulon Montgomery Pike into southwestern Louisiana territory. Pike ascended the Arkansas River to the Royal Gorge area, entered South Park, crossed the divide, and came upon the Twin Lakes and Salida area. He then crossed the Wet Mountains and the Sangre de Cristo Range by way of Sand Hill Pass to the San Luis Valley and through it to the Rio Grande. In 1820, Long's Expedition entered Colorado near Julesburg on June 27. Nevertheless, as with the Spanish, official exploration of the Gunnison was to wait awhile.

The mountaineers and fur traders--that illusive vanguard of the frontier--as with the Spanish were the first penetrators of the Gunnison country. Until the end of the Mexican War, American activity was limited in southwest Colorado, since this region was beyond the Louisiana boundary of the Arkansas River. Crossing that line could mean confiscation and forfeiture of goods to Spanish authorities and imprisonment for the party. Certainly the more

zealous and independent of the mountain men did not permit Spanish claims to stand in their way, but during the early years of the nineteenth century the eastern slope and upper Colorado probably contented them.

A long list of mountaineers and trappers of the Colorado Rockies could be compiled. For many of them it would be straining a point to identify them with the Gunnison region. A few are more likely to have found their way to that river. In 1811 Ezekial Williams was reported among the headwaters of the Arkansas and high into the mountains. In 1815 A. P. Chouteau and Julius DeMunn maintained fifty men in the field in southern Colorado. In 1817 they violated Spanish territory and were discovered at the mouth of the Huerfano River. Their goods were confiscated and they were jailed for 48 days.

By 1820, Mexican-American relations had improved somewhat and activity in the south and western portion of Colorado increased. Apparently, the Gunnison River region was becoming of interest. In 1824, William Becknell, "Father of the Santa Fe Trail," and William Huddart took parties to the western slope.[32]

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32. Hafen, pp. 64-79.

The man most likely to have covered the extent of the Gunnison was Antoine Robidoux, called by one author the "Kingpin in the Colorado River Fur Trade." [33] Robidoux conducted a fur business for many years in western Colorado and built his Fort Uncompahgre near the mouth of the Uncompahgre River. A number of travelers left accounts of Robidoux's operation. Both Marcus Whitman and Rufus B. Sage arrived at Fort Uncompahgre in 1842. Sage left his Rocky Mountain Life, which tells of his having joined Robidoux in Taos and traveled with him to his post. William Gilpin, first Governor of Colorado, after making the western trek with Fremont in 1843, returned the following year and traveled along the Gunnison. It was in that area that his party was stopped by a band of Utes, and judicious diplomacy enabled his group to continue unmolested.[34]

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33. Richard G. Beidleman, op. cit.

34. Hafen, pp. 88-93.

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IRON RAILS TO THE PACIFIC

When Asa Whitney, in 1844, proposed a transcontinental railroad, no one could have imagined the head-on collision of sectional interests that would result. By 1853 the politicians and promoters had enmeshed the railroad issue in such sectional and local conflict that it became nearly insoluble. In an attempt to break the political deadlock over the route of the transcontinental railway, Senator Brodhead of Pennsylvania proposed a series of impartial scientific surveys. The Pacific railroad surveys were injected as a means of tempering the acrimonious debate by substituting the unbiased eye of science.

The Pacific Railroad Survey bill was passed by Congress March 2, 1853. In response to its directives the Secretary of War ordered the Topographical Corps to undertake several field surveys along routes and parallels which seemed to have the strongest political support. Several suggested routes failed to be considered although indications were clear that they might have been feasible. For lack of sufficient local support they were initially ignored.[35]

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35. William H. Goetzmann, Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863 (New Haven, 1959), pp. 262-75.

As was to be expected, all three corridors--northern, central, and southern--were to be examined. The survey of the central region was to follow a line between the 38th and 39th parallels from the headwaters of the Arkansas through the Cochetopa Pass to the Salt Lake. It was the route so ardently defended by Senator Thomas Hart Benton and the aggressive business interests of St. Louis. The object of this survey was to determine a feasible route and railroad pass out of the San Luis Valley in the area of the Cochetopa Pass. Fremont's near-disaster in that region in 1848 had not turned Benton's mind away from the area. In fact, he staked much of his political future on his promotion of the Cochetopa route. He growled over the $40,000 appropriated for the survey--a sum he considered far from adequate--and he insisted that his son-in-law, John Charles Fremont, lead the exploration. His demands were not met. Lt. John William Gunnison was appointed to make the survey.

"Old Bullion" Benton's response was immediate and typical. He undertook to organize and secure the financial backing for two independent ventures. The first was led out in the early summer of 1853 by Edward Fitzgerald Beale who became Indian Agent for California and Nevada at Benton's instigation. The other was undertaken by Fremont, again

in the winter, in an attempt to undo the disaster of 1848. Again the effort was inconclusive.[36]

Gunnison set out from Fort Leavenworth on June 23, 1853. With him were Lt. E. G. Beckwith, Third Artillery, as assistant, and R. H. Kern as topographer and artist. Also along were an astronomer, a surgeon-geologist, a botanist, an assistant topographer, and a wagon-master. The train consisted of the party and escort and 18 wagons. Sixteen wagons were drawn by 6-mules each, and the last was a four-mule ambulance. This lengthy train was decided upon to demonstrate the potentiality of the route for a wagon road, if not a railroad.[37]

The party reached the headwaters of the Arkansas River, proceeded up Apishpa Creek, crossed to the Huerfano, crossed the Sangre de Cristo range and descended into the San Luis Valley to Taos. Continuing on the main line, the group

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36. Ibid., pp. 274-75, 283-85. Goetzman cites E. F. Beale and Gwinn Harris Heap, A Central Route to the Pacific . . ., Phila., 1854 and S. N. Carvalho, Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West with Colonel Fermonts Last Expedition, ed. B. W. Korn, Phila., 1954, first published New York, 1857. The latter account is not specific enough to determine whether the Fremont route followed the Gunnison River.

37. U.S. House of Representatives, Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad . . . to the Pacific Ocean . . ., 33rd Cong., 2ns Sess., 1855, Ex. Doc. 91, "Report

crossed through the controversial Cochetopa Pass.[38]

The precise route taken by the expedition from this point to Cedar Creek is not easy to interpolate. Short of an actually reproduced survey, educated probabilities must suffice. Part of the difficulty is in the designation of the creeks and rivers of the region, which now differs from that of Captain Gunnison or Lieutenant Beckwith. Beckwith reported, for example, that in crossing the Divide at Cochetopa Pass, the party continued along Pass Creek. If the pass is correctly named today, what Beckwith called Pass Creek, is today designated Archuleta Creek. Moving downstream six miles they came to the confluence of the Archuleta and the present Cochetopa Creek at a point where the Archuleta turns north and enters a canyon. In avoiding this gorge the party then turned north-northeast away from Pass Creek (now Cochetopa Creek), crossed a rugged and densely sage-covered ridge and encamped along another stream, probably today's Razor Creek, which empties into the Tomichi, called Cochetopa by Gunnison.

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by Lt. E. G. Beckwith, Third Artillery, Upon the Route Near the Thirty-Eighth and Thirty-Ninth Parallels, Explored by Capt. J. W. Gunnison, Corps. Topographical Engineers," p. 12. Hereafter cited as E. G. Beckwith.

38. E. G. Beckwith. The following interpretation of Gunnison's route from the Cochetopa Pass to Cedar Creek is based upon Beckwith's report, pages 46-55, and no further citations of his report are necessary.

On September 5 the expedition continued down the valley cut by Razor Creek and severed laterally by numerous rivulets and covered abundantly with grass. An eight-mile walk brought the expedition to Tomichi Creek. Beckwith called it "a fine rapid little stream of twenty feet in width, which we were repeatedly obliged to cross and recross as the valley narrowed into gorges, and the stream impinged against its banks, while to avoid this at other points we passed over the artemisia [sage] bluffs."

Describing the country through which the Tomichi flowed, the Lieutenant continued:

> A few cottonwoods were scattered along the creek but it was generally lined only with willow bushes. At one point where we crossed it, ledges of coarse and crumbling . . . granite were observed; but the rocks were generally sandstone, the light-colored . . . frequently overlying the red . . . Conglomerate rocks, but slightly cemented, also prevailed, and a few trap rocks were seen.

Continuing down the Tomichi, Gunnison climbed a ridge to enjoy the fine mountainous view prolific with snow-capped peaks. The report records that

> Numerous elk-horns and buffalo-skulls lay scattered whitening on the hills, attesting to the former range of the latter animals to these pastures, where the small variety of artemisia with a camomile odor, of which they are said to be more fond in the winter than of any of the grasses, flourishes.

After traveling almost sixteen miles the party encamped on a meadow one-half mile across near the mouth of Pass (Cochetopa) Creek.

The following day the train struggled across the sharp lateral ridges and cuts along the Tomichi and after a trek of seven miles emerged in the Valley of the Grand (Gunnison) River. The expedition pushed on for an eight-mile stretch which Lieutenant Beckwith described as a valley

> covered abundantly with grass, the stream being lined with willow and cotton-wood. The bottom is very level and is evidently annually overflowed at the season of the melting of the mountain snows . . . The Elk mountains tower high above us to the west, the hills immediately along the valley being high and more or less of a table character . . . Grand river is at present a fine, clear stream of cold water, one hundred feet wide and three feet deep, flowing rapidly over a paving-stone bed . . . This fine little valley is terminated a short distance below our camp, by the close proximity of the hills on either side, and a deep canon presents its giant mouth to receive the river. [Illustration No. 1]

Next day the group recrossed the river and proceeded 1.8 miles to the canyon opening and to avoid the gorge, began to climb, probably at South Beaver Creek, across Big Mesa and to follow down Willow Creek to the Gunnison once more. Describing this stretch of country, Beckwith reported that the

> hills were very rocky, but we found little difficulty in ascending and passing them withour wagons, except from the everlasting sage, which was large and rank, and the only vegetation on them, although we approached quite close to the base of the tables or mesas, which are elevated from 300 to 400 feet above our path, and are separated by deep ravines from a few hundred feet to a quarter of a mile in width.

At times, having to lower the wagons down precipitous slopes by means of ropes, they descended to the Gunnison River and crossed at the mouth of Willow Creek. They then proceeded downstream only to come upon another canyon, possibly on the East Fork, crossed with great difficulty and descended once again to the Gunnison along what might be Elk Creek.

The lateral canyons were becoming continually more precipitous and Captain Gunnison rode into them to examine them more closely. He reported on the enormous engineering job required to drive a road through the first canyon, remarking that "it would require blasting one-third of the distance for the construction of a road, and solid masonry with many arches for culverts on the whole line--a stupendous work for an engineer." Gunnison remarked to Beckwith that the country was the "roughest, most hilly, and most cut up he had ever seen. Hills with flat tops, hills with rounded tops, and hills with knife edges and points, and deep chasms, are on every side."

The following day, September 8, the expedition crossed the river several times to avoid a spur of the Elk Mountains and several sharp ravines on the south bank, particularly the Canyon of the Cebolla. Crossing to the south bank, just below the Cebolla, the party immediately began to ascend the higher table land between the Lake Fork and the Cebolla, encamping in a ravine near a spring (Ten Mile Spring?).

At this point the Lieutenant reported on the Ute Indians stealthily reconnoitering the party:

> A large smoke ascending from our last camp, from the grass taking fire after we left it, a larger counter smoke was seen during the day directly on our route ahead, made doubtless by the Utah Indians, in the heart of whose country we have been travelling for several weeks, and whom we expect daily to meet, as we are approaching their summer hunting-grounds--the elk, which they follow both north and south in the winter, migrating here at this season. Antelope are also abundant, and are taken by the Utahs by building a pen, or rather two sides of a triangle, and driving a large district of country, narrowing in until they themselves form the third side, when they bag the game; and a whipping betides the unfortunate women, says our guide, if one happens to escape where they are stationed.

From camp, Captain Gunnison continued to make personal forays into the ravines and lateral canyons of the Grand River, as he called it. He wasn't pleased by the terrain

and Beckwith reported that the engineering feat required for a railroad along this stretch was unthinkable.

September 9 proved to be one of the most nearly unbearable days of the venture. The guide returned with the melancholy news that the route ahead was almost impossibly difficult. The real obstacle was the Rio de la Laguna or Lake Fork which flows into the Gunnison from the south. The river canyon was severely precipitous and Beckwith's description of the expedition's efforts to cross it is one of the most exciting descriptions in his report:

> Ascending from the ravine on which we had encamped we were forced high up on the mesas, to avoid numerous deep ravines, which we succeeded in turning successfully, when a short, steep ascent . . . brought us . . . to the top of the difficult passage--a rapid descent of 4,055 feet in length, and 935 in perpendicular height above the stream, covered with stones of all sizes, from pebbles to tons in weight, with small ledges of rocks cropping out at various points . . . [T] he wagons with locked wheels, thumped, jarred, and grated over the greater portion, especially those too large and deeply imbedded in the soil to be removed, until their noise quite equalled that of the foaming torrent creek below. At one point as they passed . . . over a ridge, it was necessary to attach ropes to the wagons, and employ a number of men to prevent their overturning. Two hours were thus employed in descending with our eighteen wagons, and in

> twice crossing the creek, in the bed of which we had to descend for a quarter of a mile, before we could gain a permanent footing on the west side.

September 10 was almost as bad. The party had to ascend the opposite slope of the Lake Fork gorge. Doubling the teams and with ten mules, they pulled the loads up the crest of the west bank.

Leaving the Lake Fork, the expedition continued climbing the table land and moving off to the south and around the lateral ravines of the Gunnison River. Crossing what Beckwith called the Cebolla, but what today is known as the Cimarron River, the group followed Cedar Creek to the Uncompahgre Valley, turned down the latter to the Gunnison River once again. From this point the expedition continued on to the Great Basin where the party was to meet its doom at the hands of the Ute Indians. On October 26, early in the morning, the party was attacked in the Sevier River valley. Gunnison, Kern, Creuzefeldt the botanist, a Mormon guide, and four other members of the expedition were massacred.

Gunnison believed he had achieved several results: (1) a new military road to Taos, (2) another southern emigrant road to the west coast, (3) a military road to penetrate and command Utah, and (4) the discovery that the

38th parallel route was inferior to the 41st parallel route for a railroad.[39] On the fourth point, Beckwith's statement, recorded on September 17, 1853, is a definitive judgment on the engineering potential along the 38th parallel route:

> But from the continuance, for so great a distance, of vertical rocky walls along the river, ranging from 80 to 1,000 feet and more in height, upon which the road must be carried, and which can be cut only by blasting, and, from the deep side-chasms to be passed . . . only by the heaviest masonry, it is evident that a railroad, although possible, can only be constructed in the vicinity of this section of Grand river, at an enormous expense--for the accurate estimate of which . . . no data exists, nor will until such a labor shall be undertaken. And it would be a waste of labor to add even a rude estimate of the cost of so impracticable an undertaking.[40]

Clearly the Cochetopa route was found wanting. This impracticable undertaking was not to be practicable for another generation when the rails would be laid for the narrow gauges of the Denver and Rio Grande.

Summary and Conclusion: The Gunnison Expedition is the first survey to seriously investigate the country of the Gunnison River. The party avoided the greatest depths of the Black

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39. Ibid., p. 70.

40. Ibid., p. 56.

Canyon below the Lake Fork and above this point did not stay in the river bed continually. Nevertheless, the survey did follow the river very closely through what is now Curecanti Recreation Area west to the Lake Fork from which point the expedition left the area, moving south and west to return to the Gunnison once again by way of the Uncompahgre River.

The expedition itself is significant because, while it did not discover the railroad route to the Racific, it was a major part of that vast undertaking of military explorations called the Pacific Railroad Surveys. These and other military explorations helped mightily to open the west to commerce, transportation, and settlement.

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THE HAYDEN SURVEY

Serious interest in the investigation of the Gunnison River was not revived until 1874, when the explorations of the Geological and Geographical Surveys began to penetrate the region. In that year the middle division of the Hayden Survey skirted the north rim of the Black Canyon along its entire length and established several survey stations in the vicinity. One member of the party, either A. C. Peale or Henry Gannett, is said to have gazed into the gorge and reported it inaccessible. A geologist lowered 1,000 feet into the canyon stated that "No man could go farther and live."[41]

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41. Richard G. Beidleman, "Compilation of Pertinent Data on Interpretive Themes: Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument," MS filed as Theme 2, Human History, at the Monument, p. 18.

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STEEL TRAILS FOR AN IRON HORSE:

The Denver and Rio Grande

Again interest focused on the Gunnison channel when the Colorado mining boom turned covetous eyes to the southwestern part of the state. The upper canyon was to serve as part of the main line route of what has been called the greatest of the mountain railroads--the Denver and Rio Grande.

Gen. William Jackson Palmer, veteran of the Civil War as well as the eastern struggle for a standard railroad gauge, had a dream of a railroad empire stretching from Denver to Mexico City. But the north-south illusion was shattered by the western orientation of giants like the Sante Fe, which locked its steel horns with Palmer's over the rights to the critical Raton Pass. The Santa Fe's victory in that case made it a transcontinental carrier and consigned the Denver and Rio Grande to the exploitation of the Colorado Mountains.

Palmer was nurtured in his apprenticeship to John Edgar Thompson of the Pennsylvania Railroad and educated

in England where he was witness to the great battle of the gauges fought by George Stephenson and I. K. Brunel. It is hard to say whether Palmer came away from this struggle with a doctrinaire philosophy of the narrow gauge but he did firmly rest his enterprise on narrow gauge lines, even in the face of a gradual growth of standard gauge operations. In fact, his four predecessors in Colorado rolled along the standard gauge. It is most probable, however, that he settled on the narrow gauge on the basis of common sense economics. The three-foot gauge was well qualified for the mountain routes of Colorado. The steep grades and narrow defiles could easily be negotiated by the small locomotives of twenty-two tons and the thin coaches only thirty-three feet long. Furthermore, in a day when roads were secured often by means no more gentler than armed physical possession, Palmer probably figured that he could build faster and secure more right-of-way by laying down three-foot track.

On October 27, 1870, the Denver and Rio Grande became the first narrow gauge railroad to be chartered in Colorado. A year later its main line was completed to Colorado Springs from Denver, a stretch of 76 miles.[42]

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42. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad is briefly reviewed in a well-written introduction to the road contained in Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg, Narrow Gauge in the Rockies (Berkeley, 1958), pp. 12-22.

By 1884 it was operating over 1600 miles of tract and stretched out to Salt Lake City and, eventually, to Ogden. The main line of the railroad ran from Gunnison to Montrose and passed through the upper canyons emerging at Cimarron where helper engines would meet the train and pull it out of the canyon and carry it over Cerro Pass from where it was a down hill run to Montrose. (Illustrations Nos. 2 and 3) Beebe and Clegg date the completion of the line from Gunnison to Montrose in 1882. Other accounts have it as complete only to Cimarron at this date.[43] The case seems to be supported by an account of a railroad expedition undertaken by engineer Byron H. Bryant for the railroad in December, 1882. It was to investigate the possibility of a continued route through the Black Canyon below the mouth of the Cimarron. Beginning at Crystal Creek on December 18, Bryant's party ran survey line just over 53 miles long from the Cimarron to Delta. In the process they explored 45 miles of canyon and estimated the cost of construction along the most treacherous sections as $100,000 per miles. Even this estimate was not firm, and Bryant was cautious in offering it. In suggesting an estimate

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43. George A. Root, "Gunnison in the Early 'Eighties," The Colorado Magazine, 9 (1932), 208.

he showed more courage than Gunnison and Beckwith a generation before him. The cost for the entire 44 miles of canyon was ventured at approximately two-and-a-half million dollars, or $55,000 per mile, an estimate which Bryant called "crude in the extreme." No doubt his superiors rejected a deep canyon route and favored pulling their trains out of the upper canyons at Cimarron station and circumnavigating the lower canyon by hauling over Cerro Summit.[44] It is possible that the Cerro Pass route was already installed and the expedition sent out to locate an alternative which was subsequently found wanting. It seems certain, however, that in any case, the canyon route from Gunnison to Montrose was complete by 1883. What is more important is that the Bryant expedition was the first careful, albeit partial, survey of the lower canyon.

The details of the Bryant survey adequately testify to the reason why the lower canyon was avoided for so many years by Spanish and American authorities alike. The crew consisted of C. E. Telvier of Aspen in charge and included H. C. Wright, transitman; James Robinson, levelman; Mr. Gunder, topographer; Mr. McDermott, rodman; and a Mr. Usher as head

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44. Photostatic copy of Report of Survey by B. H. Bryant, dated March 17, 1883, MS in records of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Denver, 1880-84, pp. 393-98.

chairman. The pack train was outfitted and led by Charles Hall.[45] High above the river on the north rim of the canyon the party located its first camp along the Crystal River. A few days later they began running their line downstream from the Cimarron and spent one night with an old frontiersman, Captain Cline, a contemporary of Kit Carson and Jim Bridger. Cline related a most unlikely story, of his having negotiated the length of the Black Canyon by canoe.

What was to be a trip of twenty days stretched on to almost seventy as a result of the difficulties encountered. Ten days alone were required to move from the north to the south rim when further progress along the former was judged impossible. The arduous procedure of frequently climbing in and out of the gorge consumed considerable time. The daily routine from one camp as reported by Bryant consisted of a climb to the top of a range of 500 feet followed by a descent of 2600 feet to the river. There was then much scurrying up and down river over and around rocks and boulders. Furthermore, the river was partially frozen and the men had to make many risky and tiresome maneuvers on ice flows and ice bridges. At the end of the day they had

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45. Byron H. Bryant, n.d., State Historical Society of Colorado, Bryant Mss XI-26. Published in The Trail and used by Beidleman, Theme 2, "Compilation of Pertinent Data . . .," pp. 18-20, files of Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument.

to make the lengthy ascent to camp once again. The operation so wore down the party that, after the strenuous crossing was made to the south rim, all the men quit except three.

On August 13, 1882, the first passenger train is said to have left Gunnison for Cimarron. One hundred twenty-one tickets were sold and the entourage, covered by the local press, rolled out to the musical strains of the Gunnison boys' band. The last five miles of track were lined with black troopers from the 9th U. S. Cavalry who had come from Fort Riley, Kansas, a month before. The end of the line brought the train to the site of the town of Cimarron, which was no more than a laboring camp forty miles below Gunnison. Then it was a city of tents and one log house. It is reported that the only woman in town was a cook, but undoubtedly there were others not publicly acknowledged. Stores were few but saloons were plentiful and the streets were cluttered with empty beer bottles.[46] In five years, Cimarron was to take on a degree of sophistication. It was little more than a rail stop and switching junction, but the tents disappeared and few frame houses were in evidence. A garage or car barn was installed which sheltered the helper engines used to assist trains out of the canyon and over Cerro Summit. (Illus. No. 4)

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46. Root, pp. 208-09.

Other rail stations grew up along the Gunnison between Cimarron and Gunnison city. Sapinero, named after the former Ute chief, was particularly important, since it served the complicated and hazardous junction of the main line and the later branch line to Lake City along the Lake Fork. A number of local residents recall several wrecks at this point. (Illustration No. 5.) As with other stations along the line, Sapinero doubled as a sportsmen's resort. The Gunnison valley was a favorite spot for hunters and firshermen and the families that serviced the railroad undoubtedly picked up a second income by operating guest houses, hotels, and cabins. (Illustration No. 6.)

The other stations that gave rise to minor communities between Gunnison and Cimarron were Iola and Cebolla. Cebolla, situated on the north bank of the Gunnison a short distance upstream from the mouth of the Cebolla Creek, developed a Sportsman's Hotel on the J. J. Carpenter property. Several photos survive which show the hotel and cabins and even the rail line with the train parked in front. (Illustration Nos. 7 and 8.)

As long as the Denver and Rio Grande main line pursued its course over Marshall Pass and through the Black Canyon the insigne of the railroad was the landmark called Curecanti Needle, a rock pinnacle jutting skyward 7 miles upstream fromCimarron. (Illustration No. 9.)

Summary and Conclusion: The building of the Denver and Rio Grande main line was one of the most important historical events in the region of the Gunnison River. The route from Gunnison to Cimarron closely adhered to the upper canyons of the Gunnison River and in so doing left its tracks within the proposed boundaries of Curecanti Recreation Area. It is to be regretted that almost the entire extent of the roadbed is today submerged deep beneath the reservoir waters backed up by Blue Mesa and Morrow Point Dams. Furthermore, the greatest part of Curecanti Needle is inundated, although its uppermost point will continue to be seen. The road constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation from the town of Cimarron down along Cimarron Creek to the Morrow Point Dam overlays the roadbed of the Denver and Rio Grande. One trestle which crossed the Cimarron along this short route, (Illustration No. 10), is all that remains of the railroad within the Recreation Area except, possibly, for a few short stretches of the roadbed just below each of the upper two dams and along the Gunnison at the eastern terminus of the Recreation Area boundary where the river is still free flowing. Long stretches of the roadbed can be seen switch-backing accross U.S. Route 50 across Cerro Summit between Montrose and Cimarron.

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THE SEARCH FOR NEW WATER

Settlers along the fertile but thirsty Uncompahgre River undoubtedly eyed the vast rushes of water coursing down the Gunnison River through the inaccessible Black Canyon. If only that wet wealth could be diverted to their valley.

The story goes that a French settler, F. C. Lauzon, who lived along the Uncompahgre during the late nineteenth century, was the first to consider the possibility of watering the lands in his vicinity by means of a diversion tunnel from the Gunnison River. The waters of the Uncompahgre were erratic and his fellow farmers could not trust expanded operations much larger than Lauzon's forty barren acres. No doubt the Frenchman's suggestion stimulated his neighbors' proprietary longing for the "wasted" waters of the Gunnison.[47]

By 1875, irrigation had come into vogue along the Uncompahgre River. Initially, hay was grown for use in nearby mining communities. By 1884 a system of ditches had

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47. Richard G. Beidleman, "The Gunnison River Diversion Project," Colorado Magazine, 36 (July, 1959), pp. 1-15.

enlarged water availability to the point where other crops and fruit orchards were coming under cultivation. At this point, however, water resources were being strained and fluctuations in water flow from year to year, coupled with fluctuations in mining productivity, forced periodic hardship on settlers and caused many to abandon the valley. Those who remained hoped that the water of the Gunnison would soon be theirs.

The Bryant railroad survey of 1882-83 may have suggested to some that water diversion was indeed possible. In 1894, Richard Winnerah surveyed a line which lay along the present route of the Gunnison Tunnel.[48] Even Lauzon promoted a local referendum to obtain endorsement for a local fund-raising project, but his proposal was rejected.[49] Attempts to interest the state legislature in financing a diversion project failed and some surveyors even offered ridiculously

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48. Souvenir Booklet, Montrose County, Colorado (Montrose, 1905), Montrose Public Library. Also, Barton W. Marsh, The Uncompahgre Valley and the Gunnison Tunnel (Montrose, 1905), pp. 77-78. But Marsh refers to a survey of 1904. The context of his statement, however, and the above reference, suggest an earlier date. This is confirmed by Walter Fleming in the Montrose Enterprise, October 20, 1900, who referred to survey data gathered some "six or seven years ago."

49. Souvenir Booklet.

low estimates on the work required to accomplish the job. Delta County Surveyor John A. Curtis took a crew out in 1900 to Red Rock Canyon "to ascertain just the condition which exists with regard to getting water from the Gunnison into this valley."[50]

Supporters of the water diversion tunnel met defeat in 1899 after a difficult struggle with the Twelfth Session of the Colorado legislature. On January 28 of that year, Senator W. S. Buckley introduced Senate Bill No. 310, "for an act to construct, maintain, and operate a state tunnel in Montrose County, Colorado, and for the use of unemployed convicts in constructing the same and making appropriations therefor."[51] The Labor Committee tabled the bill, claiming a lack of funds for such a project and calling the proposal impractical, a word dropped from the final report at the insistence of Senator Buckley.

Disheartened, but not to be undone, sponsors of irrigation continued their efforts to sell the idea to local legislators and Congressmen. Private capitalists were prevailed upon to investigate the potential. One of these

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50. Beidleman, p. 5, quoting the Montrose Enterprise, August 18, 1900.

51. Ibid., quote from Senate Journal of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado, 12th Sess. (1899), p. 271.

was John Masters. Representing financial interests in Utah, he surveyed the possibility of a dam and power plant near Red Rock Canyon to supply electricity to the mines at Ouray. Masters reported to local officials that the project would require an investment of $250,000. The funds were never forthcoming and the prospect fell through.[52]

As part of his reelection drive of 1900, Senator E. O. Wolcott pledged to introduce a bill in the United States Senate authorizing the construction of irrigation tunnels and canals. This effort was backed up by local representatives Shafroth and Bell. Continued interest in the project was sustained by another survey, the most ambitious to date. In the late summer of 1900, a volunteer group, led by William W. Torrence, later to be called the "Father of the Gunnison Tunnel," set out to explore the length of the Black Canyon below the mouth of the Cimarron. They planned to navigate the full extent of the Gunnison River through the Canyon and at the same time examine the possibility of a diversion tunnel. They hoped to reach Red Rock Canyon in four to five days, but those hopes were dashed as the venture encountered obstacle after obstacle. Moving downstream from the mouth of the Cimarron River, it took the survey party nearly four weeks to negotiate just fifteen

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52. Ibid.

miles of the Canyon. The rapids and cascade of water near the spot called the Narrows persuaded the men they could go no farther. They named the section of the gorge and river that defeated them, "Falls of Sorrow," although the name has since been changed to Torrence Falls. After an incredibly difficult climb out of the canyon by way of a steep ravine, they reached Montrose on October 1.[53]

The following year, efforts were renewed to push a water diversion project through the State legislature. Representative Meade Hammond introduced what was called the Gunnison Tunnel bill "to construct, maintain, and operate State Canal No. 3. . . . providing for the sale of water . . ." [54] This time the bill was finally approved with an authorization to appropriate no more than $25,000. The same year the United States Geological Survey commenced to map the area of Vernal Mesa dividing the Uncompahgre from the Gunnison. By means of contours he was to show the most desirable route for any future diversion tunnel. He also ran three lines across the mesa in an effort to locate the best route for a wagon road.

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53. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

54. Senate Journal of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado, 13th Sess. (1901), p. 902.

Finally, and most exciting of his decisions, he was to run the Gunnison River beyond the point that stopped the Torrence party.

Fellows' call for a volunteer to accompany him on the trip was immediately answered by Torrence. Discarding the idea of descending to the "Falls of Sorrow'" and beginning where Torrence earlier left off, they proceeded by train to the mouth of the Cimarron and began the trek downstream on August 12. At the Narrows, the two men just decided to gamble and jumped into the swirling water with the waterproof inflatable raft. Both men survived and were carried into calmer waters, where they located a projecting shelf on which they rested for a long time in order to recover their strength. Reaching Red Rock Canyon on August 19, they were given more food supplies and continued downstream, swimming most of the deep channel passage between walls which could not be scaled. Gradually emerging from the canyon into the lower valley of the Gunnison, the party came upon a group of hay makers who fed the two men and assisted them to Delta from where they returned to Montrose.

There are a number of popular accounts of both the 1900 and 1901 expeditions. They tend to overdramatize the exploits and in a number of cases seem to confuse one trip with the other.[55] Regardless of differences over detail, the journeys

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55. Montrose Enterprise, August-September, 1901; C. H. Forbes Lindsey, "Exploring the Gunnison Canyon," World's Work,

of 1900 and 1901 were hazardous ventures. Despite the difficulties of the second trip, the men were able to survey for a side hill ditch, examine the conformation of the canyon walls, and determine the extent of fall within the gorge. All this information proved to be extremely valuable when the Gunnison tunnel was finally installed.

The success of the Fellows-Torrence expedition may have proven that the Black Canyon was not impassable, but it did not make later expeditions any less hazardous. Fluctuations in the flow of water, changes in temperature, and various unknown conditions always posed a threat to the venturesome. In 1916 the famous Kolb brothers of Grand Canyon had their boats wrecked and were forced to scale a 1700-foot cliff to save their lives. In 1934 a group of Eastern college students negotiated the river passage with little more than inner tubes, thanks to relatively low water. And in 1936 a U. S. Geological Survey team entered the canyon at Red Rock and emerged at Cimarron, traveling the length over ice.[56]

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14 (1907), 9376-9378; A. W. Rolker and Day A. Willey, "The Heroes of the Gunnison Tunnel," Everybody's Magazine, 21 (1901), 514-16.

56. Beidleman, pp. 10-15.

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BUILDING A RIVER UNDERGROUND

By the end of 1901, survey work was brought to the point of verifying the feasibility of a diversion tunnel from the Gunnison River to the Valley of the Uncompahgre.[57] A general location for the tunnel was selected and a Board of Control was appointed which was composed of residents from either Delta or Montrose County. The board hired John A. Curtis, a civil engineer from Delta, to determine the final location for the tunnel route. The original route selected by Curtis would have carried the tunnel from the Narrows at the center of the present Monument to the Mancos shale badlands about four miles northeast of Table Mountain. This tunnel would have been three miles long, emptying water into a twelve-mile ditch which would carry the water to the mouth of the Montrose Canal.

On November 21, 1901, work began on the project with the construction of a road from Montrose to the site of the west portal. At the latter location a work camp was constructed

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57. The story of the diversion project is well-told by Richard G. Beidleman, "Compilation of Pertinent Data on Interpretive Themes . . ." Theme No. 2 (1959), pp. 32-46a, MS on file at Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. The synopsis presented here is based primarily on Beidleman's account which itself employed a considerable selection of pertinent primary sources, particularly the official accounts of both the Reclamation Service and Geological Survey.

and tunneling was begun. With only $25,000 allotted by the State for the project, it was hoped that private solicitation of investment funds could be obtained. When these hopes were dashed, the State's work on the tunnel was abandoned within a year. Someone commented at that point that all anyone got out of the excitement was a "small hole in the ground and some weather-stained machinery to show for it."[58] Actually the Colorado State Engineer reported that the tunnel had been driven some 850 feet, timbered for 350, and included two air-shafts.

Fortunately, 1902 witnessed the passage of the Federal Reclamation Act by Congress and the "Gunnison River Diversion," as it was called, was incorporated in that Act. In fact, the diversion project became one of the first five programmed works under the law. In terms of acres to be reclaimed, it ranked fifth; in cost, it ranked third. In response to the plan to employ the existing irrigation ditches, the local residents organized themselves into the "Uncompahgre Valley Water Users' Association." On March 14, 1903, the Secretary of the Interior approved the project after several more Geological Surveys were undertaken, and on June 7, the sum of $2,500,000 from the reclamation fund was set aside for construction purposes.

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58. Beidleman, p. 33.

While it was the same year that the Colorado legislature authorized the transfer to the United States of all property and right in State Canal No. 3, it was not until 1906 that title was actually conveyed.

The year 1903 was not one for further construction but rather for continued surveying and mapping. The task was taken up by six survey teams, but the most exciting job was undertaken by Ira W. McConnell, topographer-in-charge, and his team who set out to survey within the canyon at the point projected as the head of the proposed tunnel. The daring venture took the men up and down on ropes off perilous slopes and into treacherous fissures. During that year further studies of the terrain of Vernal Mesa were made preliminary to the installation of a highway to carry building supplies and equipment. A dam was proposed for the Narrows and further hazardous excursions were undertaken.

After all these energies were spent, and perhaps, because of them, the site of the proposed tunnel underwent reconsideration during the winter of 1903-04. McConnell proposed a location for the east portal some five miles east of the Narrows site. The new location was known as the "upper location" or "boat landing location." Strangely enough, this new site was the very one surveyed by Richard Winnerah after his expedition of 1894. It was the one proposed by W. H. Fleming in 1900. Fleming had argued that it would avoid the necessity

of building a dam and a series of expensive flumes. A consulting board selected for the purpose of deciding between the two sites determined that the upper location was superior. New surveys were authorized, especially to determine the exact elevation of the east portal site.

On October 5, 1904, bids for the funnel construction opened at Montrose, the contract going to the Taylor-Moore Construction Company of Hillsboro, Texas. The contract was signed early in 1905 and called for a tunnel 30,582 feet long at a cost of $1,008,500.

Surveying was carried out to locate a road between the termini of the tunnel. This road, itself, proved to be something of an engineering feat and, when completed, its segment leading into the gorge could have attracted only the venturesome. (Illustration No. 11 & 12) The grade of the road as it switchbacked into the canyon sharpened to as much as 23 percent Such steepness was permissible since no loads were expected to come out of the gorge. One author commenting on the hazardous road stated that "4-horse waggons going over it present the appearance of being almost all brakes."[59] The road was the only one to reach the ri er in a seventy-mile stretch. Today the road has been improved by the Bureau of Reclamation,which uses the route to the

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59. Beidleman, p. 37.

river to get to the location for the proposed Crystal Dam to be constructed across the Gunnison just upstream from the east portal. Most of the new road follows the old, but in a few places appears to diverge at points where the old roadbeds can be seen.

The contractors began excavation on January 11, 1905, but because of unknown conditions and troublesome financial arrangements, the work began almost immediately to fall behind schedule. By May of that year, when the work should have been 15 percent complete, only 5 percent of the job had been accomplished. The contract was suspended and the Reclamation Service assumed the task of completing the project.

The achievement of the construction of the Gunnison tunnel is imposing largely because of the hazardous conditions which had to be met. Shoring and support was difficult because of the extraordinary weight of the water-bearing alluvial clays, sand, and gravel; the seepage in the belts of shale and gravel; the explosiveness of gas pockets; the threat posed by a badly shattered fault zone typified by high temperatures, pressurized hot and cold water, and suffocating carbon dioxide gas; and finally, the hardness of the granite with its many water-bearing seams. (Illustration No. 13)

On one occasion the drillers opened a cavern of carbonic gas which drove the workers into staggering confusion. At

another time a pressurized stream of water was intercepted which threw jets of water some forty feet into the cavern. The flow was estimated at 25,000,000 gallons a day. At other times, flows of hot water would be encountered which drove temperature and humidity up to unbearable levels. At half-point some shoring gave way, cutting off some thirty men. Fortunately, an air pipe was buried with them and air could be pumped to them for 72 hours while they were being unearthed. Not all the trapped men survived, however. Six were fatally injured by the rock fall.

Often the river would rise rapidly, following spring and summer downpours, causing a rush of water into the portal and driving the workers out until the pumps could clear the passage. The rains would often wash out the supply road and halt work because of material shortages.

Despite the difficulties and frustrations, work continued. At both portals, power plants were constructed and air compressors, electric generators, and ventilating blowers were installed. Six-ton electric locomotives operated on a 24-inch track pulling cars in and out of the tunnel. The work camp at the River Portal, like the west portal, was originally a tent city, gradually replaced by frame structures covered with tar paper. The narrowness of the canyon at that point required that many of the structures had to be built right on the piles

of debris excavated from the tunnel. Much of this debris is still visible today. Large stocks of supplies were stored in the vicinity against those times when the camp would be isolated by road washouts or rock slides. About 140 men were employed at the River Portal, none of them for long. The exhausting and hazardous nature of the job caused a constant turnover of employees, few laboring for more than two weeks. Even relatively high wages could not persuade the men to stay longer on the job.

In late June, 1909 the drillers from both ends of the tunnel began to hear the sounds of each other's drilling. Two weeks later, on July 6, the two crews met and the rough bore of the longest tunnel in the United States at that time was completed.

On September 23, 1909, a gala celebration was held at the west portal to mark the official opening of this grand channel. It was attended by President William Howard Taft, who rode a five-coach train from Delta up the Uncompahgre to the portal. A grand program, arranged by the local citizen members of the "Gunnison Tunnel Opening Committee," turned into the "biggest event that ever happened in Montrose." At a signal from the President, gongs began ringing throughout the valley and the head gates were opened, releasing a gush of water from the Gunnison to slake the parched lands of the Uncompahgre.

Actually, the job was far from complete. An intricate system of irrigation canals had to be installed and the

finishing touches put to the tunnel. The diversion dam at the River Portal was not complete until 1912, even though water use was begun in 1910. The overall project could not be considered technically complete until 1923 when it was finally transferred to the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users' Association. The members began then to pay back the construction costs in forty annual installments. Total cost was set at $6,715,074, of which half went for tunnel construction.

Summary and Conclusion: The Gunnison River Diversion Project was significant for several reason. First, it was a spectacular engineering feat in itself, having encountered incredible hazards in tunneling through the depths beneath Vernal Mesa. A longer and larger tunnel had been built in 1871 through the Alps--the Frejus or Mt. Cenis Tunnel, the first of the great Alpine bores. The latter, however, did not encounter the obstacles of the Gunnison Tunnel. Strangely enough, while the hazards of the Gunnison Tunnel were being met, the same severe problems were being encountered in Europe in the famed Simplon Tunnel. The Simplon, finished in 1906, drove through the Alps for almost 13 miles and encountered flooding by both hot and cold water as well as zones of peculiarly high pressures.[60]

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60. The comparative data is based upon the article "Tunnel," Encyclopaedia Brittanica(23 vols., 1967), 22,331-37.

Second, the diversion project was one of the first five undertakings of the Reclamation Service, making the River Portal a landmark of reclamation history. Third, the road engineered to reach the Gunnison portal is another intriguing feature of the project, although it has been impproved by the Bureau of Reclamation and no longer retains the steepest grades of the original.

The River Portal is located just outside and upstream from the current boundary of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. It is within the proposed boundary of the Recreation Area and just downstream from the site of the Crystal Dam to be constructed very shortly. The area contains a number of structures, a few of which may date back to the earliest days of the project. The diversion dam stretches across the river and contains, at the south bank, sluice gates enclosed in a concrete structure with the controls in an overhead room. The same is true for the head gates and their controls. Another structure higher on the bank houses a ventilating fan for the tunnel and nearby is a vehicle adit used for access to the tunnel when the water flow is shut down and maintenance crews work on the inside out of season. (Illustrations Nos. 15-20.)

##

MARGINAL NOTES

The history of the region of the Gunnison River does not stop with the explorations of its canyon, its penetration by the mountain railroad, or the diversion of its waters. One could point to the story of sports fishing and hunting. Railroad brochures touted the swift-flowing streams of the Gunnison as superlative trout waters. The very train stops, we have seen, grew into small resorts for fishermen and hunters.

The commercial life of the Gunnison developed slowly. Early interest was diverted to the fertile Valley of the Uncompahgre, which enjoyed a milder climate than the reaches of the Gunnison. The difference in elevation and, hence, climate encouraged farming along the Uncompahgre while the entrepreneurs above Montrose turned to ranching. During the short growing season, cattle are grazed on the lush meadow grasses of the higher reaches and brought down afterwards to feed on forage harvested from irrigated fields down below.

The mining of precious ores spurred the growth of Colorado. It stimulated the growth of Gunnison city, to some extent Montrose, and regions both north and south of these towns. The ores that fueled the growth of so much of Colorado were not to

be found along the upper Gunnison. Today, few mines can be located within the proposed boundary of the Recreation Area. Spencer and Vulcan, two mining towns of the region not far south of the area, were not significant sectors of the mining market of Colorado.

Thus, to be sure, there are many episodes to the history of the Gunnison Country. But the intention of this report is not to provide an exhaustive study of the history of the region. Rather, it seeks to focus on the paramount resources of Curecanti Recreation Area that deserve consideration within any plan to develop that area.

##

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study of Curecanti Recreation Area highlights the most significant chapters of the history of the region. The recommendations enumerated here are based on these most important episodes and fundamentally ask that some commitment be made in the Master Plan to the human drama that was acted out over the years along the upper Gunnison River.

UTE OCCUPATION: Minimal interpretation of the Indians' use of the region as a hunting ground and reservation should be offered. In the absence of any known settlement site within the Recreation Area there is no need to preserve physical structures or locations. Unless research shows otherwise, there is little need for an enlarged treatment of the Uncompahgre Ute story since this appears to be adequately told by the rather effective exhibits of the Ute Museum located east of Montrose on U. S. Route 50 and operated by the Colorado State Historical Society.

EXPLORATION OF THE GUNNISON: The expeditionary history of this once forbidding and still treacherous country is on of the most dramatic episodes associated with Curecanti Recreation Area. A colorful interpretive display could unfold the events from the earliest Spanish explorations, through the military

reconnaissance of Captain Gunnison, to the Geological Survey and Reclamation expeditions. One possible location for such a display would be at the eastern extremity of the Recreation Area, where the Gunnison still flows freely and where a mental association could be made with the illustrations and verbal descriptions of the country contained in the official account of the Gunnison Expedition. Interpretive markers at several strategic points along the length of the area could mark the routes of various explorers.

THE MOUNTAIN RAILROAD: The conquering of the Colorado Rockies by what has been hailed the greatest of the mountain railroads is a chapter of Curecanti history that should not be ignored. It is to be regretted that most of its structural remains are now drowned, but a few symbolic reminders remain to tell us of the glories of the General Palmer's engines setting out on narrow gauges when the rest of the nation was building on standard tracks--setting out to drive a rail empire along a main line through the canyons of the Gunnison. An appropriate place to relate the story of the Denver and Rio Grande is the Cimarron River which takes one down to the Point Morrow Dam. A trestle still remains which enabled the train to cross the Cimarron on its way out of the canyon. The trestle should be preserved, and, possibly, through it, the Rio Grande story relayed. The mouth of the Lake Fork is a potential interpretive

location, since this was the junction between the main line and the Lake Fork branch which served a nearby mining community--Lake City. If sections of the roadbed are still visible, these might provide interpretive opportunities. As already indicated, the roadbed is visible across Cerro Summit, which is outside the Area boundary. Visitors could be informed of this feature. A decision might be made to interpret the landmark, Curecanti Needle, which served as the symbol of the Denver and Rio Grande for many years. An examination of the eastern terminus of the Recreation Area might reveal the railroad traces through the riverside meadows before the Gunnison enters the canyon.

THE GUNNISON RIVER DIVERSION PROJECT: Structurally, The most impressive historical site within the proposed Recreation Area is the River Portal of the Gunnison Tunnel. Still in use by the farmers of the Uncompahgre Valley whose lands are watered by means of this conduit, the tunnel represents the first efforts made to water and make more productive the arid lands of the southwest through the national effort of the Reclamation Service. This site with its structures and remains should be protected and interpreted.

##

RESEARCH NEEDS

The historical research employed here was designed to meet the needs of a board and wide-ranging regional history and not the requirements of a detailed interpretive document. Consequently, a survey of this type is bound to be too superficial to provide the data necessary to properly interpret the themes selected above as the most prominent. Therefore, as soon as an interpretive commitment is made to the above historical resources, the following historical research should begin.

1. RSP (Resource Study Proposal), CURE-H-2, he Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, Emphasizing the Main Line Route from Gunnison to Montrose.

2. RSP: CURE-H-3, Expeditions of the Gunnison River.
3. RSP: CURE-H-4, Gunnison River Diversion Project.
4. RSP: CURE-H-5, The Uncompahgre Ute Indians.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

"First Canyon of the Grand"

Moving downstream this is the view the Gunnison party had of the Grand (now the Gunnison) River as it entered the first of the gorges composing the Black Canyon. This scene can be viewed from the eastern terminus of Curecanti Recreation Area.

Illustration copied from one of a number of plates included in the official reports of the Pacific Railroad Surveys.

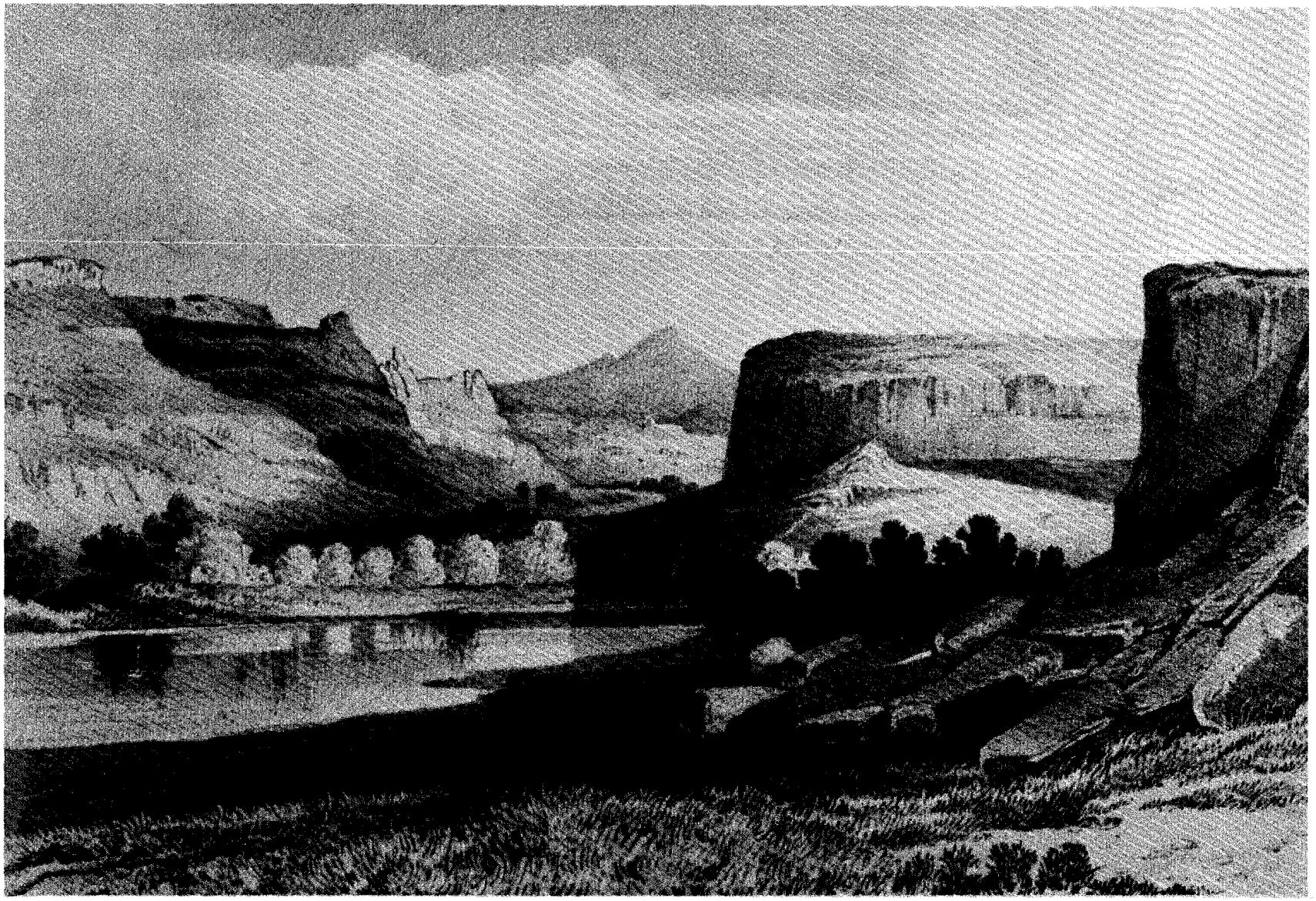

ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

Denver and Rio Grande hauling over Cerro Summit from Cimarron to Montrose. Notice the helper engines that have been added to assist the train up the steep grade.

Photograph from Lucius M. Beebe and Charles Clegg, Narrow Gauge in the Rockies (Berkley, 1958), p. 77. Taken, 1940.

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ILLUSTRATION NO. 3

No. 318 of the Denver and Rio Grande hauling between Gunnison and Montrose on the main line route.

Photograph from Lucius M. Beebe and Charles Clegg, Narrow Gauge in the Rockies (Berkley, 1958), p. 68. Date Unknown. Photo by Otto Perry.

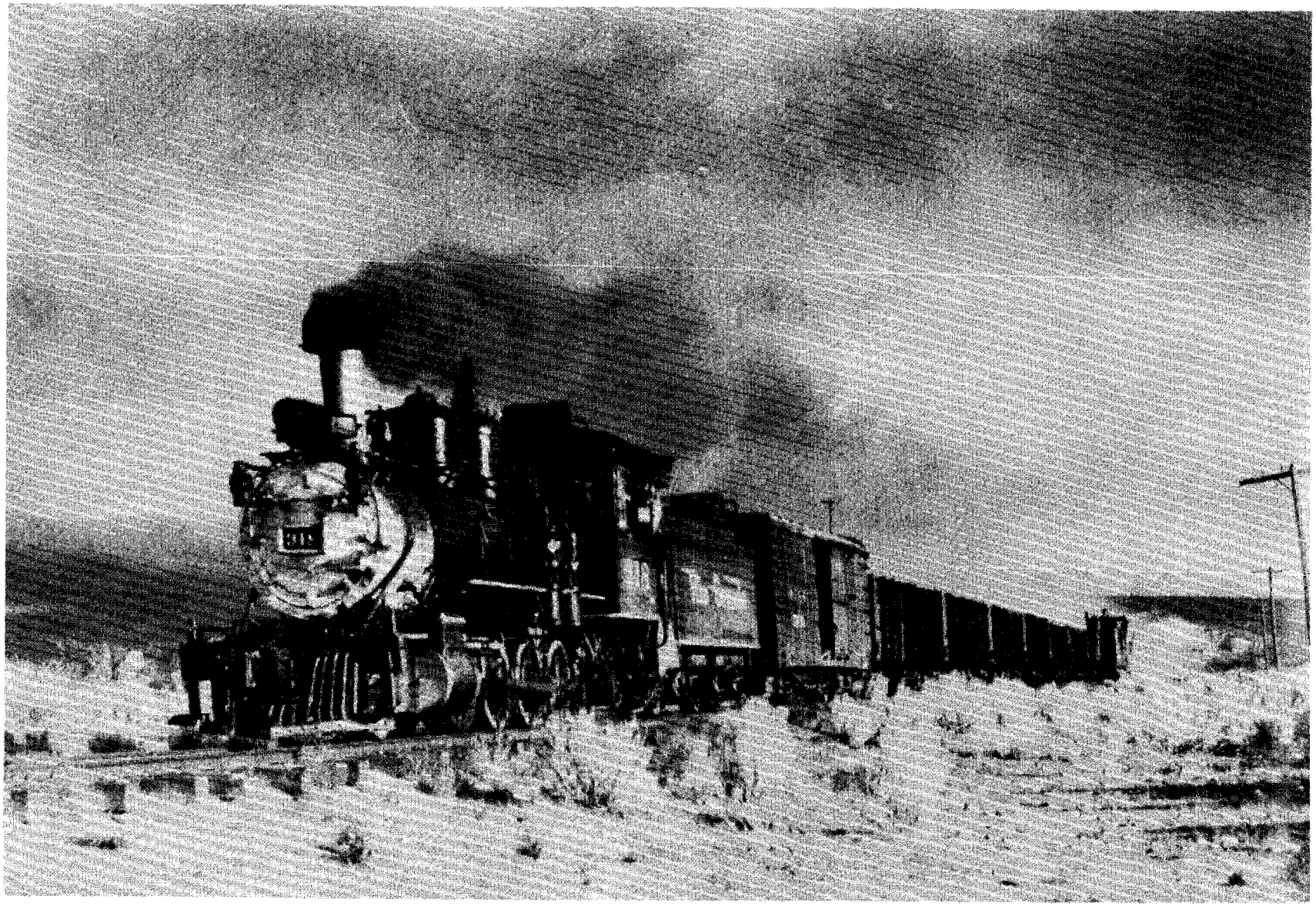


ILLUSTRATION NO. 4

Cimarron, Colorado, c. 1887. Copied from a photograph in the possession of Mrs. Nellie J. Newberry, Cimarron. She obtained her copy from James C. Blaine, whose last known address was Box 683, Kingman, Arizona.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 5

Junction of the Lake Fork branch of the Denver and Rio Grande with the main line along the Gunnison River. The train is crossing a trestle over the Lake Fork, about to enter a cut and emerge to cross yet another trestle over the Gunnison and join the main track in the lower left corner. Notice the old lower road along the north bank of the Gunnison River. The junction of so many routes made this spot unusually treacherous. The upper road and high trestle can be seen newly installed and help date this photograph c. 1925.

Photograph courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of the Interior. Photo No. P622A-427-678 filed at Curecanti Unit Office, Montrose, Colo.

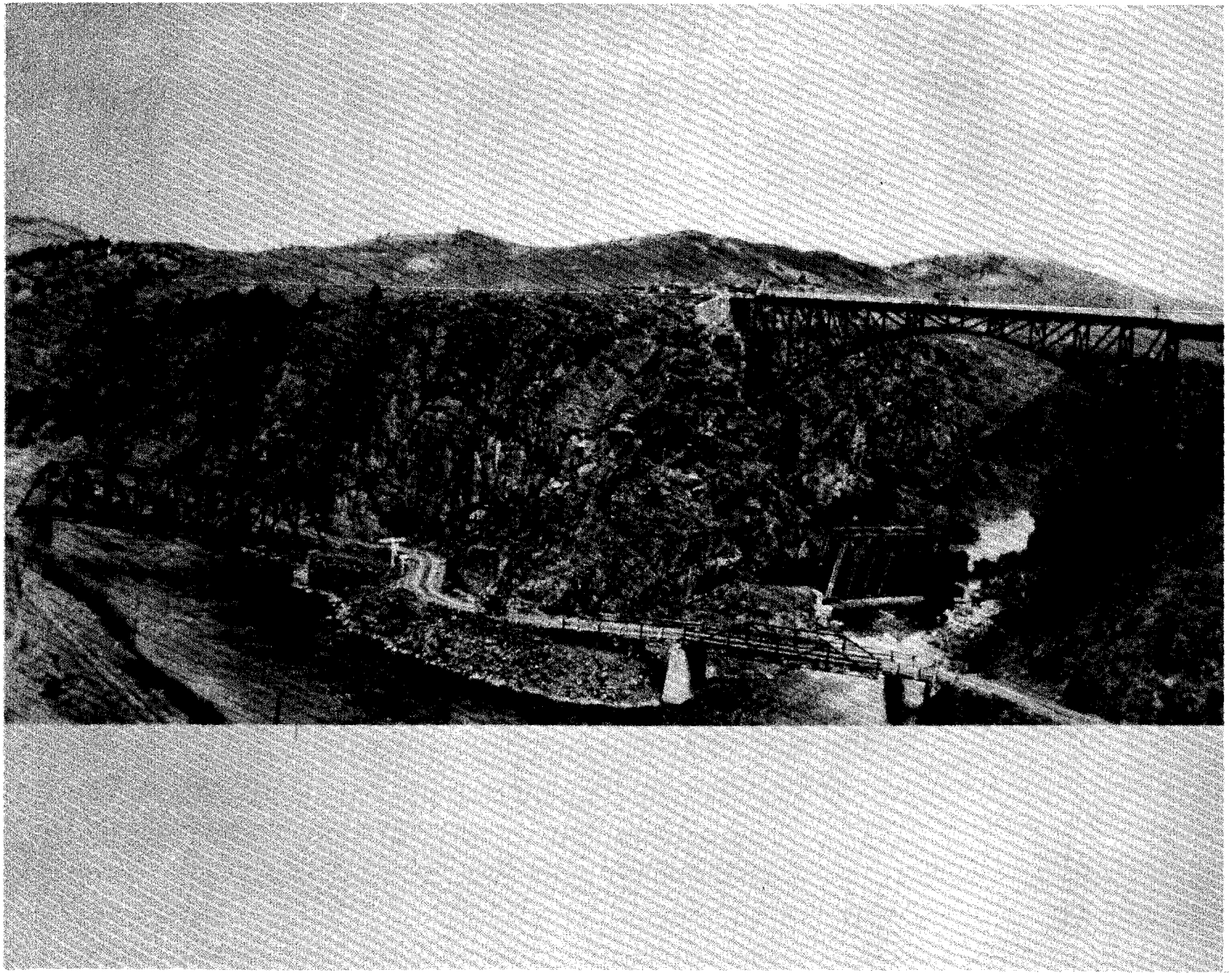


ILLUSTRATION NO. 6

Sportsmen's Home at Sapinero, one of the rail stops between Gunnison and Montrose on the Denver and Rio Grande main line. The depot grew into a small community which also catered to sportsmen during hunting and fishing seasons.

Photograph courtesy of Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unit Office, Montrose, Colo. Date Unknown.

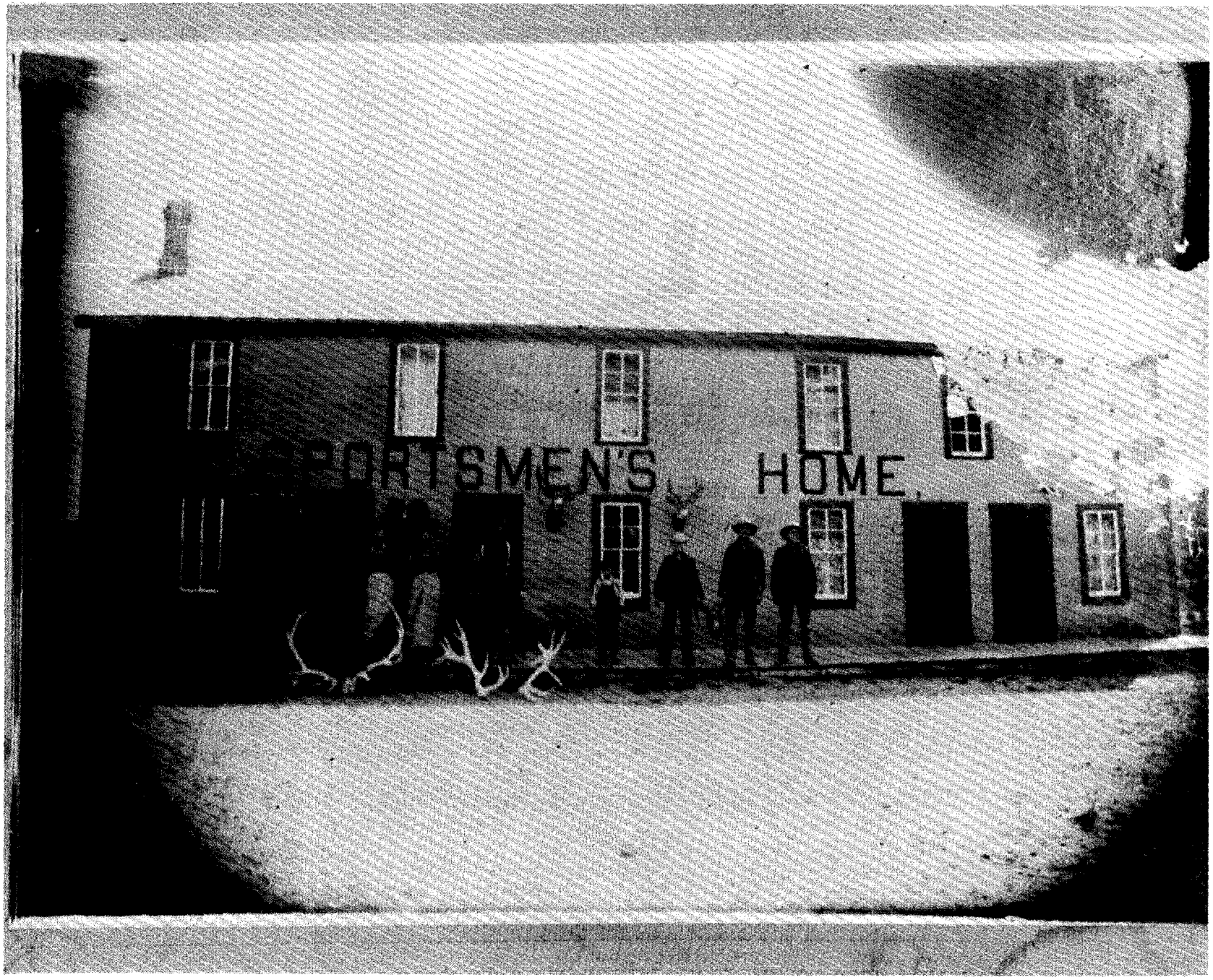

SPORTSMEN'S HOME.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 7

Cebolla, Colo., another rail stop on the Denver and Rio Grande main line from Gunnison to Montrose. Like Sapinero, it doubled as a sportsmen's resort. Date unknown.

Photograph courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unit, Montrose, Colo.

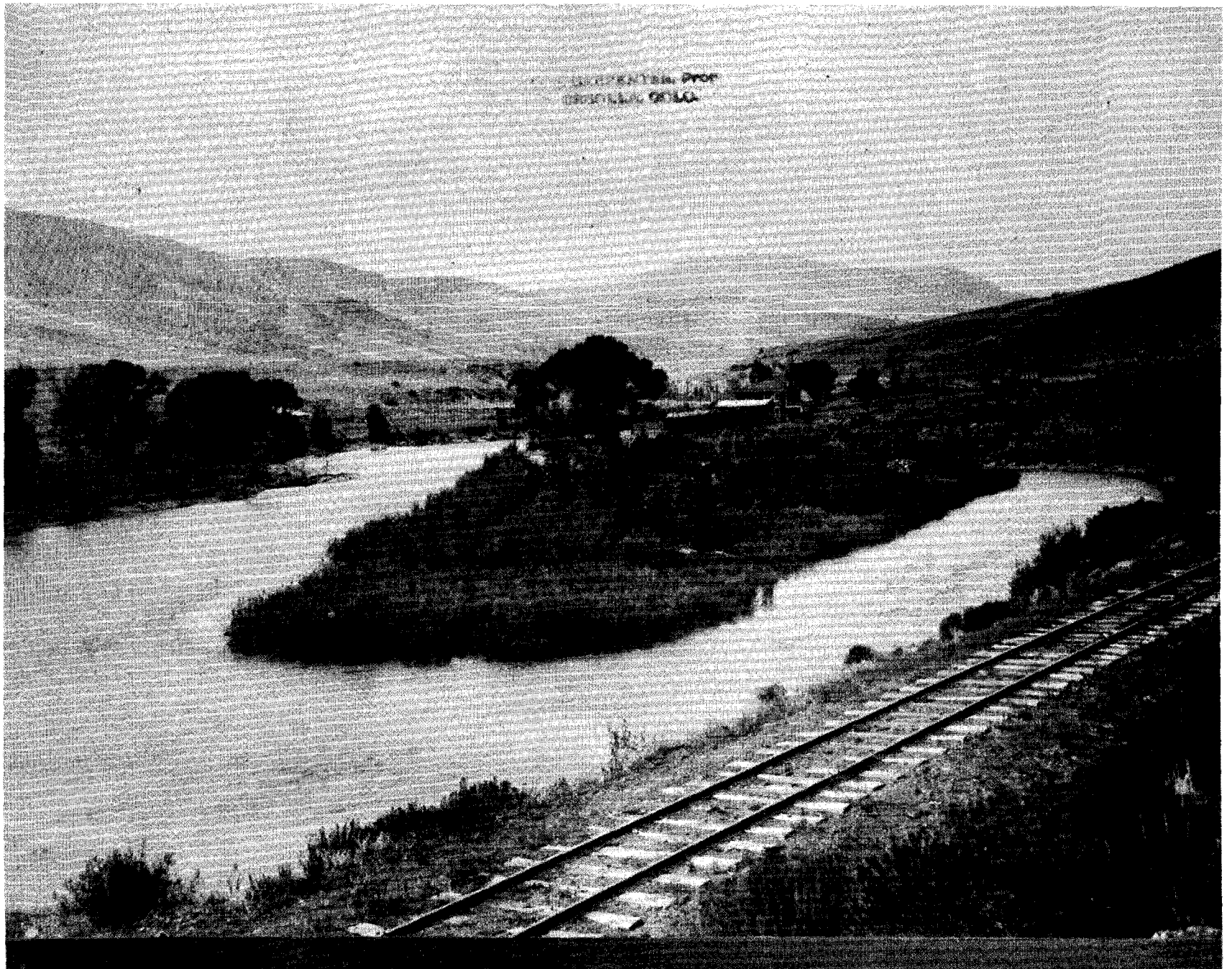


ILLUSTRATION NO. 8

Cebolla, Colo., showing the sportsmen's hotel and cabins. A train of the Denver and Rio Grande is stopped at the depot. Date unknown.

Photograph courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unit, Montrose, Colo.

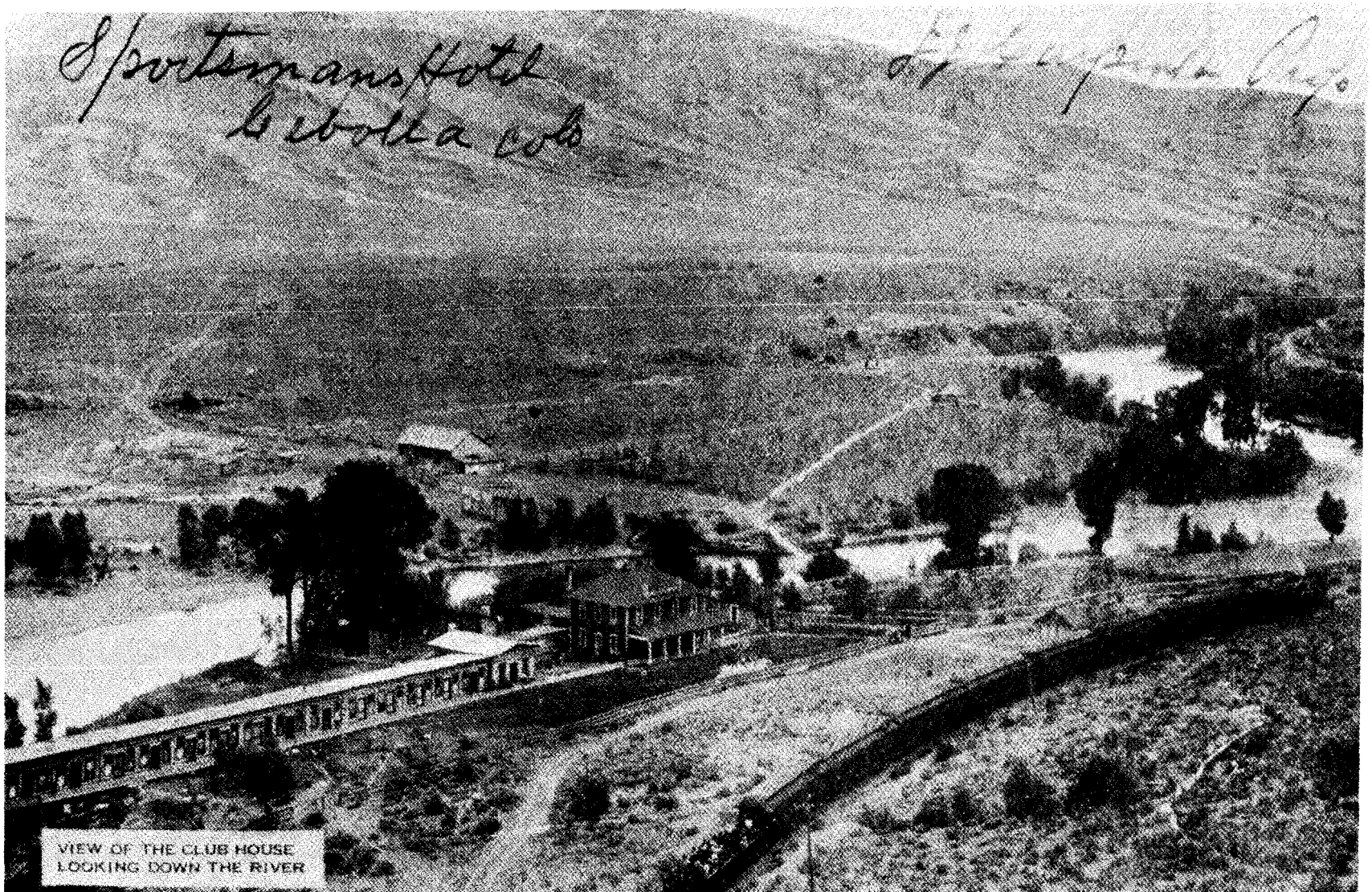

Sportsmans Hotel
Walla Walla
VIEW OF THE CLUB HOUSE
LOOKING DOWN THE RIVER

ILLUSTRATION NO. 9

Curecanti Needle, famous landmark of the Gunnison which became the ensigne of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. The main line track is shown along the north bank of the river. The roadbed is inundated today and the base of the Needle is flooded.

Photograph from Lucius M. Beebe and Charles Clegg, Narrow Gauge in the Rockies (Berkley, 1958), p. 46. Photo from the Western Collection of W. H. Jackson.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 10

Remains of a trestle of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad where formerly it crossed the Cimarron River in its steep haul out of the Black Canyon to the depot at Cimarron. Taken August, 1968.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 11

Constructing the road down to the River Portal of the Gunnison Tunnel. The present Bureau of Reclamation road generally overlays the old cut but where it diverges the original roadbed can yet be seen. Date, c. 1905. No. P31-427-62NA.

Photograph courtesy of Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unit, Montrose, Colo.

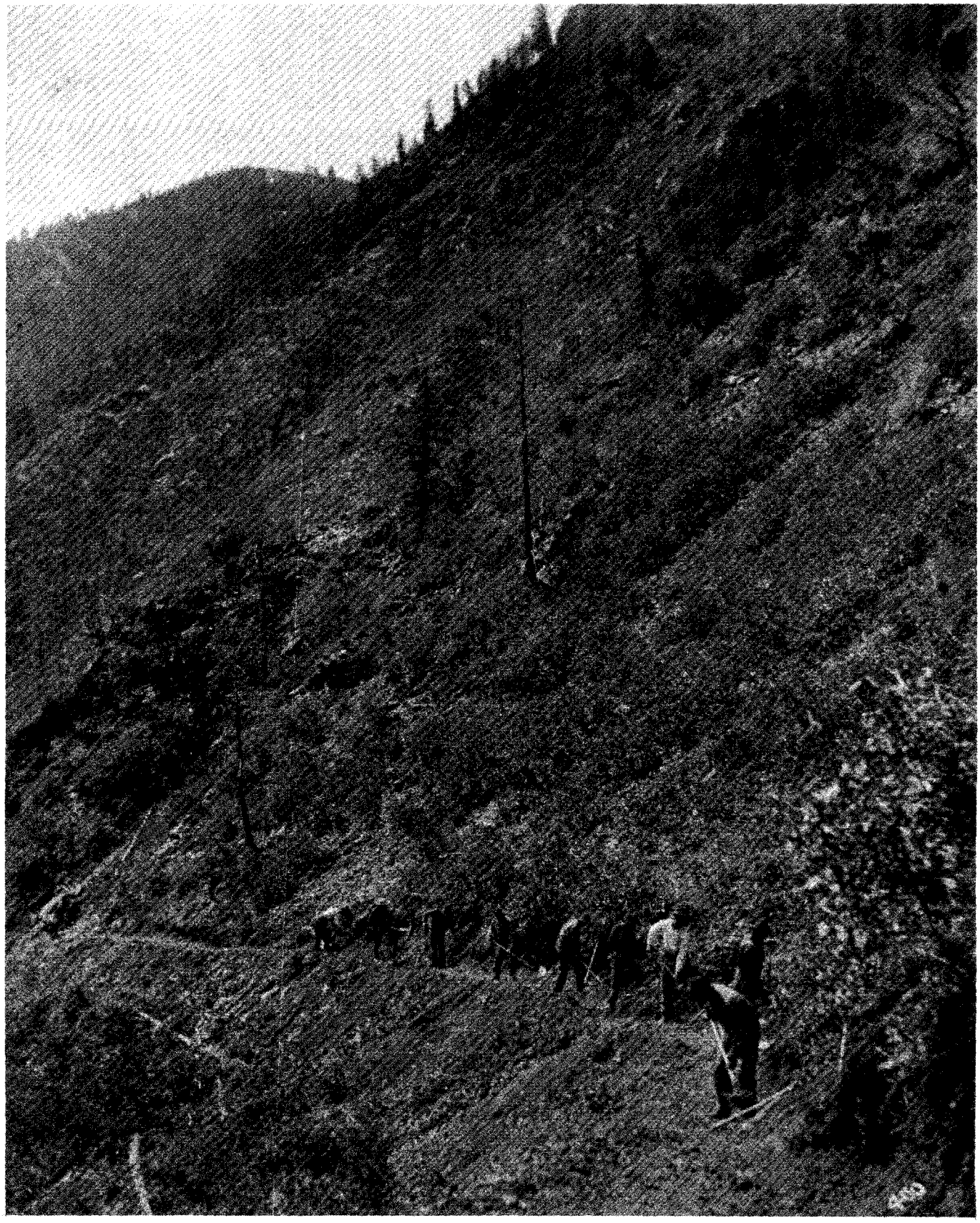


ILLUSTRATION NO. 12

View into the Black Canyon above the River Portal to the Gunnison Tunnel. The steep portal road can be seen, lower right, with a covered supply wagon hauling out of the gorge. Date c. 1905.

Photograph courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S. Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unit, Montrose, Colo.

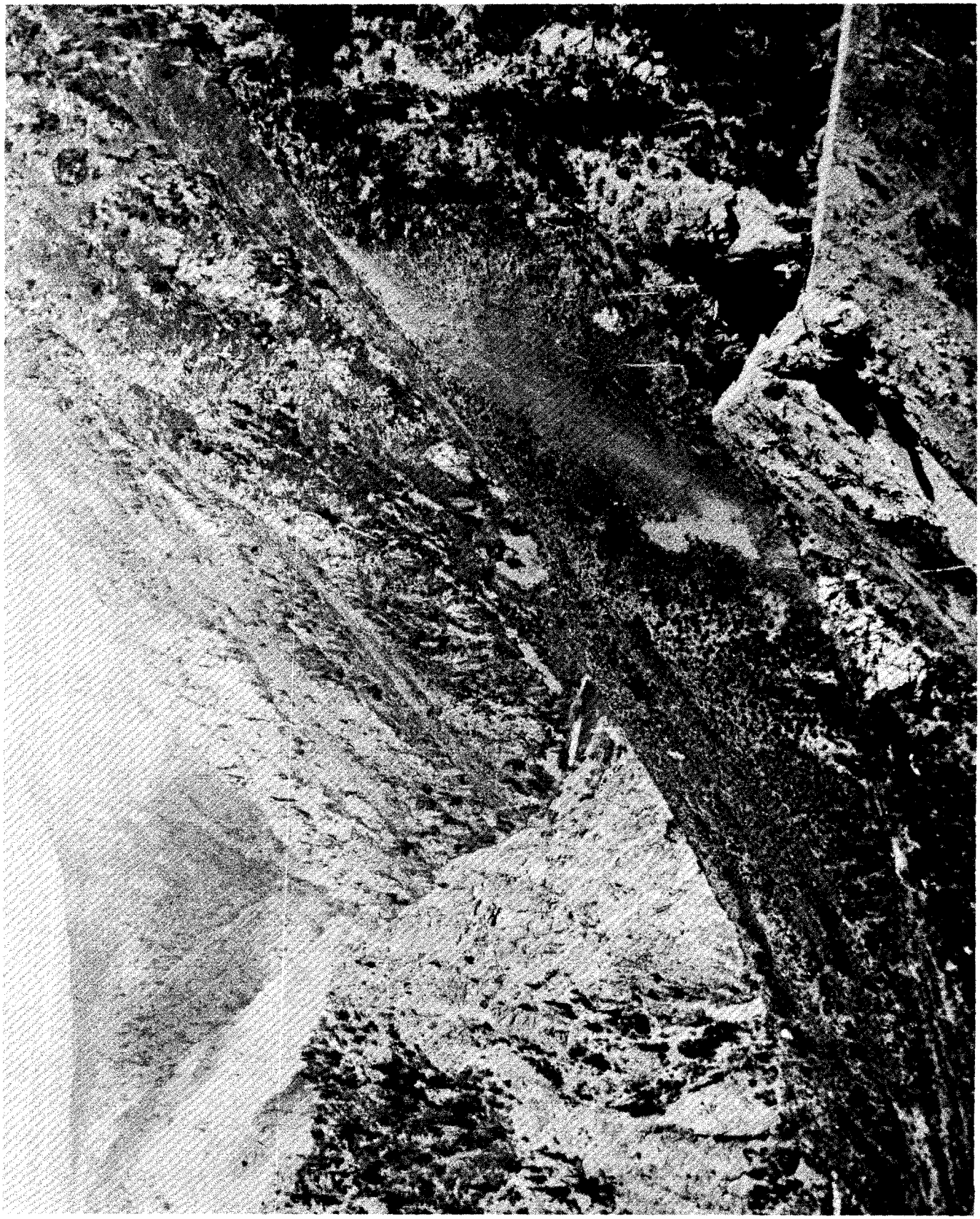


ILLUSTRATION NO. 13

The hazards of drilling the
Gunnison Tunnel.

Photo No. P31-427-58NA. Courtesy
of the Bureau of Reclamation, Department
of the Interior, Curecanti Unit, Montrose, Colo.

Striking water in Heading No.2, about Sta.181, Maximum flow of water, about 20 C. F. Taken before ventilating shaft was driven. Temperature about 90°. Ora McDermith, December, 1905.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 14

River Portal of the Gunnison Tunnel, May 23, 1909, looking down river. The portal itself is located at the extreme left center. The vehicle adit is about 150 feet downstream from the portal. Further downstream is the conglomeration of shops and powerhouses. The weir or overflow has not yet been constructed.

Photograph courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unite, Montrose, Colo.

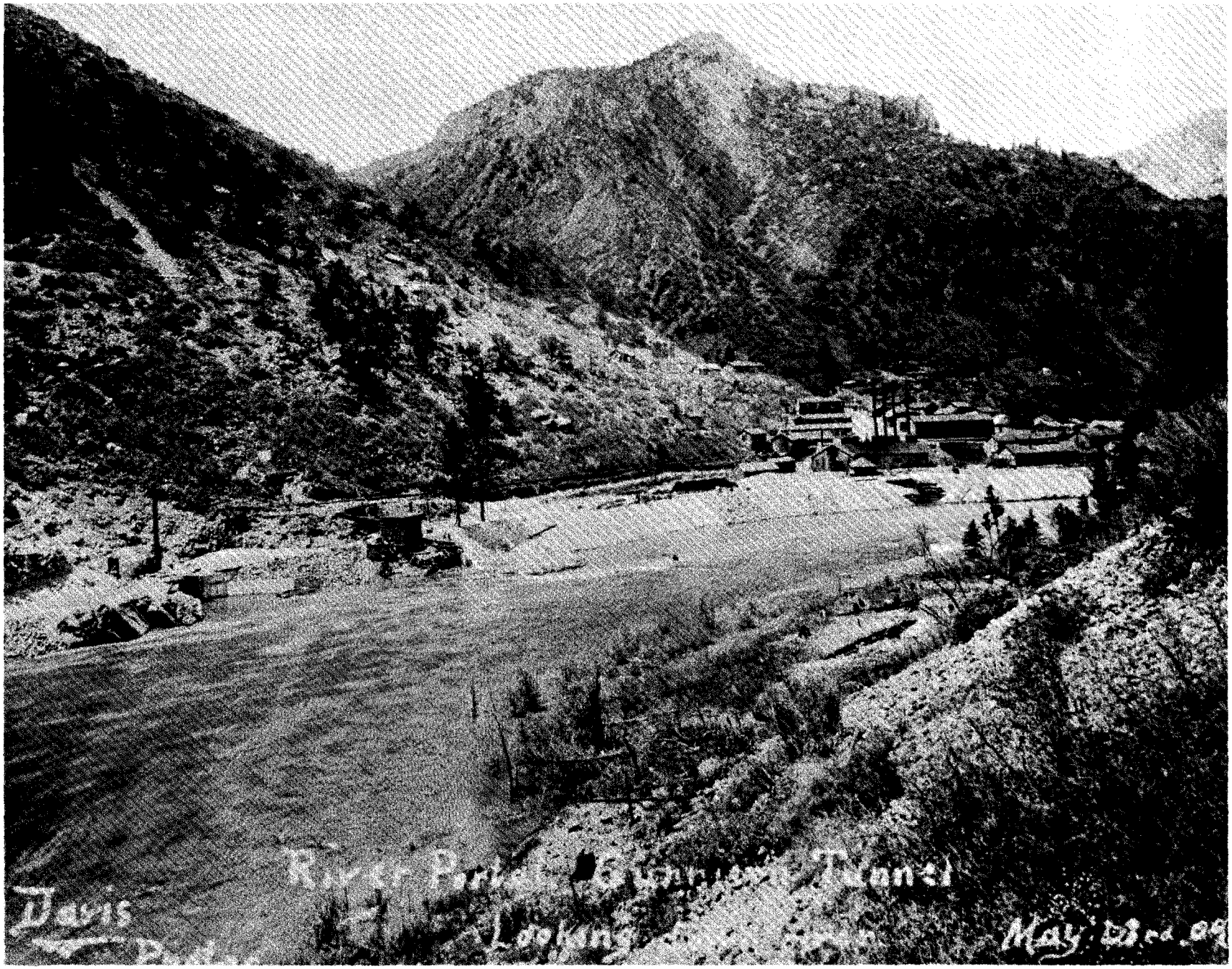

Davis
Looking

ILLUSTRATION NO. 15

River Portal of the Gunnison
Tunnel, August, 1968.

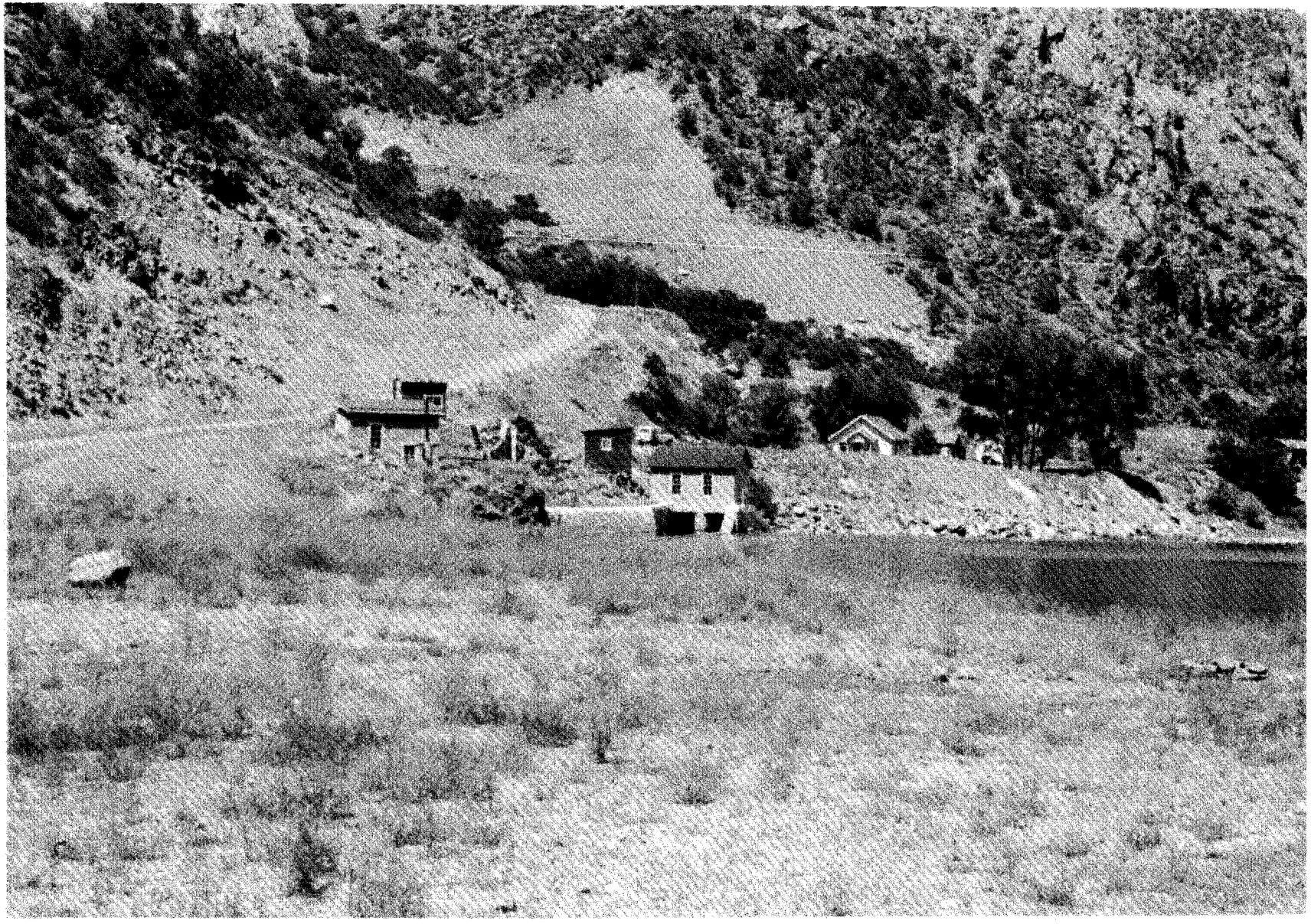
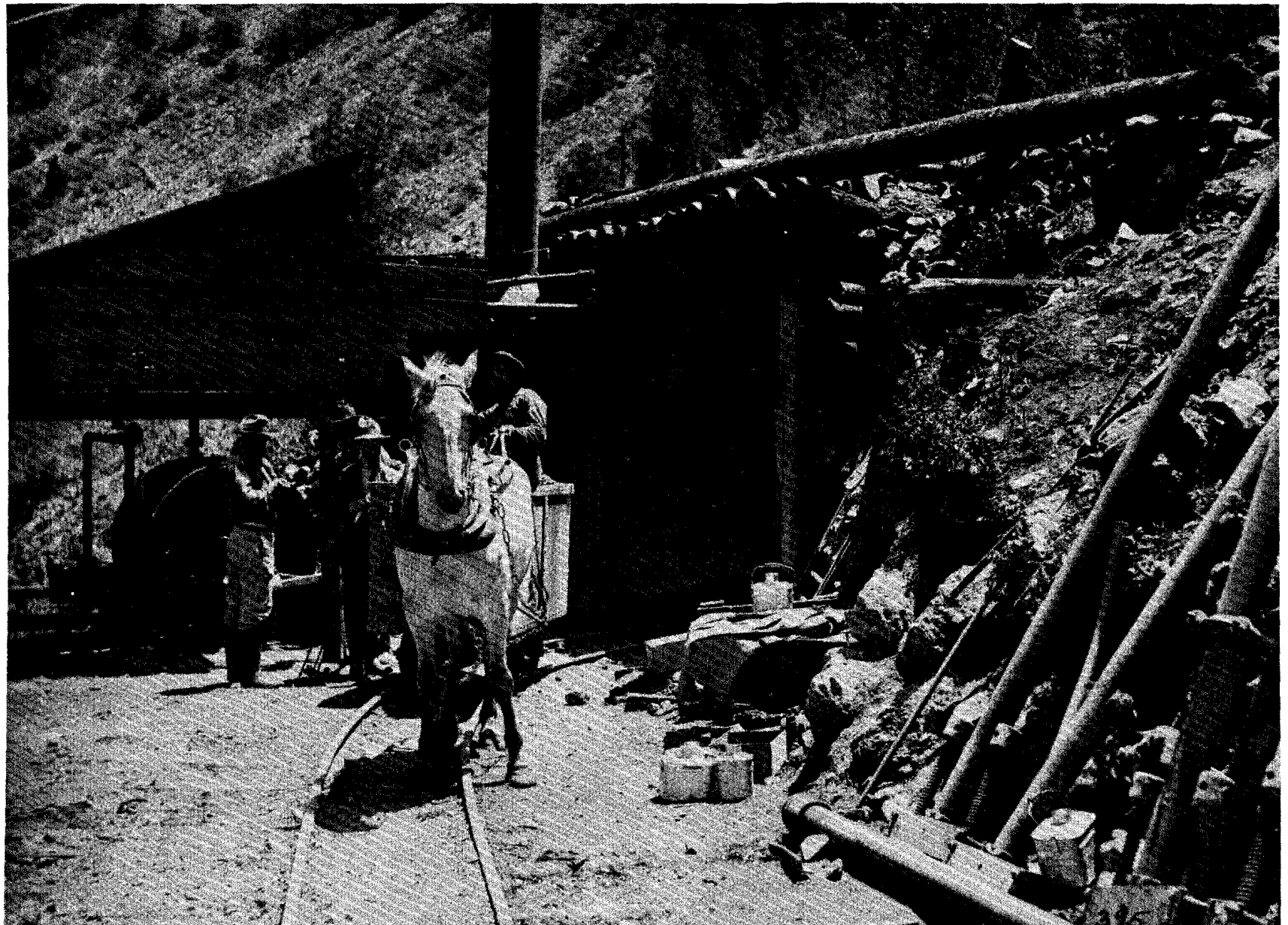


ILLUSTRATION NO. 16

Vehicle adit at the River Portal
of the Gunnison Tunnel. July 2, 1905.

Courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation,
Department of the Interior, Curecanti
Unit, Montrose, Colo. Photo No. P31-427-57NA.



East Portal of the Gunnison Tunnel, Colorado. U.S.B., July 2, 1908.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 17

Vehicle adit at the River Portal
of the Gunnison Tunnel as it
appears today. August, 1968.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 18

Construction of the weir at the River
Portal of the Gunnison Tunnel.
December 22, 1911.

Photo No. P31-427-61NA courtesy of
the Bureau of Reclamation, U. S.
Department of the Interior, Curecanti Unit, Montrose,Colo.

Gunnison River Weir Construction - Bird's Eye View of Weir
December 22, 1911

ILLUSTRATION NO. 19

The weir at the River Portal of the Gunnison Tunnel as it appears today. In the foreground is the diversion gate and gatehouse. August, 1968.

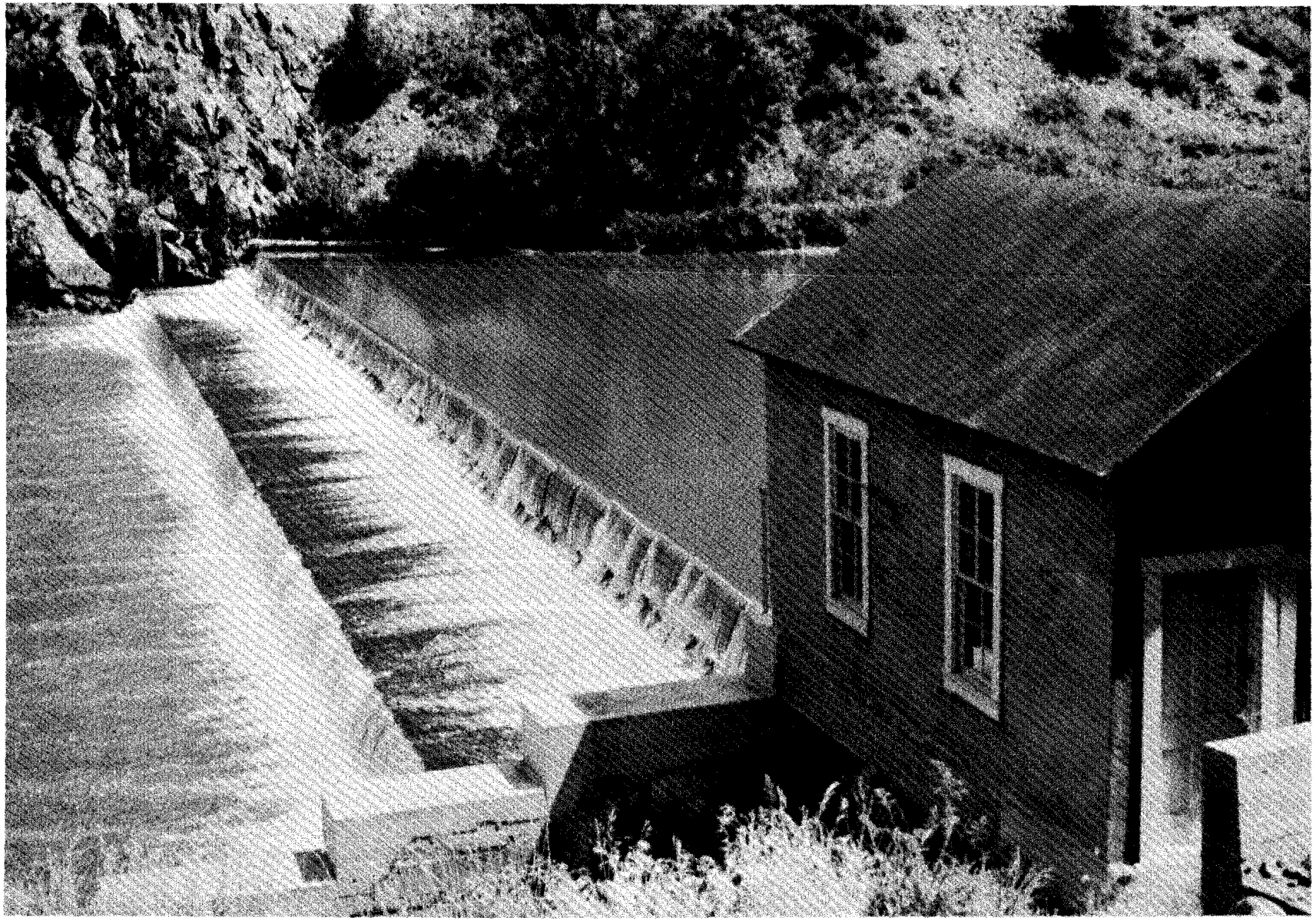


ILLUSTRATION NO. 20

River Portal of the Gunnison
Tunnel as it appears today
with gatehouse overhead.
August, 1968.

GPO 826-312