



# A San Juan Tapestry

HINSDALE COUNTY & LAKE CITY, COLORADO

History ~ Photographs ~ Memoirs



# A San Juan Tapestry

HINSDALE COUNTY & LAKE CITY, COLORADO

History ~ Photographs ~ Memoirs

A publication of  
Hinsdale County Historical Society  
Lake City Downtown Improvement Revitalization Team (DIRT)  
Copyright 2012

All Rights Reserved  
No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission and approval from  
Hinsdale County Historical Society and Lake City DIRT  
Lake City, Colorado

ISBN 978-1-937851-03-3

Printed in the United States of America

Funded by  
FY 2009 Preserve America  
*Historic Preservation Fund Grants to Preserve and  
Promote America's Heritage and Cultural Assets*  
Lake City DIRT  
*The Hinsdale County Historical Society*

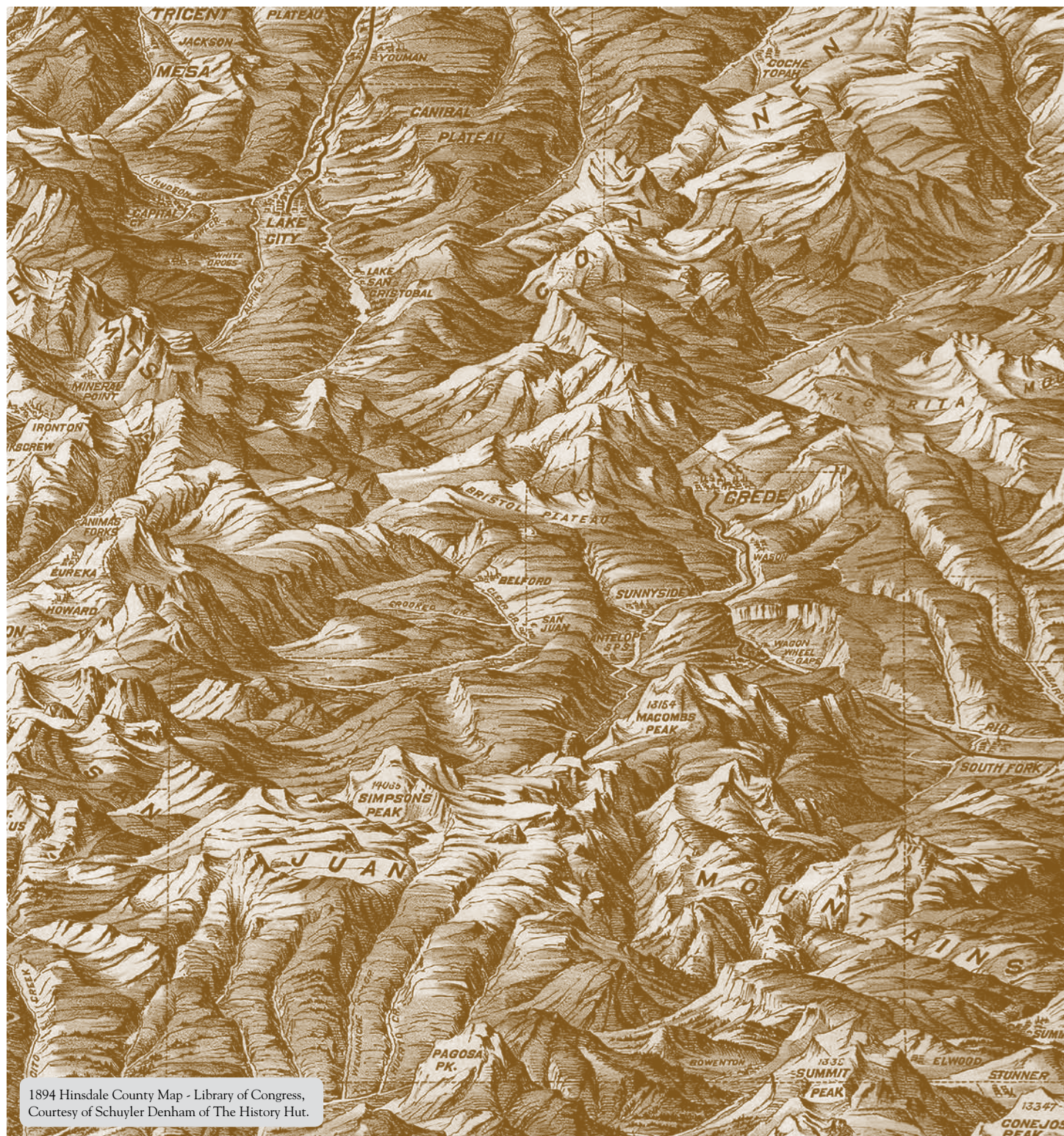
*Cover Photograph of Lake City: Joan Nelson*  
*Navajo Chief blanket: Hinsdale County Museum*

*Cover and Interior Design by APH creative design*  
*Lake City, Colorado*

Content development, editing and guidance by Marty Priest



*This publication is dedicated to a truly extraordinary  
place that we all have come to love.*



1894 Hinsdale County Map - Library of Congress,  
Courtesy of Schuyler Denham of The History Hut.



# Contents

1  
INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7  
CHAPTER ONE  
Threads of Time

15  
CHAPTER TWO  
Natural Wonders

25  
CHAPTER THREE  
Mining

37  
CHAPTER FOUR  
Hinsdale County: Settling In

45  
CHAPTER FIVE  
Settling In: Lake City

77  
CHAPTER SIX  
Ranching & Agriculture

91  
CHAPTER SEVEN  
Transportation: Travel & Freight

101  
CHAPTER EIGHT  
Recreation

115  
CHAPTER NINE  
The Process

Compiled, Drawn and  
Copyrighted by Emil B. Fischer,  
Author of the Mining Map of  
Red Mountain and the Mining Region of  
San Juan, Ouray, San Miguel and Dolores  
Counties, Southwestern COLORADO, 1891  
*Revised 98*  
Scale 4 miles to ONE Inch

as per agreement made by  
Commission with the  
SOUTHERN UTE INDIANS  
under and in pursuance of  
Sec 4 of ACT of MAY 1888

**Southwestern Colorado. 1893**

This historical map displays the following counties and regions:

- Montrose**, **Ouray**, **San Miguel**, **Gunnison**, **Hinsdale**, **Saguache**, **Dolores**, **San Juan**, **Montezuma**, **La Plata**, **Hinsdale**, **Archuleta**, **Conejos**, **San Juan**, **Navajo**, **Indian Reservation**.

**Key Features:**

- Ute Indian Reservation**: A large area in the center and south, labeled "SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN RESERVATION".
- Towns and Settlements**: Numerous towns are marked, including Montrose, Ouray, Silver Lake, Dolores, San Juan, Montezuma, La Plata, Hinsdale, Archuleta, Conejos, and Durango.
- Geographical Features**: The **Needle Mountains** and **La Plata Mountains** are labeled. The **San Juan River** and **San Juan Lake** are also shown.
- Inset Maps**:
  - Top Right**: "RAILROAD SYSTEMS REACHING DURANGO" showing a network of lines connecting Durango to other regions like Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.
  - Bottom Right**: A detailed inset map of the **DURANGO SURROUNDING** area, showing the city and its immediate vicinity.

vi

## INTRODUCTION

Tucked away along the eastern edge of the mystical San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado, a roughly T-shaped county boasts an amazing geological, social, recreational, and industrial history that continues to add indomitable energy to the “Shining Mountains” in which it lies. In this work, the result of countless volunteer hours and cooperative funding from a National Park Service Preserve America Grant, the Hinsdale County Historical Society, Lake City Downtown Improvement and Revitalization Team (DIRT), Hinsdale County and the Town of Lake City, timeless photography and excerpts from pioneer and present-day oral histories are woven into a captivating, generational tapestry. Only a few images and moments – some seemingly insignificant, others of epic consequence – are included in this book. Yet, when pieced together, the entwined character of this land and the people who have called this place home is preserved on the pages that follow, to be treasured and shared.

**The Publication:** This book is a byproduct of various Hinsdale County and Lake City historical preservation projects. Proceeds will support history education and preservation locally.

**Photography:** Bringing history to life, the images featured in this work were obtained from the Hinsdale County Historical Society and Museum photograph and glass plate negative collections, the Hinsdale County Cultural Resource Survey, the Lake City DIRT Memoirs Project, and private individuals. All images were authorized for one-time use only and cannot be reproduced unless written permission is obtained from the image’s creator or right holder. The plate negative-to-print process is explained in Chapter 9.

**Historical Text and Oral Histories:** Interspersed throughout this book are excerpts from oral histories collected by the Hinsdale County Historical Society as part of an Oral History Project begun in 2004 and by DIRT as part of its Memoirs Project begun in 2009. Also included is historical information quoted with permission or summarized from a variety of sources.



Overlooking Lake City from North  
1906  
C. Whitmon Cross, U.S. Geological Survey

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### **Our Contributors:**

#### **Hinsdale County**

Hinsdale County, Colorado, 2006 – 2007

Cultural Resource Survey of Hinsdale County

#### **Hinsdale County Historical Society,**

#### **Photograph and Oral History Collections:**

Bette Family Collection

Bill and Mille Craig Collection

Cliff and Marcella High Collection

Ruth Ann Lyke Collection

Florence Baker Heald Collection

Green Family Collection

Henry Spencer Collection

Hammond Family Collection

Heath Family Collection

Hinsdale County Museum

Glass Plate Negative Collection

Hinsdale County Museum Collection

Hodge Family Collection

Hugh McLeod Collection

Knowlton/Soderholm Collection

Martin Davis Collection

Smith Family Collection

Wallace Family Collection

1993 Hinsdale County Historical Calendar

### **Oral History Collection:**

Brown, Margaret (Cummings) – July 17, 2004,  
Interviewer Gene Bryson

David, Sally Ann (Vickers) – December 14, 2004,  
Interviewer Gene Bryson

Hammond, Donald Thelbert – December 3,  
2004, Interviewer Gene Bryson

Hood, F. Wilson – August 22, 2006, Interviewer  
Henry Rothschild

Knowlton, Althea (Griffiths)– July 3, 2004,  
Interviewer Mary Ann Nichols

Madison, Doug – July 3, 2007, Interviewer Gene  
Bryson

Mendenhall, Charles – June 13, 2004,  
Interviewer Gene Bryson

Perry, Carol (Carey) – June 6, 2004, Interviewer  
Henry Rothschild

Pitney, Margaret (Rawson) – June 27/September  
8, 2004, Interviewer Bob Lozano

Ryan, Jim and Therese – June 26, 2004,  
Interviewer Mary Ann Nichols

Swank, Celia (Rawson) – March 7, 2004,  
Interviewers Grant Houston and Michelle  
Pierce

Vickers, Purvis (Perk) – June 29, 2004,  
Interviewer Gene Bryson



Area photographer Frank Dean captured a somber moment at Lake City's IOOF Cemetery in May 1900. Pictured at center is Lake City pioneer Mary White McLeod, a native of Ireland who came to Lake City in the 1870's. She is pictured with her son, Joseph White, and daughter, Mary Ann. Pictured on Memorial Day, they are standing in the White-McLeod burial plot beside the grave of Mrs. McLeod's infant grandson, Walter, and son, John White, who had died of pneumonia a short time before.

## **Lake City DIRT, Memoirs Project**

### **Stories and Photographs:**

Taffy Bolger; Ann Bowling; C. Whitman Cross,  
US Geological Survey; Schuyler Denham;  
Granddaughters of Carolyn and Clarence  
Wright, *Tiny Hinsdale of The Silvery San Juan* -  
Marilyn Wright Plise, Claire Wright Martinez,  
and Nancy Wright Norland; Arthur Haines,  
U.S. Forest Service, Gunnison, Colorado; Grant  
Houston; DeeDee Hutcherson; Richard LaSance;  
Joan Nelson; Marty Priest; Linda Ragle; Milo  
Morse; Steve Robinson; Shannon Smith;  
P. David Smith; Allison Stewart; John and Jean  
Taylor - photograph collection and text excerpts  
from *Toner-Taylor Ranch 1894* by Lillie May (Toner-  
Taylor) Carlin and Family; Helen Whinnery and  
Stan Whinnery.

### **Our Volunteers:**

In addition to the oral history interviewers  
and transcribers, the volunteers who devoted  
hundreds of hours toward the production of  
*San Juan Tapestry* include: Kristie Borchers,  
K.C. Errett, Angela Hollingsworth, Marian  
Hollingsworth, Grant Houston, Karen  
McClatchie, Milo Morse, Team Murphy Realty,  
Marty Priest, and Steve Priest.



Henson Creek toward T-Mountain  
1911  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection



# Chapter One

## THREADS OF TIME

*From prehistoric to present, the many threads of inanimate and animate are uniquely reflected in this San Juan Tapestry. Colorful, sometimes glistening, the whole of Hinsdale County, its surviving town of Lake City, and all who have touched this ground are woven into the durable and timeless fabric that is this shining land.*



Town of Lake Shore  
Hinsdale County Museum/Smith Collection

Before the “white man” arrived in present-day Hinsdale County, for centuries the area had been the seasonal domain of three of the seven nomadic bands that made up the indigenous Ute tribe. In northern Hinsdale, Chief Ouray and his Tabeguache (Uncompahgre) band hunted and camped along the Gunnison River and its tributaries; the Capote band inhabited central Hinsdale along the Rio Grande River to the San Luis Valley; and the Weeminuche roamed southern Hinsdale up and down the Piedra River. Apparently discounting the presence of the Utes – legend and lore places Spanish explorers/prospectors in the area by the 1600s, and American trappers flocked to the region in the 1830s in search of riches to be found in a burgeoning beaver population. Yet, whether lured by gold, silver, furs, land, or fortunes-to-be-made, the never changing attraction of Hinsdale County is



the beauty, bounty, and solitude of its ever captivating environment.

Despite Native American habitation, Spain claimed much of the San Juans in the 1600s, but ceded that claim with Mexican independence in 1819. In 1836 Texas gained independence from Mexico and declared its right to lands surrounding the Rio Grande River and its tributaries all the way to the river’s headwaters (southern Hinsdale). With the end of the Mexican-American War and Texas joining the union, by 1849 the area encompassing all of present-day Hinsdale became United States territory even though indigenous tribes continued to occupy their homeland.

Although gold was reportedly first found in the area by a member of the John C. Fremont expedition in 1842, at that time the Utes actively and fiercely maintained control of their lands. But, as news of rich ore in Colorado’s mountains spread, the lure of treasures to be

Chief Ouray  
Illustration: Harper's Weekly  
Courtesy of P. David Smith,  
Western Reflections Publishing, Co.



M 663. Near Lake City, Colo.

found overcame ancestral rights; and, with the signing of the Brunot Treaty in 1873, the Utes were removed from the San Juans. By August of 1874 two discoveries in Hinsdale County, one gold and one silver, spurred prosperity that would last to the turn of the century.

Mining operations, in particular, played a primary role in the settlement and economic growth of Lake City and northern Hinsdale, and an endless variety of businesses and services succeeded because of the demands of the industry and the population it spawned. Processing plants, assayers, lawyers, freighting companies, blacksmiths, newspapers, banks, stores, hotels, schools, churches, saloons – mining was the spark that would brighten Hinsdale County’s future. Ranches

along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River north and south of Lake City also benefited from the mining boom, grazing river bottom pastures, meeting increasing local demand, and



eventually shipping livestock to market once the railroad reached Lake City. Over time, many homesteads that originated as cattle ranches evolved into guest or “dude” ranches in the 1930s to serve the growing tourist industry, some retaining working-ranch roles while offering accommodations, trail rides, trout fishing, and guide services.

Central Hinsdale saw growth early-on when Stony Pass Road, which follows the Upper Rio Grande past its headwaters, became the primary “pre-railroad” supply route connecting the town of Del Norte and mining operations in and around developing Silverton. Stock growing, and with it area ranches, thrived during the 1874 to 1881 freighting era, when everything and anything was in demand and hauled by wagon

and pack train over Stony Pass and into Lake City over Slumgullion Pass. In 1891, following the discovery of silver in nearby Creede, the demand for beef in that community skyrocketed.

Forest Ranger Henry Spencer  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

## A GRISLY FIND — A GRISLY TALE

### Alferd (Alfred) Packer

On November 8, 1873, a party of 21 prospectors, with Alferd (Alfred) Packer as their guide, traveled east out of Utah with dreams of striking it rich in Colorado. Reaching the winter encampment of Chief Ouray and the Tabeguache (Uncompahgre) Ute near present-day Delta on January 21, 1874, the group had all but run out of food and other supplies. After being warned about treacherous winter conditions ahead, some of the men decided to winter-over with the Utes, while two groups accepted a week's worth of provisions from Chief Ouray and set out toward the Los Pinos Indian Agency near Saguache.

One of those groups, which included Packer, Israel Swan, George Noon, James Humphrey, Frank Miller, and Shannon Wilson Bell, left the Ute camp on February 9 traveling southeast and then south along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison. Some six weeks later on April 16, Packer appeared, alone, at Los Pinos. He convincingly told a sad tale of starvation and losing his fellow prospectors in a snowstorm, yet his well-fed appearance and money that he was spending freely from several wallets soon shadowed his story. The discovery of strips of human flesh along Packer's trail into the Agency spurred more doubts. In August a prospecting party discovered the bodies of the five missing men at the foot of Slumgullion Pass. The men had apparently been murdered and showed evidence of being cannibalized. An illustrator from *Harper's Weekly*, accompanying the group recorded the scene in graphic detail and national attention focused on the grisly crime.

Packer was arrested, but he escaped from the Saguache jail and was at large for many years. Captured in Wyoming, he was tried in Lake City in the Hinsdale County Courthouse during the first two weeks of April 1883. He was found guilty of murder and was sentenced to be hanged on May 19, 1883, but his conviction was reversed on October 30, 1885, because of technicalities. At Packer's retrial, held in Gunnison in August of 1886, he was found guilty of five counts of manslaughter and was sentenced to forty years of hard labor at the state penitentiary in

Cañon City. Packer was paroled by Governor Charles S. Thomas in January 1901, and moved to Littleton, Colorado, where he remained until his death on April 23, 1907.

Packer never accepted blame for murdering all five of his companions, but he did admit to shooting and killing Wilson Bell in self-defense. Packer stated that Israel Swan, the oldest member of the party, died of natural causes, and was cannibalized by surviving members of the party.



Alferd Packer Murder Scene  
1874  
Harper's Weekly, Courtesy of P. David Smith,  
Western Reflections Publishing Co.

That fact and the construction of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad into Creede during its boom fueled the fire of an already hot market. By the 1920s, however, most ranches in the Upper Rio Grande drainage had to supplement income by hosting summer guests or selling property to be converted into youth camps. Few of the early homesteading attempts succeeded and Central Hinsdale's fortunes would lie in stock grazing, scenic splendor, and abundant outdoor recreation amidst its forests, lakes, creeks, waterfalls, and geological landmarks.

Reflecting the influx of settlers that occurred in the rest of the county when the Utes were removed in 1874, ranchers rather than prospectors were drawn to the geography of Southern Hinsdale's Weminuche/Upper Piedra area (also called Debs and the South End). While early agricultural use mimicked the historical "seasonal occupation pattern" established by the Utes, with Mexican shepherders and American ranchers driving sheep and cattle north from southern environs to summer-graze, some Upper Piedra Valley homesteaders eventually "adapted" and became year-round residents, supplementing income with lumber operations, stock grazing, hay raising, and hosting summer visitors and hunters in the fall. Like their counterparts elsewhere in Hinsdale County, ranchers who called the Upper Piedra home spring through winter required year-round services. Indoor plumbing, electricity, phone lines, and rural schoolhouses were the byproducts of their choice to stay and settle in.





North Clear Creek Falls  
2011  
Photograph: DeeDee Hutcherson



## Chapter Two

# NATURAL WONDERS

*Jagged peaks, ruggedly haunting terrain, lush valleys, deep and wandering canyons, crystalline lakes, thundering waterfalls that cascade into rushing rivers and creeks – Hinsdale County and all of its Natural Wonders sing a siren song to those seeking inspiration, challenge, and even sweet solitude. Born of fire, but masterfully sculpted by ice, Hinsdale's real treasures are visible for all to see.*



Lake San Cristobal  
Hinsdale County Museum

PERK VICKERS INTERVIEW ~ JUNE 29, 2004

*"It's just that I've always felt like it's (Lake City) about as close to heaven as you'll ever get. I watched the other people come and go from all over the United States and they'd tell me about what was goin' on where they were, and a lot of people come back and said they recognized it. Lake City's about as close to heaven as you'll ever get. Simply because, there's 2 reasons. No.1 reason is the government owns up to 95 percent of our land. The No.2 reason is we don't get enough snow for a major ski development. That's why it's the only place left the way God made it because of development. If we had the snow they get at other places, you'd be jammin' people everywhere, business, big business."*

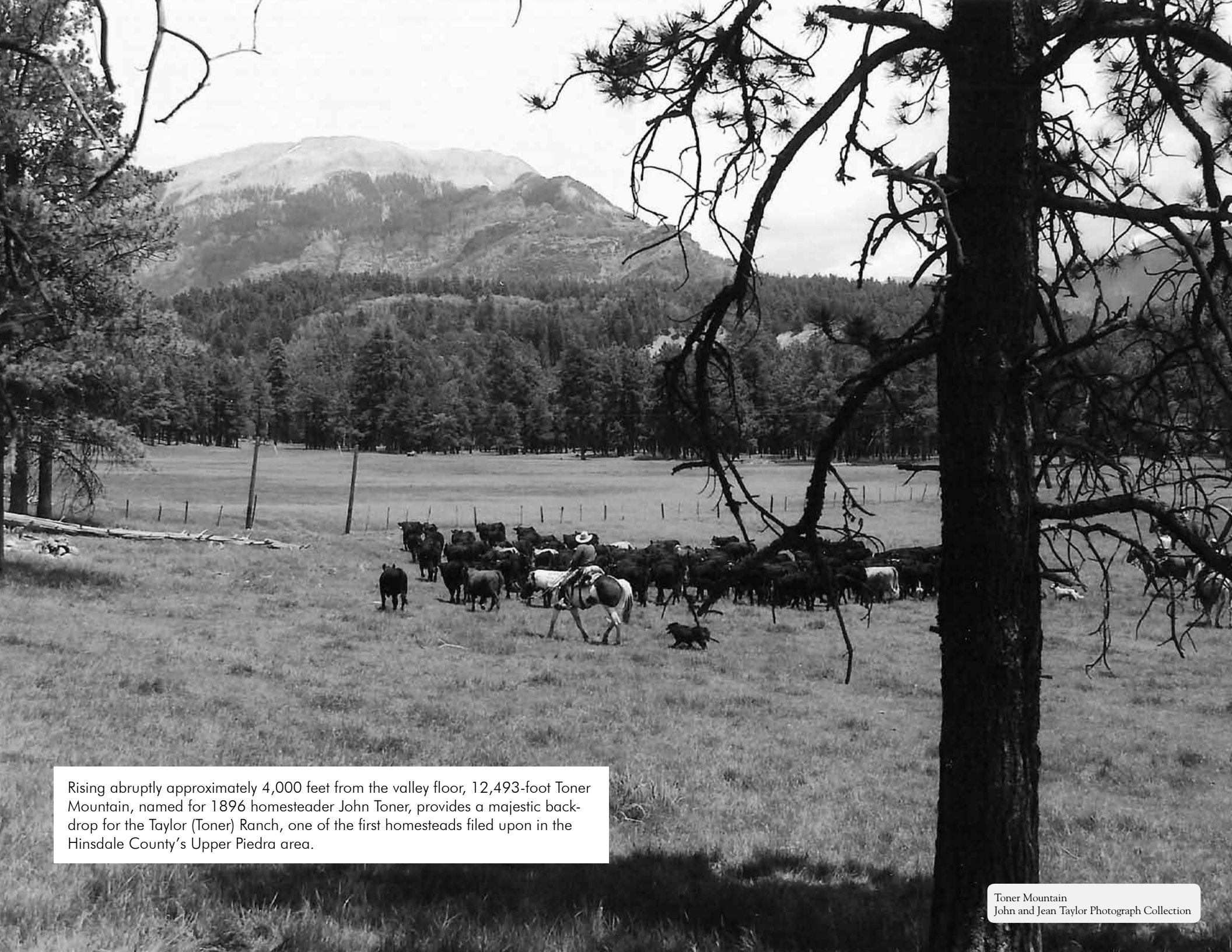
**B**orn of volcanic fire, but masterfully sculpted by ice, Hinsdale's real treasures are visible for all to see.

The **Slumgullion Earthflow** (Slide) began more than 700 years ago when volcanic material weakened by rain on the southern flank of Mesa Seco slid down the steep mountainside. The slide blocked the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River and created Lake San Cristobal. About 350 years ago, a second flow started from the top of the mountain and reportedly still moves about twenty feet per year. The Slumgullion Slide was named after a stew favored by miners because of the slide's and stew's similar coloring.

**Lake San Cristobal**, four miles south of Lake City, is the second largest natural lake in Colorado. It was formed by the Slumgullion Earth Flow in 1270 A.D. and is fed by the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River. In 1873, Lieutenant E.H. Ruffner and a party of soldiers sent by the United States Corps of Engineers to the Gunnison and San Juan regions passed through what would later become Lake City and camped on the shore of the large lake. Ruffner wrote in his journal: "This lake is a beauty. Its waters are clear, and reflect the mountains, which slope into the lake on all sides." Choosing to name the lake, the group called it "Lake Chrystobal" in honor of a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson that depicted a beautiful Scottish lake. Over the years, the lake has been called Lake San Cristobal, Lake Christobal, and finally today's Lake San Cristobal.



Slumgullion Earthflow  
2011  
Photograph: Steve Robinson



Rising abruptly approximately 4,000 feet from the valley floor, 12,493-foot Toner Mountain, named for 1896 homesteader John Toner, provides a majestic backdrop for the Taylor (Toner) Ranch, one of the first homesteads filed upon in the Hinsdale County's Upper Piedra area.

At 14,309 feet, Uncompahgre Peak is the highest peak in Colorado's breathtaking San Juan Mountains. Located in the Uncompahgre Wilderness of the northern San Juans, its broad summit plateau rises about 1,500 feet above the broad surrounding alpine basins. While its south, east, and west sides are not particularly steep, its north face boasts a 700-foot cliff, starkly distinctive within the San Juan panorama. Like all peaks in the San Juan Mountains, Uncompahgre is of volcanic origin, but is not a volcano. The Ute word "Uncompahgre" is translated variously as "red earth" or "where water makes rock red."



Uncompahgre Peak  
Hinsdale County Museum



Hiking to Uncompahgre Peak  
Hinsdale County Museum



Rio Grande Pyramid and Bristol Head  
2010  
Photographer: Allison Stewart

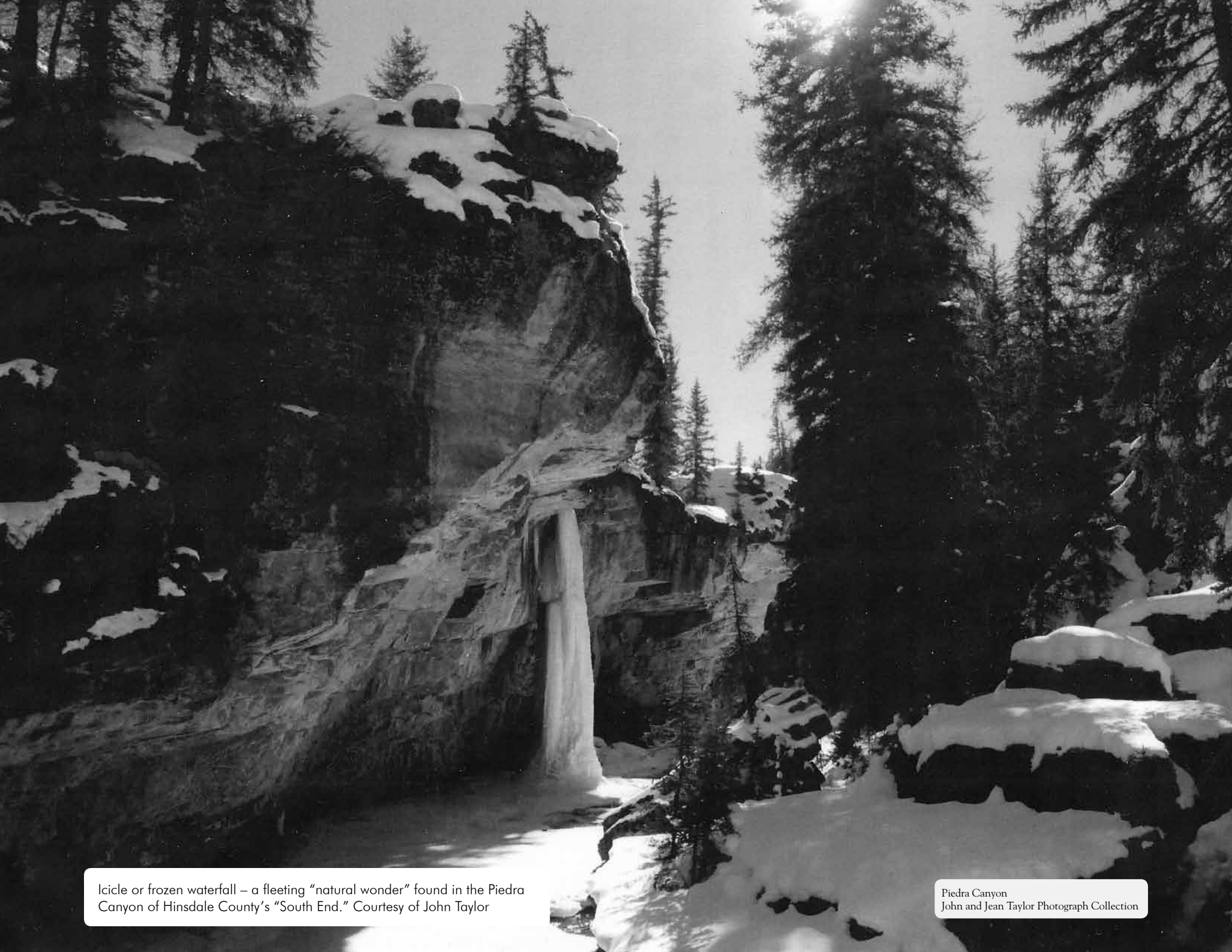
Located on the edge of Central Hinsdale County, North Clear Creek Falls (see p.14) is believed to be the most photographed waterfall in Colorado. Located at an elevation of 10,000 feet on a bench above the Rio Grande River, Clear Creek literally crashes down 100 feet to the canyon below from flat terrain covered with prairie grasses.

The Rio Grande Pyramid, located in Southern Hinsdale, stands guard over the Weminuche Wilderness. Visible from almost every high point surrounding it, the Pyramid is the highest sentinel in Colorado's eastern San Juans. Located along the Pyramid's south ridge is a geological feature dubbed "the Window," which offers a volcanic tuff-framed view of the distant Needle and Grenadier ranges. Because of the remote location, the Pyramid and the Window are rarely visited. Located in Mineral County, yet a prominent landmark visible in Central Hinsdale's Upper Rio Grande River Basin, Bristol Peak was named by a settler who missed his native Bristol, England. At 12,713 feet in elevation, this big mountain dominates the entire area. Like Uncompahgre, Bristol's shape distinguishes it from surrounding peaks.

On the Upper Lake Fork of the Gunnison River, 160-foot Argenta Falls – about 100 feet of which is an almost vertical drop – can be included in Colorado's elite list of most majestic waterfalls. It is located approximately a mile from the junctions of Slumgullion Pass and Cinnamon Pass roads.



Argenta Falls  
Hinsdale County Museum  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett



Icicle or frozen waterfall – a fleeting “natural wonder” found in the Piedra Canyon of Hinsdale County’s “South End.” Courtesy of John Taylor

Piedra Canyon  
John and Jean Taylor Photograph Collection



Hinsdale County Museum

#### JIM AND THERESE RYAN INTERVIEW - JUNE 22, 2004

*“The town was full of locals then. We were probably the only interlopers in here at the time. They were very cautious in telling me about the severe winters around here. ‘You won’t be able to put a winter in here.’ Well, I was waiting for winter the whole winter here. It never compared to the winters we had in Chicago. In Breckenridge, it was 57 below. I couldn’t believe it. It was warm out! We didn’t have that humidity.”*



ULAY.

Ute-Ulay Miners  
Hinsdale County Museum  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett



## Chapter Three

### MINING

*A decade and a half behind the Pike's Peak Gold Rush that brought boomtown prosperity to the Front Range and Colorado's central mountains, "legal" prospecting and mining in the lands encompassing present-day Hinsdale County finally happened when the Utes signed the Brunot Treaty in 1873 and ceded a tract of the San Juans, 60 miles wide by 75 miles long, to the United States "for an annual payment of \$25,000 forever." Reacting to the news of rich silver and gold discoveries, men by the hundreds swarmed to Hinsdale County to make their fortunes. Prospectors and miners came to mine, while other businesses sprang up and prospered by "mining the miners."*



PACK TRAIN, ST. JACOBS MINE,

Legal or not, in 1871 Henry Henson, Charles Godwin, Albert Mead, and J.K. Mullen staked the Ute and Ulay (Ule or Ula) mines inside Ute territory – the Ulay named in honor of Chief Ouray. Located on Henson Creek, the Ute-Ulay began operation in 1874 and became the area's largest employer, producing over \$14 million in silver and lead ore through 1918. In August of 1874, Enos T. Hotchkiss, contracted by Otto Mears to build a road from Saguache to Lake City, discovered a rich gold vein above Lake San Cristobal. He, Monette Hotchkiss (his son), Henry Finley, B.S. Bartholf, and W.C. Lewman filed the Hotchkiss Lode claim, later called the Golden Fleece Mine. The mine produced an estimated \$3 million in gold and silver ore between 1875 and 1910.

#### CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL INTERVIEW - JUNE 13, 2004

*"I worked at Ute-Ulay in '54. No that wasn't '54... that was... I run the air hoist at the Ute-Ulay bringing the ore up out of the shaft. It was what they called a whiz. I used to bring this ore up and dump it. They had a big ore bin up above my head. Dump that ore in that. Then the train would come in and haul it out. I run that air hoist... I had all my clothes that I had and what I could borrow 'cause there was such a draft in that mine. It wasn't too far from the entrance and it was cold. Ice would build up on that exhaust about that big around. Had to take a hammer or something and bust that ice off. It didn't plug it up or anything, but I'd just break it off. We had a boss - shift man that was from Arizona. He'd want to go down the whiz and inspect everything. When he'd get in he'd say, 'Now let it drop. Just let it go.' I couldn't do that. I was afraid it would jump the track and he'd get hurt. He really chewed me out the first time. That was good ore. Good lead ore. But there's no demand for lead anymore. Or anything else. Only gold."*



Drilling  
Hinsdale County Museum/Wallace Collection



CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL  
INTERVIEW— JUNE 13, 2004

[What about that ... uranium mine you were telling me about?] “Up Henson? There was a guy from Florida. He hired my brother to furnish the Geiger Counter. He was going along there ... the Geiger Counter was on low and it went wild. That’s when we got interested in it. That’s what started the mining up there. He went clear up on top and could still get the count. The uranium mill in Gunnison was going at that time. They’d ship truckloads of it down there and run it through the mill and it would thicken up like gravy. They couldn’t process it. They finally let it go. You can see the uranium on the side of the rock. But it was hard.”

Boarding house staff, Golden Fleece Mine  
Hinsdale County Museum/Martin Davis Collection  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett

News of the two discoveries started a “rush” to Lake City. In 1876 the Ocean Wave Group opened two miles beyond the Ute-Ulay. In 1878 the Excelsior was located in the Capitol City area, with the Crooke and Ocean Wave smelters completed that same year. The early 1880s saw new mines opening, including the Golden Wonder in Deadman Gulch two miles southeast of Lake City, and the premature promise of a much-needed and desirable railroad line. In 1881 Lake City’s population had grown to 2000. The area’s boom would last three more years until the Ute-Ulay temporarily shut down. Mining would again pick up in the late 1880s. By 1890 twenty mines were shipping ore and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad finally reached town in 1889.

Six mining districts were established in northern Hinsdale County – Cimarron, Galena, Lake, Sherman, Park, and Carson. Cimarron, in



Hinsdale’s northwestern corner, produced little ore. Galena, stretching sixteen miles west from Lake City to the Ouray and San Juan county lines, proved to be the most productive district with its Ute-Ulay, Golden Wonder, and Hidden Treasure mines and the short-lived settlement of Capitol City. Lake, past Lake San Cristobal, claimed the Golden Fleece as its primary producer and the Black Crooke as another major operation.

Sherman, midway between Lake San Cristobal and Silverton, boomed briefly in 1877, and included twenty-plus cabins, a boarding house, and the Black Wonder Mill; while Park, located at Burrows Park near the Hinsdale-San Juan county line, was active in the mid-1870s and home to a number of camps, including White Cross, which once flourished but is no more. Also in the mid-1890s, active mining operations in the Carson District gave birth to a camp of cabins and a mercantile with a post office that remain, albeit unoccupied, today.

Packing on Big Blue  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection



GOLDEN FLEECE.

Golden Fleece Mine  
Hinsdale County Museum  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Erett



Billy Green going to mine in Burrows Park  
1910  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hodge Collection  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett

#### DOUG MADISON INTERVIEW – JULY 3, 2007

*“In the mill at the Ute-Ulay when I worked there. They brought the ore out on the cars and they dumped it in then it went down into the crusher. Ben Griffiths or Bill Griffiths ... sometimes Ben would do it and sometimes Bill would do it...they’d dump it down and they’d break it up then it would come out in small pieces and it would go into the ball mill. They were steel balls. That conveyer would go on down to what they called the flotation. That separated everything. I made sure that the conveyor belt kept going.”*

#### CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL INTERVIEW – JUNE 13, 2004

*“We used to have more fun with those damn burros. They used to eat paper. We always took a Sears and Roebuck catalog with us. My uncle owned a pack train and my dad owned one so I always had my choice of burros. There was days when they packed that ore out of those mines, they’d put fifty pounds of ore on each side and by the time they’d get down those poor little old donkeys would be all in.”*



Surface Tramway at the Ute Ulay Mine. Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of The Silvery San Juan by Carolyn and Clarence Wright.



Hidden Treasure Mill, Office, and Bunkhouse. Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of *The Silvery San Juan* by Carolyn and Clarence Wright

#### CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL INTERVIEW – JUNE 13, 2004

“Yeah, I would help him (my Dad). I couldn’t drill. He hand drilled, you know. He couldn’t afford to have a compressor or anything. I’d help muck out. We’d go up there in the morning and muck out and he’d drill again and I didn’t do much while he was doing the drilling. I can remember one time he had a bunch of caps out there and I’d cut little hunks of fuse off, put a cap on it and light it toss it over the side and listen to it go off. He wondered what happened to the caps. I told him well, I had to do something so I...”



Drilling  
1910  
Hinsdale County Museum

#### MARGARET RAWSON/PITNEY INTERVIEW – SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

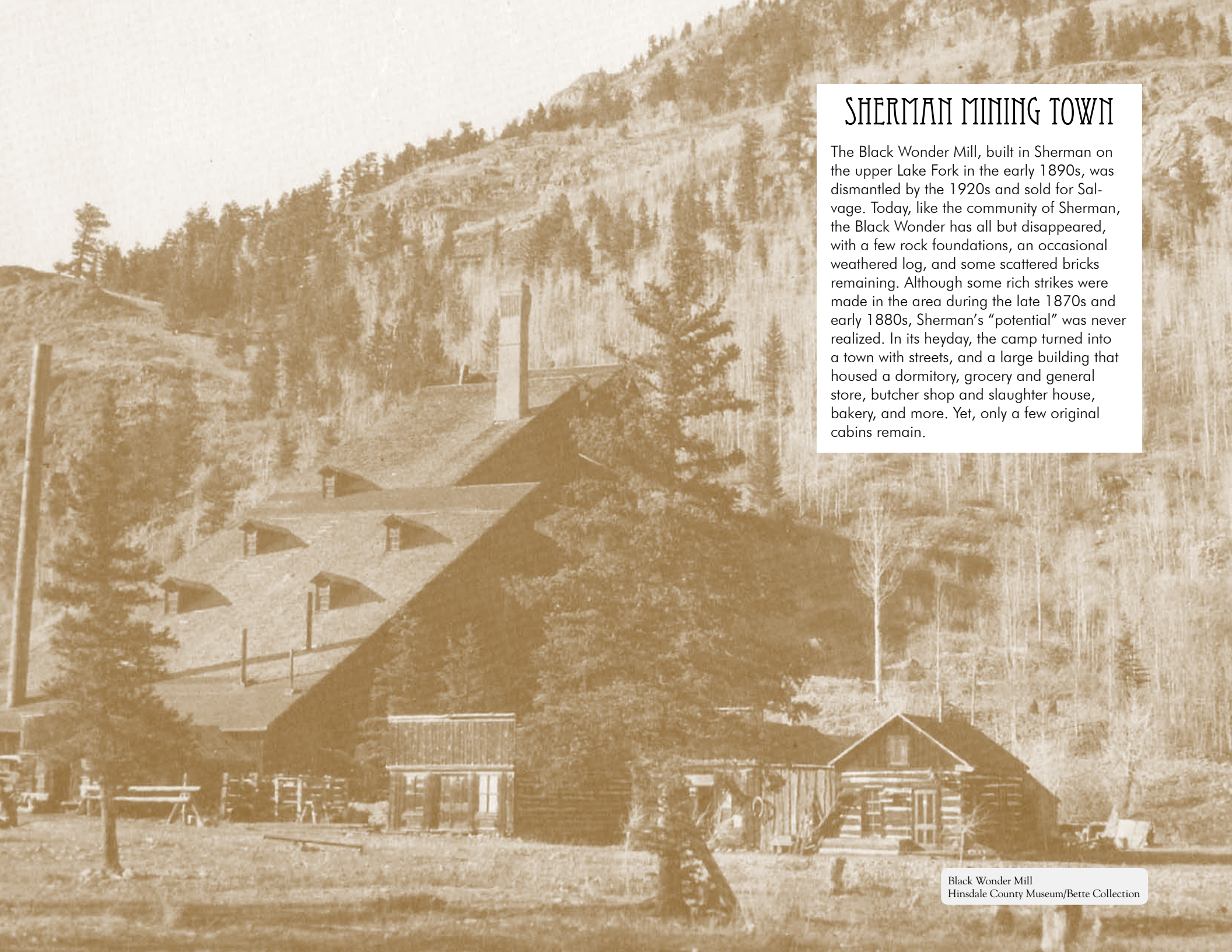
“We just had snow and snow... snow slides for two or three years would come down and kill people going to the Mine. And then, dad ... up at the top of Ranger Mountain up here, there were two mines and they both shot off a strike or two - but anyway, they set their dynamite and set it off, unknown to either one of them that they were doing that. And there were eighty men lost in that. Dad had to go up in there, and he said they finally got - he operated on two or three of ‘em on their stomach, enough to get them out.”



Empire Chief Mine  
Hinsdale County Museum

#### MARGARET RAWSON/PITNEY INTERVIEW – SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

*“We had a very bad accident one time. There was a snow slide that came down up at the Empire Chief and covered the bunkhouse where some of the workers were either sleeping or just getting up. Some of those men were buried down under the snow - they told us later - after they were rescued. They could remember hearing people walk in the snow, on the snow over them. My uncle, John Rawson, was buried and was rescued. Dick Halpin was another. There were four men who were buried who did not survive. Their bodies were brought to town and taken care of in the lobby of the Pueblo House, which was the only place that was available at that time.”*



## SHERMAN MINING TOWN

The Black Wonder Mill, built in Sherman on the upper Lake Fork in the early 1890s, was dismantled by the 1920s and sold for Salvage. Today, like the community of Sherman, the Black Wonder has all but disappeared, with a few rock foundations, an occasional weathered log, and some scattered bricks remaining. Although some rich strikes were made in the area during the late 1870s and early 1880s, Sherman's "potential" was never realized. In its heyday, the camp turned into a town with streets, and a large building that housed a dormitory, grocery and general store, butcher shop and slaughter house, bakery, and more. Yet, only a few original cabins remain.



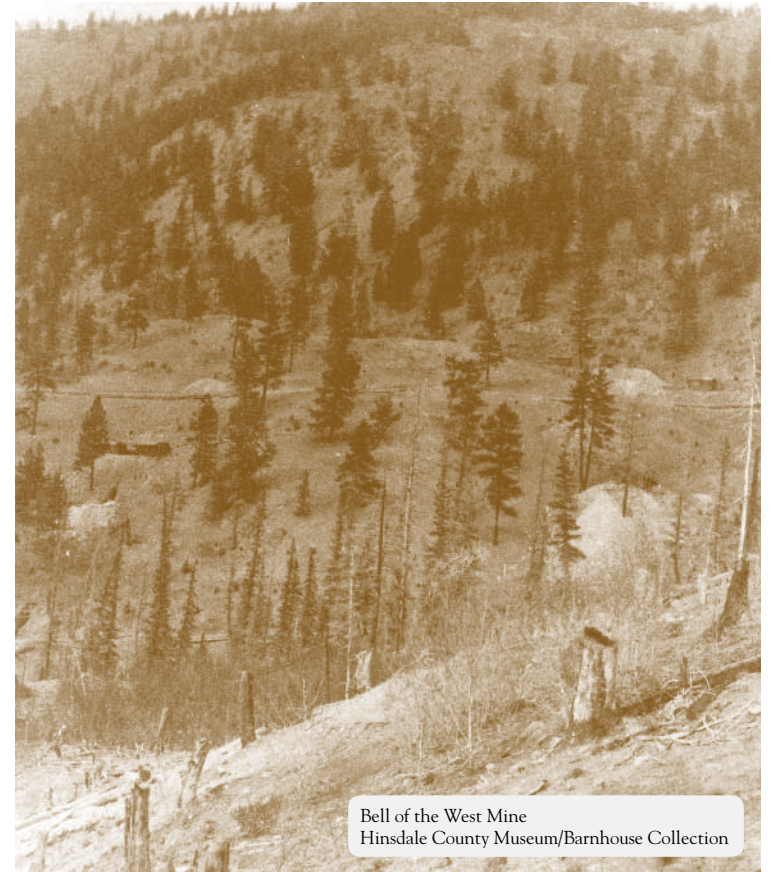
Highland Chief Mine  
Hinsdale County Museum/Margaret Pitney Collection

#### CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL – JUNE 13, 2004

*“I worked at Ute-Ulay in ‘54. No that wasn’t ‘54 ... that was ... I run the air hoist at the Ute-Ulay bringing the ore up out of the shaft. It was what they called a whiz. I used to bring this ore up and dump it. They had a big ore bin up above my head. Dump that ore in that. Then the train would come in and haul it out. I run that air hoist .. I had all my clothes that I had and what I could borrow ‘cause there was such a draft in that mine. It wasn’t too far from the entrance and it was cold. Ice would build up on that exhaust about that big around. Had to take a hammer or something and bust that ice off. It didn’t plug it up or anything, but I’d just break it off. We had a boss - shift man that was from Arizona. He’d want to go down the whiz and inspect everything. When he’d get in he’d say, “Now let it drop. Just let it go.” I couldn’t do that. I was afraid it would jump the track and he’d get hurt. He really chewed me out the first time. That was good ore. Good lead ore. But there’s no demand for lead anymore. Or anything else. Only gold.”*

#### CAROL CAREY/PERRY INTERVIEW – JUNE 6, 2004

*“He (my father, George Carey) had gone to work at the Ute and Ulay. That was (what) all kids did then. He was on a single jack. He rode his bicycle up to the mine and stayed there during the week and came back on weekends.”*



Bell of the West Mine  
Hinsdale County Museum/Barnhouse Collection



This 1888 photograph shows the White Cross Post Office, established in 1885 with H.E. Wright serving as postmaster 1885-1904. Left to right: Clarence Wright (3 years old), father, H. E. Wright (Postmaster), Lena Lowe Wright, Rene Wright & Fred Davidson. Courtesy of *Tiny Hinsdale* of *The Silvery San Juan* by Carolyn and Clarence Wright.



## Chapter Four

# HINSDALE COUNTY: SETTLING IN

*Riches to be found, adventures to be had,  
dreams to be realized – the rush to settle  
America’s western wilds was fast and furious  
in Colorado’s “promising” San Juans.*



Capitol City daily stage coach  
Hinsdale County Museum/Martin Davis Collection  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett

CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL  
INTERVIEW – JUNE 13, 2004

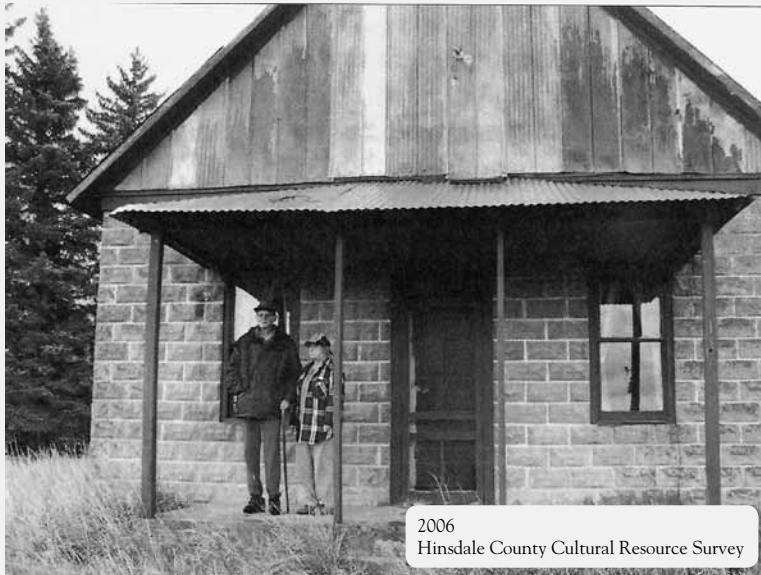
*“Well, I remember long before the light plant was ever taken out of Capitol City there was a school up there, too. That was before my time but the school was still there and on different occasions they’d use it. The power plant didn’t have wires run to the school so they got enough wire to run wire to the school and had a dance up there and a social. They got the old power plant - and they didn’t have a governor on it - you had to pull a stick back and forth to slow it down or make it go faster and the lights would go up and down, you know ... the power. I remember that. I don’t know what they run with that. There was a ... that was long before my time. That is what they did with the power when they first put it in.”*



In Hinsdale County, the lure of gold and silver gave birth to most of the area’s early settlements. Crude “tent” camps grew up around scattered claims, later to boast cabins, stores, mills, post offices, and even schools, depending on treasures discovered. The first county seat of Hinsdale was San Juan City, a small settlement located in Antelope Park on the Upper Rio Grande River. However, when rich gold and silver discoveries were made along Henson Creek and on the Lake Fork up from Lake San Cristobal, the boomtowns and camps that included Capitol City, Carson City, Whitecross, Sherman, Burrows Park, and Rose’s Cabin eventually demanded a county seat and supply hub that was accessible and closer to the action. And, Lake City fit the bill on all counts.

In the county’s northern, central, and southern areas, homesteaders would seek “community” nearby – frequenting towns like Lake City, Creede, and Pagosa Springs for supplies and social interaction.

Lee Mansion, Capitol City  
Circa 1940  
Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of *The Silvery San Juan* by  
Carolyn and Clarence Wright.



John & Jean Taylor at Debs Schoolhouse

## MRS. ROSA WILLIS: THE NEW TEACHER & MY FIRST DAY

... Our Summer School began as early in April as we were able to get to the schoolhouse by horseback. My mother had been my teacher for my first 4 years. This day was a miserable day because I had to go back to school, meet a new teacher, and it was snowing. My parents had used the Easter Sunday afternoon to break the trail to the schoolhouse through 18 to 20 inches of snow that still remained on the ground. When horses make a trail in deep snow, they try to step in the lead horse's tracks, which results in a stepped-off trail. This makes for rough riding.

I must have left the house about 6:30 to travel the 3 or 4 miles horseback to get to school by 8:00. There were at least 6 inches of new snow that

morning and more was coming. It was miserable following the stepped-off trail, but it got really bad when I reached the river crossings on Middle Fork and East Fork of the Piedra River. The flood plain areas along each stream contained dense growths of willows and alders. The heavy new snow bent these willows and alders almost parallel to the ground and now obstructed the trail. My only option was to urge my horse to forge through while I knocked as much of the snow off with my hands as I could. By the time we had pushed through two-thirds of a mile of these thickets, we were both wet and cold and still had a mile to travel to get to the schoolhouse and a warm fire. When I finally got to school, wet and cold, Mrs. Willis met me at the gate and promptly sent me down the road about a quarter of a mile to a willow patch with instructions to get and bring back a bundle of switches. She didn't say what she wanted those switches for, but in my mind they were bound to be used on kids that misbehaved. I determined at that first meeting that she was one tough teacher and that I didn't ever want to make her mad. That impression of her stuck with me all the way through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, although she only used the switches for pointers....

... 'I can't' was never ever an acceptable answer for anything that she assigned us to do in our studies. And she got significant results as well as my later respect. When I went to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Durango, I had much better basic skills than most of the kids in my classes who had attended larger grade schools. I believe that good discipline is vital in education.

Excerpt from an Upper Piedra Schoolhouse Story by John J. Taylor, March 20, 2012

## THE TOWN OF DEBS

About fourteen miles northwest of Pagosa Springs on the southeastern tip of Hinsdale County, the Town of Debs was, located in a fertile green valley on the Upper Piedra River. Incorporated in the late 1800s, Debs was once a thriving farm and ranch community, complete with post office, school, granary, and other amenities. All that remains of Debs today are remnants of its past, including a one-room concrete block schoolhouse that was built in 1926 and operated until 1951, educating the children of the Upper Piedra region. The school included first through eighth grades. Those who wanted to continue their education could attend Pagosa Springs High School or, if college-bound, could board in Durango and attend the accredited Durango High School. Started in 1909, the Debs school was located in a private home. A small wood-frame building was constructed in 1911, but burned. At its beginnings, 11 students attended the Debs school, and throughout its existence there were generally 7 to 10 students who attended the school at any given time. Students only attended classes during the summer months because of the Piedra River's high spring run-off. Normally children would ride their horses to school because of the distance to the school from the outlying ranches and farms. While it was open, the school was also used for community meetings and social events and was the only public building in the Upper Piedra region.

*An Historic Structure Assessment of the Debs Schoolhouse, Debs Community, Hinsdale County Colorado – State Historical Fund Project 2008-HA-028*



Car stuck in mud Blue Mesa Road, 1920s  
Hinsdale County Museum/Charles E. Adams Collection

### TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894 BY LILLIE MAY (TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

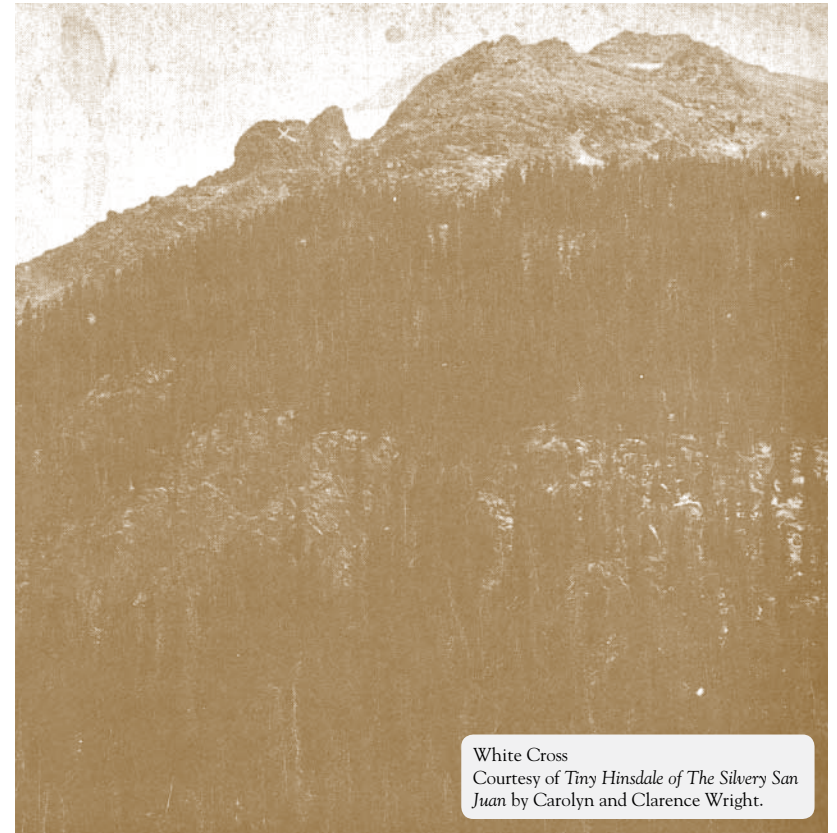
*"[1936] saw the completion of a ground return telephone line by Upper Piedra residents from Pagosa Springs to the Webb ranch and to the Toner ranch. These two families then became the message centers for the community, providing the phone, relaying messages, even delivering messages when necessary."*



Burrows Park  
Hinsdale County Museum/Robert L. Brown Collection

FROM THE DIARY OF H.E. WRIGHT, 1877, *TINY HINSDALE OF  
THE SILVERY SAN JUAN*, CAROLYN AND CLARENCE WRIGHT

"There was not a camp known as Burrows Park. The first camp in the White Cross area was Argentum, named for argentiflour ores which were found in that location....The second camp in this district was named after Tellurium, an ore which was found there.... The next camp which had a post office was White Cross....Paid by the miners at a dollar a month, I delivered mail on horseback all the way from White Cross to within two miles of Animas Forks....There were over three hundred receiving mail from White Cross during 1902."



White Cross  
Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of *The Silvery San Juan*  
by Carolyn and Clarence Wright.



Carson City  
Hinsdale County Cultural Resource Survey

*TINY HINSDALE OF THE SILVERY SAN JUAN,*  
CAROLYN AND CLARENCE WRIGHT

"In the early days, wherever there was a mine operating such as Carson or Whitecross, the winter supplies were all laid in for the entire winter months and contacts with the outside were only made when it was necessary and then by snowshoes."



LAKE CITY.  
No. 1

Overlooking Lake City  
Hinsdale County Museum  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett



## Chapter Five

# SETTLING IN: LAKE CITY

*In the summer of 1874, Enos Hotchkiss built the first log structure in what was to become the town of Lake City after finding a rich ore deposit above the Lake Fork of the Gunnison near Lake San Cristobal. Soon several cabins were erected nearby and Lake City's boom had begun.*



LAST CHANCE  
LIVERY & FEED  
STABLE.

With prospectors and speculators pouring into the area to seek their fortunes, Lake City boomed from a small thirteen-cabin camp to an incorporated town that by the end of 1876 boasted an amazing number of enterprises, including a newspaper, a school, churches, hotels, banks, general merchandise stores, saloons, barber shops, bakeries, brickyards, sawmills, breweries, blacksmith shops, cafes, billiard halls, boot shops, meat markets, stables, laundries, hardware stores, assayer and surveyor services, and a furniture store. Links to the outside world included stagecoach service from Del Norte and, with it, the establishment of a post office in 1875. Telegraph service was provided by Western Union in 1876. By 1881, telephone service over just one line connected Lake City, Silverton, Ouray, Capitol City, Rose's Cabin, Mineral Point, and Animas Forks. Crediting innovative and fun-loving Lake Citians, a few telephone concerts were held, with musicians at each "linked" station performing individually and then all singing together in a grand finale.

As in the case of boomtowns of the time, Lake City had its fair share of disreputable elements. However, from the start it distinguished itself from sister towns and generally attracted a "higher class" of citizenry, ranging from ranchers, professionals, and businessmen to educators and clergy. Demonstrating the early arrival of civilization, Lake City's Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches were built and dedicated in 1876. The town's Roman Catholic Church was built in 1877, with the Baptist Church opening its doors in 1891. In January of 1876, Lake City's first school, paid for primarily by popular



Burros grazing in downtown Lake City  
Hinsdale County Museum



Flood, mouth of Henson Creek  
June 1921  
Hinsdale County Museum/Heath Collection

subscription, was up and running; and in 1877 a volunteer fire department began operation. In 1876, rumors of a possible Indian uprising led to the creation of the Pitkin Guards and the construction of Lake City's Armory building in 1881. With no uprising taking place, the Armory took on its now historical roll as community center. In 1889, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad completed a narrow gauge line into Lake City. And, between the first train in and the last train out in 1933, the line served to keep northern Hinsdale going by serving its ranchers, industries, and its general population. With the dawn of motorized vehicles and better roadways, Lake City continued to survive and sometimes thrive. The mountains surrounding Lake City forever link past to present to future - providing strong and shining threads that weave throughout this tapestry of generations.



Flood, volunteers blasting rip-rap  
June 1921  
Hinsdale County Museum/Heath Collection



Home in Ball Flats  
Hinsdale County Museum/Martin Davis Collection  
Glassplate reproduction by K.C. Errett



Hinsdale County Museum, Knowlton/Soderholm Collection

CAROL CAREY PERRY  
INTERVIEW – JUNE 6, 2004

*“We’d catch the wild burros that were around and try to ride them. They would just wander around. When the miners left, they just sort of deserted their burros and they just propagated. My dad had a pet burro called Blackie who just followed him around town when he was a kid like a little dog. He’d sit outside the grocery store and wait for him. My sis and I would try to ride these things, and we never were successful. They had water ditches running down the sides of the streets to water those wonderful cottonwoods and to irrigate their lawns. We got dumped in those ditches invariably because they would try to make it over those ditches and we’d fall off.”*

JIM AND THERESE RYAN  
INTERVIEW – JUNE 22, 2004

*“In 1956, we bought the old bank building, which was falling down, from the First National in Gunnison. I always love to tell people we paid \$3278.60 for the building. That was a lot of money. Jim worked all that summer and came back and forth that winter. He had crews working in the building. We started operating in that building June 15, 1957. We had a very nice apartment in the building. We moved our business across to this building. The building had been called The Elkhorn from the previous hotel/restaurant/bar that had been in there. In those days the biggest sellers in town in the summertime were Kaopectate and shampoo. And the Kaopectate was because they were all dug wells - oh, I hate to tell you about them. We had one good well in back of the Elkhorn.”*



Clifford and Raymond Lant, 1933  
Hinsdale County Museum, Knowlton/Soderholm Collection



Flood  
June 1921  
Hinsdale County Museum



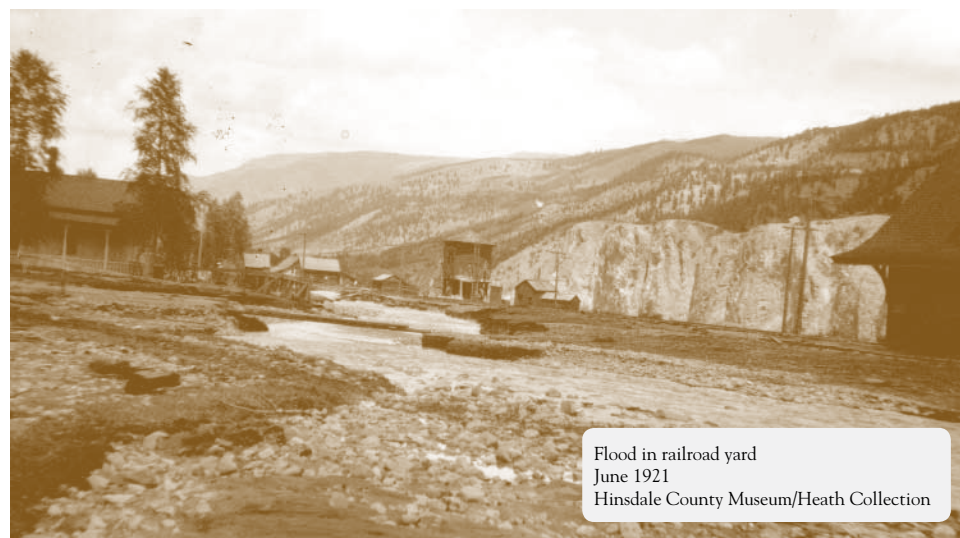
Flood  
June 1921  
Hinsdale County Museum

# PERK VICKERS INTERVIEW JUNE 29, 2004

*“Well, seemed like every year, Henson Creek flooded. I’ve seen water off Henson Creek run down Main Street. Every year, Henson Creek flooded. Everybody in town would have to sandbag everything to control the river. That continued for a great many years until the county went to the north end of Lake City, where the Conoco station is now, and blasted - that was a cliff there, that was a natural dam - they blasted that down about ten feet and that lowered the water table and hasn’t flooded since then. But as a kid, there were floods all over Henson Creek.”*

# CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL INTERVIEW – JUNE 13, 2004

*“[The 1921 flood] That’s the only one that did any damage right in town. All though along the routes, especially up Henson, it filled the Treasure Dam and it filled the Ute Dam and then I understand when they built the Ute Dam they built it in the winter time and they didn’t have sand and cement like they have today and finally the frost - you could just go down there and chip it off with your fingers - and finally it ate a hole through there and it’s still there.”*



Flood in railroad yard  
June 1921  
Hinsdale County Museum/Heath Collection



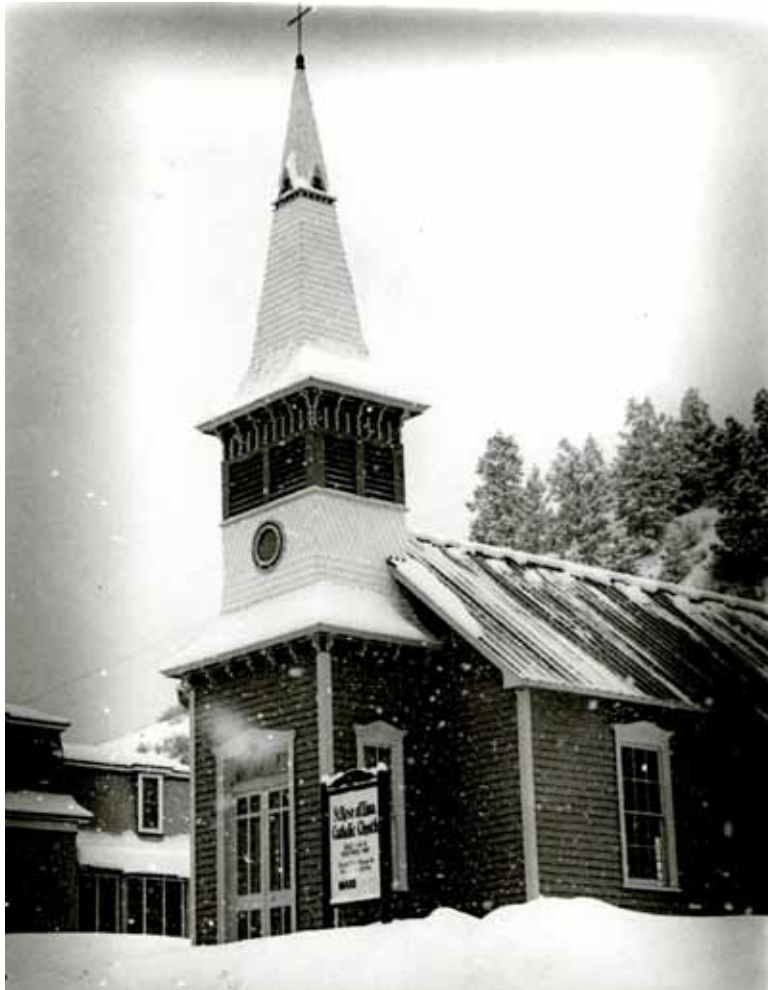
Receiving its charter from the Silver Star Lodge in 1876, the first lodge in Lake City was the IOOF. During its existence the lodge established a cemetery north of town and laid the cornerstone of the Hinsdale County Courthouse. Lake City's Masonic Lodge was chartered in 1878, with the Eastern Star granted a charter in 1898. In 1897, the Independent Order of Red Men was established, with their hall located between Bluff and Silver on Second Street. Of Indian design, the costumes of the IOORM were distinctive and attractive.

O. R. M. Lodge

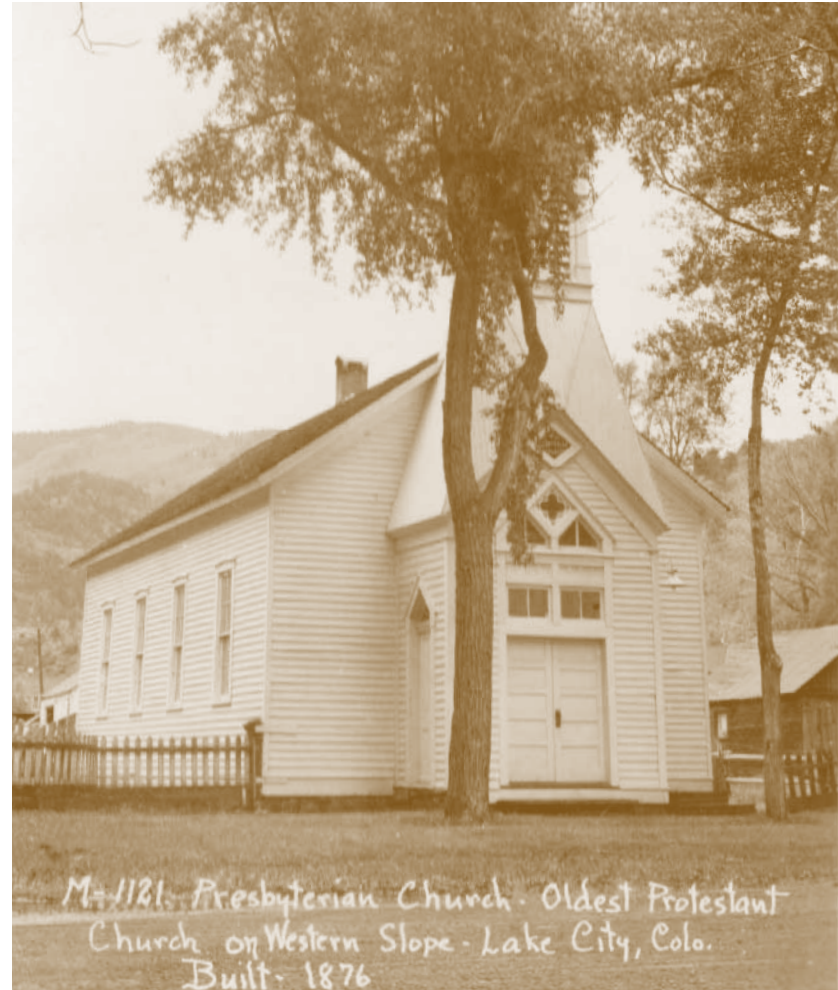
Courthouse

JIM AND THERESE RYAN INTERVIEW – JUNE 22, 2004

“Well, they had the four churches. The Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Church are the only ones that had services. Somebody along the line thought they were going to tear down the Baptist Church. That scared the older ladies in town in to war. So that didn’t happen. The Episcopal Church didn’t have any services for years after we were here. It was owned by the dioceses in Denver [early-mid 1950s].”



Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church  
Hinsdale County Museum/Cliff and Marcella High Collection



First Presbyterian Church  
Hinsdale County Museum/Cliff and Marcella High Collection



Hinsdale County Museum

MARGARET CUMMINGS/BROWN INTERVIEW – JULY 17, 2004

*“We’d climb the hill by the Baptist Church. But in the winter time, we had a lot of snow. We’d climb up above and come down on our flexible flyers. We just loved ‘em. We’d go clear on to main street. And then we’d walk back up - we’d make about three trips and then we’d had enough.”*

# LINDA'S STORY

Story by Linda Ragle, 2009

I want to tell a favorite story of mine while growing up in Lake City. When I reminisce about this event in my life, I laugh out loud every time.

My Mammy was my Dad's mom and my Moma Mick was my Mom's mom. (I know I am spelling Moma wrong but that is how we always spelled it for Moma Mick.)

Brenda Walker (who happens to be Beth Hurd's sister) and I had spent the night together at my home at Mammy's. We were about 8 or 9 years old. The next morning we told Mammy that we had decided to go to church. This was about June 1958 and the only church holding services was the Presbyterian Church. My Moma Mick belonged to the Presbyterian Church. My Mammy was Catholic. Mammy thought it was a good idea so she said she'd dress us all up. Upstairs we went to Mammy's bedroom. She started pulling out these old, beautiful bar room dresses. They must have been hers when she and Grandpa Mick had a bar, restaurant, and gambling establishment in the late 1930s and early 1940s in the building that is now the Arts Center.

These dresses were beautiful and sexy and the funny thing is that the dresses almost fit us little girls around our waist. My Mammy was awfully tiny. Naturally,

they hung off us and drug on the floor so Mammy got out each of us a garter belt and we put nylons on and bunched them up at the top to clip in to the garter belt. Brenda and I each got to pick out a pair of Mammy's high heeled shoes. Mammy wore a size 5 shoe so these beautiful shoes fit us! We felt gorgeous. Mammy looked us over and decided we needed some make-up so she applied rouge to our cheeks, bright red lipstick, painted brown eyebrows, and mascara on our eyelashes. Thank God Mammy didn't wear eye shadow!!

Brenda and I absolutely thought that this was the prettiest we had ever looked. When I look back now, I realize that Mammy raised four boys and so she had so much fun dressing us up. She said we were missing something, went to her closet, and pulled out two huge, beautiful, white Easter bonnets. She said we were ready. And we believed her so two little girls that looked straight out of a Red Light District tried to make it down thirty stairs, holding our dresses up so we don't trip on them, holding our hats from falling off, and wearing high heels. Somehow we make it down the stairs and we are so tickled with each other, laughing and proud. We walked two blocks to the Presbyterian Church. I can still picture that walk – our little ankles twisting with each step, trying to hold those dresses up, and hanging on to those huge hats.

When we entered the Church, everyone turned around to see who had come in

the door. Church had already started. Everyone stared; more than a few laughed out loud; and a couple winked. My grandma, Moma Mick, was sitting towards the front of the Church and whoever was sitting next to her elbowed her and she turned to see who had come in the door. Moma Mick just about fell out of her pew. She did not want to acknowledge that she even knew us let alone have to claim me as her granddaughter! She acted like she did not know who we were. She turned back around and I'm sure she started praying. She had also given just a slight glare at me so we knew not to sit with her. Throughout the Church service, my Moma Mick turned around and looked, slight glare, turned around again, stared, hoping she was hallucinating. I don't think anyone there that day heard the preacher's message.

We got back to Mammy's and removed all the gorgeous clothing and neither Brenda nor I said a word about what a shock we had been to the folks at Church. We did not want to hurt Mammy's feelings. Mammy didn't send us to Church thinking we'd be the laughing stock of the Town. She had dressed us up in her finest with nothing but the thought of having fun. This childhood memory has brought me more joy and laughter than almost any other event growing up. When Brenda and I get together today, sooner or later we are laughing again about the time we wore Mammy's dresses to Church.



Lake City School  
1900  
Hinsdale County Museum/Heath Collection

#### CELIA RAWSON/SWANK INTERVIEW – MARCH 7, 2004

“There was a wall and he [the undertaker] had a paint shop on one side of it and the other side was where the coffins were... We had new kids come along and they had never seen a coffin...’ We’ll show you something if you want to see a coffin. There might be somebody in ‘em, but we’ll go show you. We know where they are. We know how to get in there.’ You know what kids will do (chuckle).”

#### DOUG MADISON INTERVIEW – JULY 3, 2007

“There wasn’t too many in school. I would say for all the twelve grades there was probably maybe 18 or 20 kids in school. Edna Ramsey taught the first four grades and then Lucy Beam taught the fifth through the eighth, and H.G. Heath taught ninth through the twelfth. School was – lots of times it was cold in the school. School, we had ... I wouldn’t give a million dollars for my education. Edna Ramsey was the best teacher in the world. She was a good and honest woman but she was strict as a teacher. And Lucy Beam was the same way... they never did lock the school. Nothing was locked. In Lake City you didn’t have to worry about locking a thing.”

#### PERK VICKERS INTERVIEW – JUNE 29, 2004

“I tell you, I went through school with some of those girls, that I went through school there, they’re all dead except Margaret – Margaret Pitney, Celia’s sister, she went through twelve grades with me. Those girls – Celia and Margaret and Edith Jean – if it hadn’t been for them, I’d probably never got through high school because I cheated – I would cheat all the way through. They helped me. (Chuckle) Most guys wouldn’t admit that!”



Hinsdale County Museum/Bill and Millie Craig Collection

#### DOUG MADISON INTERVIEW – JULY 3, 2007

*“It was a big double outhouse in the back of the school. It had a wooden fence between the woman’s and the man’s. It had probably five or six holes on each side down through the middle. It was in the back. You had to go around there if you had to go to the bathroom. ... The urinal was just a piece of tin. They had bent it up and made a urinal and then all along the back that’s where the holes were and it just went down into the ground.”*

#### CELIA RAWSON/SWANK INTERVIEW – MARCH 7, 2004

*“...first grade clear through (high school in Lake City). I started out with thirteen in my class and I ended up the only one in 12th grade and Mr. Heath was my teacher. They all kept dropping out, you know, in high school in the four grades. Maybe there’d be four of us in the 9th or 10th grade, and maybe next year there’d be two of us and then it dropped down and finally in the 12th grade I was the only one left. Didn’t matter to me – I was goin’ to graduate...”*



Hinsdale County Museum/Wright Collection



Silver Street businesses in 1910. Note Hough Block, Catholic Church at head of street and block of buildings, now Lake City Town Park, which burned in 1915.  
Courtsey of Joan Nelson

FROM TINY HINSDALE OF THE SILVERY SAN JUAN BY  
CAROLYN AND CLARENCE WRIGHT

*“At the time of the fire which burned Hank Richard’s livery stable, all the buildings on the east side of Silver Street were protected by hanging bedding on ropes from the tops of the buildings and keeping this bedding wet with the hose. However, all the fronts of these buildings had to be repainted.”*



Lake City Fire Department  
Hinsdale County Museum/W.C. Blair Collection



Lake City Fire Department  
Hinsdale County Museum/Heath Collection

MARGARET CUMMINGS/BROWN INTERVIEW  
JULY 17, 2004

*“Fires...so many fires. This place across from the drugstore - there were eleven stores over there. On the end, Vickers had their big saloon and he had a cook - they all had cooks. The cook got up at 6 o’clock in the morning to build a fire, and she raised the lid up - but she’d already set it on fire at the bottom - she raised the lid and there was a bunch of dynamite! ...I don’t know what happened - but anyway, it blew up and set the thing on fire... Two saloons and grocery - no, there weren’t any grocery but there were hardware stores and clothing stores, men’s stores and women’s stores and shoe stores.”*



Lake City's "fire bell" was located on a lot located across the alley from the Hinsdale County Courthouse. In 1901 the town paid lot owner Lizzie Karl \$18 rental for the ground on which the wooden belfry stood. The bell remained at that location until 1911 when the town donated \$25 to the firemen to purchase a new steel tower, which was moved with the fire equipment to Second and Silver streets.

CAROL CAREY/PERRY  
INTERVIEW – JUNE 6, 2004

“Grandpa Carey. He was imposing to me. He was a very distinguished man. By the time I was born, mining had gone down. He had lost his saloon in a fire in 1915, but he had rented a building which no longer exists across the street from the museum for a short time. Then what I knew of him was in his ice cream shop. He opened up a fishing tackle and ice cream shop. I can remember as a child playing in the back yard making mud pies and bringing them into the ice cream shop and trying to sell them to people...

When they came to Lake City, instead of mining, they mined the miners. My grandfather opened a saloon. His saloon was supposedly a very high-end saloon. They played pool and the youngsters were not allowed inside and so forth. It was in the park - what is now our city park - downtown on Silver Street along with seven other buildings, most of them I believe were saloons. There was a jewelry store and a barbershop in there. It burned in 1915.”

PERK VICKERS  
INTERVIEW – JUNE 29, 2004

“What little shopping they did, they shopped right here in Lake City, that’s all there was. You bought groceries from Henry Hoffman’s grocery store. And somebody had, I believe there was a hardware store or two. They had some pretty fair stores here in those days. Jewelry stores, and that’s about all. You never heard of leaving town in this area.”



Hinsdale County Museum/Hodge Collection



Hinsdale County Museum, Knowlton/Soderholm Collection

# PINECONE PROCESSING

Photographs from the 1920s capture a seed extraction operation that took place on the Rawson property, located at 216 Gunnison Avenue. Seeds were extracted from ponderosa pine cones. The cones were allowed to dry (on tarps) and opened up. When the cones opened the tree seed fell out relatively easily. The seeds were collected and sold to the Forest Service or private nurseries.

In the natural world, the cones open in the trees in late September. As wind blows, the cones are shaken, seeds fall out, and with aid of an attached "seed wing" the seeds are dispersed by the wind away from the parent tree.

The photographs of the Lake City operation appear to have been taken in late October to December. It was a large operation, probably in the 400 to 500 bushel range, yielding about one pound of clean seed per bushel. In 2012 dollars, the 400 to

500 pounds of seed from this operation would be worth about \$80,000.

The cones were likely collected from ponderosa pine trees in the Lake Fork of the Gunnison area. Cones could have been picked from trees cut in logging operations, from standing trees by tree climbers, or, less commonly in ponderosa pine, raked out of squirrel caches (more common in lodgepole pine and spruce).

The collected seed can be sown directly into the soil at the planting site. But, more commonly, the seed is sent to a tree nursery where the seed is sown in beds; then the seedlings are lifted from the soil as bareroot transplants to be planted elsewhere on sites requiring reforestation. In this era, those seedlings could have been planted anywhere from Montana to California to Arizona.

The empty cones were most likely used for fuel.

All photos from the Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection



Piles of cones on tarps. Crew could be sorting for bad cones, sticks or other debris. Or, they could be picking up seed which has fallen out of the cones by hand. The photo includes, from left, Hufty Rawson and his little brother Downing, as well as an unidentified crew member.



Worker beating on spread out cones with a shovel. He is probably shaking seed out of the cones.



Ponderosa pine cones spread out on tarps to dry. Crew looks to be cleaning out debris and bad cones, or picking up seed.



Ponderosa pine cones spread out on tarps to dry. Crew looks to be cleaning out debris and bad cones, or picking up seed.



Tarps placed over spread out cones or seed to keep snow off or birds out.



Moving a tarp full of cones. Note the large pile of ponderosa pine cones along the fence. Unknown if the seed has been extracted from those cones or they are leftover material.



Tree seed spread out on tarps.



Seed extractor or cone tumbler. Open cones are placed into the extractor; then the drum is turned over, shaking the remaining seed out of the cones. There may be paddles inside the drum to knock the cones around more. The seed being smaller in size than cones will fall to the bottom of the drum. Most seed extractors should have a screen on the outside of the drum which allows the seed to fall through and out while keeping the cones and larger debris in. On the photographs, the detail of the screens and fill/empty hatches is not readily apparent. Bushel bags are the common unit of measure for cones. Contractors were paid by the bushel for collected cones. Extracted seed is usually measured by the pound. Bags on the right appear to be filled with clean seed, which is the end product of the process.

## THE HANGING BRIDGE

And so the story goes... Arriving at the darkened house of W.G. Lockett to begin their investigation of a reported burglary, Hinsdale County Sheriff E.N. Campbell and his deputy Claire Smith were surprised by the two burglars, saloon and brothel owners George Betts and James Browning, who had come back for more loot. When ordered to drop their guns, Betts shot the sheriff and both burglars fled. The deputy, unable to revive the sheriff, was able to identify Betts and Browning. Betts was apprehended as he was trying to get out of town, while eighteen-year-old Browning reportedly was found hiding in the closet. A coroner's jury determined that the bullet that killed Sheriff Campbell came from Betts' gun. Betts was charged with murder, and Browning was charged as an accessory. On around midnight

following their imprisonment, a masked crowd of citizens descended upon the Lake City jail, overcame the guards, and dragged the two prisoners to the Ocean Wave Bridge just north of town. There, in the early hours of April 27, 1882, Betts and Browning were hanged, as the coroner would later pronounce, "by unknown parties." It has been said that school was dismissed that day to allow the children to view the hanging bodies – a hard and graphic lesson involving crime and punishment.

The original Ocean Wave Bridge, a wood beam and plank suspension structure, became a tourist attraction for many years and was known as "the Hanging Bridge." The bridge, over the Lake Fork of the Gunnison, was replaced by the present bridge connecting Highway 149 and Ball Flats.



Ocean Wave Bridge  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection

MARGARET CUMMINGS/BROWN  
INTERVIEW - JULY 17, 2004

*"We had a base burner in the hall, and the kitchen stove, and in the fall he got logs and chopped 'em up and had to store them in the little shed. We had a shed there that had two coal bins - one for soft coal and hard coal. And then in the back of it were toilets. We had electricity - we had light in it. We had the dam up at Crooke's where the falls came down [to generate the electricity]."*

PERK VICKERS  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 29, 2004

*"Mostly the kids from the other side of the bridge called Crookeville. Some people used call them 'shanty Irish'. On this side of the bridge . . . it was like two separate countries. On the north side of Henson Creek, that was part of Lake City. The people there were the people running the county and the city. We were on this side - Crookeville."*



SALLY ANN VICKERS/DAVID INTERVIEW – DECEMBER 14, 2004

*“They had the duck pin bowling alley. This was an important part of our lives, too, was the bowling alley. Auburn Howard owned it- that was Henry Hoffman’s son-in-law. So every kid in town set pins in the summer time. I think we got 10 cents a line, if I remember right. We had one lady, Aunt ‘Rene, she tipped two dollars a night, when she bowled. She bowled on Tuesday night - she bowled on Tuesday afternoon and Tuesday night. There was always a big battle over who got alley number two because that’s the alley where she bowled. So Auburn had to set down some rules that we had to take turns [late 1940’s].”*



Boating on Lake San Cristobal  
Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of *The Silvery San Juan*  
by Carolyn and Clarence Wright

Baseball became popular in the early 1900s. Practice would take place on the school grounds most evenings and, on Sunday afternoons, players would meet across the Lake Fork on the “flat” later known as the ball park. Eventually, the Lake City Blues were organized and participated in a league consisting of Salida, Gunnison, Montrose, Delta, Olathe, and Grand Junction. The “flat” later became known as Ball Flats.



C.E. Wright, pitcher of the Lake City Blues. Courtesy of  
Tiny Hinsdale of *The Silvery San Juan* by Carolyn and  
Clarence Wright

SALLY ANN VICKERS/DAVID  
INTERVIEW – DECEMBER 14, 2004

“Dances were a big thing, even when we were little kids, because the folks didn’t leave us with babysitters - everybody took their kids to those dances. And when we were real small, in between dances, we’d slide that slick floor - you know, they used to put that spangles on there and, boy, you could slide from one end to the other. Then when the music would start again, we’d have to go sit down or go outside, whatever. .... And I can remember many times, walking home at 5 o’clock in the morning, trudging through the snow, you know, because they played ‘til 5 - dances were supposed to be over at two but they’d pass the kitty and people would donate to it and keep ‘em dancing. I can remember many times doing that - it never bothered us any..... When we got tired, they’d take and lay us on the benches behind the piano and put coats over us. There’d be a whole row of kids, you know, laying there asleep. I don’t think we ever slept too much, it was mainly the younger ones that did [1940’s and 1950’s].”



Fourth of July events  
Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of The Silvery San Juan  
by Carolyn and Clarence Wright

DOUG MADISON INTERVIEW – JULY 3, 2007

“I remember the Fourth of July in Lake City used to be a big thing. A man by the name of Minx – he lost his eyesight up here in a mine accident up in Capitol City - he always gave money and we had races just like we have today. They used to penny scramble - they used flour. They put a bunch of pennies and nickels and dimes in the bag of flour and shake it all up then put it in the street. You should have seen the kids in all that flour. They finally went to sand. Across the street from IOOF - it’s the museum now but the old IOOF building was the donkeys’ house. That’s where they slept at night. Every Fourth of July we used to have a turkey shoot in there. They had built a box out from the wall and filled it full of sand. We kids used to get down in that sand and find all the bullets in that sand. That’s where we spent a lot of time.”



Pike Snowden at home  
October 8, 1916  
Hinsdale County Museum/Florence Baker Heald Collection

# THE OLD RULES

Story by Ann Bowling

My father and I were both born and reared in Colorado. I learned much from him about proper behavior in the high country.

When I was young I was taught that folks who had cabins in the mountains always left the doors unlocked. If someone was in trouble of any kind they could come by for help. If no one was at home they could stay – and were welcome to what food they might need. In return they were obliged to leave the cabin clean, the doors closed, and pay, if possible, for any food eaten.

I remember walking with him through Silver Plume. The streets were quiet and there was no one around. The buildings were empty of people, but the furnishings were still inside. There was a beautiful mirror above a marble bar and the little tables were clean, some with tablecloths, in one building. I wanted to go inside, but my father said it was not my building, but that the owner had left, perhaps with a plan to return. We continued along the main street of this ghost town, seeing not a soul. Things were untouched, as they had been left.

I was fortunate to be taken through old mining camps where he explained about the old mills and showed me the machinery, explaining how it worked.

I find it sad that this “rule of the mountains” has been forgotten. So much has been stolen, broken, littered; and graffiti is everywhere. How good it would be if the old rules were remembered.



Picnic party at Alpine Ranger Station  
Hinsdale County Museum, Knowlton/Soderholm Collection



Picnic party at Dinty Moore Cabin  
Hinsdale County Museum, Knowlton/Soderholm Collection



CELIA RAWSON/SWANK  
INTERVIEW – MARCH 7, 2004

“Henry Hoffman was our grocery man here, and he was always trying to get my oldest brother, Downing. He’d (Downing) would go over there....’ Henry, don’t ya have something for me to do? Can I, uh, can I help you put the groceries out on the shelf?’ Well, Henry didn’t like to put it on the shelf, he liked to put it down in one of the cabinets there, and if somebody came in and didn’t pay their grocery bill, Henry didn’t have anything for them. We all laughed about that.”

# AN OLD MAN'S FIRST MEMORIES OF LAKE CITY

Story by Richard LaSance

In 1947, my father's doctor told him he needed to take a month off from work and relax. He had been to Lake City the year before and wanted to come back, so the day after my school was out for the summer we began our adventure. We had a 1941 Ford two-door sedan and limited funds, no camping equipment except a Coleman stove so innovation was required. We made a two-person sleeping bag by sewing a couple of quilts together. The front seat had independent bucket seat backs, which we removed and used as a bridge between the front and back seats bottoms. We made a box to fit on the floor between the front and back seat that would keep the seat backs from falling to the floor and made a less than level bed out of the seats. When we went to bed, we removed the seat backs, rolled out our sleeping bag, and emptied our pockets – placing the contents on the area below the back window. The box additionally served as a storage place for cans of Campbell Pork and Beans, Spam, etc. – our meals, excluding what we caught. Basically, we had fish three times a day.

The trip lasted six weeks, during which we supplemented our regular fish and canned-goods diet with hamburgers twice. Our other expenditure was gasoline, which at that time ran in the area of 13-cents a gallon or less. On Mondays, we washed our clothes by boiling water in a dish pan over a campfire and erecting a clothesline for drying. Daily bathing in a Colorado stream was, to say the least, an experience not to be forgotten. While in the Lake City area, we camped on the Cebolla River at the Hidden Valley Campground and in a cottonwood grove off of County Road 30, just south of Lake San



Cristobal. The Red Mountain Gulch Day Area did not exist at that time.

The Central District of Lake City has not changed much since 1947, but the ownership of the businesses has changed a number of times. The Boettchler Building, Southern Vittles and the Back Country Navigator are new. The buildings that currently house Murphy Realty and Mean Jeans replace a group of quaint cabins that to me were more representative of the city. Lake City had limited electrical power, which to my memory was supplied by an individually owned diesel power plant and a gas generator. Twenty-five-watt lights were the maximum in use, with most of the power going to merchants needing refrigeration. At nine o'clock the lights went out most nights.

Phone service was limited and was housed in the location of the current Trails End Restaurant. The switchboard had many wires with which the operator connected the calling party with the party called. If we wanted to place a long distance call to Mother, it was necessary to come to the phone company and the call's duration was limited. The original switchboard is currently located in the Lake City Museum.

Radio reception was nonexistent in the mountains until after dark or until you could find the perfect rock to set the radio on for reception. My dad liked to listen to the boxing matches at the time, frequently between the World Champion Joe Lewis and Jersey Joe Walcott. Mike Pavich owned the grocery store, liquor store, and had a theater located at the present Mary Stigall Theatre. We would go to the grocery store on fight nights as did many of the local citizens. Mr. Mike, as he was known I believe, was also the Mayor and always wore a white shirt with a narrow black tie. Our first hamburgers came after a number of weeks of only fish, beans and spam as our diet. We purchased hamburger meat at Mr. Mike's, cooked it to just beyond raw, and had a fine meal.

One of Mike's sons, Jesse, and his family owned the soda fountain located in the same location as the current soda fountain. We got there infrequently, as we ate mostly what we caught. A very nice lady, Mrs. Craig, owned what I recall was a drug store located in the current Lake City Shirt Company building. The Elkhorn Saloon, later to become a leather goods store, is now the location of the bank.

Camping in the cottonwood grove near us was Ernie Crumb and his wife. I loved to sit around the campfire and listen to Ernie's stories. He had driven the stage between Rifle and Meeker; and, according to him, one winter night was so cold that, upon arrival, they had to lift him out of the boot. Another job he had was snowshoeing across country inspecting phone lines. Not sure when and where that took place. He also told of the time his tonsils swelled and became infected. He purported to go to a doctor who painted his tonsils with silver iodide. After leaving the office and reaching the street, he threw his tonsils up in the street.

Town of Lake City  
Courtesy of Tiny Hinsdale of *The Silvery San Juan*  
by Carolyn and Clarence Wright



July 1916  
Hinsdale County Museum

MARGARET RAWSON/PITNEY  
INTERVIEW – SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

“Yes, we went swimming. We swam below the falls in an area close to what is now the Texan, and we walked up to the swimming pool. We carried our bathing suits or wore them under our clothing. Then we had to undress in the bushes. Of course, it was girls only. The boys had their day to swim which we were not allowed, of course. That water was very cold. There was a huge rock across the river that we would try to ... we would jump in ... and swim across to the big rock. It was kind of flat. We would sit there for awhile and get warm and then get back in the water and swim some more. It wasn't a very big area, but we had fun.”



Round Top Mountain  
Hinsdale County Museum



Whinnery Grocery Store  
Helen Whinnery

#### HELEN WHINNERY INTERVIEW – APRIL 2012

“John Whinnery was an honorably discharged Civil War soldier who married Mary Ann Fawcett in Ohio and then relocated to Colorado to the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River Valley after a winter spent in Saguache, Colorado (in the 1870s). I still live on the Home Ranch. The Whinnery’s homesteaded and raised livestock and John also started a dairy in Lake City. John and Mary Ann had children – George, Webster (born 1865), Ida, and Eva Jane. When John and Mary Ann moved on to Delta in 1885, Web stayed to run the ranch. He continued raising cattle and began growing potatoes. He started a grocery store primarily to sell butchered beef and potatoes to the miners and Lake City residents. The first store operated from the existing Restless Spirits building with a business partner named Sweet. This partnership ran the Whinnery-Sweet store for two or three years before Web moved into his own building where the garden lots are now at the corner of Silver and Third Street. Web married Finella Fuller (daughter of the Reverend Fuller, a minister in Lake City) in 1895. Web and Finella ran the grocery store through the 1920s or so. Finella’s wedding dress is at the Lake City Museum as well as a gown she worn to state social functions.”

#### STAN WHINNERY - APRIL 2012

“Web Whinnery served as mayor, commissioner, and was involved in state and national politics for a time. He was named Chairman of the Board of Hinsdale County Commissioners, in January 1911. I was named chairman almost exactly one hundred years later. Web was my great-grandfather.”



Hon. W.S. Whinnery  
Denver Public Library/Helen Whinnery



Benson Ranch, Lake Fork  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hodge Collection



## Chapter Six

# RANCHING & AGRICULTURE

*Forbidding geography, harsh and unpredictable weather, shorter-than-short growing seasons, remote and sometimes inaccessible locations – ranching the formidable northeastern San Juans could not help but produce true “pioneer” stock. Though separated into three distinct areas by jagged peaks, deep canyons, rushing rivers, and rugged terrain, Hinsdale County’s generational ranches embody the strong character and unique spirit of this place – forged over time, with unwavering ties to the past.*



*John and Maggie Toner with family and friends in front of original cabin built to establish John Toner's 1896 homestead – filed upon in the Upper Piedra area.  
Jean and John Taylor Collection.*

As the Utes left the San Juans, Americans rushed to this touted land of riches. Many came to strike it rich, while businessmen, clergy, educators, and others were lured by the unlimited opportunities of this new and booming frontier. Yet, looking beyond money to be made, fame to be garnered, and services to be rendered were those pioneers drawn more by the promise of “land” and the exciting prospect of turning homesteads into homes.

Encouraged by the Homesteading Act of 1862, which led to the “agricultural” development of thousands of acres of public lands, most settlers selected the fertile valleys along Upper Cebolla Creek, the Lake Fork of the Gunnison, the Upper Rio Grande, and the Upper Piedra to establish their homesteads. Success in demanding Hinsdale meant cultivating a required three acres by raising crops that would actually grow, like potatoes and turnips. While some would fail because of the demands of the environment, others adapted and did what had to be done in order to keep the land and pass it and a treasured lifestyle on to their children and children’s children.



Otto Johnson on horseback  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hodge Collection

#### PERK VICKERS INTERVIEW – JUNE 29, 2004

*“When we were born, my dad had started the upper ranch at that time, 1912 - that’s before I was born. He built that big ranch house and a huge barn, big barn. We lived at that upper ranch all summer, until all the hay was up, then we’d move to the house in Lake City. That was the way we operated for many a year.”*



TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894  
BY LILLIE MAY  
(TONER-TAYLOR)  
CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"When the ranchers moved the cattle they used a covered wagon with a trail wagon attached much like our pickup-trailer rigs of today, except that the wagons were pulled by 4 or 6-horse teams (true horsepower). Grandfather [Charles] Toner preferred mules to horses, but drove whatever was available."*

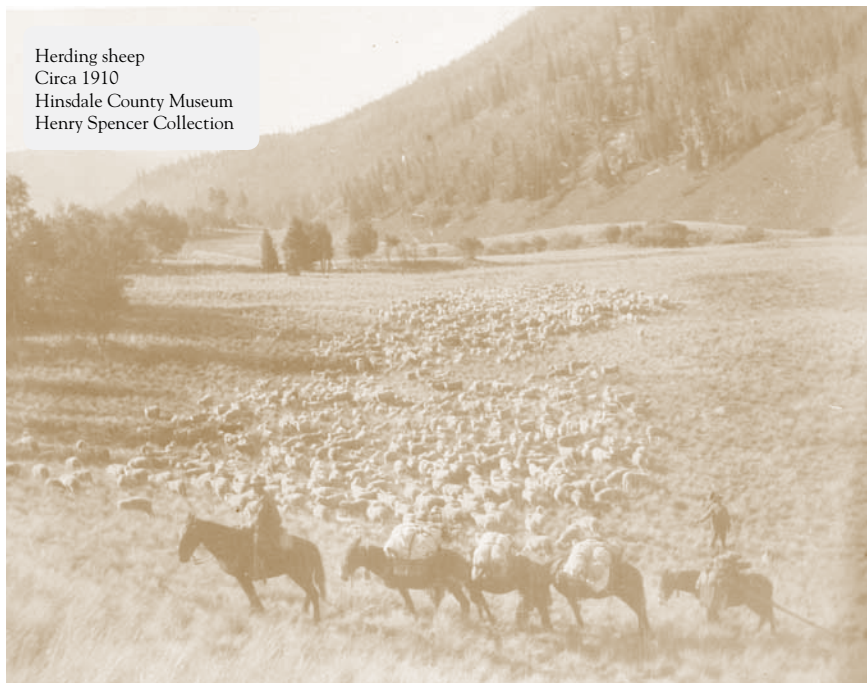


Breaking horses, Schild Ranch  
Circa 1910  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894  
BY LILLIE MAY (TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"In the spring of 1894, not long after the Southern Ute Indians were moved to the reservation at Ignacio, Charles, John Toner, and Tom Johnson trailed a herd of 800 head of cattle to the Upper Piedra area 22 miles northwest of Pagosa Springs... That first summer, the Toners and Tom camped at a spring near where John Clayton later built his homestead cabin. In 196 homesteads of 160 acres each were established for John Toner, Tom Johnson, and Lillie Johnson and 2 one-room cabins were built to confirm the existence of those homesteads... The Toner [Toner-Taylor] ranch was eventually formed by combining the Toner homestead with the Lillie Johnson homestead and a later trade for 40 acres of forest ground isolated by those 2 homesteads."*

Herding sheep  
Circa 1910  
Hinsdale County Museum  
Henry Spencer Collection



#### PERK VICKERS INTERVIEW – JUNE 29, 2004

*"We ran a thousand head of sheep along with the cattle. We ran sheep for so damn many years that you can't believe it. We finally got out of the sheep business during World War II. We used to... in fact me and my brother, the family, somebody at least one of us, had to be in that sheep camp all summer - Park or Alpine or Freeman Gulch, American Basin. I'm sure the rest of my brothers probably felt the same way - just get out of this damn sheep business and we'll never run us again another sheep. And yet, here about ten days ago, I was up at one of the best restaurants here and the first thing I ordered was a rack of lamb. I thought to myself, here I am eating sheep when I used to hate sheep!"*



53360 Sheep feeding near Lake City, Co.

Hinsdale County Museum

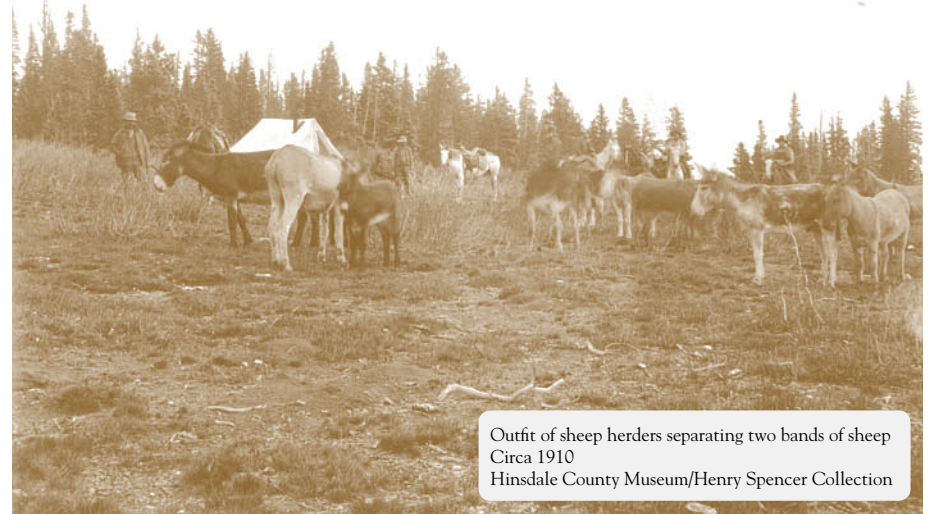


Shepherders on Big Blue Creek  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894 BY LILLIE MAY  
(TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"... in those times of open range [late 1800s – early 1900s] with local law seldom present, a rancher after selecting a portion of that open range for his own use had to hold it by strength of will and even force if necessary. Initially a few neighbors got along okay or left one another alone, but as more settlers came to the area competition for the available land increased and conflicts over land developed between cattle ranchers themselves and between them and sheep ranchers.*

*When problems with sheep encroachment on Dad's [John Toner's] ranges occurred, he would run the herder off... and his dog would run off the sheep. The dog didn't like the herders much either and one day when Dad came home he found that his dog had a herder treed on a hitching post by the cabin. No one knew how long the man had perched on the post, but he was never a problem again."*





Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894 BY LILLIE MAY  
(TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"The hay crop was cut with a horse drawn mowing machine, raked into windrows with dumprakes, forked with pitchforks into shocks for curing, then loaded by hand on to hay wagons and taken to hay corrals. There it was lifted on to haystacks using slings and a Mormon derrick, where men using pitchforks scattered the loads and built the stack as high as 15 feet. When completed each stack would have a well rounded top so that rain and snow melt would tend to run off on to the ground rather than into the hay."*



Elk Creek Ranch  
Taffy Bolger



Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894 BY LILLIE MAY  
(TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"Where barns were present tracks in the top of the barn could be used to transport the hay into the barn using harpoon forks. In each case horse teams provided the power to lift the loads using cables and pulleys. Working the cross-haul team usually was one of the first jobs that ranch kids began a work experience with."*



Home on Ocean Wave overlooking hay fields  
Hinsdale County Museum/White Collection



Haying on the Lake Fork  
Hinsdale County Museum/Florence Baker Heald Collection



Haying on the Lake Fork  
Hinsdale County Museum/Florence Baker Heald Collection

TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894 BY LILLIE MAY  
(TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"The winter feeding of cattle was often a difficult process during winters when the snow got as much as 4 ½ feet deep. As long as feed roads could be kept up with daily travel by teams pulling feed sleds and the packing action of livestock, the loading of and feeding of hay was the main chore. But when snowfall came too fast and/or wind obliterated the roads or new roads had to be opened, that became the demanding chore .... March was always a bad month because there was usually a lot of drifted snow and toward the end of the month warm days and cold nights would result in the formation of a thick crust on top of the snow .... Cattle could walk on top of the crust also which let them cross buried fences, get mixed up and often get stranded away from the feed ground ...."*



Hinsdale County Museum

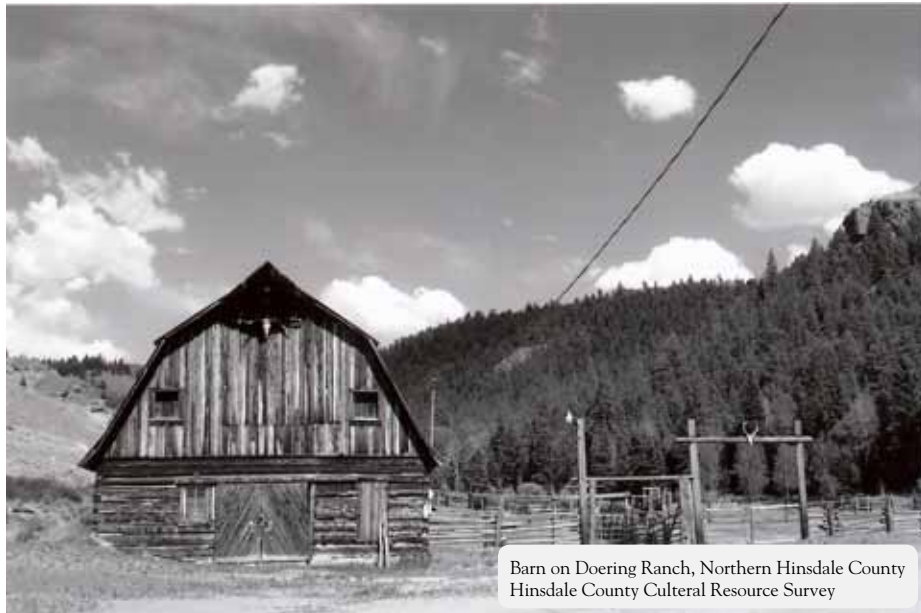


Haying on the Lake Fork  
Hinsdale County Museum/Florence Baker Heald Collection

TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894  
BY LILLIE MAY (TONER-TAYLOR)  
CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"When you are on horseback at night, let your horse have its head and it will take you home."*





TONER-TAYLOR RANCH 1894 BY LILLIE MAY  
(TONER-TAYLOR) CARLIN AND FAMILY

*"Ranch work and transportation was very different in those early days [late 1800s – early 1900s]. Dad [John Toner] first fenced the property with aspen poles which were cut on the place or nearby. Posts to hold up the poles were planted in holes dug with shovels and tamped with dirt and rocks using tamping sticks or shovel handles. In some cases where the ground was soft and not too rocky the posts were sharpened and driven into the ground with 16 or 18 pound hammers called post mauls....We still use one occasionally in boggy areas where we cannot reach the site with a tractor ..."*





Elk Creek Bridge  
Hinsdale County Museum/J.H. Benson



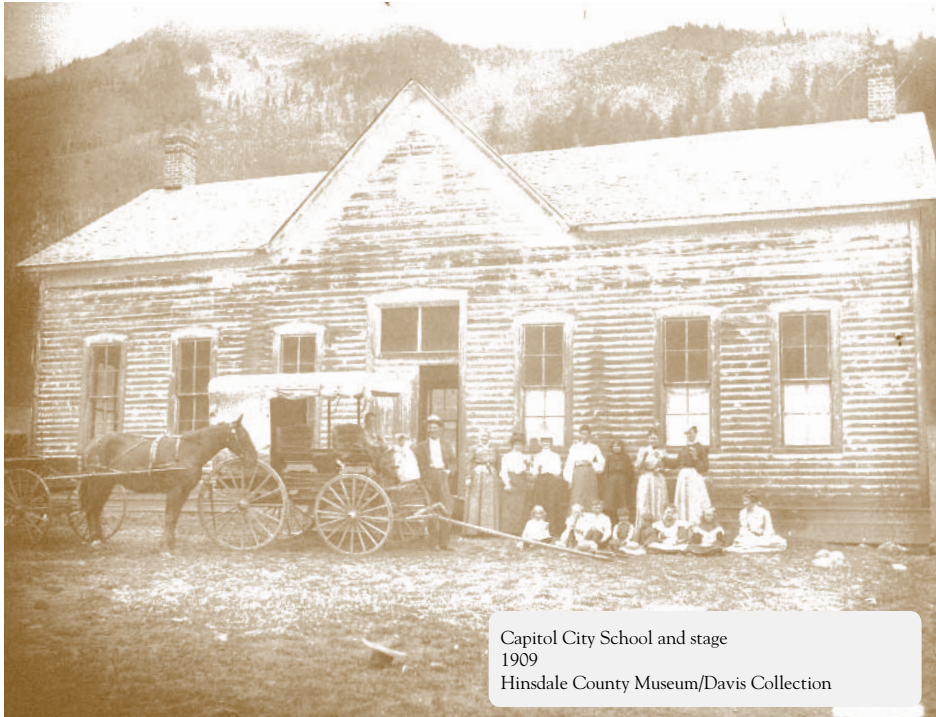
## Chapter Seven

# TRANSPORTATION: TRAVEL & FREIGHT

*Rugged and remote – traveling or hauling supplies to, from, and around Hinsdale was done early-on over crude game and hunting trails by foot, mule, horseback, or pack train. When the rush to Colorado’s rich San Juans began, the territorial legislature encouraged local businessmen to organize toll road companies. Narrow trails were widened, allowing stagecoaches, freight companies, and pioneer-filled wagons access to the mining camps and towns of this new frontier. The completion of the Lake City Branch of the Denver & Rio Grande railroad in 1889 gave a much needed boost to mining operations and ranches in northern Hinsdale, but perhaps its truest benefit was bringing sportsmen and tourists to Lake City, Lake San Cristobal, and the Upper Lake Fork.*



Among upper Silver Street's popular attractions was the old Pastimes Saloon which was located in the one-story brick building across from what is now the Hinsdale County Museum. Built in the 1870's, the brick building housed such diverse interests as a general mercantile, used furniture, and saloon; allowed to slowly disintegrate, it was finally demolished in the 1940's. Another popular Lake City pastime, sleighing, is also evident in this turn of the century photo.



Capitol City School and stage  
1909  
Hinsdale County Museum/Davis Collection

Northern and Central Hinsdale saw growth early-on when developing mining towns and camps required transport routes that would service the area's booming, remote locations. The Saguache and San Juan Toll Road connected the Lake City area to the San Luis Valley; while Stony Pass Road, which follows the Upper Rio Grande past its headwaters, became the primary "pre-railroad" supply route connecting the town of Del Norte and mining operations in developing Silverton. Between 1874 and 1881 freight and people were transported to and from the San Juan boomtowns by wagon, pack train, horseback, stagecoach, and foot. During its infancy, stages ran daily into Lake City until heavy winter snows interfered with on-time scheduling. Large Concord coaches pulled by four and six-horse teams streamed into the San Juans through the energy-filled metropolis. Near the turn of the century, the railroad came to Lake City – breathing new life into the region's mining operations, while fostering the up-and-coming tourism industry. By the 1930s, better roads and America's love affair with motorized vehicles made once remote Hinsdale and its vast wilderness areas accessible and ripe for exploration and recreation.



Railroad ties at Benson Ranch  
Hinsdale County Museum/Green Collection

CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 13, 2004

"[At Sapinero] That's where they met the train from Montrose. There used to be a train that come up from Montrose to Sapinero and then they went into Gunnison. Sap Richardson was the engineer on that engine, and when he'd get down here at what they called Blue Cut, he'd blow his horn to let people know the train was coming in. [Where's Blue Cut?] That's that big cut that's over here. Have you ever been down in there? You know where the sewer plant is down there? That's it. That big cut."



PERK VICKERS  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 29, 2004

"I remember one of the sad events – everybody in the valley was down in Lake City when the train just quit, they just quit running the railroad... All the people in town came to kiss their goodbyes – some of the folks said that was the end of us. They thought when the railroad went out, it was the end of it. Little did they know that they couldn't exist in the first place. The trucks and automobiles would take the place of the railroad."

MARGARET RAWSON/PITNEY INTERVIEW – SEPTEMBER 8, 2004

"[The railroad] was running from here [Lake City] to Sapinero, which was a distance of 36 miles. It took the train three hours to get to Sapinero and three hours to get back again. It met up with a main line which was coming from Montrose and Grand Junction. It was run on a narrow gauge line and was in operation until 1930 ... probably, I'm not sure of the day, because they took the train off and brought in the Galloping Goose as they called it, which was a modified bus - auto bus on wheels for the railroad track. That was in effect until 1937 when they pulled out all of the railroad lines and left Lake City without any kind of transportation to the outer world except by bus - auto bus and that was the best that we had."



D&RG engine at Sapinero  
December 1917  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection

#### CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL INTERVIEW - JUNE 13, 2004

*"Nineteen Twenty-Two we had a flood. It washed part of the railroad out and it was all around the round ... see, they had a big circle up there. They'd take the engine off the rest of the train and go around and back it into the big roundhouse they called it and it washed enough that they couldn't get the engine out the next day. They had to fill it up so they could get the engine out. That used to be quite a ride from here to Sapinero on that train. It only went twelve miles an hour and it'd rock you to sleep."*

CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 13, 2004

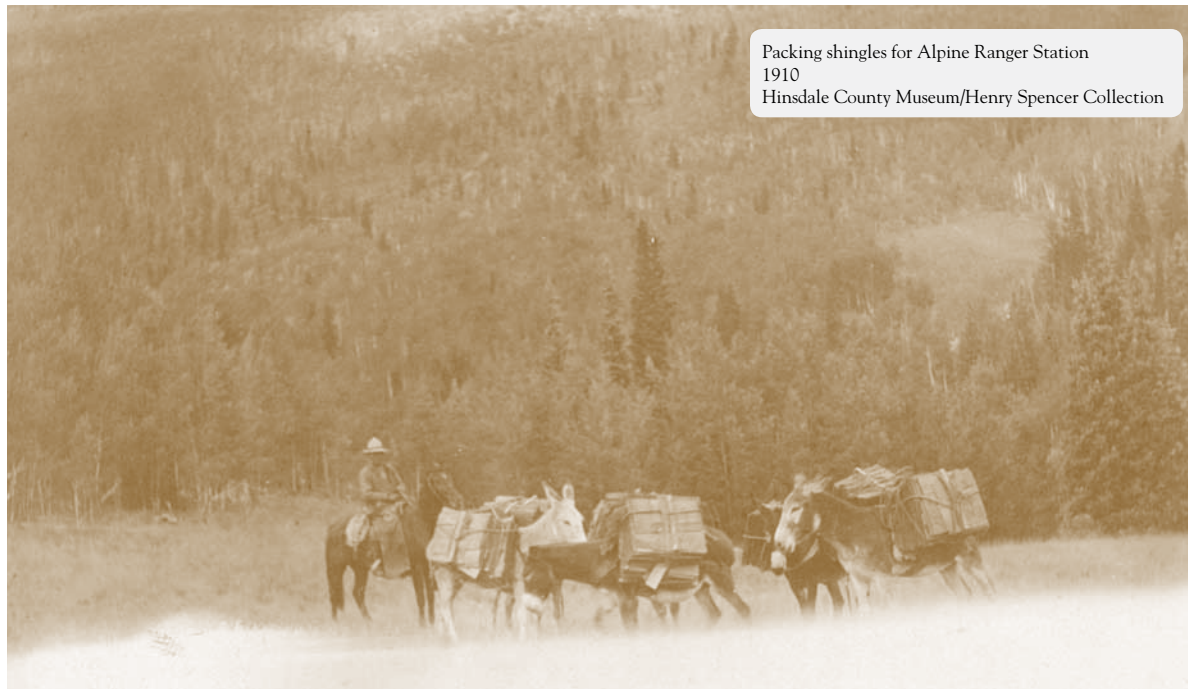
*"He'd [Sap Richardson] start blowing the whistle to let people know. Then Clarence Wright was the postmaster and he had an old Star (an automobile) – I don't know if you remember those ... And he'd go to the train and pick up the mail and bring it over. The post office was in the log cabin restaurant there – you know, it's closed now. You didn't ever run in the post office because it bothered Clarence Wright. He was a grouchy old rascal. He was a nice guy but he was grouchy if you got to playing in the post office."*

CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 13, 2004

*"They had a little ol' pot-bellied stove in there in the caboose. All the cars had some kind of heat in them. All but the freight and it'd be kind of chilly. They used to let the people off. You could get a ride down and get dropped off any place you wanted to fish until the train would come back and they'd pick you up. Stuff like that."*



Railway workers commemorate Lake City train's last departure in 1933 with alarm and calendar.  
Hinsdale County Museum



Packing shingles for Alpine Ranger Station  
1910  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection



Packing lumber for Alpine Ranger Station  
1910  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

SALLY ANN VICKERS/DAVID  
INTERVIEW - DECEMBER 14, 2004

"The donkeys were a major part of our life. There was old 'Sid' and, 'Old Gray Jenny', and Johnny Benson's 'Jeanette'. And in later years, there were two or three miners' little donkeys that we didn't know as well as those old ones. Oh, yeah, I loved those donkeys. Old Sid could open any gate in Lake City, except ours. We had one of those - I don't know even how to explain it - you had to push a bar - it had a little spring on it - and he never could get his teeth around that little thing you push. But he could get everybody else's. They were town pets. We rode 'em all the time. We loved to get the tourist kids on 'em and get 'em bucked off. We knew old Sid would buck 'em off. Old Sid would - all he had to do, was put his head down and up would go his rear end, and off he'd go....I've got a picture of a buggy that Addie Williams gave us kids, and old wagon, and we used to hook those donkeys up to that wagon and pull the tourist kids around the block, and charge them ten cents a ride. We thought we were getting rich [early 1940's]!"

CAROL CAREY/PERRY  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 6, 2004

*"He [my Dad] would just take a week or two off, and we would come to Lake City in a Model A? It had a rumble seat in it, I remember. We were all jammed in there and sometimes we would have to turn around and go up the hill backwards because we wouldn't make it up the other way. We always stayed overnight in Salida because it was a long trip from Pueblo to Salida. Then we would come over this little crooked road and I would always be carsick. Could not ride in the back seat of that car - and besides that, my dad smoked a cigar. We always looked forward to our summers here."*

CELIA RAWSON/SWANK  
INTERVIEW - MARCH 7, 2004

*"...right where the restaurant was, it had a building that went clear back to the alley and in that building was an old car and I guess it was a Pierce-Arrow.... It was something. It was just a beautiful old piece of equipment with leather seats....Goodness, all of us kids played in it especially when it was raining.... And the back of it had a little seat and that little seat would pull up from the outside and open the door and there was a little step to go down....It was a great place to play. ... Playin' in that old Pierce-Arrow over there....It was a wonderful childhood. There wasn't a day I didn't like."*





Lake San Cristobal from bridge  
April 1911  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection



## Chapter Eight

# RECREATION

*Exploration, escape, enjoyment – what more can an environment provide in this land we love.*



Visiting couple fishing  
July 1929  
Hinsdale County Museum

The area that makes up Hinsdale County has always been one of great beauty and promise. Native Americans, explorers, fur trappers, adventurers, prospectors, and settlers were its first “discoverers.” As early as the 1890s, Lake City merchants promoted the area’s recreational opportunities by advertising horse rentals and “special arrangements” for fishing and hunting parties. When this remote and rugged land became more accessible, eventually by motorized vehicles, word spread about the amazing and abundant opportunities to be had and Hinsdale’s secret treasures were revealed.

By the 1920s, summer tourists and sportsmen were taking advantage of rustic accommodations provided at rural ranches in northeastern, central, and southern Hinsdale. From the 1930s into the 1960s, improved roads and an increasingly “mobile” populace caused “cabin camps” and motor courts to appear in Lake City and along the Lake Fork of the Gunnison, as more and more visitors discovered the joys of fishing, hiking, boating, climbing, camping, hunting, trail riding, skiing, snowshoeing and more.

Fishing took center stage early, with the D&RG Railroad even dropping sportsmen off at favorite fishing spots along the Lake Fork. Visitors came to the Lake City area to catch native brown, brook, and rainbow trout in the Lake Fork River, Lake San Cristobal, Henson Creek, Crystal Lake, Waterdog Lake, and other mountain creeks and lakes, but sportsmen also discovered prime fishing in the Upper Rio Grande River, as well as its tributaries, natural



Fishing Lake San Cristobal  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection



Lake San Cristobal  
July 1916  
Hinsdale County Museum/Florence Baker Heald Collection

CAROL CAREY/PERRY INTERVIEW – JUNE 6, 2004

*“Mother was raised in this very straight-laced Victorian home, and she got to Lake City and it was a new world to her. They had dances, and they fished up at the lake. The Careys had a cabin up there, and they’d stay up there all night.”*

SALLY ANN VICKERS/DAVID  
INTERVIEW – DECEMBER 14, 2004

*“Another thing we made when we were kids, and thanks to my poor mother, she did most of the work - but we sold worms. You dug worms and sold ‘em. We got five cents a dozen. But it paid for our school clothes. But my mom did most of the work. You know, us kids would go out and we’d dig for ten minutes, maybe, and we were tired. She’d go out in the evenings, after she got off work, and dig enough worms. We put coffee grounds or cornmeal in to feed ‘em - to feed those worms. We sold a lot of worms [1940’s].”*

lakes, and reservoirs. Not to be ignored, the Weminuche River, Palisade Lakes, and Williams Reservoir attracted sportsmen to Hinsdale's South End. Beginning in the 1930s, three private fishing clubs appeared in the Upper Rio Grande drainage, and similar clubs later developed along the Lake Fork.

With its expanse of national forests teeming with wildlife, hunters found Hinsdale to be a sportsmen's paradise. Abandoned mining and logging roads winding amidst the county's peaks, forest lands, and high country soon found new life for recreational purposes. The roads became trails for hiking and trail rides, and the Forest Service began to improve and reopen mining era roads to accommodate the increasing popularity of "jeeping" in Colorado's high country. In recent decades, the number of sportsmen has increased and expanded the scope of outdoor recreation. Now cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice climbing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, downhill skiing, and hot air ballooning join trail riding, 4-wheeling, mountain biking, backpacking, mountaineering, rock climbing, boating, and river rafting to make Hinsdale County an all-season destination.



Lake San Cristobal catch  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection



Lodge at Lake Shore  
Hinsdale County Museum/Smith Collection



2002  
Photographer: Marty Priest

CAROL CAREY/PERRY  
INTERVIEW - JUNE 6, 2004

*"... my first exposure to Lake City was when I was one year old. I was accompanying my mother and father back for vacation. They spent their honeymoon at Crystal Lake in that little cabin. I think it's still there. They rode burros up on their honeymoon."*

CHARLES ARTHUR MENDENHALL INTERVIEW - JUNE 13, 2004

*"In those days when I was a kid you could have thirty fish. ... You pack thirty fish on foot down from Crystal Lake and you'd be all in when you got home. Thirty fish can weigh quite a bit. They were never wasted. Give them to people who couldn't catch them, you know."*



2002  
Photograph: Marty Priest



Thornton Witherite and Mr. Brooks outside Capitol City Post Office  
1916  
Hinsdale County Museum/Florence Baker Heald Collection



F. Oliver's cabin at Lakeshore  
April 1911  
Hinsdale County Museum/Hammond Collection

DOUG MADISON  
INTERVIEW – JULY 3, 2007

*"Well, I fished, hunted, climbed mountains. I climbed about every mountain around Lake City and all over. We walked everywhere because there was no transportation. It was nothing to start out in the morning and walk to the lake [Lake San Cristobal] or walk to Capitol City, up to White Cross, and ride burros. We rode burros a lot. We had to name us some of them. Johnny Benson had a half mule and half donkey. Jeannette was the name of the donkey. There was Old Gray Jenny, there was Sid, there was Pard. We used to have rodeos on the donkeys."*

CAROL CAREY/PERRY INTERVIEW – JUNE 6, 2004

*"When I remarried, I married a man who was a dedicated hunter and fisherman, so I introduced him to Lake City. We came in the early 60s up here and camped out on the east side of the lake. We always camped in a big cove - we call it our cove - you go down into it and it has a nice beach and it's sheltered. We could draw our boats right up and the boys, especially my middle son, he'd go out and catch his limit, come in, fry them up and eat them, so he could go out and catch another limit."*



Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection



Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection

# OVER THE LIMIT

## Letters from Ann Bowling

Our family loved to camp on Cebolla Creek.

When we would visit my husband Dewey's aunt and uncle in Pensacola, Florida, we would fish with them, but tell them our trout were much better.

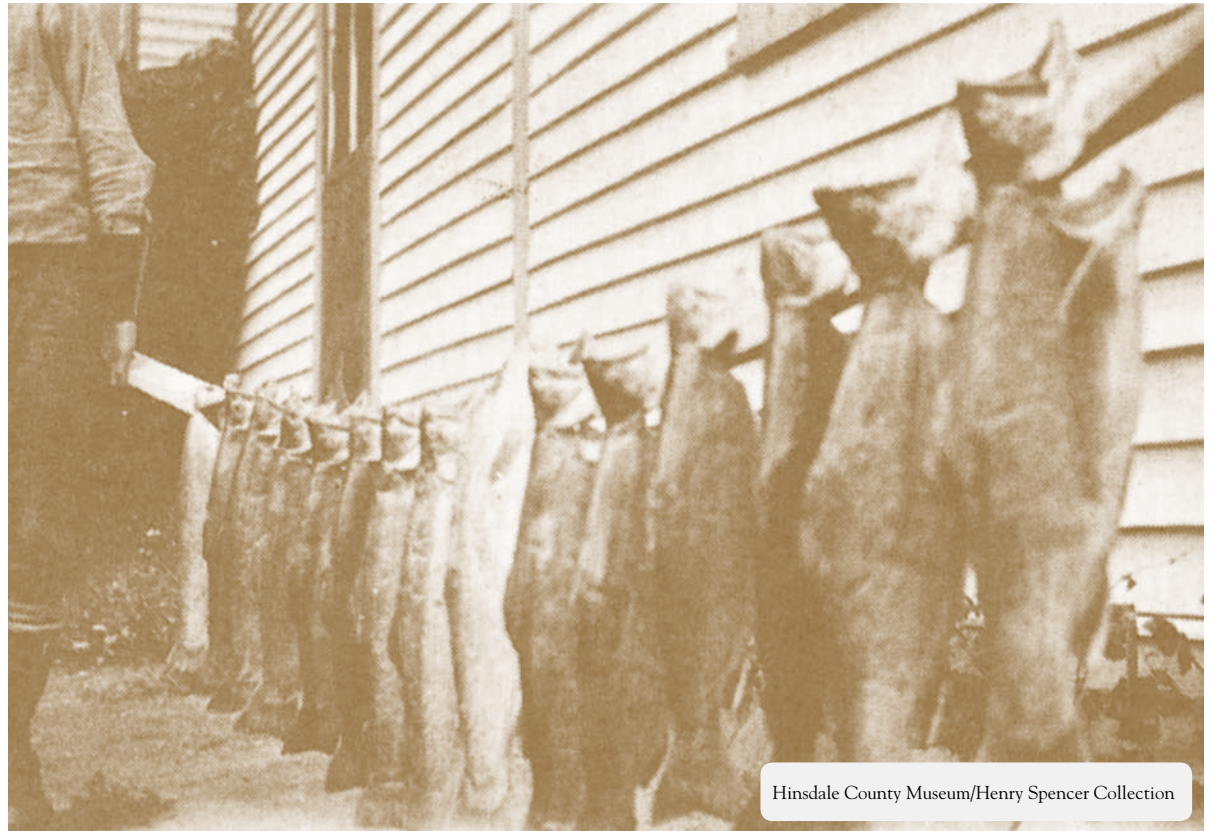
Finally the day came when they were able to visit us and drive with us to Colorado.

We had two cars, but only one tent. On the way we stopped at a motel where we all became terribly ill with "the bug". We couldn't eat and had no desire to.

As soon as we were able to travel we drove to our favorite campground on Cebolla Creek. My husband, Dewey, then drove me and the children to Fruita, Colorado to visit while he camped out with Uncle Mac and Aunt Virgie. For a few days Dewey fished and they ate the fish he caught. They were kept in an ice chest covered with a wet cloth until ready to cook.

On about the third day when Dewey came back to camp the game warden, Mr. Jim Houston, was in camp with his supervisor from Denver. They asked to see Dewey's fish, and he showed them to them – just the day's limit. When they remarked on the size of the fish & said what nice fish they were, Aunt Virgie said, "you think those are nice, you should see the ones we have in the ice chest!"

Of course she showed them the ice chest full of fish – 81 of them – that she and Uncle Mac had caught and saved the days Dewey was fishing. Dewey had no idea they were even fishing! Mr. Houston, Dewey, and the man from Denver drove into Lake City where Dewey went before the judge and paid \$81 for 81 illegal fish. He had \$85, so wasn't he lucky?



*"Chat Priddy and I went up on Handies Peak last Sunday and took our dinner along. I wish I could describe the scene as it appeared to me spread out in all its picturesque beauty, but I cannot express myself what I feel when looking at such grand scenery...Toward the northwest in Utah the Wasache range could be distinctly seen...If I could have all the sights of that day transferred on canvas, what a picture it would be!"*

From the diary of H.E. Wright, 1877-1884 (last entry), *Tiny Hinsdale of The Silvery San Juan*, Carolyn and Clarence Wright



#### CELIA RAWSON/SWANK INTERVIEW – MARCH 7, 2004

*“[Jeep Tours] Fourteen years I drove the jeep from Lake City to Ouray and Silverton....I got \$40 for four people. I had it fixed where I could fit two in the front and two in the back....Well, going up over Cinnamon....it was a horrible road, but he (Joel Swank) went in there and he built a road that I could get down....Finally we’d go into Silverton and go over the Red Mountain Pass and then come down into Ouray and back down Henson.*

*It was a lovely trip. Leave at eight o’clock and then get back at five. Had to keep pushing people. They all wanted to stop and do this and that. I made one... eight days in succession. It was beautiful weather. The flowers were out and I had to get another jeep or two to go with me to take care of all the people. I was busy all the time. I was going ‘pert near’ every day....*

*We had lots of dances here, and there was always somebody... the Forbares played and Claude Hunt played and Joel’s mother, she played the organ and piano both....Well you know people like music, all that good music, and there’d be a fight once in a while, but it would get calmed down....Anyway, I thought it was a wonderful place to live. That’s why we stayed here.”*



Hinsdale County Museum

CELIA RAWSON/SWANK INTERVIEW – MARCH 7, 2004

*“Joel got interested in snowmobiles [1930s or 1940s]...he had some kind of something and he sent out and got a hundred and twenty horsepower airplane engine and put it in it. He built something with skis and he built... it was like a little wagon, actually it had a little nose on it....You could get inside, two people, and sit. Anyway... they got the rascal going....then the thing ran out of gas. (Joel said) ‘You go back and tell Celia to bring us some gas. (I said) You go back down and tell Joel come get his own gas... I’m not packing gas around for him because I never got a ride, and I was supposed to get the first ride.’”*



Henson Creek  
1909  
Hinsdale County Museum/Henry Spencer Collection



# Chapter Nine

## THE PROCESS



San Juan Mountain Range  
Hinsdale County Museum

## FROM GLASS PLATE NEGATIVE TO PRINT

Many of the photographs in this book were produced from the Hinsdale County Museum's Glass Plate Negative Collection. In the winter of 2009, paper prints were contact printed on hand coated fine papers, Rives BFK 90-pound paper, or Crane's Premium Pearl White PS 8111. The hand coating was done with chemistry known from the 1840s in England. Commonly known as the Vandyke or brown print, it is the simplest kallitype technique. The paper was coated using a fine hair brush dipped in a silver sensitizer to the approximate size of the glass negative to be printed. It was then air dried in the dark. Once dry, the coated paper was stored in a light-tight envelope for future use.

When an image was selected for use, its glass plate negative was lightly brushed off with a fine hair brush and placed in a "printing frame," emulsion side up. It was then covered with the previously prepared print paper, coated side down. The frame was closed and exposed either to direct sunlight or to another UV light source. For this project, a specially designed and constructed UV light source



box obtained from Edwards Engineered Products of Austin, Texas, was used. Exposure times varied depending upon the density of the negative. Usually several minutes of exposure were needed to obtain a print. Once a print registered on the paper, the paper was removed from the printing frame and washed in clean, fresh water. When developed, the print was immediately fixed in Hypo, otherwise known as Sodium Thiosulfate. The fixing process was usually five minutes in duration, followed by a second five-to-ten minute, freshwater washing. The print was then hung to drip-dry for twenty-four hours.

According to K.C. Errett, a Hinsdale County Museum volunteer who produced the paper prints from the museum's glass plate collection, "making fine paper prints in the same manner used during the mid-to-late 1800s, when wet plate and dry plate glass

negatives were the typical photography process, can provide a unique tie to history and is very rewarding."

K.C. Errett – Pioneer Photographer, Lake City, Colorado (2012)  
Reference: *The Keepers of the Light*, William Crawford, Morgan & Morgan, 1979

## COLLECTION AND COMPILATION OF ORAL HISTORIES, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND HISTORICAL DATA

Hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into producing *A San Juan Tapestry*. Facts pulled from a number of sources complement memories collected from individuals who “lived the life,” and photographs enhance the telling of a journey that continues. Beginning in 2004, Hinsdale County Historical Society volunteers started an oral history project; and, in 2009, DIRT volunteers began to collect memories from individuals touched by this land. The selection and scanning of images and oral history excerpts, the compilation of photographs and text, writing, editing, and graphic design – all came together in a final product that celebrates commonality, while embracing diversity.

It should be noted that *A San Juan Tapestry* is not a history book – it was never meant to be. Most of the text is not specific to “nearby” photographs and the chronological placement of images was never a goal. Instead, the mixture of reminiscences and photographs, no matter the time or the locale, emphasizes the common threads that bind us all into this strong, yet beautiful, cloth that is Hinsdale.

### Source Materials:

2006 – 2007 *Cultural Resource Survey of Hinsdale County*, SHF # 06-01-036. Prepared by Cathleen M. Norman, Preservation Publishing, Palmer Lake, CO 80133

*A Brief History of Mining in Hinsdale County*, Collected-Written-Edited by Milo Z. Morse and Faye Bielser, Copyright 2000.

*An Historic Structure Assessment of the Debs Schoolhouse, Debs Community, Hinsdale County, Colorado*, State Historic Fund Project #2008-HA-028

*A Quick History of Lake City Colorado*, by Margaret Bates, Copyright 1973, Little London Press, Colorado Springs, Colorado

*Exploring the Historic San Juan Triangle*, by P. David Smith, Copyright 2004, Wayfinder Press, Ridgway, Colorado

*Geology and Ore Deposits near Lake City, Colorado*, a reprint of United States Geological Survey Bulletin 478 by John Duer Irving and Howland Bancroft, Copyright 2010, a historical reprint published by Western Reflections Publishing Company, Lake City, Colorado

*Gunnison and San Juan*, by Robert Edmund Strahorn, Copyright 2012, a historical reprint published by Western Reflections Publishing Company, Lake City, Colorado

*My Lake City Railroad Memories*, by Margaret Rawson Pitney as related to Bob Lozano, Copyright 2006, Hinsdale County Historical Society, Lake City, Colorado

*Tiny Hinsdale of The Silvery San Juan*, by Carolyn and Clarence Wright, Copyright 1964, one-time use permission granted by granddaughters Marilyn Wright Plise, Claire Wright Martinez, and Nancy Wright Norland

### Website Sources:

[www.lakecitymuseum.com](http://www.lakecitymuseum.com),  
[www.lakecity.com](http://www.lakecity.com), [www.lakecityhistoricdistrict.com](http://www.lakecityhistoricdistrict.com)

ISBN 978-1-937851-03-3



9 781937 851033

90000