The implements of the past - Plantin' Beans and Diggin' Ore

Seen at Weber Park, Dove Creek, Colorado

Boom or Bust - Mining has been part of Dolores County since 1870

Carolyn J. Fosdick © 2014

Between high mountains on the east and gigantic rock formations on the west lies a small town in Southwestern Colorado that is so far off the beaten path that it cannot even be called "fly-over country." Dove Creek has no large planes that fly overhead, and certainly not the huge jumbo jets carrying hundreds of passengers to and from busy places. An occasional private plane flies over, or an even rarer military plane, but few people want to go to this town. The only planes overhead are local farmers spraying their crops.

A highway runs through the town and from this highway anyone can get wherever they wish in the United States, but it will take some driving. There are no stop lights in Dove Creek, no malls, and no discount stores here. A few businesses line the highway: one grocery store, a couple of gas stations, and a couple of cafes. There are several churches and a school that the locals are proud of. This town, Dove Creek, Colorado, is somewhere special to those who live there.

Dove Creek has had a boom or bust economy. The two ways people have had to earn their living is from farming and mining. Both have had their ups and downs through the years, and have greatly affected the economy of Dove Creek in Dolores County. Farming has always been at the whims of nature and market prices, but mining more than farming has added to the boom or bust economy of Dove Creek.

Mining can be divided into two distinct eras: mining in the high mountains for gold, silver, and other metals north and east of Dove Creek in Rico, Colorado in the 19th century, and mining for uranium in Disappointment and Southeastern Utah north of the town of Dove Creek, Colorado in the 20th century.

The first mining boom in the area happened before there was a Dove Creek or even a Dolores County back in the late part of the 19th century. The Golden Age of mining in the Rico area started about 1870 and ended in 1893 when the bottom fell out of the price of silver. Since this time, there have been several attempts to revive mining in the Rico area with some success, but nothing like the Golden Age of the past glory of Rico. Each one of these attempts to revive mining caused minor fluctuations of boom and bust in Dolores County.

The second era of mining in the area was of uranium from the Uravan Belt, which is a zone of uranium-vanadium deposits ranging from Mesa County in Colorado, to north of Dove Creek into Southeastern Utah. This mineral belt includes Slick Rock, Gypsum Valley, Uravan, Gateway, and the area north of Dove Creek into Utah. Serious mining in the area started in 1911 and prospectors rushed to the area because of the radium in the carbonate ore rather than the uranium content, which was thought to be a by-product then. The Uravan belt supplied about half the world's radium used for medical reasons from 1910 to 1923. It revived in 1935 and boomed after World War II when the United States stockpiled uranium for nuclear weapons. The Uravan Belt was the last producing uranium mine in the state but closed down entirely in 2009 due to depressed uranium prices. For a while, only the Sunday Mine in Gyp Gap remained, which was the last producing uranium mine still producing in the United States. It is now closed.

The glory days of Rico and the boom days of uranium mining are over. Dove Creek is now in a bust economy. The old-time miners have moved on to other jobs and to other places, or they have retired. Many have passed on to "Miner's Heaven," where there is plenty of gold around, and they live in riches and eternal happiness up in Heaven. Those who remain in Dove Creek still think this is the best place to live --- they still think it is somewhere special.

Information from: Rico, Colorado; a Century of Historic Adventure in Mining, by Engels, Charles M: Rico; Uranium Mining in Colorado

The Future of Uranium Mining

Carolyn J. Fosdick © 2014

I asked Dan Johnson a while back if he knew what the future of uranium mining was. He laughed and said, "Carol, if I knew that I'd be rich!" However, since so much of Dove Creek's economy through the years has been dependent on uranium mining, I decided to see what I could find out on this issue. The answer is mixed. Some experts think uranium will boom again, while others don't agree.

First, we must look into the fact that uranium, like all minerals we mine or drill from the earth, is finite. When we remove it all, there is no more. Uranium is present in almost all of earth's substances, including many rocks, clay, sand, and even the ocean. However, most of these sources do not provide the high grade uranium ore needed to make nuclear energy or weapons. In addition to mining for uranium, other sources include de-powering nuclear weapons. Also on the horizon are new techniques being discovered to mine uranium out of seawater or as a by-product of oil shale.

There are a number of factors to consider when planning for future needs, including the number of high-grade nuclear power stations needed to change the ore into usable uranium power. In 2005, the United States had 103 such nuclear power stations, and this is expected to increase through the years. Another factor to consider is world population. Electrical demands will increase as the population increases. In 2012, the world's population was more than 7 billion people and is increasing at a rate of about 21,000 people every day. According to the U.N., by 2050, the world population is predicted to be 9.07 billion. Furthermore, the population growth is predicted to explode even faster in developing countries such as India, Africa, and China. These countries will have 62% of the world's population. As these countries develop, more people will expect higher standards of living, demanding more electricity. Thus, the demand to energize the world will have to increase as we go into the future.

Rising uranium prices and the growth of future needs for uranium are encouraging mine owners to reopen abandoned mines with new promises of hundreds of jobs and millions in royalties. However, many people are afraid of the health problems posed by uranium mining and are not too happy at the prospect of re-opening the mines. Some also argue that since uranium is a non-renewable resource, uranium depletion will happen and the availability of high-grade uranium ore will deplete over time. Others also argue about the greenhouse effect and the increased nuclear power emissions that will happen once the uranium ore is converted into power. This means that the fuel from uranium will become environmentally and economically too expensive to produce. This, of course, would be far in the future.

So if you are a miner here in Dove Creek waiting for the mines to reopen, the mines may reopen locally or they may not. Globally speaking, it looks like a good possibility, but politics and many other factors come into play that make the reopening of uranium mines uncertain. As Dan said, predicting the future of uranium mining is impossible to do.

Information taken from: Hurbert's Peak and Uranium

Somewhere Special...

Dove Creek, Colorado

Ninety-four years in Dolores County, Colorado

by Stanley R. Crapo

I was born November 11, 1919 at the family home at White Sage Flats just across the state line in Utah. We called it White Sage Flats because of the short white sage that covered a lot of this country in the early years. It was good cow feed. Through the years the farmers worked it up to plant crops and it never came back. Today we live about a mile and a half east of where I was born.

I was the son of Clarence Ezra (Ez) and Lola B. (Morris) Crapo. I had one older brother, Clarence, born in 1917. Ez was from a family of fifteen children. Lola was the oldest of nine. My parents met when my mother was teaching school in Disappointment, at the Lavender school, I think.

My mother died when I was three days old from a combination of the 1918 Influenza and the stress of childbirth. (The 1918 flu epidemic did not get to this country until 1919).

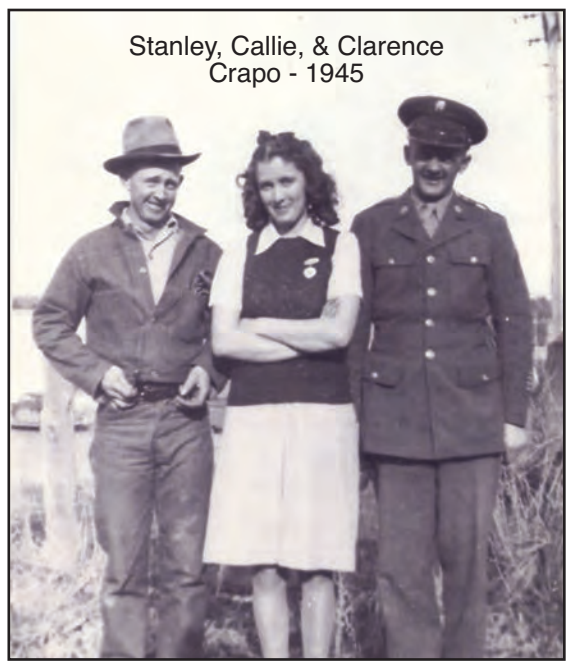
After my mother died, Ez took me to live with his sister and her family on Chico Creek, Harriet (Hat) and George Snyder. Three of Ez's sisters married three Snyder brothers. Clarissa (Carrie) married Hank and Sarah (Sadie) married Chan. Hat and Carrie raised their families in the Dove Creek area. Sadie lived at Rico. The Snyders also lived at Slick Rock, which in early days was called Camp Snyder.

Hat and George had seven daughters when I went to live with them. Nina, the eighth daughter, was born about 1924. It was Hat and George that named me Stanley in remembrance of their only son who had died at birth.

My mother's family had moved to Oregon after she and Ez were married. When I was about two one of my mother's sisters came from Oregon on the train to Thompson (I think) and took Clarence and I back with her to Oregon to live with my mother's family. They had a cattle ranch on the Moon River, near John Day. I don't remember much about my time there. I do recall when Clarence fell in the hog scalding vat. The men were butchering hogs. They had a vat of scalding water they dipped the carcass in to take off the hair. The older kids were daring each other to jump across the vat. Clarence took a turn, lost his footing, and fell in. He grabbed the side and was able to keep his face out. One of the men jerked him out and threw him into the irrigation canal, which no doubt saved his life. He was severely burned.

In 1922 Ez married for a second time to a young woman named Hazel Shemp. Ez and Hazel had two sons, Hayes, born in 1924 and Lloyd born in 1928.

Ez and Hazel bought a Model T Ford and drove it to Oregon to bring Clarence and I home. We moved back into the White Sage Flats home. Clarence always stayed with Ez but I spent a lot of time with the Snyders even after Ez remarried. Often the Snyders spent their winters in Moab. One fall I made the trip with them. Hat drove the team and wagon while George herded the loose stock, horses and cattle. We went down Three Step and across Lisbon Valley. It was not the nice paved road of today, rough and rocky the whole way, especially in a wagon. Hat had Nina and myself in the wagon. It was cold and windy and she made us stay under a tarp. She claimed we cried the whole way because we wanted out. It took two days to make the trip. We spent the night in an old abandoned cabin. I remember George made a "bitch light". He put bacon grease in a jar lid, twisted a piece of cloth into the grease for a wick and lit it with a match. It did not make much light but it is what we had.


Stanley, Callie, & Clarence Crapo - 1945

One summer Ez, Hazel, Clarence, Hayes and I (Lloyd wasn't born yet) lived in a tent below Rico. Ez was working for Hat and George who were running sheep on a lease up Scotch Creek. When Clarence started school Ez and Hazel moved into Hat and George's house on Chico Creek for the winter (Hat and George were probably in Moab), so Clarence could go to school at Coal Bed School, which at that time was north of the intersection of Dolores County Roads 3 and C. At Easter time the community gathered at the school for an Easter egg hunt. Homer Conn, who had married Alice Snyder, had a new Model T car which was a novelty for all. I ran to the school house steps where I could get a better look. Someone yelled I would get run over. I wasn't sure but realized I must have done something wrong so I ran back and that time Homer did hit me. That was pretty embarrassing and painful too. I woke up back at the house with a lot of worried adults standing around me.

When I started school we were living back in the White Sage Flats house and Clarence and I went to the school at Ucolo, about three miles north of our house. We rode old one eyed Rabbit or a sorrel mare we called Bess. Bess would have her off days when she would throw us off. One time Bess threw Clarence and broke his arm.

One day Clarence and I and the Brown kids decided to play hooky and go to the old abandoned mine near Ucolo and ride the mine car up and down the track instead of furthering our education. We were hurrying to get out of sight when the cinch broke and I fell from Bess. I hit my head on a rock and was knocked unconscious. I was told I was out for some time, long enough that the other kids got scared and went for help. The hard part was explaining why we were not at school.

One Christmas we had a party at the school. Someone gave me a mouth harp. That was a really nice gift. I held it tightly all the way home on the back of Bess. But when we got there all I had was the box, the harp had fallen out. All winter to and from school I looked for my harp. It was the last day of school when I found where it had fallen near the trail not far from home. Being out all winter did not seem to have harmed it.

I was about nine when our house almost burned down. It was the fall of 1928, just after the first snow. Ez was gone. He was cutting and hauling wood for the boilers for a mine in Lisbon Valley. Clarence got up to build the fire. First he had to light the kerosene lamp so he could see what he was doing. He set it back on the shelf. Hazel had lined the walls with pages from the "Saturday Evening Post" to help insulate and to make the bare wood walls cleaner. This particular morning the lamp got too close to the paper for whatever reason and flames shot up the wall. Clarence and I started running back and forth to the spring under the rim and carrying buckets of water. Our shoes had gotten wet in the snow the night before and were frozen stiff so we could not get them on. We did our bucket packing in our bare feet. Hazel used the water to douse the fire. She also used a butcher knife to cut out the part of the wall that was on fire. Things were tense for a while but we saved the house. Clarence and I frost bit our feet and they burned and itched all winter.

In the spring of 1932 the family moved to where the old Molding post office had been, north of the Dolores County Fairgrounds. I didn't live there much. I went to Slick Rock and lived with the Snyders. It was about this time that George was sentenced to the penitentiary at Canyon City for running moonshine (the prohibition law was repealed in 1933). I stayed with Hat and Nina until fall. The three of us were on our own, there were no neighbors.

That fall and winter I lived with Alice and Homer Conn (north end of County Road 4). Homer was working for the county road department. Alice was expecting her third baby and I was there to chop `wood and help her with the chores. I walked to school at Coal Bed, about a mile across country. The teacher was not impressed with the education I had received at Ucolo and set me back a grade (or two?).

In the spring of 1933 I moved back with the folks. We lived on what we called the Moore place (today it belongs to Callie and I), on what is today North County Road 3.

We had cattle and horses and had started acquiring some sheep, doggie lambs the big sheep outfits did not want to be bothered with. We milked cows and fed the lambs on a bottle. Each morning, before school, it was my job to let the sheep out of the corral and head them south. There were lots of old abandoned homesteads where they could graze. After school it was my job to get on the trail of the sheep and bring them home. They always went as far north as they could, sometimes three or four miles. We corralled them at night and the next day we started over again.

I finally made it to the sixth grade but quit school about the first of March to be with the sheep. In the spring they ranged even farther to find feed. Then they started lambing in April and May so I had to be with them. The next fall I went back to school and was still in the sixth grade (Clarence had graduated from the eighth grade). This year I had a super good teacher, Miss Gage. Later that fall, after the harvest, the older boys started coming to school. Some of these boys were seventeen and eighteen and still in the sixth or seventh grade (I was one of the younger ones). Miss Gage put us all in the eighth grade (there were seven or eight of us, both boys and girls) and we all graduated in the spring. She didn't just pass us through, however, because at the time you had to pass the state exams to graduate. The County School Superintendent came from the county seat at Rico to give the exam. Eighth grade finished my formal schooling.

We had another house fire while we lived on the Moore place. I had gone to haul water from the well north of the house when I noticed smoke coming from the roof. A spark from the cook stove had set the shingles on fire. Hazel passed water up to me. I cut out the section that was burning and got the fire out before there was any more damage than a hole in the roof.

The well on the Moore place was not very good. In fact water, or rather the lack of it, was always a problem. At some point several people went together and paid to have some wells drilled. We got three good wells, one on the Bittle place, one on the Cowling place (both on North County Road 2) and one on the Stoneking place (North County Road 3). Everyone in the country hauled water from these wells.

One day when I was about fourteen I took the team of horses and wagon, the usual procedure, to haul water from the Cowling well. I had three barrels in the wagon. On each barrel was a wash tub turned upside down over the barrel to keep the water from splashing out when they were full. There was no seat on the wagon so one day I got the not so bright idea to set on top of the wash tub on one of the barrels. As we rattled along the tub I was setting on slipped and I fell off. I fell between the wagon and the horses and the wagon ran over me. The horses got spooked and ran off. I had to gather myself up, catch the horses, go to the well, and pump the water (hand pump). I was feeling pretty bruised and sore and sorry for myself. I was late getting back to the house with the water. Then I had to go relieve Clarence who was with the sheep. He had been expecting me to come for hours so he could go to camp and get some breakfast. He was pretty steamed and not impressed at my bruises. It was now 2:00 pm and he had had nothing to eat. By this time we had 200 to 300 ewes and someone had to stay with them all the time to keep them out of the neighbors' crops (no one had any fences).

We lived on the Moore place several years and then moved south to the Lee Morris place. Lee was my mother's brother. He had married Francis Snyder, Hat and George's oldest daughter. George and Sally Fury now own this property. The Coal Bed School was on the same property. It was being torn down and a new building was going up about a half mile west on what is

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Stanley Crapo - continued

now County Road C. We tore down the old school and used the lumber to build onto our house. I helped haul rocks for the foundation for the new school and camped at the site to keep an eye on the new lumber that had been hauled in.

Not long before Callie and I married in 1941, Ez and Hazel bought Hat and George's old place on Chico Creek (at that time it belonged to the Smith estate) and lived there the rest of their lives.

When I was about fourteen Ez, Clarence and I went into partnership with the sheep outfit. We each worked out at various jobs, also. Whoever was home took care of the sheep (and the cattle and horses).

I picked up a few day jobs here and there for area farmers. I got my first real paying job when I was sixteen. Harry Rogers had a bean outfit and store at Arriola. He also had a farm and a herd of about 1200 ewes. I was hired to help with the sheep. Jimmy Hindman was the foreman and my boss. My job was to take care of the new born lambs, (see that they got dry, got up and sucked) and cook for myself and two Navajo herders. I was paid $35 a month and room and board. My room was a bed roll I provided myself and I had the option of putting it wherever I wanted. I chose to put it in the cook tent where it was slightly warmer. (The herders slept in a teepee).

We lambed in the North Pines. Normally there were about sixty lambs born within any twenty-four hour period. May 13, a late spring snow storm hit and we lost every lamb born within that twenty-four hours. We were finally able to get the sheep down into some better shelter in some thick pinyon trees. Then we started saving some of the newborns. It snowed a foot and then turned off warm again.

After lambing, the sheep went to the mountain on Hermosa for the summer. We walked with the sheep towards Dove Creek, south over McCloud Point, to Cahone, Pleasant View, Lewis, Deer Creek (about 75 miles). It took us sixteen days. At that point my job was over and the sheep were turned over to the herders. Jimmy was the camp mover. He moved camp with a truck until we got into the rough country then it was with a pack string. I did get to ride a mule back from Hermosa to Tenderfoot (about ten miles) to get on the truck to come home. I was dropped off at Arriola where I worked in the store for a couple of days until Harry had time to bring me on home. I bought a couple of cows with my wages.

In 1938 we went into partnership with Ed (Edgar) Shafstal and Bill Cole. They had about 300 ewes. We lambed separately each spring so we could mark our lambs before the herds were put together. We leased pasture locally. One summer we were in Summit Canyon near Egnar. Another time we were in the Pines.

Then we bought two sheep leases on the mountain. We had a lease for 1200 ewes on Little Taylor with Shafstall. Elmer Belcher had a lease on the West Dolores with a partner. The partner wanted to sell so we bought that lease for 500 ewes and ran on that range with Belcher. We didn't have the West Dolores lease too long. We sold it when Clarence went off to fight in World War II. We bought out Shafstall in about 1945.

We sold our lambs in the fall and put them on the train at Rico before trailing the ewes home. There is no longer a train into Rico but at that time south of town there were stock corrals where the lambs were sorted and loaded. Many different people shipped their lambs from there.

Our brand was the crescent moon. We branded our horses and cattle with a hot running iron on the left hip. The sheep were branded with red paint on their back. We had a stamp iron for that. We branded the sheep after shearing before they went on the mountain and usually we branded them again in the fall when they came off the mountain.

We liked to shear our sheep about May 1, before they lambed, but a lot depended on the weather and when we could get the shearers to come to our place. I started shearing when I was sixteen or seventeen but I never was as good as the professionals. A good shearer could shear a sheep in about four minutes. It took me about eight minutes at my best. First you trim the face. Then you roll the sheep on her back, holding her with your leg, and do the belly, one side and then the other, and last the back. It was back breaking work because you worked all day bent over. After shearing, the fleece was thrown to the fleece tier. Each fleece was tied with a special tie to keep it together. These ties were paper so they would disintegrate when the fleece was washed. After tying, the fleece went into the wool sack. These sacks were about six or seven foot long (so, when full, they would reach from side to side of the truck beds of the day). The sacks were held in a special rack while being filled. Someone had to get in the sack to stomp the wool down. When it was full it weighed about 300 pounds. It had to be lifted so the top could be sewed shut and then it was rolled to the side to be picked up and put on the truck later.

Callie Crapo - Summer 1942 - Little Taylor Creek

The hand clippers were belt driven on gasoline motors. In later years some of the shearers had electric motors run on generators. Neighbors with small herds would bring their sheep to our corrals to have their sheep sheared while we were doing ours. It cost about 60 cents a head for the shearing. We often hired the Wilden brothers from Mancos to shear. There were four Wilden brothers and they usually brought a couple of men with them. Irie Wilden, the ramrod, was married to Hazel's sister, Jesse.

The professional shearers belonged to a shearing union. People like the Wildens would start shearing in Arizona and would work their way north as weather permitted. Some shearers from Mexico started coming north and undercutting the unions which caused more than a little hostility. Sometimes things got real ugly.

The wool was taken to Dolores where it was sold to wool dealers and loaded on the train there. The price you got for your wool depended on the quality. It was graded on how coarse or fine it was, how clean or dirty, etc.

We used Rambouillet bucks to improve our wool production. After we had raised some pretty good Rambouillet ewes we crossed them with Hampshire bucks to get the black face sheep the lamb buyers preferred.

We had a couple of Judas goats, Bill and Blondie, we kept for years. Judas goats are kept for leaders. The sheep will follow the goats down the trail, into the corral, onto the train. Then the goats will work their way back out the gate and leave the sheep behind.

Callie Burke and I married at Aztec, New Mexico, May of 1941. Her parents, Jim and Daisy Burke, had homesteaded here in 1921. We lived with Ez and Hazel until we went to the mountain that summer with the sheep. We lived the summer in the sheep wagon on the Red Rock Ranch on the river above Dolores.

That winter we moved into a log cabin my grandparents, Leonidas and Alice Crapo, had built east of where Ez and Hazel lived. The place had been vacant for some time and was alive with mice. The house was two log cabins with a wooden dog trot joining them. Callie was just learning to drive. We hauled our water in a barrel. She was backing up to the house with a barrel of water when her foot slipped off the clutch and she rammed the dog trot. She moved the wall over about a foot. I was able to take a crow bar and move it back into place. In the process I found a butcher knife that had been left in the wall when it was built.

The next summer we went back to sheep camp. We lived on Little Taylor Creek in a tent. We were eight miles from the nearest road. Now we had a real mouse problem and no traps.

We spent two summers on Big Taylor Creek where Taylor Creek and the Dolores River meet. Here we had a tent with a wooden floor. And we remembered to bring a cat. Neo was her name. No rodent was safe within a half mile of camp.

In the winters we lived in a tent in a big cave in Summit Canyon west of Egnar. The winter range for the sheep was in Summit Canyon. We were not the first to camp in that cave, the walls are marked with ancient pictographs and more recent cowboy writing.

About the time Connie, our first daughter, was born (1945) I built us a one room house on Chico Creek near where Hat and George and Carrie and Hank Snyder had their cabins. Ez helped me. It was very crowded, you had to move the crib to open the dresser drawers. Later we bought some land on Coal Bed Creek where I built a larger house. We still live in this house though it has been moved from the original location. I knew very little about carpentry so I ordered some books from the catalog. We had no electricity so it was all hand sawing and nailing. Indoor plumbing was not added until about 1959 when we moved the house to the present location.

We always had a lot of dogs. Ez had lion hounds. Neighbors paid him to hunt and kill the lions that preyed on their livestock. We, also, had lots of sheep dogs, mostly Australian Shepard or various crosses.

There were wild/abandoned horses in the country when I was a kid, stuff that had gotten away from someone or had been turned loose when the owner couldn't feed them or didn't need them. Many of these horses were descended from horses that the King family had brought into this country. I am told the Kings trailed 600 head of mares up from Texas. The Kings were probably some of the first people to move into this area. The country was wide open and their horses grazed where they pleased. They built several big horse traps, the wings were a mile or two long, to catch what they wanted to break and sell (turning the rest back out). One trap was north of where Clifford and Rachel Geisinger live, another was on Summit Point. By the time I was old enough to remember, the Kings had taken the horses they wanted and moved on to Wyoming. I knew Deefy King who later came back from Wyoming and lived as a hermit in Summit Canyon. (King Springs west of Egnar is named for the King family).

We called these wild horses "broom tails" (most had long unkempt tails). Ez and Lee Morris caught a couple on the Grassy Hills off of Island Mesa. Ez ran several head into a box canyon and roped one. It was hard times and he only had one rope but he caught another by its long tail and took a wrap on his saddle horn with it. Lee soon got there to help. The horse Ez caught by the tail was a sorrel. We named him Jimmy and Clarence broke him to ride. Clarence rode Jimmy for several years. He was riding along Chico one day when the creek bank gave way and both horse and rider took a tumble. Jimmy hurt his back in the fall and would not get up. Clarence pulled off the saddle and left him, hoping he would get up later. A flash flood came in the night and Jimmy was washed down the creek. He was dead when we found him the next day.

A former wild horse I rode was Shorty. He actually belonged to Shafstall. Ed got him from Little Bill Goforth. Shorty had a big bushy black mustache on his upper lip like many true Mustangs. He was hard to get on and off of so once you were on you stayed.

A chestnut sorrel showed up at the house one day, two years old and no brand. Clarence rode him one time and then turned him over to me. I couldn't afford a saddle so I rode him bareback. Not a bad horse. When he was four or five he ate some frozen thistles and died of colic. In fact we lost five or six horses at that same time. Several other horses got sick but managed to get over it. Dee, a favorite of mine, was only a yearling at the time. He disappeared and I thought he had, also, died. When I finally found him he was almost completely bald. He had rubbed off all his hair rolling and trying to relieve the pain in his gut.

Bess was a good blooded mare, a Steel Dust (Quarter Horse). She had one colt. We sold him to John Redd and he made a race horse out of him. Blue was part Percheron. She turned out a colt every year. One of her foals was Betty. Another was Sonja, named for Sonja Henie, a Norwegian ice skater that had won a gold medal at the Olympics. Sonja Henie was pretty and graceful. Sonja the horse only dreamed of being pretty or graceful. Sonja had a foal we called Spicy that Callie rode.

Our horses ran loose when we weren't using them. They mingled with other peoples' horses and the broom tails. Some years the mares caught a colt. Often we didn't know who the stud was. One year all the foals in the country were a cream color. We never saw the stud but he left his mark.

Through the years we had a great many horses and mules. I particularly remember the mule Kelly. One day I was driving down the road and there in someone's pasture near Cortez stood Kelly. I thought she was in our pasture in Utah where I'd left her. I happened to be in a pick-up and had a rope so I stopped, caught her, and hauled her back home. Someone called the sheriff and I heard they put up a road block but not quick enough. I found out later she had been sold by the sheriff's office in Monticello as a stray.
I also found out they had to return the pur-

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Stanley Crapo continued

chase price. No one ever came and talked to me and I didn't volunteer any information.

One of our mules was shot. One night several young men were coming home from a dance when they spotted a herd of horses and mules in a bean field northwest of Dove Creek. They took after them, firing over their heads to spook them out of the beans. Just as they shot the mule threw up his head and they hit him. That took a lot of the fun out of the adventure. They didn't know who he belonged to but didn't want him found in the bean field with a bullet hole so they got a trailer, loaded him, and hauled him where they thought no one would find him. However, not knowing who he belonged to, they accidentally put him on our property where I found him shortly afterward. (It was years later when I found out the whole story, including who the shooter was).

People would loan us horses, something along the line of take him and use him and while you're at it break him and feed him. One was a big grey. One day I was loading corn on him. I had put a hundred pound bag on one side and was lifting the bag to the other side when he reached back and bit me square in the back. Before I thought I pulled back my fist and hit him as hard as I could. I meant to hit him on the jaw but my fist landed behind the jaw and with the weight of the corn on my arm he fell like he had been shot. I was sure I had killed him but after a while he got up. He never bit again.

Predators were always a problem around the sheep, bears, coyotes, lions, they all liked mutton. A predator will kill anything he can catch, eat what he wants and leave the rest to rot. Their favorite meal is the very young. They also maim and injure and leave the killing to the herder to put the animal out of their misery. I've seen a bear swat a ewe, break every rib on her side and leave her lay. The first year after we got the lease on Taylor Mesa we killed eighteen bears. We had forty head of bucks in a pasture above Dolores. Bears killed twenty of them before we knew what was happening. We saved the rest by bringing them to the house.

In the fall of 1941 I was alone bringing the sheep down the mountain. I was on Beaver slope between Disappointment and Dolores when I saw a big bear in the middle of the herd. He had already killed and injured several sheep. I sicced the dogs on him. He ran to a tree but would not climb it. Suddenly he turned on the dogs and they ran to me. I didn't happen to have a gun but it had been raining and I had my rain coat over my arm. I beat the bear in the face with my coat until he finally turned tail. Another time I was on Stoner Creek and met a bear coming down as I was going up, both of us at a run, both of us after the sheep but for different reasons, no gun and no raincoat this time. I had to out bluff him but I was beginning to get scared before he finally backed off and went back up the mountain.

March of 1941 Clarence enlisted in the army. December of 1941 the United States entered World War II. We did not see Clarence again until after the war. He spent most of the war in North Africa and Corsica. Thirty percent of the soldiers sent to North Africa died, not from combat, but from disease and exposure. Hayes was only about seventeen but he volunteered for the navy and served in the Pacific Islands.

Stanley on King, holding Connie, January 1949

There was a local draft board made up of veterans from World War I. They decided who would be drafted. Every six months I had to be "classified". Physically I was A-1 but I was deferred because of the sheep. The Army needed meat and wool. Uniforms and blankets were made from wool. Not everyone that was drafted was sent to fight. Raymond Shemp, Hazel's brother, was drafted and sent to work in the mine at Telluride. The Army, also, needed metal and there was a shortage of miners.

In 1944 or 45 I was drafted and ordered to report to Denver. There were sixteen of us from Dolores County. I remember Wayne Harlow, Ed Baird, Glen Knuckles, Jimmy McCabe, Wilmer Dicken. They put us on a bus in Dove Creek. As the bus went we picked up more men at Cahone, Lewis etc. They took us to Alamosa where we got on a train. In Denver there were physicals and test this and test that. Then they put us back on the train and sent us home and told us to be ready to go, we'd be called in a week or two. I'm still waiting. We faced a lot of hardships during the war. There were shortages of everything but we fared better than those in the cities. At least we could always eat.

When the men went off to war they turned their horses loose to fend for themselves. The country was full of horses running at will. No one would hurt a soldier's horse even if they destroyed crops, got in a hay stack or made a general nuisance of themselves. After the war not all the men came home, many horses were never claimed and slowly started to disappear.

The summer of 1943 or 1944 (I forget which) was the year of the rain. It rained for forty days and forty nights (I've wondered about that Noah's Ark story ever since). It would start raining mid-morning, rain the rest of the day and then rain hard all night. Everything was soaked and stayed soaked. We were on the mountain with the sheep. The trails we traveled were a slick boggy mess. The flies were a fright. They laid their eggs everywhere including the saddle blankets and around the horns of our bucks. The eggs would then turn into maggots. The Rambouillets, with their tight wool suffered the worst. We tried all kinds of medicine but nothing worked. We finally had to resort to turpentine which burned their raw skin but it did put a stop to the maggots. Hornets were also horrible that year. The horses would stumble into the nests. The hornets were not particular, they'd sting man or beast, no discrimination.

In August or September 1948 our Navajo herder, John Lee disappeared. His body was found five years later. John was in his early forties and had worked for us for years. He was with the sheep on Taylor Mesa the last time I saw him. I stopped by the camp to check on him. Lee Morris and George Snyder were with me. John seemed nervous and upset about something and I've always regretted I didn't take more time to listen to him. We had sold him a horse, Pharlap was her name. He asked me if I thought it would be a good trade to trade Pharlap for a gun. I said sure, probably. He asked me to write to his wife in Chinle and advance him some money to send to her. John could speak good English and he was good with math but he could not read and write so Ez or I wrote letters for him. He also insisted that I return to camp the next day. George, Lee and I went prospecting on Stoner Mesa and I did not get back to camp for a couple of days. When I did return John was gone and the sheep were scattered all over the mountain. Pharlap was at camp but my rifle was gone. We immediately reported John's disappearance to the authorities and also spent a lot of time riding and looking for him. Five years later a boot with a foot in it rolled into the Priest Gulch road. Law enforcement tracked back up the hill and found John's body. My rifle with the crescent moon brand in the stock was with him. They claimed the back of his head had been "mutilated" but I wondered how they could tell after five years? We read all this in the paper, no one contacted us. I came to understand that that last time I talked to John he was trading his horse for my gun, though I didn't understand it at the time. We all missed John. He was a good man.

That fall my cousin, Jimmy McCabe, helped me get the sheep off the mountain. Jimmy was a cowboy and sheep were pretty foreign to him but he was willing.

The winter of 1948-49 was brutal. That fall and early winter was cold and dry. January 2, 1949 it started snowing and snowed hard every day until February 6. The wind blew hard. Some ground was completely bare while in other places the drifts were gigantic. Out of the wind the snow was halfway up the leg of a man on a horse (about forty-eight inches). Shortly before it started snowing we'd had a big load of hay brought in to feed the sheep through the winter. We fed it all up within two months and felt lucky to have it. When it finally stopped snowing we were out of feed. We took the sheep to Summit Canyon where there was less snow and more shelter. There was a crust of ice under a layer of fluffy snow. The sheep could walk on top of the crust but the horses and mules fell through with each step and soon their feet and legs were bleeding. In places the crust was so thick even the horses could walk over fences and rock ledges (and hope you didn't fall in).

After we got the sheep to Summit we hired Glen Knuckles to use his dozer to push out a path part way down Bishop Canyon. When you got lower into Bishop and into Summit the snow was not so deep. I used a pack string to take feed to the sheep until spring. Oil cake and corn was the best but we also fed barley and split beans, anything we could get. You had to be careful with the beans, if they had been frozen they would kill the sheep when they ate them.

The sheep would hear you coming and stampede to get the feed. The dogs would hold them back until I could get unloaded so they all had a chance to get a few mouthfuls.

Normally we went up to the end of what is now County Road 3 and straight off into Bishop Canyon but the trail was steep. When it was covered with ice it was treacherous. The horses would go but the mules would lay down and refuse to move. So we had to take the longer route around by King Springs. I would take the pack string into the Canyon one day, spend the night, go home the next day, spend one day home letting the horses and mules rest and then do it all over again. I rode King, Lloyd's horse, and packed horses, Dee, Pharlap and Betty and mules, Jack, Kelly and Susie. Sometimes I, also packed King and walked and led the bunch. When spring finally came man and animal were all thin and worked to death.

In June of 1949 we dissolved the sheep partnership and sold out to Joe Adams. We continued to care for the sheep until October of that year when Joe took possession. I was tired of the sheep and ready to sell. Sheep are a constant twenty-four hour, seven days a week job. It was always hard to get good help, especially during the war.

I had done some farming, raising dry land beans and wheat and always had a few cows so the farm and cattle became our livelihood. Then I got a job with the ASCS and worked for them off and on for the next ten years. I was the field wheat reporter. I went out and measured and mapped wheat acreage of area farmers that re-

Continued on page 6

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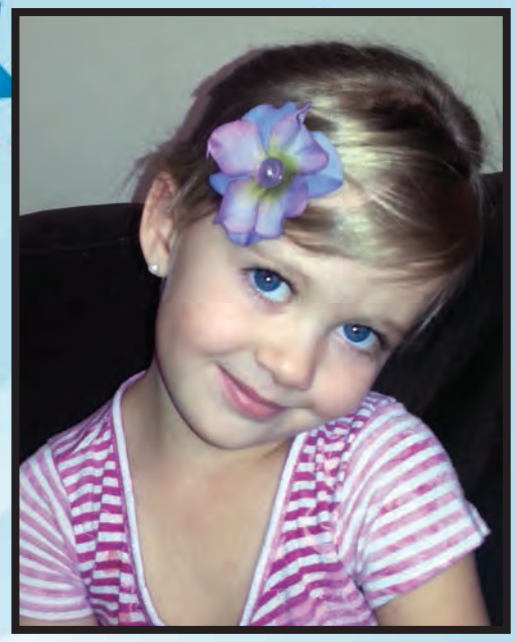

Little Miss Candidate
Holley Schamp

Daughter of Scott and Amanda Schamp.

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Little Miss Candidate
Lilianna Harrison

Daughter of Athena Harrison and Ethan Boyd

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Queen Candidate
Kris Johnson

Daughter of Buddy and Kati Banks & Rob Johnson and Karon Johnson

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Cutest Toddler Candidate
Hagen Schamp

Son of Scott and Amanda Schamp

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Son of Chris and Amanda Fluke

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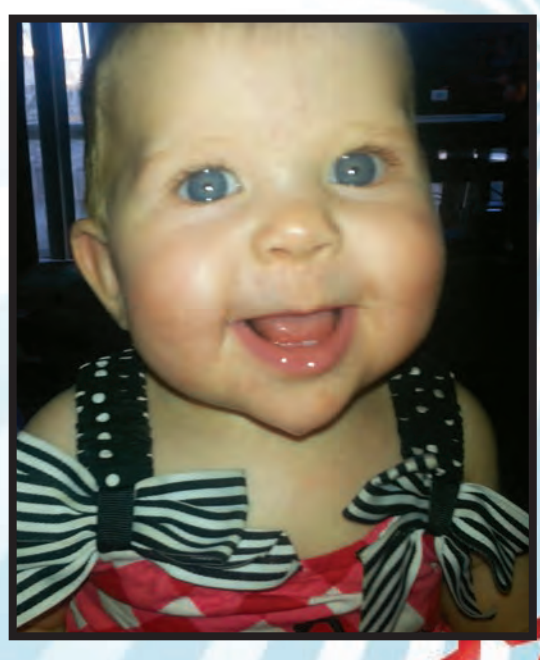

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Stanley Crapo continued
Stanley Daves mining

ceived government subsidy wheat payments. I was to verify that the farmer was in compliance with the amount of acres the government told him he could have.

In the early 50's I was a roustabout for Lee Ancel Drilling. We were prospecting for uranium. We worked in Disappointment and near Durango, Colorado and Grants, New Mexico.

In the mid 50's I worked at the uranium mill in Monticello, Utah processing ore. First I worked on the tailings pond. The job was to see that the ponds were flooded properly, shovel work and running a wheel barrow mostly. Then I moved up to the tank room. There were seven to eight tanks of chemicals and ore. I had to keep the flow going from one tank to the next, lots of walking and stairs for eight hours. Shifts were "day" 7:30 am to 3:30 pm; "swing" 3:30 pm to 11:30 pm; and "grave yard" 11:30 pm to 7:30 am. Every week our shifts rotated. I worked up to part time shift boss and then moved into the filter room. Here they sucked out the water that had gone into the mixture in the tank room. They were always trying different chemicals to improve the process. When they started using a lot of ammonia my body started to feel numb. Fearing for my health I quit the job.

One day as I was leaving work, after my shift, I met Herb Howell who was just coming on for the graveyard shift as my replacement. He told me it was his last day, he had a new job. As I was getting in my pick-up I heard the mine whistle blow. The whistle would blow if there was a problem. It would blow if the ore was bridging over so it would not go in the grinder properly before going into the tank. You then took an air gun and blew the bridge down, it was a fairly common occurrence. I found out the next day Herb had fallen into the tank. He would have died almost immediately.

After the mill I worked for Johnson and Youvon. This was another drilling company looking for uranium. I worked for Ross French Drilling putting in the pilings for the bridge at Bluff, Utah; then three months at the uranium mill at Slick Rock, lost the job at Slick Rock when the mill closed.

November 1962 I was sworn in as the Dolores County assessor to replace Frankie Eggers who had resigned before completing his term. I was reelected three times. I resigned December 31, 1973. I ran a shovel at the Dove Creek water ponds for a few days, best eight hour a day job I think I ever had, no state tax commission, no irate tax payers.

After that I spent about ten years driving tractor and wheat truck for Dave Fullmer . I also had cattle for years but today I lease my land out for wheat and pasture and just enjoy life.

Stanley & Callie Crapo - Wedding May 1941

From Stanley Daves

I started mining January 16th 1973 at the Henderson Mine located at Empire, Colorado. I was 19 years old. The first time I went underground I was scared, not knowing what to expect. Don Trusty was showing me around, and 2 miners were getting ready to blast a round and they were ready to break this greenhand in. Just as Don and I approached the blast area the round was set off. I screamed and took off running in the dark. I had lost my hard hat when I jumped and ran so I couldn't see where I was going. I finally stopped and looked around and there was Don on his knees laughing his butt off, along with the other 2 seasoned miners. This was definitely different than what the movies made it look like. I worked there 18 months, and was privileged to work with my brother Eddie Daves, friends from Dove Creek, Allen young, David Spitzer , Kevin Barlow, Randy Dossey, and Dwayne Garchar.. I also met new friends, one named Paul Rehmert who I really liked and who soon would become my brother-in-law.

After I left the Henderson mine I worked at Union Carbide at Deremo/Snyder mines. This was June of 1974. At this mine I was really educated on how to chase uranium, make bonus, and provide a good living for my family. I believe I had the best teaching available because of the great men who took the time to teach me, educate me in safety, and help me daily to do the best job I could do, as well as stay alive to work another day. A few of these great men were my brother Marlin Daves, and a friend, Jack Doyle. I also worked with many Native Americans at this mine, some in-particular were Ben Harrison and Albert Begay, who taught me the value of horseplay.

After working for a year and a half at this mine, my brother Marlin and I were transferred to Wilson mine located out Ucolo road, 18 miles outside of Dove creek. We started this mine with myself, my brother Marlin, Jack Doyle, Bill Nelson, Wayne Cook, Larry and Lynn Crawford, Roger Fraser, and James Hasty was the superintendent, and Elle Fraser was our shift boss. We drove drift from the Wilson to the Silver Bell mine. We did rehab on the Wilson, but soon despite our efforts the old Wilson shaft caved in, so we went through the vent hole north of the Wilson, and upreamed the new Wilson shaft. Throughout this process I learned many things which I have used throughout my mining career. We completed the Wilson with casing and guides, and when that was completed, we moved 3/4 of a mile to the end of the drift where we put in what is called the Silver Bell shaft. The Silver Bell was ready to start driving drift to the uranium ore body. I worked again with a lot of fine men: Raymond Cressler, Norman Ayres, Stanley Brewer, Jim Warren, Burt Wood, at this particular mine there were 5 of us Daves brothers working: James, Marlin, Woody , myself and my younger brother, Bobby Joe.

Marlin had his hands full keeping Bobby and I from horseplay; we couldn't help having fun on the job at others' expense. One of my funniest memories at that mine was turning my mine light off and sneaking up on Lynn Crawford. I grabbed him from behind and he began to cuss, scream and swing his arms around, so I had to keep holding on for dear life because I knew if I let go, I had a butt whippin coming. Bobby had a love of grease and would grease just about everything to see people get into it. he greased the hoistman's phone, we would let him lower us down the shaft, then Bobby would call back up and speak real low into the phone, and poor ol Dave Miller would have to really push his ear into the phone to hear Bobby, and the grease would be all over his ear. Of course we always denied any wrong doings; we would blame the Crawford boys or Roger Fraser, until one day we greased the wrong phone underground and our shift boss and older brother Marlin got into it. Marlin told Bobby and I if we didn't knock the horseplay off we both would be going down the road kicking horse turds. We both laughed after he left but knew he meant business. I continued to work there for 5 more years, then I would farm in the summer and go back to mining in the winter.

The winter of 1979 James Hasty of union Carbide, hired myself, my brothers James and Woody, and Kenny Bracket, James Davis, Bill Blackburn, Dale Kibel, and our shift boss was Ray Mason, to put new declines in the mine called Deluxe 15 & 16, down Slick Rock. We worked all winter there until time to farm. No horseplay on this job, nobody else had my sense of humor and I had no partner to share the blame with.

The uranium mines near Dove Creek wasn't hiring the winter of 1980, so myself, Tommy Wood, my brother Woody, went to Ticabo by lake Powell and got a job mining at the Tony M uranium mine. I now was hired by Plateau Resources and we stayed there until spring then went back to farming again. The mines were all shut down from 1980-1989.

In the fall of 1989, I went to work for John Reams, mining uranium at the Rim Shaft on West Summit; the mines were just starting to make a comeback. At this job I worked with my brother Woody, and others such as Leroy Jack and Calvin Baker. This would last through 1990. Leroy Jack gave me the nickname "Farmer." He was funny, you never knew what was gonna happen with him. I would have to say I was schooled in the practical jokes department by him. Again the mines shut down and I went back to farming. In 1997 I went to work for International uranium, at the West Sunday mines, located on the Gyp Ridge, there is where the fun began. Mining was in my blood, but the next group of men I had the pleasure Of working with was Harley Gardner, Larry and Gary Kibel, Richard Peterson, Todd Eldridge, Mark Robinson, Danny Wright, just to name a few. We worked hard, but I was always looking for a victim to play my jokes on. I was now named "red -headed bitch," and "muck muck." Poor Mark Robinson took the brunt of my joking, and he later told me that all the money he made at the mines did him no good cause he had to spend most of it on mental therapy caused from myself and Gary and Larry Kibel. The mines shut down again only 2 short years later, I would go back to farming in 1999.

By 2004 I went back to mining, this time at Cotter Corporation, in Bull Canyon at the JD9. Rick Ernst was our boss. Myself, Gary & Larry Kibel, and Tommy Wood, would again be working together. Uranium would start coming up In price, so they started opening more mines, this is when we started hiring a new younger generation of miners: Shon Dossey, Joe Buffington, Jerod Gersch, as well as my 2 sons, Trent and Dallas Daves. I now became more cautious. I still had my sense of humor but had more fun teaching my boys and the younger ones how to be safe, and how to develop into skilled miners, I felt more accomplished.

Tommy Wood, my son Trent Daves and Joe Buffington were transferred to the SR11 mine to sink a decline. I soon would follow after a replacement was found. Myself and my son Dallas also were moved to Delany Hill to the SR11, and this time around the job would last until 2006, and again another lay off.

February of 2007, I once again went back to mining for John Reams and Tomcat mining as a mine superintendent on the Gyp Ridge at the Topaz mine in the West Sunday complex, and again I would work with fine men: Mingus Lee, Chase Davis, my son Dallas Daves, John Reams' son, Matt Reams, Richard Peterson , Jack and Rick Randolph, Gary and Larry Kibel , Steve Puderbaugh, Kevin Clark and Ben Button, to name a few. This would last 2 and half years, before Dennison Mines shut us down.

I was one of the lucky ones and was able to go the next day to the Beaver mine located in La Sal, Utah, there I was mining with Seasoned miners as well as younger miners, Jeremy Veach , and Brennan Banks was a new addition to the green-hand department and would soon learn a few of my practical jokes. As their lead man I would make them sing "Green Acres" as we rolled down the decline on our tractors. I loved getting the new hires. The Kibel boys had a reputation of being grumpy, so I would make one of the new hires, Derek Woolsey, flip them the bird when they passed us in the haulage area. Derek and I had a lot of extra time on our hands, so we made good use of this in the dry room, where we would tie knots in other miners diggers, nail their lunch buckets to the wooden bench, or fill them with log chains. This time around it would last until October of 2013.

I was in and out of the uranium mining industry for a forty year span, and in this time I have experienced fatalities, radon exposure, and cave-ins among other things, that gave me wisdom to share. I have also seen ventilation and technology, and ground support improve, I've been through many rise and falls of this unpredictable industry. I started as a young man of 19, and enjoyed the closeness and friendships that develop between older and younger generations of miners. I have been a miner, a mine superintendent, electrician's helper, Safety inspector, a mechanic, a marriage counselor, a banker, a referee, a friend, a boss, and a prankster. As I reflect back over my past 40 years as a miner and a farmer I wouldn't change a thing, I have been blessed.

Stanley Crapo with a sheep wagon

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Union Carbide and the Deremo Mines

by Larry Deremo

Union Carbide Mining Corporation (UCMC) signed a lease with the Deremo family in 1955.

In 1956, Larry Deremo was discharged from the Army and returned to Dove Creek. He went to the farm and found out that there were drill holes and roadways all over three of their fields. It was a dry farming year with limited production. Wheat was just producing six bushels per acre and the beans were at 50 pounds per acre.

Larry went to work for the Johnson and Yuvan Drilling Company out of Naturita, a sub-contractor for UCMC. He ran a core drilling machine working on the Deremo property. He drilled three or four holes and on the last hole, he hit a hole that contained about 15 feet of high grade Uranium. This was late in November on a Friday afternoon so the hole couldn't be probed till later.

Most all of the drill rigs were moved off the Deremo property for the winter. When spring came, the drilling rigs for UCMC didn't return to the Deremo property. Larry was moved to other properties to drill. His dad Clyde Deremo, ordered UCMC to vacate the property for violation of contract, (the contract stated that when UCMC found a commercial body of ore, that they would start production as soon as possible.) They then offered to buy the mineral rights but the offer was rejected by the Deremo family. UCMC then started paying advance royalty monthly until production was started.

In 1958, UCMC sank three compartment shafts (D1 Shaft) to a depth of 740 feet, it was completed in June of 1959. Production of mining started immediately after the completion.

In April 1962, the Deremos requested a mining investigation and hired two mining geologists and a mining engineer for investigating the production of the mine. UCMC stated that the Deremos didn't understand the mining operations.

The production was as follows:

1959: Averaged 5137 dry tons per month
1960: Averaged 4523 dry tons per month
1961: Averaged 2765 dry tons per month
1962: Averaged 1500 dry tons per month

After the Deremos received the mine maps and the drill hole logs and visited the mine, the results showed that there was 78,500 tons of ore available immediately, and 200,000 tons available within 12 to 18 months. UCMC still wanted to buy the mineral rights but it was turned down by the Deremos.

The ore from the Deremo mine, was shipped to the Slick Rock mill and on to Naturita until the Slick Rock mill was closed in 1960. After that, it was shipped to the Rifle mill.

In a short period of time, from 1957 to 1971, the mine produced 1,983,000 dry tons of Uranium and Vanadium. The Deremo mines won many awards including:

National Safety Award January 31, 1961- operations of 418,135 man hours without Disabling Injury

Safety Achievement Award State of Colorado: 13 years without a Disabling Injury

The Deremo mine was the largest Uranium and mining operation that Union Carbide had in the Sand Wash Stone formation. It included three shafts, D1, D2 and the Eloise, plus 11 vents for air circulation. The mine opened in 1958 and closed in 1991 (34 years). They employed up to 120 people, and also employed many truckers that delivered the ore to the mills. Reclamation of the mine ended in 2013. UCMC and UMETCO mining and milling, helped to stabilize the economy in the Dove Creek area and all the surrounding areas for many years.

Larry Deremo ~ This information is to the best of my knowledge and memory

Left to right: George & Ethyle Hainey and daugher, Helen & Daidy Burke, Carles, Dean, and Lula Wagoner ~ 1921

Some Interesting Facts about the Fourth of July

Carolyn J. Fosdick

• In 1781, Massachusetts became the first state to recognize July 4th as an official state holiday.

• In 1783, Salem, North Carolina, held a 4th of July Celebration with a challenging music program titled "The Psalm of Joy". This became the recognized first recorded celebration and is still celebrated there today.

• In 1791, the first recorded use of the name, "Independence Day" was used.

• In 1870, Congress made Independence Day an unpaid holiday for federal workers, and a paid holiday in 1938

• In 2009, the largest display of fireworks in the country was in New York City with over 22 tons of pyrotechnics exploded.

• The first week of July is typically one of the busiest travel periods of the year, as many Americans use the holiday for extended vacations.

• Miami, Florida lights one of its tallest buildings, adorning it with a patriotic red, white, and blue color theme on the 4th of July.

• Since 1970, the annual 10K Peachtree Road Race is held in Atlanta, Georgia.

• The Boston Pops Orchestra called the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular held a program which has run annually since 1973. The event was broadcast nationally since then, from 1987 until 2002 on Channel A&E and from 2003 until 2012 on CBS, until it was dropped with no reason given. It was a truly inspirational experience to see this show on TV.

• On the Capitol lawn in Washington, DC, a free concert, "A Capitol Fourth" is held yearly with music and fireworks. Over half a million people attend annually.

• I have heard, but cannot verify, that if you take a child to at least one 4th of July parade, that child will grow up to be more patriotic as an adult.

Information taken from: Independence Day (United States) – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (with the exception of #12 which came from Carolyn J. Fosdick.)

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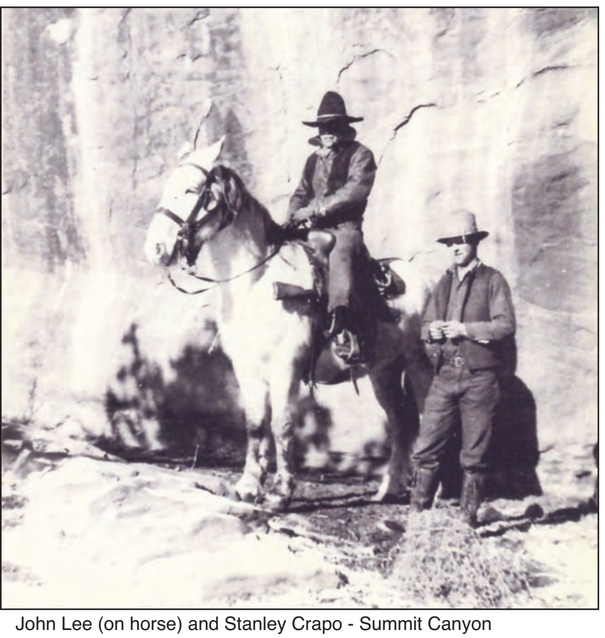
July 2015 • Comin' Home



John Lee (on horse) and Stanley Crapo - Summit Canyon

	July 2nd	July 3rd	July 4th	July 5th
9:00 AM		3-on-3 Sand Volleyball	Parade	All Day and Night Softball Quickdraw
9:30 AM				
10:00 AM		Horseshoe Tournament	Opening ceremonies	
10:30 AM			Kids Games	
11:00 AM			Cook Shack opens ~ Senior citizens first	
11:30 AM			Greased Pole, 2 age groups	
12:00 PM			Big Foot challenge	
12:30 PM				
1:00 PM			Adult Games	
1:30 PM				
2:00 PM			Pig Catch	
2:30 PM				
3:00 PM			2 man Drilling signup	
3:30 PM				
4:00 PM				
4:30 PM				
5:00 PM	DCVFD Beer Tent Opens	Alec's 5K Scholarship Walk	Bost Family Tradition Bluegrass	
5:30 PM		Washer Tournament signup		
6:00 PM		Washer Tournament	Patriotic Hour	
6:30 PM				
7:00 PM			John More & Bluegrass Etc	Kevin Under the Tent
7:30 PM				
8:00 PM		Royalty Announced		
8:30 PM		Austin Walhert Band		
9:00 PM			Dark-30 Fireworks	
9:30 PM			DJ Music by Martin	
Early signup available for Alec's 5k, Washer Tournament, 2-man Drilling, Quickdraw Softball at Coke Trailer				
	Weber Park		June 28, 9:00 a.m. 5th Annual Poker Run Starts at the Sinclair	
	Tennis Courts			
	Football Field			

Times and schedule subject to change

Jim Burke

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A big thanks to everyone who has helped me in one form or another to make
Pick 'n Hoe such a success ~~~ Carol Marie Howell

Dwayne Garchar - 2014 Pick 'n Hoe Grand Marshal

Dwayne was born in Cortez, Co in 1952, and lived in Dove Creek, CO, till he graduated from High School in 1971. He played basketball all 4 years of High School and of course helped on the family farm.

He married Cherrie James and they have 2 sons and now have 4 beautiful granddaughters, which they enjoy very much and are very proud of.

He loves to go hunting and fishing and goes every chance he gets.

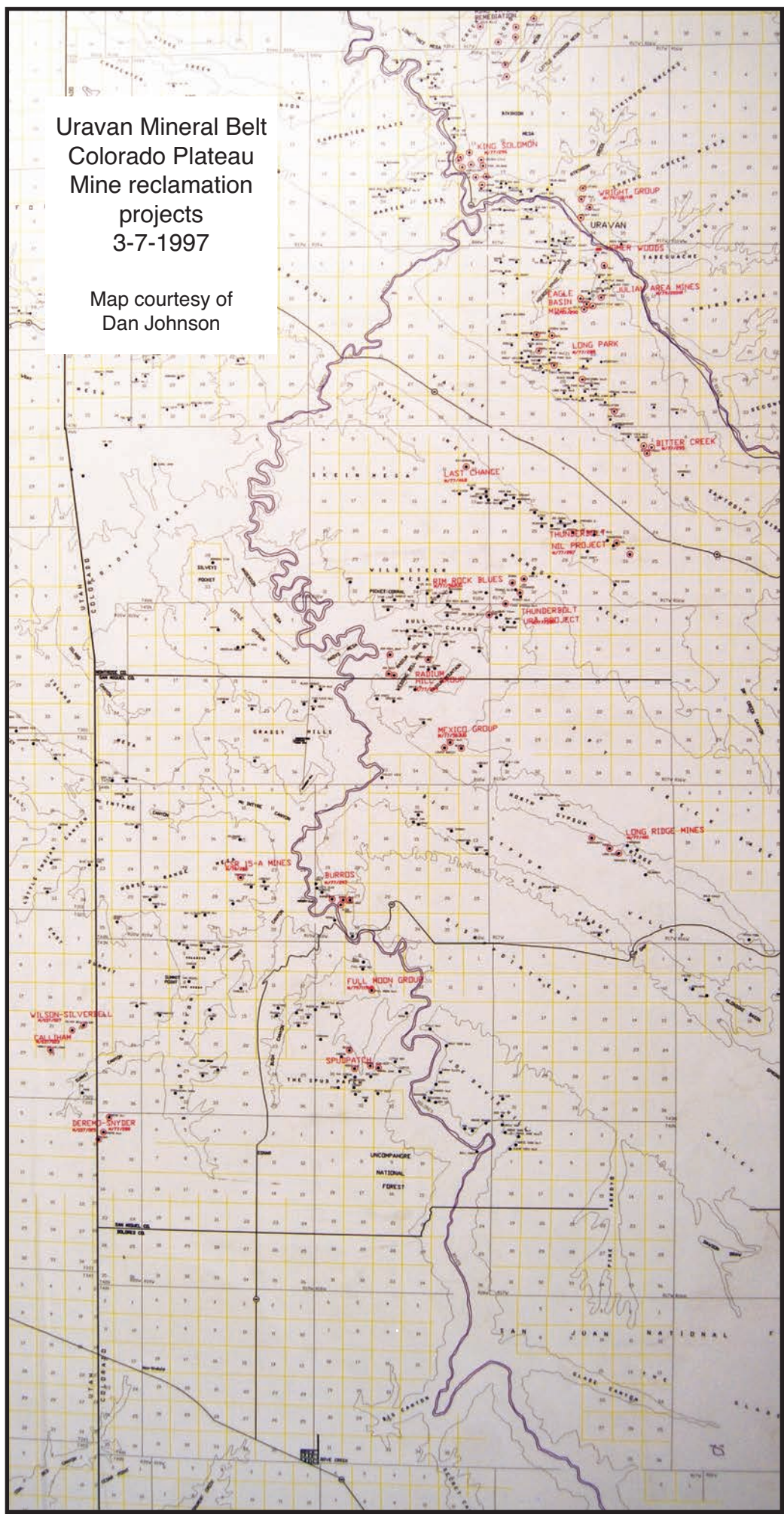
In 1971 Dwayne and his family moved to Dumont, Co where he worked in the Urad mine until he was able to get on with Empire Electric Assoc. in Cortez, Co. in 1973 as an appentice. The schooling and on the job training took 4 years. Then when he became a full fleged Journeyman Lineman, he was able to finally get back to Dove Creek in 1978, his dream. He has been with EEA for 41 years. He has seen many changes and upgrades at EEA, and there sure are a lot less outages these days! When an outage happens it is always the worst weather (rain, hail, sleet, snow ,wind blowing 100 miles an hr, or in the middle of the night) they get up and put on as many clothes as they can still work in and go to work to get everyone's lights back on. His wife might let him retire someday!

One full time job wasn't enough for Dwayne so they bought a farm and have been farming since 1988, with the help of his family. Then in 2005 they sold their house just east of Dove Creek and moved to Cahone on the farm. We think it is easier being closer.

Dwayne was in Search & Rescue for more than 20 years.

Dwayne joined the DCVFD and has been fighting fires for over 27 years and been Fire Chief for more than 13 years. The Fire Dept. is a very important part of his life. He never misses the meetings (Wed night every week) so you better not have anything you want to do that night, cause it isn't going to happen. He also sits on the District Fire Board (2nd Tue of the month). He and his crew have gotten new Fire Houses built, new updated equipment, new trucks and more training to keep all the members safer, and put the fires out more quickly and efficiently. Not a better Fire Crew in the 4-Corners. The DCVFD was also instrumental in getting the new Cook-Shack built at Weber Park, and helps with the Pick-N-Hoe, watering down the fields. They put on the Beer Tent to raise money for the Fireworks and of course set them off each year. They help out the people in the community who are struggling for whatsoever the reason.

Dwayne has probably helped out almost everyone here in this community some-way , some-how through his job or volunteering!



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Lyndell Brinkley

Memories of a Boy Growing Up in Dove Creek

These are memories I have of growing up in Dove Creek. Most are true, but some may be a bit hazy or completely off the mark. None the less, this is how I remember it!

I was born in 1941 in Perryton, Texas, only because it was the closest hospital. We lived about 15 miles away in Gray, Oklahoma. I don't remember much of our time there. I do remember a big hill that was on the way to Perryton. Years later, after living in Colorado, that hill kind of disappeared. It was still there, but just kind of a bump in the flat country. We moved to Colorado in the spring of 1944. I remember some of that trip. We camped out on the way. Had a caravan of a truck, pickups, and several cars. Making the move to Dove Creek were my parents, Loyce (Peanuts) and Irene Brickley; my grandparents, Jess and Alma Wilson; my uncles Bob Wilson and J. E. Wilson Jr. We also had friends Carl and Luella Kerns that made the trip. We moved into Frosty's cabins on arrival, but I don't remember how long we lived there. We moved into the old Shutt house (where Robert & Evelyn lived) sometime later. I remember my mother kicking boards from the window to get into the house. We lived there a few years and Dad raised rabbits, and started a dairy. We also farmed two 160 acre plots 5 miles west of town. Our neighbors were Leone and Irma Shutt and Mrs. Brumley, Hank Lettman, Ez and Hazel Crapo and Loren and Grace Berry. I remember Mr. Dossey used to deliver water to us, but we also got water at the Crapos. At that time the water in Dove Creek was not fit to drink. It was full of alkali. Northdale had a store and a post office run by the Shutts. Dad and mom then built our house and dairy barn on the 160 acres west of town. It is the place where Terry Funk now lives. I remember my grandfather dowsing our well, and it worked, we had a great well. We had running water into the cow barn for cleaning the milk bottles and things connected to the dairy. The house was three rooms and we didn't have electricity or running water. We had kerosene lamps and a water bucket with dipper. Art Canfield and Junie Weese helped Dad build the house. I remember losing some of my brand new crayons down the cracks in the floor. Mom finally flattened tin cans and made strips to cover the cracks. I often wondered if the crayons were still there when the Funks finally tore the house down. There were only 4 houses between Dove Creek and the state line when we built our house. There were the Shutts, the Bud Sandavol & Jim Marrow house where the fairgrounds are now, the Gray's house at the intersection to 80 Highway (Highway 141) and Jones' house near the present day High Country Elevators. I remember we lost one of our best milk customers when Frosty's store burned down. Not long after that Dad sold the cows and stopped the dairy. My grandparents and uncles then revamped the barn and moved into it, leaving the Shutt house. The barn was well built and is the house still used by the Funks today. I remember we used to get ice for the ice box from the Redshaw's over in Ucolo. They cut blocks of ice from their lake and stored it in an old log cabin. The ice was covered in saw dust to keep down the melting during the summer. We ran wires to the car battery and listened to the car radio in the house. I remember listening to the Grand Ole Opry and Joe Louis fights. We eventually got a Delco generator so we finally had some electricity. We farmed beans and wheat and once dad tried a new crop of safflower, but went back to just beans and wheat. I remember clearing sagebrush from some of our land. My grandparents had the 160 acres across from our house and also some smaller plots to the west. We also rented some land at the state line and out toward Cedar Point. Bean farming was a little different back then. First we had two row equipment and then finally 4 row equipment. We cut the beans then shocked them by hand. Wooden slips pulled behind the tractor transported the beans to the threshing machine. Eventually we converted the wheat combine to thresh the beans, but we still had to walk in front of it and pitchfork the bean shocks into the auger. Of course, hoeing the beans was everyone's favorite job, fighting the heat and the gnats and waiting to get to the end of the rows for a cold drink of water.

About this time some of our relatives joined us in Dove Creek. Clyde and Faye Kuykendall built a little one room shack behind our house. They eventually bought some land and moved the one room to Coal Bed Creek north of the Shutts. Clyde built a few rooms onto the one room. Felix and Zelma Kuykendall also moved to Dove Creek and took over a homestead at the end of McCloud Point. They lived in an old log cabin with a partial dug out. I loved that place. We had some great times there. I remember lots of card games and a little spotlighting. Deer meat was a year round staple back then along with pinto beans, potatoes and a wonderful garden of onions, carrots, radishes, corn, turnips, lettuce and of course green beans before the pintos were ripe.

Alvin and Lola Geiger moved here and built a house in Utah just west of the Ucolo road. He was Dad's brother-in-law. We also gained some new relatives when J.E. married Margie Baird and I had a new aunt.

One of my favorite memories was of the Dove Creek baseball team. Dad was a pitcher and some of the other players I remember were Arthel Hodson, Cal Gore, Ernie Stevens, Leonard Garland, Lem Lindquist, my uncle Bob Wilson, and the Hancock brothers Bob, Ivan, Allen and Wilber. Of course watching a whole game could be a little tiring for a 5 year old, so the real fun was playing with Robert Thompson, Billy Hodson and LeRoy Gore out in the pinion trees behind the ball field. Robert always had some of the best toys in town.

My friends before I started to school were Robert Thompson, LeRoy Gore, Bill Hodson, Donnie Southcott and Bob & Don Weber. I remember spending the night at Donnie's and falling through their ceiling and landing on the kitchen table. It seems only part of the upstairs had flooring and I stepped in a place that didn't – very embarrassing. Once school started I had more friends and a great 1st grade teacher – Mrs. Louise Pribble. She gave me the greatest gift of all – literacy – I could read. It started with Dick & Jane, Spot & Puff and I have been reading ever since. Something I remember about that 1st grade was breaking out a window trying to throw a ball up on the roof. I left and went to Mom working at the Frontier Cafe. I was scared and embarrassed. Nathan Mellott – I believe he was the principal -came and got me and took me back to school. He was very nice and not mad at me at all, whew! I remember my now great friend Floyd Johnson sitting on me at recess – the big bully. Another memory was of some of the older girls chasing us 1st graders and kissing us. The one I remember was Dorman (Sisk) Baird. Classes were in the old rock building which still serves today. I remember losing Millie Krebs and Barbara Trusty to a second grade promotion, but we gained Joe Reedy. Joe became a great friend, so it was a good trade. My second grade teacher was Mrs. Barber, another great one. One thing I remember about the second grade was this girl falling out of the swing and hurting herself. I have been married to that girl now for 54 years!!! I had Mrs. Pearl Hatfield for 3rd grade, Miss Bonnie Lindquist for 4th grade and Mrs. Mary Almond for 5th grade. I never went the whole year to the same school until the 7th grade. Each winter we would move south so mom and dad could work when the fields were covered with snow, then we would move back in the spring and I would be back in the rock building. I went to part of the first grade in Phoenix. I wore bib overalls on the first day – it's what we all wore in Dove Creek – and the kids teased me. Mom went to the store that evening and bought me some blue jeans. For the winter of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade we moved to Hot Springs, New Mexico, but always back to Dove Creek in the spring. In the middle of the 5th grade we sold our house and land to Felix and Zelma Kuykendall and moved to Parsons, Kansas. I did come back to Dove Creek for a few weeks in the 6th grade, but finally went the entire year in Parsons in the 7th grade. We moved back to Dove Creek for the 8th grade and I finished the rest of my school years in Dove Creek.

Mom and dad got a divorce when I was in the 8th grade and mom and I lived with my grandparents. They had built a new house on their 160 acres across the road from our old house. Being back in Dove Creek was wonderful with all my old friends and some new ones that had moved there.

Now I would like to take you on a tour of the Dove Creek that I remember. Not all of these places were there at the same time, but these are my memories. We will start at what is now Debbie Park on Main Street and move south. There was Stull's Jewelry Store and next door was Petefish's barbershop. I believe Don Weber and I got the first flat top haircuts in Dove Creek. Next, Wayne Blythe had the drugstore and next door was Mrs. Knous's house. She was the mother of a Colorado governor. The next house belonged to Alec & Maggie Davis with Delia. Delia worked many years in the post office. Moving south was Young's grocery store. Fred Young served as sheriff for a time. Then there was Laird's Electric and the Dove Creek Press. Several people owned the Press. I believe Dan Hunter started it, and Birl Brewington owned it for many years. My memories are when Frank Mignon owned it, because I worked there all four years of high school. I started at 65 cents an hour sweeping the floors. By the time I graduated I had learned to run all of the presses and do everything as an apprentice printer. Lou Tabler was my supervisor at the press and he taught me valuable lessons about work ethic. Another employee at the time was Joann Dermo. That experience served me well helping pay for college in later years. I worked at the Durango Herald while attending Fort Lewis, and The Boulder Daily Camera when I went to CU. I actually took a cut in wages from $8500 as a printer to $5100 when I started teaching school in 1967. On with the tour: Essie's Cafe was next to the Press and then the telephone office and Main Supply. Main Supply has a rich history in Dove Creek. It was built by Feodal Sitton in the 20s, he had a general store there. Jessie Gift had a business there. Then Bill and Emma McCormick had a general store. Mr. McCormick grubstaked Charlie Steen in his search for uranium before he struck it rich. McCormicks later had a big store in Moab. Other occupants were George Nelson and Eldon Leffel, both having hardware stores. Reaching the highway, we turn west to the Dove Creek State Bank. Next door was McKibbin's Store owned by Frank & Helen McKibbin. Frank was also a sheriff at one time. On the corner, where the post office is now, was a Phillips 66 station. The post office was next. There were several different businesses in the right side of the building. I believe there was a drug store and later on Ted Weed moved his store here. The postmistress was Beverly Hodson. Bob Elder delivered mail in the area for many years. We go down the hill to Frosty's Grocery, one of the most important stores in town. Also, in back were cabins for rent. Frosty and Myra Thompson ran the place for many years. I remember the cold locker where we had a bin to store food. It was a great place to go on a hot day. I remember seeing a huge frozen fish there. On a cold day nothing was better than standing over the floor heater to get warm. Often, in Frosty's, Dan Robinson would grab your arm and say he could just jerk it off. We were kind of afraid of him, but then not really. Some of the people I remember working there were Kermit Miller, butcher, and Ruby Medley at checkout. Across the street west from Frosty's were some of the best dugouts ever, built by Robert Thompson. A great place to smoke the ever favorite cedar bark cigar! The Continental Bulk Station owned by Hubert Sellard was next door to the dugouts. Then came a grain elevator. I loved to stay in the truck when the lift on the front wheels would go up to empty the grain out the back. Next door to it was an old dug out pond where tadpoles could be captured. The log Assembly of God Church and parsonage were across the street and then the home of Pierre and Bill McAlroy. Singing Sam's restaurant owned by the Huffs and then the Rogette Motel owned by Dan and Margaret Wadsworth. Next was the Church of Christ and a little further down was Rohwer's garage. Now we come to the A & W Root Beer Stand, one of the great

Continued on page 14

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THE HOMESTEAD YEARS (and beyond)

from the journal of Daisy (Snook) Burke Dalrymple

I was born December 18, 1895 in Fulton County, Illinois. In October of 1904 our family moved to Barnes, Kansas. Father chartered a railroad car and rode with the stock and household goods we took with us. Mother and we four children went by passenger train. We lived on a farm. I started helping with the chores when I was nine or ten. Father died in 1908 and mother in December of 1912. I was seventeen when I married Jim Burke in January of 1913. My younger brother and sister, Rollin and Lula, came to live with us. Our daughter, Helen, was born in 1914.

Jim and I rented ground and farmed but we wanted to own land of our own. Land was too expensive in Kansas so we decided to look elsewhere. February of 1921 we had a public auction and sold our farm equipment and stock. We went first to look at railroad land for sale in Canada, the Saskatchewan Province. We could not see how a crop could be grown where there was such a short growing season so we decided that was not where we wanted to buy. We knew several people who had moved to southwest Colorado so in August Jim and six other men decided to go and look the area over. They had a wonderful trip, except for one hair raising experience when their brakes failed going down a steep grade near Telluride.

By September we were prepared to move. Sister Lula had married Charlie Wagoner, Jim's cousin, and they decided to come with us. Also friends, Ernest and Ethyle Hainey, wanted to come. They had a daughter the age of our Helen.

Jim and I had a new 1921 touring Ford car. Charlie and Lula also had a Ford. Ernest and Ethyle had a Dodge. All three cars were packed inside and out, even on the running boards, with our clothing, bedding, cooking utensils etc. We left Kansas September of 1921. We had to stop each evening early to make camp. Lula had diapers to wash (her baby was just over a year old). Haineys had a three burner gasoline stove that we cooked on. We had a tent we slept in and, yes, it was crowded.

We ladies (and the little girls too) had outfits of tan khaki that we wore. Ethyle's and Lula's were sort of a coverall, pants and shirt made in one piece; mine was pants with a separate blouse. They were convenient for climbing over car doors that were fastened shut so as not to lose anything from the over load we carried. I'm sure we shocked many as women did not wear pants then but we needed then and were glad some company was making them.

When we broke camp the morning of the 14th we knew we would be crossing the Great Divide by way of Monarch Pass. The pass was narrow, steep and rough in spots but not too bad. The next day was the rim-rock road of the Black Canyon. The road was very narrow and ran high along the cliff with only a place now and then to pull out and let a car you were meeting pass. The car going up (us) had to back down to the passing place when we met another car. It was a clear sunny day but dark in that canyon. That night we camped early in Montrose.

We left Montrose. The road through the valley to Ridgeway and over Dallas Divide was not bad. But the road from Placerville to Norwood was very narrow along the San Miguel River and then a steep two mile climb up a rough hole filled road into Norwood. We camped in Norwood. The next day it was miles through sage brush and the Disappointment country to the Dolores River which we crossed on a rickety bridge and up Slick Rock Hill. I have no idea how far it was but that hill took us hours and hours. Steep does not begin to describe it with huge boulders in the center. We had to lift the cars over one at a time, the owner steering, the rest of us all pushing and lifting. If we had not all been young and strong and used to hard work I doubt if we would have made it. It was dark when we finally got to the top but we continued on to Egnar where we were allowed to camp in their log school house.

We had been nine days on the road from the time we left Kansas until we reached the homestead country near Egnar.

Our first day among friends from Kansas was with the George Mellotts. We met his three brothers and mother; all had filed for homestead land. Jim had released his to Bert Mitchell and Milo wanted to relinquish and offered his to Jim and I. However, before making any deal we wanted to look around so the next day we headed to Cahone where we visited the Jim and Gene Johnson families (they were also from our home town of Barnes, Kansas). We soon found that all desirable land open for homesteading was already taken so we went back to Milo and bought his relinquishment for $500. He released the land back to the government and we filed on it, 320 acres.

Within a short time Haineys decided to go on to Oregon. Charlie and Lula moved to a place about one and a half miles west from ours, just over the state line in Utah, near the pour off at the head of Coal Bed Creek. Charlie got work with Del Rassmussen. Del had a general merc store and post office and was trying to start a town (Ucolo). There was also a school and several homes. Lula and Charles had a small stone house, well-built but not finished inside. It sat on the state line. Lula did her wash in Utah and hung it to dry in Colorado.

Our house was a cabin that Milo had built. 17 foot by 31 foot was the inside measurement. There was mud chinking between the logs on the outside. Inside the walls were covered with blue building paper. There were three nice two pane windows and two doors, one had glass in the upper part. The floor was three inch matched/grooved pine. It was as good a house of any and better than many. There were no partitions; we used a piece of canvas from the tent across one corner where the beds were. Jim made our furniture of lumber. The legs of the table were 4x4 inch with a top of two 20 inch boards, top and legs were bolted together. The cabinet had a flour bin, drawers and a bread board. The cupboard above was nice too with four doors and two drawers. Our chairs were one old rocker, a bench the length of the table, wooden boxes and blocks of wood. We traded our car for a team and wagon.

Daisy (Snook) Burke

It was too far to the school in the Burn to send Helen so I taught her at home. But we did go to all the school entertainments and community gatherings. They all ended with a dance. We had not gone to a dance since we were married but soon joined in the fun. Everyone went, even the children. Helen started to learn to dance when she was not more than eight years old.

The one thing that we disliked was that most men wore their six gun, not normally in sight but we knew they had them. In March of 1922 two men that we knew were shot and killed a few miles west of our house, Bradford was their name. A man by the name of Stevens shot and killed them, claimed self-defense. In fourteen months there were eleven killings in the San Juan Basin. The Bradfords were the only ones we knew. The younger Bradford had been a dance partner of mine at the Burn school two nights before he was killed. Charlie had to serve as a witness at Steven's trial. It was during the summer several months after the killing. He and the others had to dig up the Bradfords for evidence. Charlie was really ill, could not eat for days. Stevens was found guilty but somehow made his escape and was never brought back. Some say he went to Mexico.

Edna Mae, Lula's second child, was born June 25, 1922. I was not to be sent for unless things did not go well. But Charlie sent Rolf Rassmussen, a boy of thirteen or fourteen to get me while he went the ten or twelve miles to get the closest registered nurse, Mrs. Carroll. When we saw the boy come charging into our yard at top speed, we were sure the worst had happened. Our only way of travel was with a team and wagon. It was a wild ride to Lula and Charlie's and when we got there the baby had not yet put in an appearance. At this time Charlie's brother, Ray Wagoner, and his wife, Daisy, and boy, Neil, had come from Kansas and were living with Charlie and Lula. The house was only one room so the men and children camped outside while we waited through the night. It was 5:00 a.m. before the baby put in an appearance. When she came she was feet first. She was dark blue and not breathing but Mrs. Carroll worked with her until she got her to breathe. It was a miracle that baby lived, thanks to a wonderful nurse.

That fall both Wagoner families left by covered wagon, headed back to Kansas. We felt bad to see them go. We had always lived near relatives. We were mighty discouraged too. We'd run out of money, the jackrabbits had eaten the garden, clearing brush was slow going with one team of horses, a grubbing hoe and a borrowed brush rake. Jim worked for feed for the horses and chickens. He also bought barbed wire and fenced 160 acres. The government required that we have forty acres in cultivation before we could get our patent.

The winter of 22-23 we were broke. There were times we did not have the two cents that it took to mail a letter. Lee Shutt, the store keeper at Northdale, let us have credit on groceries that were necessities, sugar, lard, flour, salt, matches. We had potatoes, dried corn, beans and apples. In the fall we had gone with the wagon to Arriola where we'd camped and picked apples which we exchanged for cabbage etc. We, also, had a barrel of dill pickles and we had eggs from our chickens. Our meat was mostly rabbits. Jim was never lucky enough to get a deer. We never asked for it but Dad Burke would once in a while send us a $25 money order. We were always mighty glad to get it. Jim walked to Northdale to get the mail, four miles one way. Once he carried a fifty pound sack of flour home on his back.

Toward spring we traded the team and wagon for a car. We were allowed to be gone from the homestead for five months of the year and Jim hoped to find work. April 12, 1923 we started our five month leave. Charlie Dixon, a young neighbor, left his wife and two babies with his parents and went with us. The old Ford engine gave us trouble. Charlie and I rode in the back seat going downhill but would have to get out and push uphill. It seemed like we were going uphill most of the time. When we got to Ridgeway Jim and Charlie tore the engine down but could not find the trouble. We were several days in Ridgeway but there was no work so we went back to Placerville and then on to Telluride to check at the mines. We camped at Placerville. The next a.m. we started before sunup and in the dark Jim finally saw the spark that was causing the short in the engine. Finally he got it fixed and Charlie and I got to ride both downhill and uphill.

In Telluride the lawns were starting to green up, a lovely spring day. We went on the stage up to the Tomboy mine, five miles up Savage Basin. The stage was a two seated spring wagon with room back of the seats for baggage. Jim, Helen and I were the only ones going up with the driver. There were four horses pulling us. After we had gone about two miles straight up we transferred to a long sled as there was snow and ice the rest of the way. The road was all ice packed. Out on the edge of the cliff the snow had melted. The sled would slip toward the edge of the rim, the thawed ground would stop both the sled and our hearts. We saw two or three avalanches. When we finally got to the top we found the boarding house was for only single men. We could have gone back down on the sled but thought it was safer to walk the five miles back down. Helen and I had no overshoes and our feet were soon badly blistered. We had $2.60. We couldn't camp, our bedroll was still up at the Tomboy. We got a room at the McCloud Rooming House. The Mrs. was very nice. She let us have a room for $1. Helen and I stayed in the room while Jim went out and got us cheese and crackers and milk.

The next day Jim got work at the Smuggler Mine on the roustabout crew. We rented a small house in the alley back of the Transfer Barn. We had to pay $5 a month rent. Jim made enough money we could pay off our debt at the Northdale store and some of the money we had borrowed (we didn't pay Dad Burke until the next fall). We also paid to hire some brush clearing on the homestead. We had $250 to carry us through the winter.

In 1923 Telluride had some big ore companies closing down their operations but the Tomboy and Smuggler were still employing several hundred men. There were also some smaller companies, Black Bear, Sheridan etc. There were twenty-two saloons (bars with dance halls) and a red light district on Pacific Avenue, not far from where we lived. The mills and mines shut down only twice a year, the Fourth of July and Christmas, for a two or three day celebration. The third of July 1923, about 3:00 a.m. we were awakened by the fire alarm. We dressed and ran to the street in front of the Transfer. From there we witnessed almost a full block of buildings in flames. The Silver Belle, a large two story dance and gambling hall with rooms above and another adjourning two story building were burning, also several of the "cribs" that housed the "girls". We saw quite a show of the girls in their beautiful gowns and house coats. It was not hard to tell them from the other spectators. The public opinion was that the Diamond Honkytonk, competitors of the Silver Belle, had hired an old swamper to start the fire. It was noted that he did not have to work after that night.

One day in the grocery store Helen and I met a lady we had known back in Barnes, Kansas. Her husband, Earl Morris, and Jim had gone to school together. What a reunion we had that night! Jim also met a man, Luther Winklepeck, that I had known as a child. He told us Clyde Dickinson, whom we knew, was working up at the Tomboy. I had one good neighbor, Mimie Molter.

On September 12 we headed back to the homestead. Clyde Dickinson decided to come with us. He preempted a 160 acre homestead that had been relinquished by Harve Dixon and built a small cabin on it.

This time we kept the car. We ate better this winter and were able to go more. But we still did a lot of walking to save on car expenses. It was only two and a half miles to our friends the Bert Mitchells, not more than a mile to Pendergrafts, less than a mile to Ucolo etc. It was too far to walk to see friends in the Burn, the Keeps, Eastins, Sherrels, Bales, Peters etc. but they all stopped by to see us on their way to the store or post office.

Jim made a deal with Bert Mitchell to have

Continued on page 13

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Daisy Burke Dalrymple continued

him plant our place to cane the spring of 1924 so we could make our final proof that fall and get the government deed to our land.

We took our leave again this year, leaving the homestead in April. The roads were very muddy and we did not quite get to Redvale that first night. We had to ask for shelter at a farm house. They let us put our bedroll on their kitchen floor. Another man had gotten lodging at a home near where we were. The next morning he could not get his car started so we took him with us. We found a landslide in Redvale Canyon. Jim and the other man had to clear boulders and dirt from the road, took more than an hour. The man left us at Placerville. We went on to Telluride.

The year before Jim had only been on the roustabout gang a few days before he'd gotten a better paying job operating the elevator that sent everything out on the tram to the mines and boarding house up the mountain (also receiving what came down). This year his job was operator in the ball mill, better wages yet.

Helen Burke - homestead cabin

At first we lived across the river but then moved to a house at Pandora near the mill. It was a nice place but with the steep mountain sides on three sides it felt a little like a prison. On the fourth side was a view down to Telluride, about two miles away. Mrs. Record was a neighbor and became a good friend. I sewed and did crochet work for a Mrs. Alex Carrier. I made enough money to buy some clothes for Helen and me. We were planning a trip back to Kansas in the fall to see family and I made some new dresses for the trip.

In September we went back to the homestead for a few weeks to complete our three years on the property so we could get our deed. We spent a few days down near Cortez picking apples. We went to one last dance at Egnar and then headed for Kansas. We planned to be back in a few weeks so left much of our stuff behind. I had no idea it would be thirteen years before I would see the place again.

Jim and Daisy Burke homestead
Helen Burke, Hermie Foote, & Jim Burke

We almost lost our lives November 11th on Monarch Pass. The snow was too deep. We were about a half a mile from the top and completely exhausted from breaking trail. Jim froze his ears and hands and Helen's feet were frozen. Then we met a man coming down with a team pulling a hay baler and riding another horse. He tried to pull us with his saddle horse but without luck. He had to unhitch his team and help us over the pass. Jim offered to pay him but he refused. He said that if it had not been for the "woman and kid" he would not have stopped. He knew it would be long after dark before he was able to get himself down out of the mountains and he was in danger of freezing also. We never learned his name.

We spent some time in Kansas visiting. Then went to Blackwell, Oklahoma where Jim had family. Jim worked in the oil fields for a time. We were packed to come back to Colorado in May of 1925. Charlie and Lula were coming back with us. When we went to the post office to give our forwarding address we had a letter from Del Rassmussen at Ucolo telling us his wife, Callie, had died and also that Del had no job for Charlie. We went back to Kansas instead where Jim and Charlie got jobs in the gypsum mills north of Blue Rapids. Helen was eleven and I was expecting our second baby. Jim did not feel well. He had developed a bad cough. He went to several doctors. They all told him he had tuberculosis. There was not a lot they could do for him.

Our second daughter, Callie, named for Callie Rassmussen, was born March 13, 1926. Jim died February 4, 1928. I went to work helping with the housework on a farm north of Blue Rapids. I was able to keep Callie with me. Helen went to live with Lula and Charlie. Later I worked at another place for a couple of older men. I'd never learned to drive a car but I was so scared of Mr. Dean's driving that I had him show me how. He had a big Chrysler.

August 21, 1933 I married Pete Dalrymple and Callie and I moved to his farm. Callie was in second grade that fall. A year later August 30, 1934 Pete and our son, Daniel (named for my father), was born.

The weather was hot and dry and there were no crops. Pete could not make his farm payment that year. The next year the man he had bought it from foreclosed and we had to move. We moved to another farm but finally I convinced Pete that we should move back to Colorado to the homestead. The fall of 1937 Pete, Dan, Callie and I returned to the farm northwest of Dove Creek. These were the "dirty thirties", not only were there no crops but no market for what little people did have to sell. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president. He organized the P.W.A. (Public Work Association). Pete was able to get work with them. He also farmed and worked in the mines some. At first he was home some but later he got work in Utah some 60 or 70 miles away and was gone a lot.

When we got back to the homestead there was a lot of work to do. People had stolen all the furniture, the windows, the doors, even the floor. There were also fences and sheds to be built and repaired for the stock we had brought with us. It was too late in the year to work the ground and get a crop planted for the next year. I did a lot of canning, tomatoes, peaches, etc. Two young men were leaving the area and gave us permission to gather stuff from their farm, beans, pumpkins etc. We did manage to keep the car and were able to borrow money from the bank.

The spring of 1938 we had company from Kansas. Their children had had scarlet fever. We didn't know it and the parents did not tell us. There were no signs of the rash but the skin on the little boy's hands was still scaling off. Callie and Dan both caught the disease and almost died. Callie lost all of her finger and toe nails. We thought Dan would choke to death before Pete could get the nurse, Mrs. Beatrice Brady, from over in Utah. Mrs. Brady saved Dan's life, running her fingers down his throat to open the air passage. She told us Callie had been near death too. It was months before they were well.

Callie walked two and a half miles to school at Coal Bed. She finished the eighth grade and was started on the ninth but quit to get married to Stanley Crapo (1941).

I was tired of living so far in the country, alone much of the time, that I insisted that Pete move us into Dove Creek. Before he left to work again he rented a two room shack in Dove Creek, near Clyde and Eloise Deremo. Pete got Stanley and the neighbors to move the household goods and chickens into town. The other stock was cared for by neighbors out on the farm. Lee Deremo helped me cut wood that winter. Pete and I divorced in 1948.

In May of 1949 I bought a little one room shack on three lots on the corner of 9th and Main in Dove Creek. I had a job at Nick Cook's. He had a snack bar and I also worked in the home which was in the same building. I did ironings for people and Dan worked odd jobs for various farmers. I also had a small income from the farm which was leased. Stanley, Dan and some hired help worked on my house for me, digging and cementing a basement, adding a room. Callie and Stanley were expecting their second baby. Callie had to stay in bed. They moved in with Dan and I so I could help care for Callie until after the baby was born in January 1950.

September of 1952 I started working in the school lunch room with Alma Rieske and Anna Webber. My wages were $25 a week. It was hard, heavy work but I liked it. Dan was a senior in high school. The summer of 1953 I worked in Dr Kadlub's home. Then back to the lunch room in the fall. Cleo Gore replaced Anna. Then Carrie Lee Johnson took Cleo's place. Alma was away because of sickness so Hazel Crapo took her place.

The next fall I went to Towaoc to cook for Ute Indian and government employees. I enjoyed meeting and being with all different kinds of people there. There were all different nationalities.

In March the school board at the Pleasant View School asked me to come and help organize their lunch program. That first year my helpers were mothers of the students, none with any experience in mass cooking and serving but we did okay. The next year the school hired a regular helper, Flossie Cassady. She became a good friend. I worked there until November of 1959. I'd been having some health problems and had even spent a few days in the hospital. It was my first time ever as a hospital patient. I finally had to retire. I continued to garden and take care of a large yard and was able to take a few trips with friends. In 1968 I learned to croquet afghans and by 1971 I had made twenty-five. I cooked for friends and made several wedding cakes.

(Daisy died June 1979 and was buried in Kansas next to her first husband).

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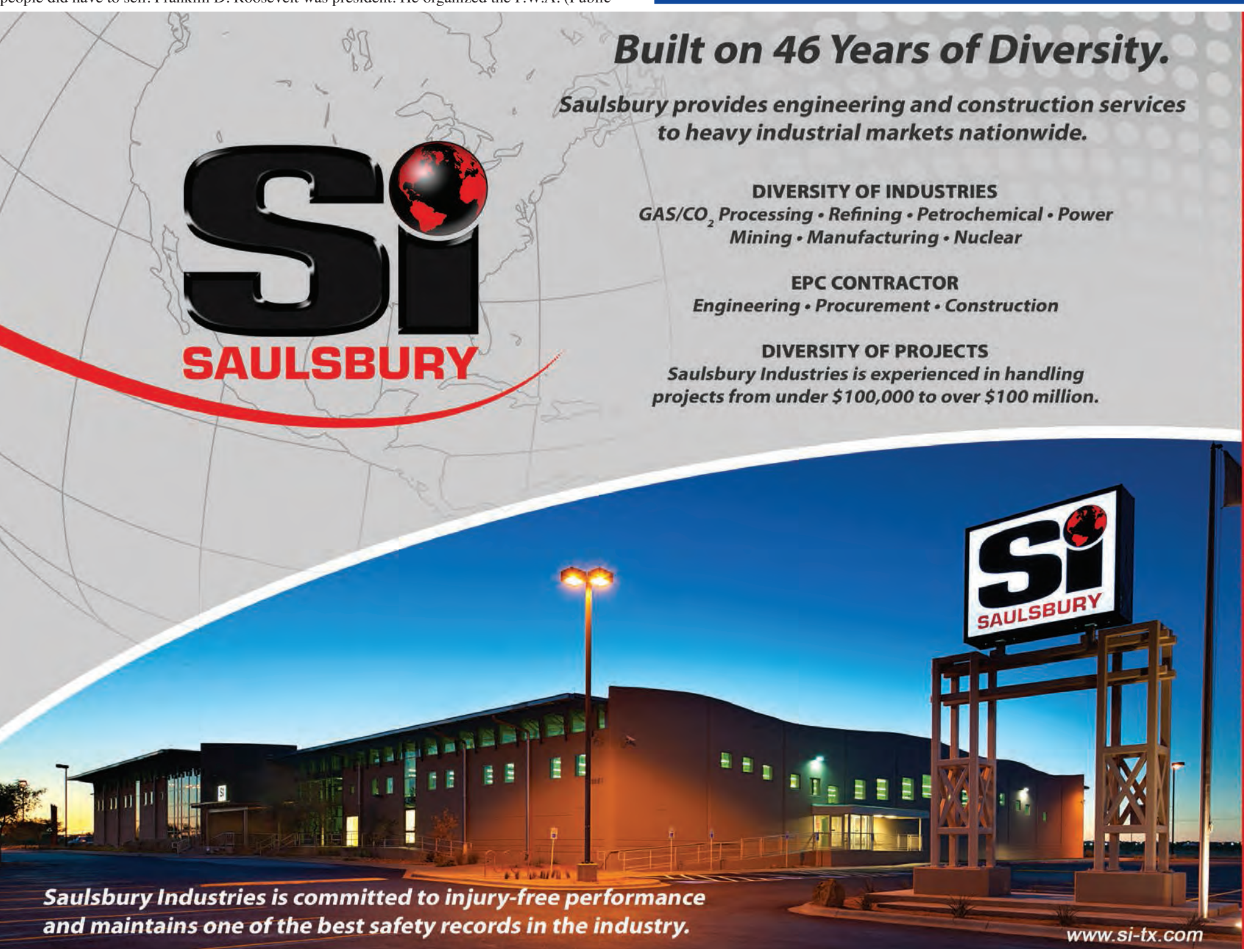

The underground world Brickley continued

By Eddie Daves

This is some of the memories of my years in the underground world. I began working at the Rio Algum Mine near Lisbon Valley, UT in May of 1971. My supervisor was Ronnie Barnett. We were hired to complete the drill water and air system and start mining a ventilation drift to connect the two shafts and install rail system for the air 40 mucker and locomotives. Some of the people that worked at the mine were Ronnie Barnett, Jack Gardner and Eldon Shear. Needless to say being the new hire and a total green bean I got the full treatment of having the total heck scared out of me to all of the crappy jobs they could dream up. Finally they realized that I was there to stay. Shortly after that a major power failure occurred and we had to ride the chippy cage for 2,900 feet and then be hoisted about another 50 feet by a rope. After that incident I said "this it not for me" and I left the mine.

I applied at the Henderson Mine near Empire, CO as they were hiring to develop a mine of the future and this started my mining career - December 7, 1971. I continued working at Henderson Mine until September 1991.

As a new hire I once again spent the next few weeks cleaning the piss ditch and hauling trash.

Finally I was assigned to a mine crew on the 8100 mining level. The Henderson Mine was in development stage, the Urad Mine which was just to the east of the Henderson Mine was in full production. Urad Mine paid the bills until Henderson Mine went into production. The total investment to develop the mine would include funds from the sister mine at Climax near Leadville, Co.

The development of the mine took approximately 10 years and $500 million dollars. The mine was designed as a block and cave system or panel mining and was the biggest, most modern and most efficient Molybdenum mine in the world. It is located between the Red Mountain and Harrison Mountain on the Continental divide. At that time the mine entry was by shaft. The shaft was 28 foot in diameter and 3100 feet deep designed to transport men, equipment and waste rock.

Finally after having a better understanding of the block and cave mining system, I realized that this was an all right job, it would take approximately 10 years of development before this mine would be producing and I could retire here. At that time retirement was a dream.

After spending approximately two years in mining I transferred to maintenance of the shafts. They had just completed the second shaft and we had to maintain the shaft, pumps and cages. Yes inside this shaft there were three cages: a chippy four man capacity, a man material cage that could transport a five yard loader without the bucket and/or 100 people, and the third was a waste rock bucket. In the near future this would become a double deck man cage capable of transporting 100 men at a time.

Also the mining department was developing a tunnel for our ASEA Locomotives and trains (the size of the Rio Grande) that would haul ore to the mill site about 15 miles away. There was a total of 15 miles of rail with 10 miles being underground at a six percent grade. These mining crews had been working two years of nonstop seven day production to get the tunnel complete. The tunnel was mined from the east side by Henderson personnel and by Harrison Western and Boyles Brothers from the Mill Site.

From there I decided to go into maintenance. I was hired into maintenance as a material coordinator and worked there for a couple of years and the mine was ready for production in 1976. At that point the mine's manpower had tripled and employed 2,100 at the peak of operations with people from all walks of life.

It had taken approximately ten years to develop the mine in order to produce 40,000 tons of ore every 24 hours and ship it 15 miles by rail through the Continent Divide to the Mill. Production started and we were the largest producer of Molybdenum in North America. The good time had begun, making good money, no worries and the production lasted for approximately eight years and then the price of Molybdenum dropped.

In 1983 and 1984 we were hit by lay-offs and the mining was stopped. We continued with some of the mechanical people, repairing rubber tired equipment and the mine personnel continued with mine ventilation and the water system during shutdown knowing in the future the mine would reopen and we would be ready. Just after that the production was lower, but still producing 14,000 to 20,000 tons per day - it was a slow process.

Another lay-off hit in 1986, it took a lot of our people including myself. I had 17 years invested and was put out to pasture. During the layoff I went to work for Asarco Mining in the Denver branch where we were taking lead product and melting it down into litcharch for Newmont Gold Mining in Elko, NV. This was for the micro gold leech operation.

After a nine month layoff I was recalled back to the Henderson Mine and was three years away from vested retirement. I went back to the mine and got my years and retired in 1991. During my employment at Henderson Mine I was a miner, maintenance clerk and maintenance coordinator planner. I transferred to the Haulage Department as a haulage trainer, moved to the Track Department as a railroad ultra sonic tester. I was later promoted to the Track Foreman and retired from that position. I moved to Cortez, Co where I still live and enjoy being back home.

I was reading about the Henderson Mine today and they are still in production, the 8100 level that I was involved in has been exhausted and caved in. The rail road system is now the longest mine conveyor system in Colorado and a complete new level called 7225 is being mined. The article says the Henderson Mine, as of January 4, 2010, had produced a total of one BILLION pounds of Molybdenum.

Some of the people around Dove Creek, CO that have and or might still be working for the Henderson Mine or the new owner Freeport-McMoRan are Stanley Daves, Paul Rehmert, David Cressler, Owen Poole, Allen Young, Randy Dosey, Carl Neely, Don Neely, Lynn Crawford, Dewayne Garchar, Peggy Daves, Kevin Barlow and I am sure I left a couple names out.

by Marlin Daves

I got started in mining in 1960, at the Deremo mine. I was 17, but I told them I was 18. I only worked 2 months and I just didn't like it, so I quit and went into the Army.

I went back in 1967 at the Deremo mine as a miner, and I worked with my younger brother Stanley, as well as many others from the Dove Creek area.
They wanted me to transfer to the Wilson Silver Bell, but I told them I wouldn't go unless Stanley could go with me. We drove over 1/2 mile of drift. I worked for Union Carbide at the Wilson Silver Bell for 16 years, and I also farmed when I got off work and on my days off.

I got laid off in 1972 for one full year, but the first 2 miners they called back was Jack Doyle and myself, then everyone else. Jack and I had many adventures together: we even went into the Army together, our serial numbers in the Army was one number different and the same would be true with our mining numbers.

When the mines got ready to shut down I lacked 2 weeks from retiring, so James Hasty kept me around another few months so I could retire.

I got to where I really enjoyed mining; it got into my blood. I worked for Crowleys 23 years after the mines around Dove Creek shut down and now I'm just a farmer.

by Mike Ernst

I first mined in this area in 1976, when my dad (Harold Ernst – aka Buck) and I started a decline for Don Tripp on Long Park south of Naturita. The decline was finished in the early part of 1977 and was sold to a large company before any mining was done.

Dad and I continued to work for Don Tripp at the little mine called Unita, which is located at the top of Slick Rock Hill to the West. We worked the Unita through 1977 and into 1978. Later that year we moved over to a new mine Don had called the Letty Jones. This mine had a steep decline that required a hoist to raise- and lower a 3-ton car on rails to remove ore from the mine. At this time the mine in Silverton, Co. had closed so my brother Rick joined us. In 1979 Rick and I left dad and the Letty Jones Mine to work in Alaska for a Canadian Company. This did not last long and we soon came back to Dove Creek. After that we went to work at the Sunday Mine in Big Gypsum Valley for Union Carbide Corp. The next year Rick and I were asked to start a new mine for Union Carbide called the West Sunday. The West Sunday was about 1 mile west of the Sunday Mine. We were still working there in 1982 when the mines closed and we were all laid off.

I believe it was in it was in 1987 when I went back to work at the West Sunday and was there until the mine closed again in 1991. This is when my career in mining ended.

Brickley continued

hang out places. I remember eating 10 hamburgers on a bet with Petefish. I had to eat them or pay for them. That last burger wasn't very good, but I got it down! Moving on west we come to our landmark – the Frasier Elevator. Turning back toward town we pass the Weber place and then a couple of grain elevators still there today. There was a gas station where the Sinclair is today and next was a big hill that had a cut out. I remember Lloyd Crapo hiding his car there. I'm not sure why, but I remember that. The Griffin cabins and trailer park were next. Ruth's dad built the house in 1945 and we still have it today. Across the street was Denny & Jones. They sold International farm equipment and cars. Dr. Hasbrook's office and Frank Lambo's cleaners shared the next building. The Frontier Bar & Cafe followed. Elba and Frances Wilson owned it and their son Elba Dean Wilson was a good friend. My mom worked there several years as a waitress. The next place up the road was a welder's shop, across from the old post office. I can't remember his name, but he welded my tricycle together one time after I had ridden it a little too rough. The next place has memories of different times. First there was a large hill with a sign that listed the names of all area soldiers from WWI and WWII. The hill was removed and a Conoco gas station run by Hy Pockowitz and the Dove Creek Implement building occupied the place. John Martin started Dove Creek Implement and it has since been passed on to his son Cecil. I have purchased 2 beautiful Ford trucks there in recent years and when this one wears out, I'll be going back. Marc Semadeni and Brett Martin have my thanks for selling me great trucks. Virginia Cash's Store was next along with an insurance company office owned by W.A. Thompson. My mother worked there for a time. The next building was occupied by a Dr.'s office, Dr. Clark, and the Empire Theatre owned by Neil Bolt. The building next door has a long history. It was the county court house for many years. I remember the town library being there at one time. Ted Weed had a dry goods store there as well. Moving around the corner and up Main Street was Charlie's liquor store and the pool hall. I believe the fire department was up there, as it still is today. The Hunter Hotel was across from the old court house. Dan & Lola Hunter owned it. If you ever have the chance, read some of the old Dove Creek Press stories written by Dan Hunter. Colorful language fails to do it justice! Moving on east there was the gas company building still there today and Hixson's Texaco station. Crossing Dove Creek as you looked off to the south there was an old log cabin rumored to be the home of Zane Grey when he wrote Riders of the Purple Sage. On up the hill was the Laird residence, some Quonset huts and then houses occupied by the Sellards and Bairds. The last business was another gas company at the turn off to the pumps. I believe the Sandersons owned this place, but I'm not sure. Heading back toward town we first pass the Lindquist house and then the airport. Next were some houses, one occupied by Mort Coffman and family. The Maverick gas station was next before you get to Romer Mercantile operated by David and Jean Corlett. Their home was next door and then came Jim Brandt's welding shop. After crossing Dove Creek again you come to the Elk Café operated by Bud & Sally Vinger and then the Dove Creek Opera House. It was a shame this place couldn't have been preserved. Heading north up Main street there was an old hotel and some other old buildings along the way until you came to the First Baptist Church, which was just a basement. The Trails were here at one time and then Nick & Mary Resovich had the church. Ruth and I were married here by Nick on Christmas day 1960. The parsonage of the church was next door. Don't think there was much until you got to the courthouse and then the schools. The teacherages were at the end of Main and across from there, at one time, was an ice skating rink. It had a warming house and water could be flooded when it was cold for the rink. I had one of my only nose bleeds there after face planting on the ice. Well, that brings me to the end of the tour. I know I probably forgot some places or have some things mixed up, but then these are my memories. Help me out when you see me!

When I was in high school Mom got remarried to Warren Kuykendall. It is kind of strange that my grandmother Brickley's maiden name was Kuykendall, and Clyde and Felix Kuykendall were from that side of the family. We have never made any connection between the two Kuykendall families. Warren homesteaded out on Summit Point. He is one of the finest men I have ever known. He taught me a lot about living and loving and I am proud to have had him as a step-dad!

I hope you have enjoyed my reminiscing. There are a million other memories of people and events, but……time & space. Ruth and I have had some great experiences living, working and traveling throughout the world, but Dove Creek will always be home. I feel very fortunate to have grown up and lived in Dove Creek. As someone wrote, "It Takes A Village", thank you past and present people of Dove Creek for raising me, educating me and caring for me. I remain ever grateful!! Lyndell Brickley

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The Golden Age of Rico

Carolyn J. Fosdick©2014

This article is reviewing the 100 years of mining in the rugged Rocky Mountains of Southwestern Colorado: The dim trails worn through the forests made by wild animals, used by Indians, and later fur trappers from St. Louis, and prospectors of a century past have become today's jeep trails, graveled roads, and paved highways. The mining town of Rico, Colorado means "Rich" in Spanish. Rico was incorporated in 1879 and is 26 miles southeast of Telluride, Colorado, and 38 Miles north of Dolores, Colorado. At the time, Rico was in Ouray County and the town of Dove Creek did not exist yet. The Rico Mountains are steep, the gulches deep, and erosion continues, sometimes at alarming speeds. Dense growths of aspen and spruce made prospecting hard.

In 1833, the first white man in the area, Wm. (Colonel) Walton was a trapper from Taos, New Mexico and was the first white to explore the Dolores River Valley. He observed there was evidence of old Spanish smelters in the vicinity. As early as 1860, Gus Begole prospected the Dolores River Valley and located some gala lodes near what is Rico today, but the area remained inactive until 1869. Others heard and followed, and by 1869, a party of prospectors entered the Dolores River Valley from Silverton and Trout Lake. The Pioneer Lode was discovered in 1869 which became the first developed profitable ore producing property in the Rico area.

A party of prospectors returned to Fort Defiance in August that year and reported to E.N Darling who organized a party of fifteen men to investigate the reported discoveries. They built adobe furnaces (Spanish Smelters) which were constructed from native materials and were not suited for the purpose, even though the Spanish had apparently used them. When they collapsed after a few months, Darling abandoned the project. During the summer of 1870, Darling built the first permanent structure in Rico, a pretentious log cabin erected at the site of Rico. Within weeks a small settlement appeared and mining activities increased. A boom of the area seemed eminent, but the panic of 1873 had a killing effect on mining. Many miners went to the Black Hills hearing of the excitement there. The panic lasted three years.

Apart from the panic was the major problem of transportation. In 1875, during the panic, the extension of the railroad to the south and west of Denver was the first step in bringing railroads to the San Juans. It was a period of uncertainty and doubt. Routes for the train line to Rico from Lake City seemed like it might work via Ophir Pass and Trout Lake seemed to have advantages, but the area had heavy snows that closed the route in the winter. An alternate route was considered from the south, one by way of the Dolores River Valley, but it was infested with hostile Indians. A toll road was built along the trail down Bear Creek Hill and Scotch Creek and down into the Dolores River Canyon. This road was abandoned after a few years because of the treacherous route. Colorado, the Centennial State, was admitted to the Union in 1875. Following a treaty with the Ute Indians to open Indian Lands as a reservation, the area to mining was opened and within two years the number of prospectors in the Rico area increased ten-fold. (The names of many prospectors and of mines developed during this period are available if you are interested in more details. Check out Charles Engle's book online.)

News of the number of mines discovered in the area spread into the area rapidly until early spring of 1879. Within months, a small community of prospectors flowered into a booming mining town with an estimated population of 1200 people. In August, the miners held a meeting to draft local regulations and R.C. Darling was elected President of Committees. Rico was granted a post office and a mail route was established from Silverton via Ophir and Trout Lake and the first major sale of mining property was recorded in 1879. The price was $60,000. Dolores County was created with the division of Ouray County creating an area of 950 square mile area on February 10, 1881. By now it seemed that Rico would become a mining metropolis. Hundreds of mining claims were staked out. 105 log cabins were built during one thirty-day period. Beginning with the incorporation of Rico in 1879 until the early 1890s, Rico showed steady growth despite many problems, one of which was still adequate transportation. Light and power were non-existent, and communication was inadequate. Supplies were freighted into Rico at $12.00 per ton, while ores were shipped out by pack train and wagon to the railroads, then on to the smelters in Denver or Pueblo at an additional cost of $8.00 a ton. Otto Mears, a diminutive 5'3" Russian immigrant who laid most of the narrow gauge railroads in southwestern Colorado, pushed forward the rail line, The Rio Grande Southern Railroad, from the south in 1889. The Rio Grande Railway finally reached Rico in 1890 from the south along the Dolores River Canyon. Rico became the county seat of Dolores County.

Probably the greatest single impact on mining in the area was the discovery of the Enterprise Contract in 1887. David Swickheimer bought half interest in the Enterprise, and is one story of rags to riches, to riches to rags, back to rags to riches, with many ups and downs. He was versatile, capable, and well-respected, but he became caught in a web of circumstances that almost led him to the brink of ruination. One of the major problems was that the cost of operation was several times more than anticipated, and funds were dwindling. All of Swickheimer's savings were invested into the project because they found evidence that there was gold in this location. Creditors finally refused to loan him any more credit. Thousands of dollars in wages were also owed to the miners. At the most crucial time, Mrs. Swickheimer won $4000 in a lottery in Louisiana, and she used the money to pay a few of the smaller bills and get some much needed supplies, but it was just a stop gap. She offered to pawn her diamonds and jewelry. However, this was never necessary; the shaft reached a depth of 262 feet when it met with a vein that contained 15 inches of ore worth $300 per ton in silver and gold. The Enterprise hired 200 men and soon became the largest producer of ore in the Rico district and was the hub of all mining operations. In 1891, fifteen claims were bought from the Enterprise Group for $1,250,000 in cash. A boom that would last for six years was started in Rico. By 1892, total production figures for the year were $2,553,050. The ore was clean and ran high in gold and silver.

The boom of Rico was accelerated with the arrival of the Rio Grande Southern in 1890, and this spurred construction within Rico. Constructed of stone and pressed brick, these included the Dolores County Courthouse, the Rico State Bank, the post office and several other businesses, and also a four room school. Mines operating in the area employed 1800 to 2000 men, four freight trains were required daily to run ore and supplies, while four passenger trains arrived daily with passengers and mail. Businesses grew and bloomed. Rico had reached her zenith.

But, of course, it couldn't last. Repeal of the Sullivan Silver Purchase Act by President Grover Cleveland in 1893 shattered the future of the mining camps and plunged the miners into financial chaos. Within months, 4000 inhabitants of the region dwindled to 2500. By 1900, the count was 811. The low reached was 212. Rico had reached its lowest depths.

There were more booms and busts in the area, but not on the scale of the Golden Age of Rico. Mining started again in 1913 and lasted until 1919. It started again after four years, and following were a few years of prosperity. The bottom of everything fell out of mining with the fall of the stock market in 1929 which shut down the mines. Some operations started up again in 1938 and operations were increased and by 1948, the Rico Argentine Mining Company increased their holdings from about 240 acres to 3000 acres. Then in 1948, some operations of the Rico Argentine were curtailed and a crew of 200 men was reduced to less than 50.

A sulphuric acid plant was started in 1953 a mile north of Rico, and continued during and following the Uranium Boom, but the plant but was closed down and partially torn down in 1963. The Rio Grande Southern struggled through the years and was bought as scrap in 1953. Presently much of the railroad bed is a part of Colorado State Highway 145. In 1946, the population of Dove Creek succeeded in getting the county seat of Dolores County moved from Rico to Dove Creek. Loss of the county seat and the Rio Grande Southern being scrapped deprived Rico of two of its most important assets.

The population of Rico in 1968 was 400. A cross section of the region had undergone revolutionary changes. Rico is struggling to retain its identity as an old mining town and many tourists flock there in the summer to enjoy the spectacular views and the old mining atmosphere. The demand for silver and the increase in price has recently stimulated new interest in mining. The outlook is bright and the future may be rewarding. Who knows, Rico may boom again.

Information from: Engel, Charles M. Engel; Rico, A Century of Historic Adventures in Mining

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BY DAN JOHNSON

Mining has been around since the first man began walking upright and could scratch the earth with a stick. I have been told that mining is the second oldest profession on earth. Not wanting to be thought of as selfish or unsociable, it has also been rumored that some miners were known to have consorted with members of the oldest profession. When a miner has money, everyone has money. They work hard and they play hard. Money is only a means to keep score and it is destined to be spent.

There are some who look down their noses at miners. They think a miner may not quite measure up to those of a more noble profession. Miners are a tough breed of men in an even tougher profession. It is a profession not for the weak of limb nor faint of heart. When not only your livelihood, but your very life depends on your partner and co-workers, you develop a brotherhood not found in many other professions. I am referring primarily to underground miners. Those of us who have our roots in underground mining remind the surface miners that their way is the cowardly way out.

To be a successful miner, you must be a productive miner. An old timer once told me that you have to learn to work smarter not harder. One thing he said that has always stuck with me is that "A man can't sell his sweat". Not a bad philosophy to keep in mind.

Some say the perfect miner wears a size 2 hat and a 22 inch collar. That may have been true years ago, but today's miner is a far distant memory to that day and age when most miners were only looking for rock that weighed 2,000 pounds to the ton. In some of the larger pit mines, the heaviest thing a miner will have to lift is his or her lunch box. When you are operating a loader the size of a house or drive a haul truck with a payload of 400 tons, brute strength will take a back seat to skill and ability. It is not unusual for a crew in these mines to move a million tons of ore in a day. This kind of production is a far cry to the old days when our fathers and grandfathers measured a day by the wheelbarrow load.

Danger goes hand in hand with mining. Ground fall, explosives, noxious air, heavy machinery, compressed air, electricity, water, and confined spaces are only a few of the perils a man must deal with on a daily basis. Of these elements, it is my belief that compressed air is the most dangerous. Over the years I have been witness to a number of accidents. The worst were usually those involving compressed air. There are also long term health issues associated with mining. Some of the more notable chronic diseases that a miner may suffer are cancer, black lung, emphysema, silicosis, arthritis, and hearing damage, to name a few. It takes a real man to be a miner.

I did not include women in this assessment, as most women are not physically strong enough to work underground. We have all heard stories about a woman working side by side with her man. I am sure there are exceptions' the rules, but in most cases a woman cannot stand behind a jackleg, or swing a 16 pound doublejack all day. In fact, in the earlier days of mining, a woman working underground was considered taboo. If a woman were to go underground, it was not unusual for the rest of the men to walk out of the mine and seek employment elsewhere.

In today's workplace women often make some of the better miners. This is especially true in the large open pits where they operate heavy equipment and drive haul trucks. In these mines a good portion of the crew will be women. I have found that these women usually set a more constant pace and are not as rough on the machinery as their male counterparts.

Another group I would like to recognize are the Navajos I have worked with over the years. The Navajos are some of the best miners and men I have ever had the pleasure to work with. As a young man I learned a lot about mining from them. As an older man, I learned a lot about life in general from these people. Early on as a supervisor I quickly learned that you need only to tell them what to do. Never tell them how to do it.

Mine Safety has evolved a long way through the years. In the early days, Mine Safety ranked somewhere between nonexistent to something you would tolerate at best. You were responsible for your own safety and you had to take care of yourself. Accidents and injury were to be expected. Death and injury were simply the cost of doing business.

In mining's early days, training was "learn on the run and hope for the best." I can remember an episode as a young man on my first mining job at the Snyder mine. My first assignment was that of a grizzly man. On one particular day, my shifter, Bill Blackburn Sr. came by and asked me if I could drive a 912. "You bet," I lied. "Go down to South 3 and bring it back to the station," he barked. Not only did I not know where South 3 was, I didn't have a clue what a 912 was either. However, I figured no matter what it was, it had to be better than beating big rocks into submission with a 16 pound double jack until they would squeeze through a 12 inch grizzly.

I left the station and walked down the main drift in what I thought was a southerly direction. Periodically I would stop to look and listen for activity. I finally located a pair of miners, Stanley Brewer and Paul Davis. I asked them if they had a 912 with them that I could take back to the station. One of them told me it was the big loader I was standing beside. They figured out right away I was on a bluffing mission. I later learned that "912" was a slang term for an Eimco 912B L.H.D. (which stands for Load, Haul, & Dump) mucking machine. They politely gave me a 30 second training session on how to start the loader and where the gear shift was located. The rest was on my own. Incidentally, I did make it back to the station with no major damage to the loader or myself. That was my first opportunity as a loader operator. Not quite your MSHA approved training program, but obviously effective and appropriate in 1970. Today that type of indoctrination could land a mining company or a supervisor a big fine or a trip to jail.

The mining industry worldwide is completely cyclic. All mining is temporary. An ore body is finite and non-renewable. When the ore is gone, it is gone, and cannot be regenerated. You cannot fertilize a spent mine and expect a new crop of ore.

We have all seen booms and busts. A full classroom is usually consistent with a peak in mining activity. Communities grow, established business flourish, and new businesses spring up. Occasionally a town will arise to accommodate a new mine.

On the other side of the coin is the darker side. Anyone who has been in the mining business for any length of time can relate to promises of grandeur from large mining companies. The miners would be told that everything was going great, that they were in for the long haul and should buy houses. Thirty days later they would lay off the crew and close the mine. I can remember being handed a 20 year plan for the Sunday Mine Complex and being asked if I thought it was feasible. I reviewed the plan and assured our upper management team we could definitely handle the challenge. A year later we closed the mine and locked the portals. If you are in the mining business you can expect chicken one day and feather the next.

On a note a little closer to home, our mining community has had worldwide implications. Some of the ore mined by our local miners was instrumental in ending World War II.

Prior to World War II, local mines in the Uravan Mineral belt which is located primarily in southeast Utah and southwest Colorado shipped their ore to a mill in Uravan Colorado for processing. At the time the mill was owned by U.S. Vanadium Corporation. While vanadium was the primary focus of the mill, other elements such as radium, thorium, and uranium were also processed. During WWII, Uravan provided some of the Uranium needed by the Manhattan Project for development of the atomic bomb. Because of wartime secrecy, the Manhattan Project would only publicly admit to purchasing vanadium, and did not pay miners for the uranium ore. Many years later some miners were able to reclaim lost profits from the U.S. Government through lengthy litigations in court.

On August 6, 1945 a United States B-29 bomber christened the "Enola Gay" carried an atomic bomb named "Little Boy." This bomb was detonated above the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later on August 9, 1945 another nuclear bomb named "Fat Man" was deployed above the Japanese city of Nagasaki. These were the first two atomic bombs ever used in warfare. The consequences of these bombings were unprecedented destruction to the Japanese cities. These two missions essentially ended the war and saved countless American casualties.

Mining is an honorable and challenging profession that is absolutely essential for a prosperous nation. Mining and mining products affect everything we do every day. Within a few hours' drive in any direction from Dove Creek some of the mines you could locate contain uranium, vanadium, coal, gold, silver, lead, copper, trona, alabaster, molybdenum, and of course sand and gravel. We need mining and we need miners. Keep in mind… "When a miner has money, everyone has money."

The stories and family histories were written by family members and to the extent possible their stories are presented as written, without editing or fact checking.

This paper is the production of ROCK (Reaching Out to Community and Kids), PO Box 364, Dove Creek, CO 81324. Many people had a hand in making it possible: Thank you each and every one.

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