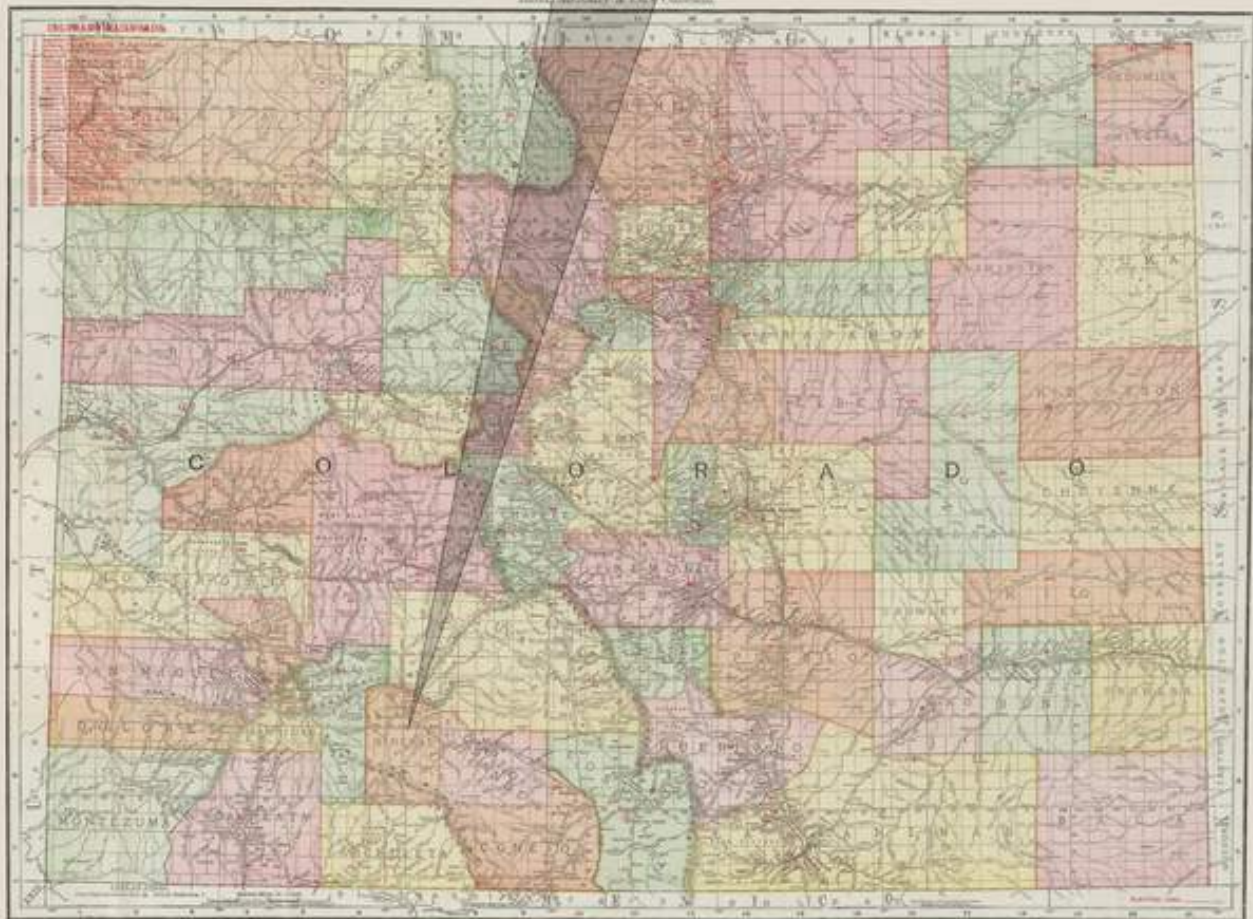


# Mineral County



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

*Established: March 27, 1893*

*County Seat: Wason*



## **MINERAL COUNTY**

By William H. Bauer

Mineral County lies in the southwestern portion of Colorado, east of the main ranges of the San Juan Mountains and west of the San Luis Valley. The La Garita Mountains border the northeastern portion of the county. It is a somewhat irregular north-south oriented rectangle with maximum dimensions of twenty-five miles east-west and forty miles north-south. The county is bounded on the north by Hinsdale and Saguache Counties, on the east by Rio Grande County, on the south by Archuleta County, and on the west by Hinsdale County.

The northern boundary is irregular and in part (western) coincides with the Continental Divide. The Continental Divide reenters the county in the southern portion and crosses the county from west to east. North of the Divide the Rio Grande River and its tributaries drain about three-quarters of the county. The southern quarter drains into the San Juan River and its tributaries.

A very large portion of the county is high mountain country and is sparsely inhabited. For much of the year cattle and sheep, along with their attendants, are the only residents. Human habitation has been largely confined to the valley of the Rio Grande River and the lower reaches of its tributaries.

Like habitation, transportation routes have been restricted. The Rio Grande Valley was an important early route of travel into the San Juan Mountains and to the mines in the Silverton and Lake City Districts. The importance of this route declined rapidly after the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad reached Silverton in 1882 and Lake City in 1889. In 1883 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad extended tracks from Del Norte, via South Fork, to Wagon Wheel Gap. When the silver excitement at Creede blossomed, the tracks were pushed on to Creede and the Willow Creek mines.

Modern Colorado Highway 149 parallels the old wagon road and the railroad. Highway 149 is the only road to cross the county from east to west. US Highway 160 traverses the southeast corner of Mineral County and crosses the Continental Divide at Wolf Creek Pass (10,850 feet). Other than those two roads, there are only a few short side roads. A very large portion of the county is inaccessible by vehicle.

The economic history of Mineral County can be roughly divided into four periods. The first period, prior to 1890, was one in which the main activities were providing services to the freighters and travelers on the stage road. There was some ranching along the Rio Grande River and a gradually growing interest in recreational activities: hunting, fishing and visiting the hot springs at Wagon Wheel Gap.

From 1890 to about World War I, mining came to the forefront and dominated the economy. There had been some early prospecting and attempted development but it was the silver mines around Creede that produced a high dollar volume of ore.

After World War I the decline in mining activity that had begun with the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1893 continued. There was limited activity into the late twentieth century but it was of minor importance. Once again ranching and recreational activity became the basis for the economy of Mineral County.

In recent years there have been several large developments along the Rio Grande with many homes having been built, some as full time residences, but most as summer homes. Creede has become the business center for the county providing services to residents and tourists. There are a number of guest ranches along the river but to date the major motel chains have not entered the county. The short business season is not favorable to large motel corporations.

The surrounding scenery, the hunting, the fishing, the opportunities for back country hiking and camping, and the mining history make Mineral County an attractive place to visit.

When Colorado Territory was created in 1861 the land that would become Mineral County was an unsurveyed area shared between Lake, Conejos and Costilla Counties. In December 1866 Saguache County was carved from the area and in February 1874 Hinsdale and Rio Grande Counties claimed their share of what would become Mineral County.

Mineral County at last came into existence on March 27, 1893, taking territory from Hinsdale, Saguache and Rio Grande Counties. The extract below from *Postal History of the Colorado San Juan* by Ray L. Newburn, Jr., relates the administrative confusion that led to the formation of Mineral County.

It was an unfortunate accident that the towns making up the Creede complex just happened to lie where three counties, Hinsdale, Saguache, and Rio Grande, came together, and further that none of the county lines were accurately surveyed. Cautious people filed papers in all three counties, a great nuisance and expense. M. V. B. Wason, for example, incorporated a toll road from his ranch into the heart of the Creede mining area on Dec. 30, 1890, filing in all three counties. Rio Grande County granted him a rate structure, Hinsdale County granted one and then rescinded it because of misrepresentations, and Saguache County never granted one. When Wason's agents tried to collect tolls from individuals as well as ore wagons on what was the main public thoroughfare between the various parts of Creede, all sorts of trouble began, with suits, counter suits, injunctions, and arrests. Much of the legal case against Wason hinged on the fact that he hadn't been granted rates by all three counties.

The multiple county confusion was one of the major reasons there was soon pressure to create a new county, although with Creede's rapid growth, a new county was probably inevitable. Then when Mineral County was created in March 1893, Wason was made the county seat! Pioneer Wason had called in a few political debts in Denver, to the dismay of Creede's citizens. In November 1893 the county voted to move the county seat to Creede. Wason retaliated by reestablishing his tollgates, which had been abandoned after the new county was created. In 1894 the Mineral County courts found that Wason had no legal right to collect anything in Mineral County, but five years later, after much additional battle in court the state of Colorado paid him \$10,000 for his road anyway.

### **PROBLEMS WITH SOME POST OFFICE LOCATIONS**

The Geographic Site Location Reports for Mineral County provide specific references to the Federal Land Survey Grid for the group of post offices that were in operation at the mouth of the Willow Creek Canyon and a short distance north in the canyon. Those offices were, in sequence by their date of establishment: Willow, Amethyst, Creede (I), North Creede and Creede (II).

Willow became Creede (I) which in turn became North Creede. Amethyst became Creede (II). Sounds simple, but the survey positions complicate the story.

It needs to be made clear that the Federal Land Survey "positions" may not be precise and may at best be estimates of the locations. Neither the 1965 General Highway Map for Mineral County Colorado, nor the USGS Topographic Map for Mineral County show the land grid in this section of Mineral County.

Plotting the reported locations, it appears that after only two months Willow moved approximately a mile northwest and became Creede (I). In early 1909 Creede (I) moved, somewhat less than a mile to the southeast, and became North Creede.

During the period of the Willow to Creede (I) to North Creede changes, the Amethyst Post Office was in operation to the southwest, and little more than a mile from those offices. In 1892 Amethyst did move a short distance northward but in 1909 when it became Creede (II) it moved back to the same quarter section as the original Amethyst location. Also, it is difficult to fit these locations within the narrow confines of the Willow Creek Canyon.

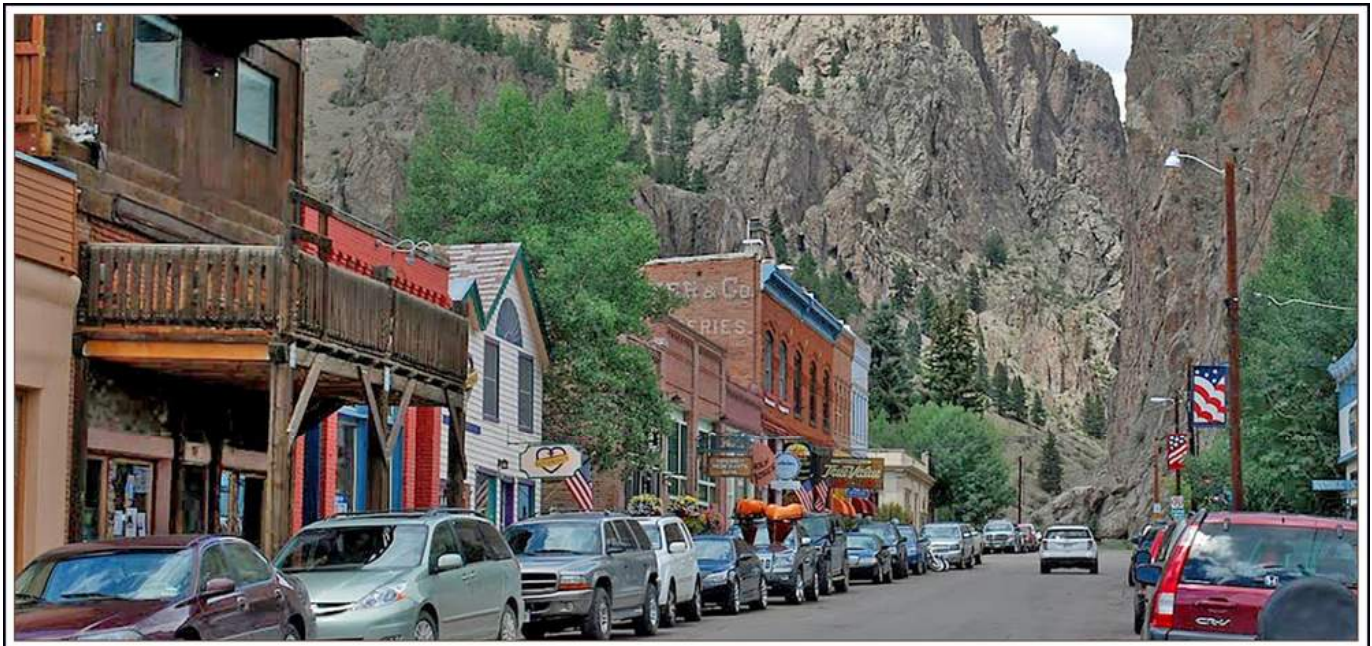
I cannot completely resolve this problem but I do draw the following conclusions:

1. Amethyst and Creede (II) were within the limits of the present day town of Creede.
2. North Creede was at the junction of East Willow Creek and West Willow Creek, primarily along East Willow Creek.

3. Creede (I) was most likely on West Willow Creek, perhaps a mile north of the junction with East Willow Creek.

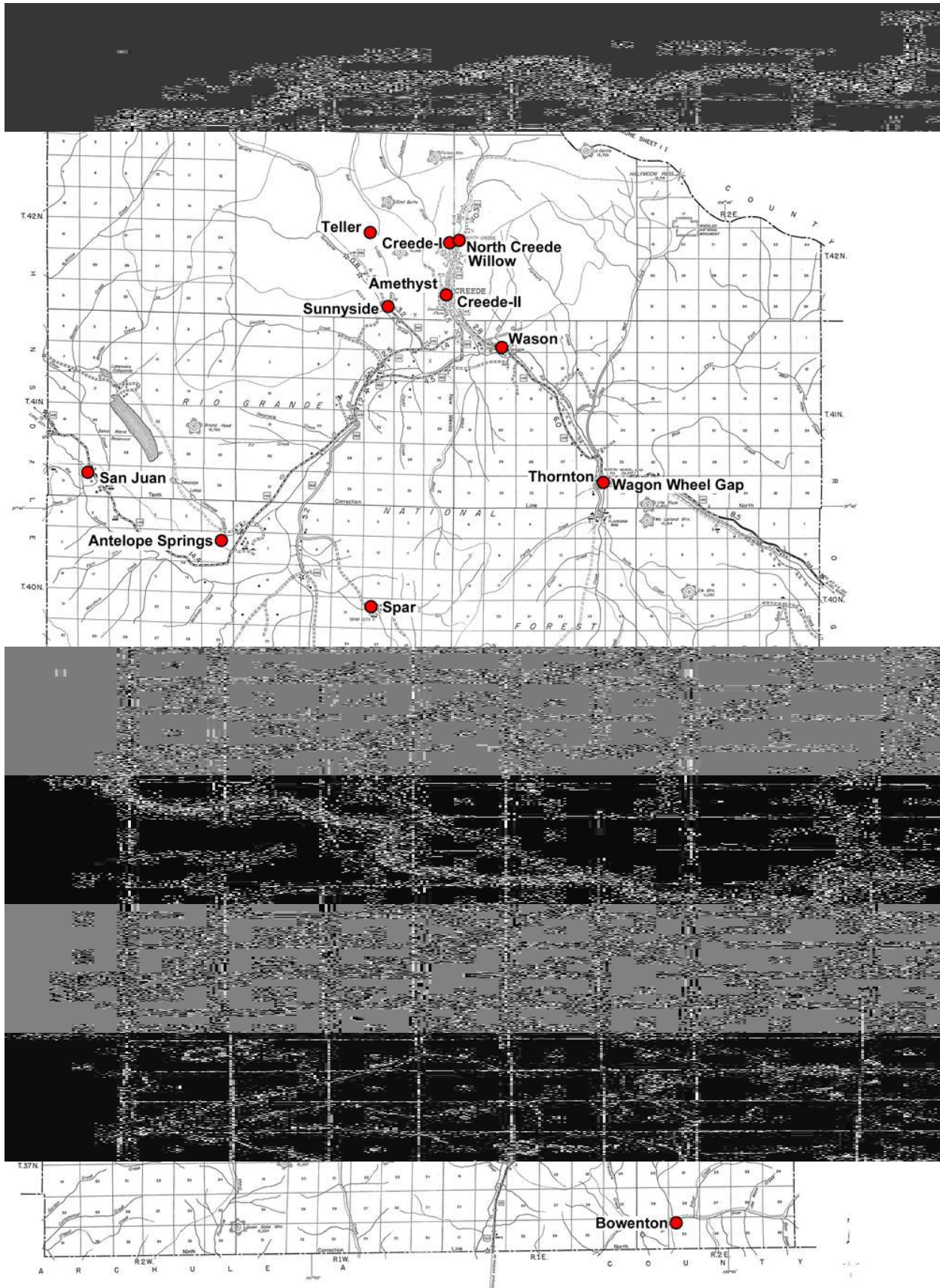
4. Willow was probably on East Willow Creek, or on the joined Willow Creek, very close to the junction of the two forks. Its brief existence may indicate that it was never at the stated location but was actually at the Creede (I) location and soon adopted that name.

If anyone can provide additional information to resolve these questions, it would be appreciated.



**Modern view of Creede, at the mouth of Willow Creek Canyon**

Photograph from: <https://4urranch.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/top-creede-1500x600-3.jpg>



Post Office Location Map – Mineral County

**AMETHYST**

Nicholas C. Creede made the first discovery of silver in the area on the eastern edge of the San Juan Mountains in Willow Creek Canyon. One of his major mines was the Amethyst, located on the side of Bachelor Mountain about two miles north of the mouth of the Willow Creek Canyon. Amethyst is a colored form of the mineral quartz (silicon dioxide). There has been confusion between the town of Amethyst and the Amethyst Mine. Some historians have equated the two but it is now becoming accepted that they were not at the same location.

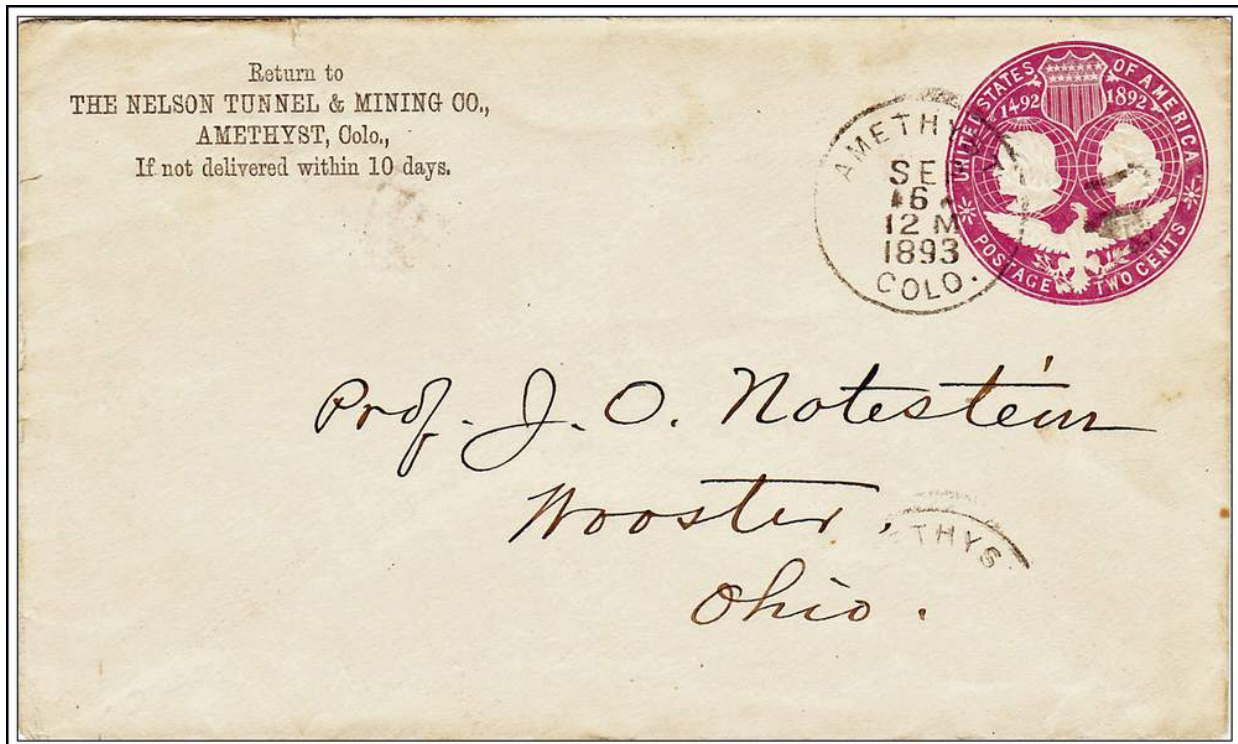
The silver discoveries quickly brought a flood of prospectors and merchants to the area. Initially settlement was in the narrow canyon of Willow Creek but the lack of suitable land forced the community down and out of the canyon onto the flats on the north side of the Rio Grande River.

An early name for the community was Stringtown, a reference to its elongated nature stretching along Willow Creek. Another name was Jimtown, or Gin Town. It is not clear which of these names came first with the one being a derisive slang term and the other a gentler appellation for the collection of hastily constructed buildings. When a post office was requested none of these names was acceptable and hence the name Amethyst was chosen.

Through the 1890's the name Creede was applied to the northern end of the settlement and Amethyst to the portion at the mouth of the canyon, with post offices in both communities. In November 1908 the Creede (I) Post Office either closed or was moved to a new location and renamed North Creede. It would not be beyond reason to assume that the whole area was popularly known as Creede.

Now there was a North Creede Post Office, but where was Creede? In February 1909 the problem was resolved when Amethyst became Creede.

Colorado Highway 149 from Del Norte turns north along Willow Creek to the southern edge of Creede where it crosses the creek and turns back south on the way to Lake City. Amethyst was in the area north of Highway 149 within the present day Creede.



**AMETHYST / COLO.      September 6, 1893**

**AMETHYST – Continued**

Latitude = 37:53:06 North Longitude = 106:56:05 West AMETHYST MINE

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Mar 2 1892	---	SE/4 Sec 25 T42N R1E 3 miles north of the Rio Grande, on the east side of Willow Creek	
Jan 25 1892		Established	
Jan 25 1892		Frank, Silas	
Jan 13 1893	---	NE/4 NE/4 Sec 36 T42N R1W 3 miles north of the Rio Grande, on both sides of Willow Creek	
Sep 25 1893		Smith, Curtis J.	P&S [Apptd. by President & confirmed by Senate]
Jul 21 1897		Woodruff, Mark G.	P&S
Jan 21 1902		Woodruff, Mark G.	P&S
Jun 18 1903		Sloan, William C.	P
Nov 19 1903		Sloan, William C.	P&S
Dec 18 1907		Sloan, William C.	
Feb 9 1909		Name changed to Creede (II)	

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	AMETHYST / COLORADO CI 20P 31.5/29.0	Hstp Target, heavy 3-ring 19mm	Mar 14 1892 Aug 30 1892
2	AMETHYST / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads, smudge	Sep 6 1893 Mar 16 1900
3	AMETHYST, COLO. / REC'D CI 10P 28.0	Hstp No killer, backstamp [NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]	Nov 24 1894
4	AMETHYST / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Cork, Smudge	Jan 11 1899 May 14 1901
5	AMETHYST / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Grid, 9 bar oval	Dec 27 1902 Jan 13 1909
6	AMETHYST, COLO. // REGISTERED SL 00R 46.0x16.0	Hstp No killer	Jul 2 1904



**REGISTERED**  
JUL 2 1904  
**AMETHYST, COLO.**

6

**ANTELOPE SPRINGS**

Antelope Springs was a Barlow and Sanderson Stage Station on the route from Del Norte to Silverton and Lake City. It was of considerable importance until the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad reached Silverton in 1882. After that, travel on the stage route declined and virtually ceased when the railroad built a spur line to Lake City in 1889. The name is a reference to springs and a salt lick that attracted herds of antelope and deer.

**ANTELOPE SPRINGS – Continued**

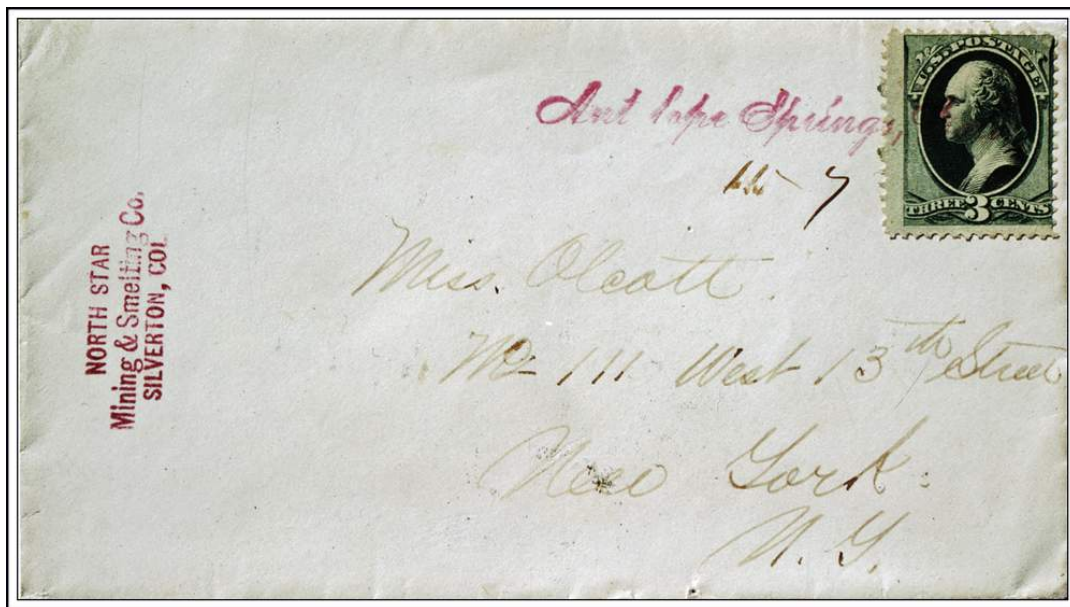
The site was also known as Aldens’ for George and Gustavus Alden who settled at the springs in 1875. In addition to a roadhouse and the stage station operated by the Aldens there were several ranches in the surrounding area and wayside services were available to travelers. In 1879 the establishment was sold to the Soward family who added a sawmill to the activity at Antelope Springs.

The location of Antelope Springs was at an early road junction. One branch followed the Rio Grande River to San Juan, Lost Trail, Timber Hill and over Stony Pass to Silverton. The other branch went up Seepage Creek and on to Lake City via Spring Creek Pass.

From the junction of Colorado Highway 149 and Middle Creek Road (the road to Spar) drive southwest five miles on Colorado 149. There is a modern guest ranch with several cabins on the north side of the highway and some older log buildings, occupied, a few hundred feet from the highway.

As a rural post office, Antelope Springs continued to serve ranches along the Rio Grande west of Creede until 1903 when it likely succumbed to the expanding Rural Free Delivery System.

Latitude = 37:44:36 North Longitude = 107:02:13 West ANTELOPE SPRING



**Antelope Springs, Colo                      November 7, 1880**  
**A very unusual style of typeset postmark**

**Chronology of the Post Office**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Apr 15 1876 ---<br/><br/>May 5 1876<br/>May 5 1876<br/>Apr 25 1877<br/>Jun 5 1877<br/>Oct 24 1877<br/>Jan 2 1878<br/>Jun 3 1879<br/>Jun 7 1888</p> | <p>Unsurveyed One mile north side of Rio Grande Four miles west of Fir Creek San Juan City 6 miles westerly An accompanying map shows it at a junction of roads to Howardsville and to Lake City Another sketch map places it in the center of the NW/4 NE/4 Sec 12 T40N R2W of the New Mexico Principal Meridian</p> <p>Established</p> <p>Alden, Gustavus A.<br/>Alden, George S.<br/>Guth, Jonathan J.<br/>Moreland, Mrs.<br/>Crowley, Mrs. M. E.<br/>Soward, Daniel W.<br/>Soward, Emma</p> |
|---|---|

**ANTELOPE SPRINGS – Continued**

Apr 4 1899	Soward, Adda M.
Nov 15 1901	Woodruff, Mrs. Jennie
Oct 10 1902	La Fout, Carl
Mar 26 1903	Harvey, James J.
May 30 1903	Discontinued Papers to San Juan

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	ANTELOPE SPRINGS / COLO. CI 10P 25.5	Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm	May 28 1877 Oct 14 1879
2	ANTELOPE SPRINGS, COLO. SL 00R 63.0x8.0	Hstp No killer	Nov 7 1880
3	ANTELOPE SPRINGS / COL. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Not present	May 31 1894 Sep 21 1894
4	ANTELOPE SPRINGS / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Rim of cds	Manuscript date Sep 9 1898

**BOWENTON**

For a short time, Bowenton was an active camp on the wagon road over Elwood Pass from Summitville to Pagosa Springs. It was on the East Fork of the San Juan River about two miles from Elwood. The settlement was the product of a mining venture promoted by Judge Thomas M. Bowen, for whom the community was named. The mining venture was not successful and the camp soon disappeared.

Current maps do not show any road to the site. The 1965 Colorado Highway Map for Mineral County does show a trail starting from US Highway 160, about two miles north of the Mineral-Archuleta County line and going over Windy Pass (9,976 feet) to the vicinity of Bowenton on the East Fork of San Juan River. It is unlikely that very much remains to identify the site if you can get there.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Aug 6 1881	--	Unsurveyed On the east fork of the San Juan Summitville 20 miles northeast Pagosa Springs 20 miles southwest
Aug 10 1881		Established
Aug 10 1881		Laughlin, Lemuel L.
Aug 21 1884		Discontinued Papers to Summitville

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

**NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM BOWENTON**

**CREEDE (I)**

In May 1889 Nicholas C. Creede and George L. Smith were prospecting in the mountains along Willow Creek. Legend has it that while they were resting and eating lunch, Creede picked up a piece of rock and upon examining it, shouted "Holy Moses." He had picked up a piece of float, rich in silver ore. Thus was born the Holy Moses Mine and the settlements that became Creede.

**CREEDE (I) – Continued**

The town that developed in the canyon of Willow Creek was first named Willow, after the stream. Soon the name was changed to Creede in honor of Nicholas Creede.

As time passed, this settlement acquired the local name of Upper Creede while the larger settlement at the mouth of Willow Creek Canyon became known as Creede, even though it was officially known as Amethyst. In late 1908 and early 1909 the confusion in names was resolved when Upper Creede became North Creede and Amethyst became Creede.

Please refer to the introduction for a discussion of the locations of the post offices that were in the Creede complex along Willow Creek.

Based on the Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report it seems that Creede (I) was located on West Willow Creek, perhaps a mile north of the junction with East Willow Creek. The slopes of Bachelor Mountain on the west side of West Willow Creek, was where the majority of the producing mines were located and formed a center of activity that warranted a post office.

Having visited the area, it appears that as development of the mines proceeded, less and less space was available for residences and businesses. That combined with the growth of Amethyst at the mouth of the canyon likely led to an exodus to the more suitable location. In 1909 the Creede (I) post office closed, or moved to a location on East Willow Creek and became the North Creede Post Office.

From Creede, drive north along Willow Creek to the forks of the creek. Stay to the left and go approximately a mile. This stretch of the canyon is lined with large mine dumps and the remnants of mining activity but hardly any occupied buildings. As a relict of mining activity, it is most photogenic, especially in the fall when the aspen turn to gold.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Jul 1 1891	Name changed from Willow
Jul 1 1891	Meister, Augustus C.
Aug 6 1891	--- SW/4 Sec 19 T42N R1E 3 miles north of Rio Grande On east side of Willow Creek
Mar 22 1892	Major, Alexander H.
Jan 20 1900	McLeod, Isaac R.
Jan 29 1904	Ostrum, John
Jun 19 1906	Oates, Mary N.
Nov 28 1908	Post office moved to North Creede

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Aug 15 1893 Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads
2	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Feb 17 1892 Apr 5 1895 Hstp Cork, Smudge
3	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Apr 19 1898 Jan 1- 1900 Hstp Cork, Smudge
4	CREEDE, / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Sep 15 1904 Jan 29 1909 Doane Type 2, with 3



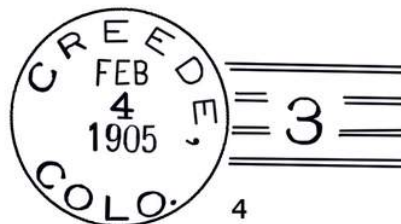
1



2



3



4

**CREEDE (II)**

Creede was named for Nicholas C. Creede, who with George L. Smith is credited with the discoveries of silver that led to the rush to the narrow Willow Creek Canyon and the steep slopes of the San Juan Mountains north of the Rio Grande Valley.

The early history of Creede is intimately connected with the other communities of Amethyst, Creede (I), North Creede and Willow. Please refer to the discussions of those settlements and to the introduction to this chapter for elaboration on the relationships of the five post offices.

Creede (II), initially known as Amethyst, was at the mouth of the Willow Creek Canyon where there was sufficient level ground to permit the development of a community to serve the mines further up the canyon. The growing community stretched up the canyon, beyond the forks of the stream, and because of its elongated form was initially known as Stringtown. It was also called Jimtown or Gin Town. But, in January 1892, when a post office was acquired, it took the name of Amethyst. The post office continued to be known as Amethyst until February 1909 when the name was finally changed to Creede (II). During this time, in spite of the post office remaining Amethyst, the community at the mouth of the canyon soon became known as Creede, while the settlements in the canyon were referred to as Upper Creede. Another name sometimes applied to the settlement was Creedmoor.

Soon after the formation of Mineral County, the county seat was moved from Wason to Creede. On March 19, 1892 the town of Creede was incorporated as a city. In October of that year the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad extended the spur from Wagon Wheel Gap to Creede. The tracks of the spur line are still in place and there has been talk of reopening the railroad as a tourist railroad but to date there has been very little progress and apparently the residents of Creede do not favor the proposal.

Creede's economic peak was in the early 1890's. The silver crash of 1893 and soon thereafter a disastrous fire that destroyed a large portion of the town, led to a downturn in the economy. Mining did continue, even into the late twentieth century, but activity never returned to the level that led to Cy Warman's famous line: "It's day all day in the daytime, and there is no night in Creede."

Creede, located on Colorado Highway 149, the road from South Fork to Lake City and the Gunnison River, is an active community, particularly during the summer months. The surrounding area along the Rio Grande River has become a developing area for summer homes and some permanent residences. Creede is the center of commerce serving those developments.

When you visit Creede, be sure to drive out the north edge of the town and observe the location of the Creede Volunteer Fire Department. Rather than construct a building, the Fire Department occupies one of the abandoned mining tunnels in the steep cliff on the north side of Willow Creek.

Latitude = 37:50:57 North Longitude = 106:55:33 West CREEDE

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Feb 9 1909	Name changed from Amethyst	
Feb 9 1909	Sloan, William C.	
Jan 24 1911	---	NE/4 Sec 36 T42N R1W 2.5 miles north of Rio Grande 30 feet west of Willow Creek 180 feet east of railroad track
Jul 11 1913	Barnhart, Herbert D.	P&S
Jan 24 1913	Barnhart, Herbert D.	P&S
May 1 1914	---	NE/4 Sec 36 T42N R1W 2-3/4 miles north of the Rio Grande 40 feet west of Willow Creek Local name is Amethyst
Jul 31 1922	Weaver, Arthur J.	P&S
Dec 14 1926	Weaver, Arthur J.	P&S
Dec 18 1930	Weaver, Arthur J.	P&S
Jan 17 1935	McCrone, Elmer B.	Nominated
Jan 30 1935	McCrone, Elmer B.	Confirmed
Mar 11 1935	McCrone, Elmer B.	Commissioned
Mar 14 1935	McCrone, Elmer B.	Assumed charge

**CREEDE (II) – Continued**

Jun 12 1939	McCrone, Elmer B.	Nominated
Jun 19 1939	McCrone, Elmer B.	Confirmed
Jun 22 1939	McCrone, Elmer B.	Appointed Presidential
Jun 9 1939 [Jul 9?]	McCrone, Elmer B.	Commissioned
Jul 15 1941	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Acting
Jul 16 1941	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Assumed charge
Nov 11 1941 ---	Creede Avenue	
<p>Note follows: These post offices were, Willow changed to Creede, changed to North Creede now discontinued - April 1918 Amethyst name changed to Creede, the post office and location as of 1914, and apparently since to the present time.</p>		
March 1929. (J.F.M.)		
Feb 9 1942	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Nominated
Feb 25 1942	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Confirmed
Feb 26 1942	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Appointed Presidential
Mar 28 1942	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Commissioned
Apr 15 1942	McCrone, Mrs. Margaret	Assumed charge
Nov 30 1945	Comstock, Mrs. Carrie E.	Acting
Dec 1 1945	Comstock, Mrs. Carrie E.	Assumed charge
Mar 26 1947	Lemke, Paul A.	Nominated
Jul 11 1947	Lemke, Paul A.	Confirmed
Jul 14 1947	Lemke, Paul A.	Appointed Presidential & Commissioned
Sep 15 1947	Lemke, Paul A.	Assumed charge
--- -- ----	Lemke, Paul A.	Removed, embezzlement
Sep 6 1955	Lamb, Mrs. Margaret E.	Assumed charge
Sep 23 1955	Lamb, Mrs. Margaret E.	Acting
Jun 27 1956	Hargraves, Edward H.	Nominated
Jul 19 1956	Hargraves, Edward H.	Confirmed
Jul 20 1956	Hargraves, Edward H.	Appointed Presidential & Commissioned
Sep 17 1956	Hargraves, Edward H.	Assumed charge

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

REFER TO CREEDE (I) FOR TYPES 1-4

5	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Sep 16 1909 Jul 1 1925
6	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Jun 30 1928 Oct 1 1935
7	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, oval with 1	Aug 31 1936 Dec 9 1951
7.1	CREEDE, COLO. / PARCEL POST CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Jul 28 1939
8	CREEDE / COLO. CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Sep 8 1952
8.1	<b>CREEDE, / COLO. RC 10P 37.0x19.0</b>	<b>Hstp No killer, Parcel Post Box style</b> <b>[NOT AVAILABLE FOR ILLUSTRATION]</b>	<b>1950s</b>
9	CREEDE / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, pointed oval with 1	Apr 14 1958 Jul 9 1969
10	CREEDE, CO / 81130 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x19mm	Nov 19 1962 Mar 19 1973
11	CREEDE, CO / 81130 CI 10P 23.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	Jul 27 1970 Feb 3 1976
11.1	CREEDE, CO / 81130 CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Jan 29 1991
11.2	CREEDE, CO / 81130 CI 10P 22.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	May 15 1993

CREEDE (II) – Continued

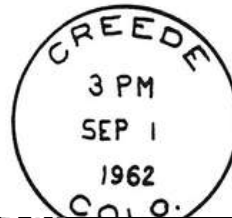
12	CREEDE CO 81130 / USPS CI 11P 28.0/18.0	Hstp No killer	Jun 2 1993
13	CREEDE CO / 81130 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x17mm	Jun 2 1993
14	CREEDE CO / 81130 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-23x17mm	Apr 17 1995



7.1



8



9



10



11



11.1



11.2



12

**CREEDE (II) STATIONS**

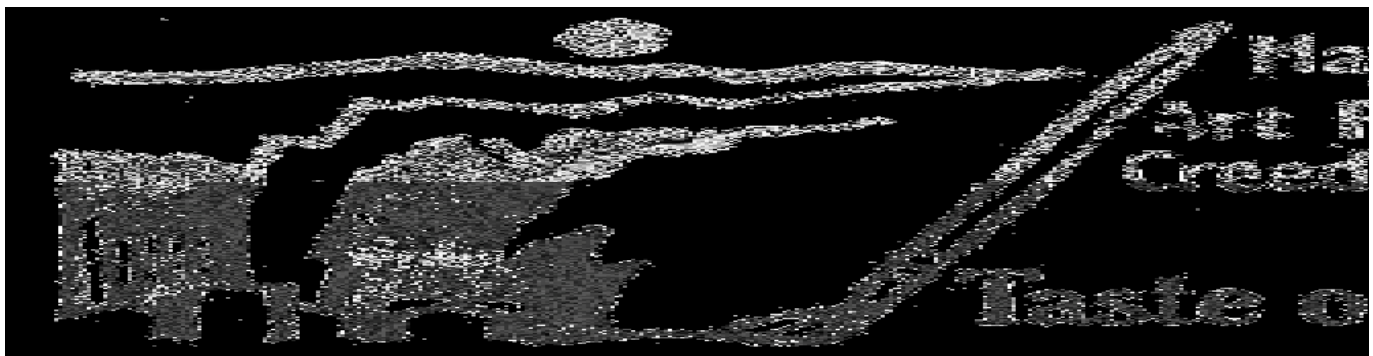
**ART FEST STATION**

**Chronology of the Post Office**

May 24 2003	Operated as a special Commemorative Station [ART FEST STATION]
May 29 2004	Operated as a special Commemorative Station [ART STATION]
May 28 2005	Operated as a Special Commemorative Station [ART FEST STATION]
May 27 2006	Operated as a Special Commemorative Station [ART FEST STATION]
May 26 2007	Operated as a Special Commemorative Station [ART FEST STATION]
May 24 2008	Operated as a Special Commemorative Station [ART FEST STATION]
May 23 2009	Operated as a Special Commemorative Station [ART FEST STATION]

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Fest Station IR 00R 93.0x45.0	May 24 2003 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon; Text - Taste of Creede
2	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Station IR 00R 75.0x36.0	May 29 2004 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon; Text - 15th Anniversary / Taste of Creede
3	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Fest Station IR 00R 75.0x36.0	May 28 2005 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon; Text - Taste of Creede
4	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Fest Station IR 00R 66.0x33.0	May 27 2006 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon enclosed in stamp frame; Text - Taste of Creede
5	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Fest Station IR 00R 66.0x30.0	May 26 2007 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon; Text - Taste of Creede
6	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Fest Station IR 00R 65.0x32.0	May 24 2008 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon; Text - Taste of Creede
7	Creede, Colorado / 81130 // Art Fest Station IR 00R 65.0x32.0	May 24 2008 Pict Scene - Mountains, buildings, paint brush, spoon; Text - Taste of Creede



3



4

**CREEDE (II) STATIONS – Continued**  
**ART FEST STATION – Continued**



**WAGON WHEEL GAP**

Please refer to the discussion of Wagon Wheel Gap as an independent post office for the history and location of this office.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

- Jun 1 1955 Re-established as a Rural Station of Creede  
Summer P.O. only, 6/1 to 9/30
- Sep 30 1957 Discontinued

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

- |   |  |                 |                       |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | CREEDE, COLO. / WAGON WHEEL GAP RUR. STA.<br>CI 10P 34.0 | 4bars S-24x20mm | Jun 1 1955 Jul 9 1955 |
| 2 | CREEDE, COLO. / WAGON WHEEL GAP RUR. STA.<br>CI 10P 40.0 | 4bars S-31x23mm | Jul 5 1956            |



**NORTH CREEDE**

Following the 1889 discovery of silver by Nicholas C. Creede and George L Smith, the initial settlement on East Willow Creek was named Willow. After only two months of existence the post office was moved to a location on West Willow Creek and the name changed to Creede. At the time, what is now the town of Creede was home to the Amethyst Post Office. Quickly the Amethyst settlement became

**NORTH CREEDE – Continued**

known as Creede and the locale of the Creede Post Office was called Upper Creede. In late 1908 - early 1909 this confusion of names was resolved. The Creede Post Office closed and a new office named North Creede opened, apparently at a site a short distance upstream on East Willow Creek from the original site of Willow. In February 1909, the Amethyst Post Office finally adopted the name of Creede.

The North Creede Post Office continued to operate until 1919. A disastrous flood in 1917 destroyed the Cliff Hotel and the Holy Moses Saloon. The Denver and Rio Grande had extended tracks up the canyon to North Creede. The flood damaged the tracks and dumped the depot in the creek. After the flood, very little was rebuilt and many of the remaining residents moved to Creede proper. The decline in mining activity also contributed to the demise of North Creede.

From Creede drive north along Willow Creek to the where the creek forks. North Creede and Willow were to the right. There are still several occupied buildings along the creek in the quarter mile north of the junction.

For more information on the group of post offices in the Willow Creek Valley, please refer to the discussions of Amethyst, Creede (I), Creede (II) and Willow. Some additional facts are reported in the introduction to this chapter.

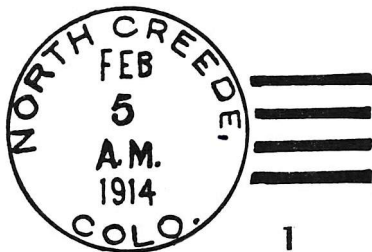
Latitude = 37:51:51 North Longitude = 106:55:31 West NORTH CREEDE

**Chronology of the Post Office**

- Jan 25 1909 --- NE/4 Sec 30 T42N R1E 4 miles north of the Rio Grande  
On the west side of Willow Creek 115 feet west of D&RG track
- Nov 28 1908 Post office moved from Creede (I)
- Nov 28 1908 Oates, Mary N.
- Apr 15 1919 Discontinued Mail to Creede

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

- 1 NORTH CREEDE, / COLO. Mar 8 1909 Feb 5 1914  
CI 10P 32.5 4bars S-??x14mm



**SAN JUAN**

The location of the San Juan Post Office is another of the puzzles in Mineral County. In 1874 when the San Juan Post Office was authorized, the area was within the boundaries of Hinsdale County (formed February 10, 1874). And San Juan was the first county seat of Hinsdale County, although it would soon lose that position to the rapidly growing Lake City, which was more convenient to the mining excitement.

If the location described in the April 1874 Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report is to be believed, then San Juan was originally at a site that is now within Mineral County. The San Juan Post Office was closed in 1895 and when it reopened in 1900, the location was definitely in Hinsdale County at what is now the San Juan Guest Ranch.

**SAN JUAN – Continued**

It is generally accepted that one Harry Franklin took up a ranch claim and platted San Juan City, centered on his ranch. Apparently a few other buildings were constructed as the Hinsdale County Courthouse was in a building owned by W. H. Green. The settlement was on the road from Del Norte to the San Juan Mountains and may have been where the road to Silverton, via Stony Pass, split from the road to Lake City. The loss of the county seat was a serious blow to the new settlement and if later reports are correct the “City” soon disappeared.

San Juan City was the site of a roadhouse, the Texas Club, operated by the Tafts. In the spring of 1875 it was taken over by Clarence W. Brooks. The Galloway Ranch, a mile beyond Brooks’ place had cornered the business from the freight wagons coming to and going from the San Juan Mountains. The location of the Galloway Ranch could well be that of the present day San Juan Guest Ranch, and with the heavy freighting activity it would be logical for the post office to move there. Anna Taft and Clarence W. Brooks were both postmasters at San Juan. In May 1877 James P. Galloway became the San Juan postmaster and that seems a likely time for the move to the location in Hinsdale County. However it appears the move was not reported to the Post Office Department in Washington D.C. “San Juan” is Spanish for Saint John.

The 1874 location fits best to a site in the NW/4, Section 32, Township 41 North, Range 1 West. Strangely, that is the location on a 1921 report for a post office to be named Hermit. The original Hermit, well within Hinsdale County, had been discontinued in 1920. Nothing seems to have come of this attempted revival. This location is one and a half miles east of the Mineral-Hinsdale County line, and on a side road that leads in to a large, well-maintained guest ranch complex. From the entrance to that site, drive west on Colorado Highway 149 to Rio Grande Reservoir Road, to the southwest. The San Juan Guest Ranch is about a mile from Colorado 149. The combination stage stop and store is the dominant structure and houses the office for the guest ranch. A small log structure that once housed the post office is still standing.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Apr 27 1874	---	Unknown 1/2 mile east of the Rio Grande 1/4 mile south of Clear Creek This description places the site in Mineral County approximately one mile east of the county line (W.H.B.) SAN JUAN (Or BRISTOL -crossed out)
Jun 24 1874		Established
Jun 24 1874		Taft, Anna E.
Jun 21 1875		Brooks, Clarence W.
May 16 1877		Galloway, James P.
Jul 3 1883		Abbott, Jacob J.
Aug 20 1884		Holmes, James H.
May 21 1894		Burdett, Herbert W.
Mar 18 1895		Discontinued Mail to Antelope Springs
Jan 31 1900	---	NE/4 Sec 25 T41N R3W One mile north of the Rio Grande On north side of Crooked Creek This location is in Hinsdale County, a short distance west of the county line (W.H.B.) Proposed postmaster - Herbert C. Bent
Feb 28 1900		Re-established at site in Hinsdale County
Feb 28 1900		Bent, Hergbert C.
Apr 23 1904		Ordered closed
May 14 1904		Discontinued Mail to Amethyst
Jul 5 1922		Re-established
Jul 5 1922		Wright, Anna M.
Mar 8 1923		Re-establishment rescinded

**SAN JUAN – Continued**

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	San Juan Colo MS	Mscp Pen Cancel	Jun 22 1875 Jul 17 1881
2	SAN JUAN / COLO. CI 10P 26.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 16mm	Aug 21 188-
3	SAN JUAN / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, manuscript date	Aug 17 1894 Aug 1 1901



**SPAR**

In June 1892, prospector John Fisher discovered quartz float rich in silver. His discovery brought a rush of miners from nearby Creede and a tent city sprang up along Lime Creek, below Monument Peak. At first the camp was known as Fisher City, after John Fisher or Lime Creek for the stream. It soon took the name of Spar a reference to the quartz and feldspar rock in which the ore was found.

The mines proved to be of only marginal value and the silver crash of 1893 brought the virtual abandonment of the camp.

On November 20, 1899 Charles Branch filed a homestead claim on the site of Spar City and with the backing of Charles King of Hutchinson, Kansas attempted to open a new mine. The mine was not a paying proposition. In 1913 King and a group of Kansans took over the settlement. They renovated many of the cabins and turned Spar City into a private club for summer outings. In 1955 Spar City became a private corporation with each resident owning one share of stock. No new buildings are permitted. The hotel that once served the miners is now the community hall.

Begin the drive to Spar at the junction of Colorado Highway 149 with Middle Creek Road (Road 528). This junction, west of Creede, is a short distance east of where Colorado 149 crosses to the north side of the Rio Grande River. Four miles from the junction there is a fork. Keep to the left on what is now Lime Creek Road for another three and one half miles. That will bring you to the entrance to the Spar City community. From that point the road is a private road and a locked gate may block it. Several of the cabins can be seen from the entrance or a short distance beyond the gate.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Jul 23 1892	---	NW/4 Sec 22 T40N R1W 4 miles southeast of the Rio Grande River, 100 feet north of Lime Creek Proposed postmaster - Frank E. Soward
Aug 16 1892		Established
Aug 16 1892		Soward, Frank E.
Nov 13 1894		LaFont, Alexander
Aug 23 1895		Discontinued Mail Amethyst

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

**NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM SPAR**

## SUNNYSIDE

Some indication of ore was found here during the 1870's, however, it was not until 1885 that any significant find was made. In August 1885 Richard Irwin and his brother J. N. H. Irwin bought the Alpha Mine and began serious development. This may be the same Richard Irwin for whom the town of Irwin in Gunnison County was named.

The town of Sunnyside built up on the west side of Rat Creek and was large enough to support a hotel and a newspaper. There was substantial mining activity at Sunnyside until the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1893. Sunnyside declined but mining continued into the twentieth century.

Drive west from Creede on Colorado Highway 149 to Miners Creek Road, a little over two miles. Turn north from Colorado 149 and go about a mile and a half to Rat Creek Road. The settlement of Sunnyside and the mines were along Rat Creek for about a half-mile. There are still some remnants of the mining activity but several new homes have been built in the area.

Latitude = 37:50:46 North Longitude = 106:57:35 West SUNNYSIDE



**Remnants of one of the mines at Sunnyside, west of Creede, Colorado**

Photograph by James L. Ozment

September 4, 2001

### Chronology of the Post Office

Feb 10 1886	---	None reported 2-3/4 mile north of the Rio Grande by a good Wagon Road, on west side of Miner's Creek This report is filed under Hinsdale County Proposed postmaster - Richard Irwin
Apr 7 1886		Established
Apr 7 1886		Irwin, Richard
Jan 3 1891		Discontinued Papers to Wagon Wheel Gap

**SUNNYSIDE – Continued**

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

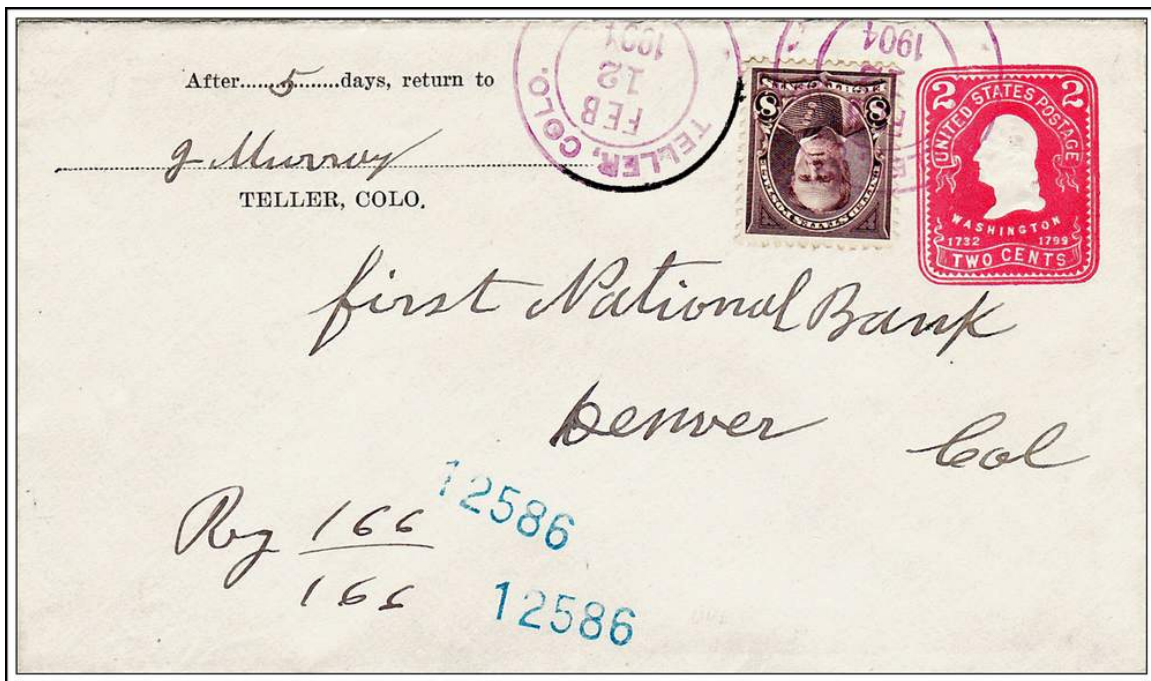
**NO POSTAL MARKINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM SUNNYSIDE**

**TELLER**

To the local populace and to historians this town was known as Bachelor, for its location at the Bachelor Mine on Bachelor Mountain. However, since there was a Bachelor Post Office in California the Post Office Department required that a different name be used for the post office. Teller, honoring Senator Henry M. Teller, a strong silver advocate, was the name selected.

George Wilson made the initial discovery in 1884. Extensive development did not begin until late 1889 after the discoveries by Nicholas C. Creede that resulted in the Holy Moses and the Amethyst Mines along Willow Creek.

There is a claim that Wilson named his mine the Bachelor because there were no women in the new camp.



**TELLER, COLO.**

**February 12, 1904**

**The positioning of the postmarks may indicate that there was inappropriate wording, in the lower portion of the dial. Another cover with a full strike of the postmark does show “M.O.B.” in the lower portion of the date stamp.**

Bachelor grew rapidly once development of the mine began in earnest. The townsite was in a park like area around some springs at an altitude of 10,500 feet near the crest of Bachelor Mountain. The town was surveyed and platted in January 1892 and incorporated in July 1892. Bachelor soon acquired a reputation as a “wide open town” with many saloons, parlor houses and gambling halls. It also provided nearly every other service or business that would be needed in a major mining community.

The population of Bachelor may have been as high as 6,000 but following the silver crash of 1893 the population rapidly declined and by 1900 was less than 1,000.

A hundred years later, virtually nothing remains of Bachelor. The site is in a wide-open glade and the ruins of a couple cabins can be seen at the edge of the timber on the far side of the shallow valley.

**TELLER – Continued**

From the south end of Creede, a road to the west starts the climb up Bachelor Mountain. This road also goes to the Creede Cemetery. Continue past the cemetery. It is four to five miles of wandering road to the site of Teller/Bachelor. In 2001 the site was well marked with an historical marker that tells the history of the town and there is a small parking lot.

It is also possible to reach Teller by driving north from Creede along West Willow Creek and beyond the Amethyst Mine. Keep to your left at the intersections or forks in the road but do pay attention to the directional signs (if they are still there) as there may be some new roads to confuse the situation. In 2001 this was not a difficult road but it is rougher and steeper than coming to Teller from the other direction.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Mar 29 1892	---	NE/4 Sec 23 T42N R1W 4 miles north of the Rio Grande 2 miles west of Willow Creek Proposed postmaster - John Gould	
Apr 29 1892		Established	
Apr 29 1892		Gould, John	
May 5 1894		Eades, Asa B.	
Feb 13 1895		Van Noorden, Solomon E.	
Jun 24 1896		Cassidy, Mary J.	
Oct 27 1898		Grace, Mary J.	Declined
Dec 5 1898		Wood, William J.	
Sep 26 1906		Lundy, Edith C.	
Nov 18 1908		Moore, Frank J.	
Mar 15 1912		Discontinued Mail to Creede	



TELLER / COLO.

March 10, 1893

**TELLER – Continued**

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	TELLER / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Cork, Geometric pattern	Mar 10 1893 Feb 1 1902
2	TELLER, COLO. / M.O.B CI 11P 30.0/18.5	Hstp No killer	Jan 14 1904 Apr 4 1904
3	TELLER, / COLO. CI 10P 31.5	Doane Type 3 with 4	Apr 17 1908 Dec 8 1910



**THORNTON**

Virtually nothing is known about Thornton. For some unexplained reason the Wagon Wheel Gap Post Office closed on February 2, 1895. On June 24, 1895 a new post office opened at almost the same location. However, the new office took the name Thornton. The source of the name is unknown.

I can speculate that local politics and animosities must have played some part in the change of names. In any event, on March 26, 1901 the Thornton Post Office closed and Wagon Wheel Gap was once again back on the map as a post office town.

Refer to the discussion of Wagon Wheel Gap for more information on this area and directions to the site.

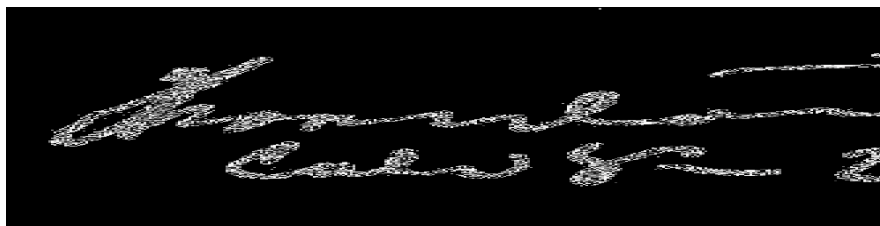
The Thornton Post Office was on the north side of the Rio Grande River, 500 feet west of the mouth of Goose Creek, possibly associated with an abandoned log building a short distance west of the side road to the 4UR Ranch.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

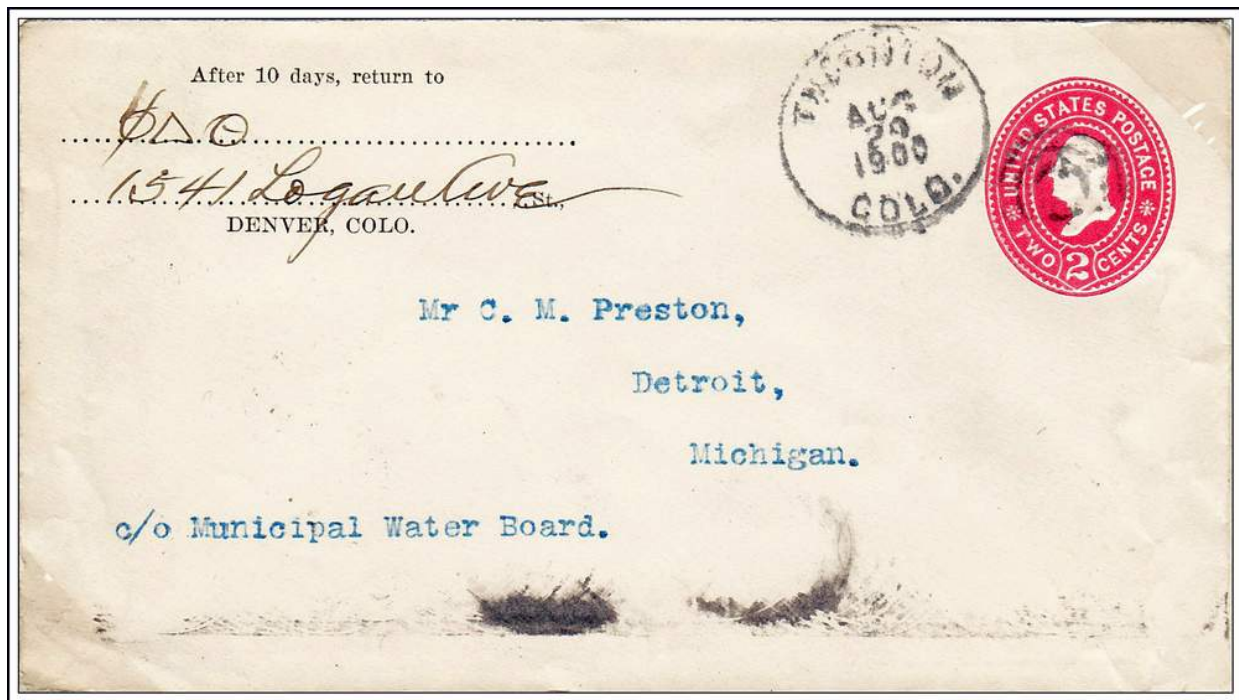
Apr 13 1895	---	NE/4 Sec 35 T41 N R1E Not over 50 yards northeast of Rio Grande 500 yards little west of mouth of Goose Creek Proposed postmaster - James A. Murray Note: The office will not be established with the name of Wagon Wheel Gap. We get our mail at Amethyst, nine miles
Jun 24 1895		Established
Jun 24 1895		Murray, James A.
Mar 26 1901		Name changed to Wagon Wheel Gap

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1	Thornton / Colo MS	Mscp Pen cancel	Aug 22 1895
2	THORNTON / COLO. CI 10P 27.5	Hstp Target	Sep 13 1898 Aug 29 1900



## THORNTON – Continued



THORNTON / COLO.

August 29, 1900

**WAGON WHEEL GAP**

Legend has it that one Judge Jones found a large wagon wheel at the gap. Supposedly the 1861 Baker party that had prospected the San Juan Mountains, including the upper reaches of the Animas River at what became Silverton, had left the wheel. From this discovery came the name Wagon Wheel Gap.

The stage station at Wagon Wheel Gap was established in 1874 to serve travelers on the road from Del Norte to Lake City and Silverton. In 1877 J. C. McClelland built the Hot Springs Hotel for hunters, fishermen and those who desired to “take the waters” at the hot springs south of the Rio Grande River.

In 1883 the Denver and Rio Grande extended its tracks from South Fork to Wagon Wheel Gap and began promoting the community as a recreational and medicinal resort. Within a few years traffic on the railroad declined and the trains ceased operating to Wagon Wheel Gap. The silver discoveries at Creede changed everything. The tracks were extended to Creede and trains again began running to and through Wagon Wheel Gap.

By 1903 General William Jackson Palmer, founder of the Denver and Rio Grande, had acquired the hotel. Palmer spent \$100,000 on improvements, including electric lights. Palmer also acquired considerable land in the vicinity and set about to turn Wagon Wheel Gap into an important mountain resort. Unfortunately, by 1914 the interest in such resorts began to fade and Wagon Wheel Gap soon declined. However, it has never ceased to be a resort community.

Throughout its history Wagon Wheel Gap has also served as a supply point for travelers along the Rio Grande River and for ranchers in the area. There were some unsuccessful attempts at mining south of the river near the hot springs.

**WAGON WHEEL GAP – Continued**

Between 1875 and 1941 the location of the Wagon Wheel Gap Post Office was reported to Washington six times. All of those locations were on the north side of the Rio Grande River opposite the point where Goose Creek from the south flows into the Rio Grande. There is a small, fairly open level area there just east of the narrowest point in the valley - "The Gap." It seems certain that for much of this time the post office was in the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Station. That building still stands in good repair and is now a private residence.

In 1945 the Wagon Wheel Post Gap Office was one and three tenths miles south of the Rio Grande, on the west side of Goose Creek. That location coincides with what is labeled on modern maps as the Wagon Wheel Ranch. That is where the hot springs are and it was the location of General Palmer's ranch and resort.

In 1949 the post office moved back to the railroad depot. It is not clear where the Wagon Wheel Gap Rural Station was located from 1955 to 1957. About two miles east of the railroad station there is a modern guest ranch on the north side of Colorado Highway 149. This might have been the site of the Rural Branch.

From 1895 to 1901 the Wagon Wheel Gap Post Office was closed but the Thornton Post Office was in operation, some 500 feet west of the mouth of Goose Creek.

From South Fork on US Highway 160 drive fifteen miles west on Colorado Highway 149. You will pass the modern guest ranch and cannot miss the former Denver and Rio Grande depot, a large yellow and brown building between the highway and the railroad. All but the 1945 site of Wagon Wheel Gap were along the next half-mile of Highway 149.

A short distance west of the depot a private road crosses the river and goes to the 4UR Ranch, the 1945 site of the Wagon Wheel Gap Post Office.



**The former Rio Grande Depot at Wagon Wheel Gap, Colorado, now a private residence**  
Photograph by William H. Bauer  
September 4, 2001

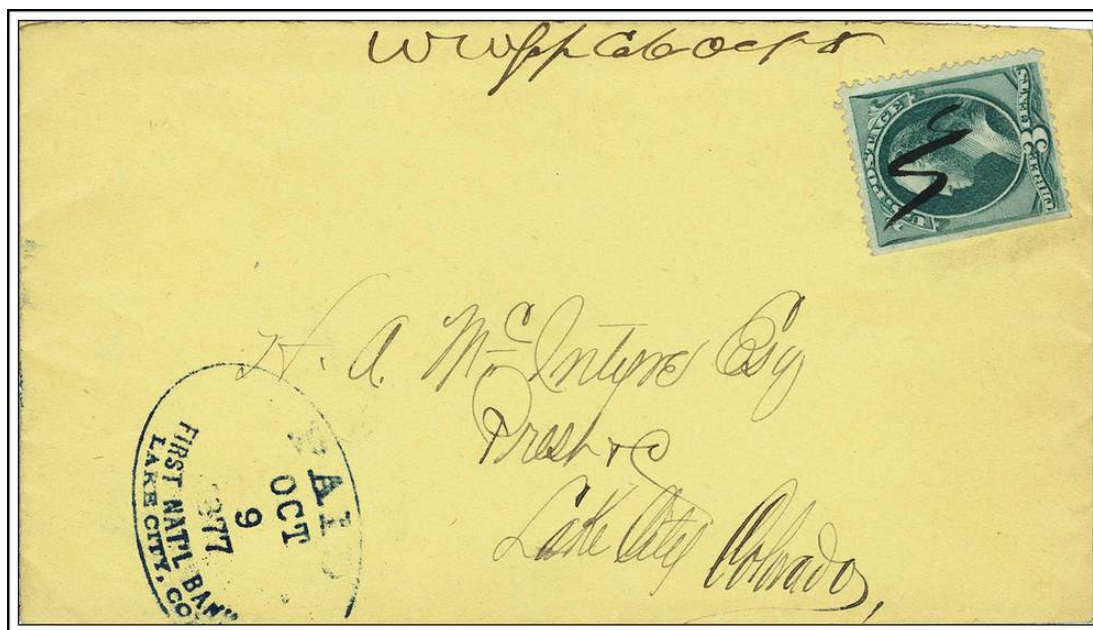
**WAGON WHEEL GAP – Continued**

Just west of the road to the 4UR Ranch, on the north side of Highway 149 there is an abandoned log cabin. The building is down in a small gully and partial obscured by trees. It is possible that it was a part of Thornton during its short period of existence.

Latitude = 37:46:12 North Longitude = 106:47:50 West WAGON WHEEL GAP

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Aug 17 1875	---	On unsurveyed land On the north bank of the Rio Grande 1/4 mile west of Hot Spring Creek (Goose Creek?)
Aug 27 1875		Established
Aug 27 1875		Murphy, John
Oct 14 1875		Mullin, Jack
May 18 1876		Peck, Charles D.
Aug 4 1879	---	NE/4 Sec 35 T41N R1E 50 yards north of Rio Grande 1/4 mile north of Goose Creek
Mar 18 1881		Kinder, Walter
May 11 1882		Peck, Charles D.
Apr 17 1883		Patten, Arthur K.
Feb 3 1887		Flory, Mrs. Fannie S.
Jun 9 1887		Yost, E. A.
Sep 14 1887		Franklin, Amy H.
Oct 22 1888		Franklin, George W.
Jun 28 1890		Patten, Nathaniel
Feb 24 1892	---	NE/4 NE/4 Sec 35 T41N R1E 1/10 mile north of Rio Grande
Aug 31 1892		Harpet, Charles H. Declined
Feb 2 1895		Discontinued Mail to Amethyst
Mar 26 1901		Name changed from Thornton
Mar 26 1901		Murray, James A.
Jun 19 1901	---	NW/4 NW/4 Sec 36 T41N R1E 1/12 mile north of the Rio Grande 1/4 mile north of Goose Creek



Manuscript postmark – W W Gap Colo October 8, 1879

**WAGON WHEEL GAP – Continued**

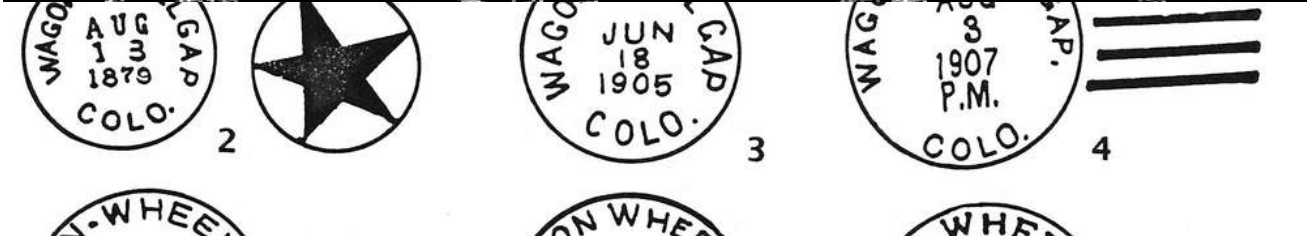
Apr 3 1904	Smith, Jesse P.	
Sep 7 1906	Berger, Ellwood	
Nov 22 1912	Smith, Jesse Park	
--- -- ----	Bassert, Jacques	Acting ?, no date given
Dec 16 1913	Newitt, Robert	
Apr 26 1914 ---	NE/4 NE/4 Sec 35 T41N R1E	
Aug 30 1917	Glendenning, Esther	
Nov 21 1919	Laylon, Blanche V.	
Jul 20 1925	Outlaw, Donna W.	Acting
Sep 29 1925	Outlaw, Donna W.	Appointed
Jan 15 1927	Rhodes, Arthur B.	
Sep 8 1927	Johnston, Lois L. (Mrs. Lois L. Corwin)	
Oct 12 1927	Corwin, Lois L.	Commissioned
Oct 21 1941 ---	Not reported Rio Grande River 95 feet south of office P.O. in D&RG Depot	
Mar 14 1945	Booth, Mrs. Edna M.	Assumed charge
May 5 1945 ---	NE/4 Sec 2 T40N R1E Rio Grande north 1 mile Goose Creek east 50 feet 1.3 miles by road from Wagon Wheel Gap Station of D&RG	
Oct 29 1945	Booth, Mrs. Edna M.	Confirmed
Dec 28 1945	Booth, Mrs. Edna M.	Commissioned
Sep 1 1949	Schwarzbeck, Mrs. Leona	Assumed charge
Sep 6 1949 ---	Being moved 1.3 miles north from previous sit P.O. in depot of D&RG 175 feet north of the Rio Grande River. 10 feet north of the D&RG tracks	
Sep 30 1949	Schwarzbeck, Mrs. Leona	Acting
Feb 23 1950	Walker, Mrs. Cleta B.	Confirmed
Apr 5 1950	Walker, Mrs. Cleta B.	Appointment rescinded
May 9 1950	Schwarzbeck, Mrs. Leona	Confirmed
Jun 9 1950	Schwarzbeck, Mrs. Leona	Commissioned & Assumed charge
May 22 1953	Ancell, Mrs. Alma L.	Assumed charge
Jul 6 1953	Ancell, Mrs. Alma L.	Acting
Jul 15 1953	Ancell, Mrs. Alma L.	Confirmed
Aug 20 1953	Ancell, Mrs. Alma L.	Commissioned
Nov 24 1953	Price, Clyde J.	Assumed charge
Jan 28 1954	Price, Clyde J.	Acting
Nov 29 1954	Ordered closed	
Nov 30 1954	Discontinued Mail to South Fork	
Jun 1 1955	Re-established as a Rural Station of Creede	
	Summer Post Office only, 6/1 to 9/30	
Sep 30 1957	Discontinued	

**Confirmed types of postal markings**

1.A	W W Gap MS	Mscp No killer	Jul 9 1877
1.B	W W Gap Colo MS	Mscp No killer	Oct 8 1877 Feb 22 1878
2	WAGON WHEEL GAP/ COLO. CI 10P 25.0	Hstp Fancy, Large outline star in circle	Jul 10 187- Aug 13 1879
3	WAGON WHEEL GAP/ COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target	Jun 18 1905 Oct 11 1906
4	WHEEL GAP, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x13mm	Jul 18 1907 May 3 1912
5	WAGON-WHEEL-GAP, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Sep 25 1917 Dec 24 1917
6	WAGON WHEEL GAP. / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-??x14mm	Dec 4 1918

WAGON WHEEL GAP – Continued

7	WAGON WHEEL GAP, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Jul 28 1927 Nov 14 1936
8	WAGON WHEEL GAP/ COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-??x??mm	Oct 20 1936 Oct 6 1939
9	WAGON WHEEL GAP/ COLO CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x19mm	May 17 1940 May 21 1954



WASON

Martin Van Buren Wason, a native of Vermont, had traveled extensively and been involved in mining in many parts of the world before he came to Colorado in either 1870 or 1871. He settled on Willow Creek just above its junction with the Rio Grande River. Mr. Wason eventually owned 2,000 acres and upon his death, December 27, 1903, he left an estate valued at \$300,000. A word of caution, Mr. Wason’s initials have been recorded as “A. H.” or “M. H” by several historians. I am accepting the version reported by Ray Newburn in his series *Postal History of the Colorado San Juan*.

When the discoveries of silver ore brought a rush of miners to the Willow Creek area, Wason quickly sought to take advantage of the influx. He constructed a toll road to the mining camps and platted a townsite along the toll road. Wason believed that his location, in the open flats along the Rio Grande River, would be a better place for a town that would serve the mines. He even erected a building to be a courthouse for the new Mineral County. For a few months Wason was the county seat.

**WASON – Continued**

However, the three or so miles from the mines to Wason were more than the miners cared to travel. The town of Wason never developed beyond a few buildings, and following an election, the courthouse was dismantled and moved to Creede.

The site of Wason is on Colorado Highway 149, just north of the bridge over the Rio Grande River, and about three miles southeast of Creede. It is now the site of an active guest ranch with a number of cabins for visitors.

Please refer back to the introduction to Mineral County for an excerpt from *Postal History of the Colorado San Juan* for a history of Wason’s toll road operation.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

- Dec 12 1891 --- SW/4 Sec 5 T41N R1E 1/2 mile north of the Rio Grande  
3/4 mile east of Willow Creek A map, following Antelope Springs,  
places Wason in the SE/4 SW/4 (EXTREME) Sec 5 T41N R1E  
Proposed postmaster - Charles M. Morrison
- Dec 26 1891 Established
- Dec 26 1891 Morrison, Charles M.
- May 2 1894 Wason, Edith
- Jul 15 1895 Wason, Martin B.
- Apr 13 1904 Ordered closed
- Apr 30 1904 Discontinued Mail to Amethyst



**Wason, Colorado – One of the main buildings of the guest ranch at the site of Wason**  
Photograph by William H. Bauer September 4, 2001

**WASON – Continued****Confirmed types of postal markings**1 WASON / COLO.  
CI 10P 28.0

Jun 29 1892 Nov 2 1893

Hstp Target

**WILLOW**

In May 1889 Nicholas C. Creede and George L. Smith discovered the Holy Moses Mine. By late 1890 a mining camp was growing on Willow Creek below the mine, and took its name from the creek. Settlement quickly spread in all directions, to the north along the forks of Willow Creek, and south out into the Rio Grande Valley.

The first post office in the area was at Willow, but after two months it was renamed Creede (I). If the Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report is to be believed the post office moved approximately a mile to the northwest, from East Willow Creek to a site on West Willow Creek near the mining complex that included the Amethyst Mine. The post office remained there until 1909 when it was closed and moved back to a location on East Willow Creek with the new name of North Creede.

From Creede drive north along Willow Creek to the where the creek forks. Willow and North Creede were to the right. There are still several occupied buildings along the creek in the quarter mile north of the junction.

At the junction, the left hand road will take you to the location of Creede (I), and if followed beyond there, it will eventually loop back to the south and climb up on to Bachelor Mountain and the site of Teller (Bachelor).

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Mar 11 1891 --- SE/4 Sec 30 T42N R1E 3-1/2 miles north of the Rio Grande  
On the westerly side of Willow Creek, 1/32 mile from creek  
Proposed postmaster - Augustus Caleb Meister

May 12 1891 Established

May 12 1891 Meister, Augustus C.

Jul 1 1891 Name changed to Creede (I)

**Confirmed types of postal markings**1 WILLOW / COL-  
CI 10P 27.0

Jul 3 1891

Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm

NOTE: The postmark reported above was used two days after the official change in name from Willow to Creede



1

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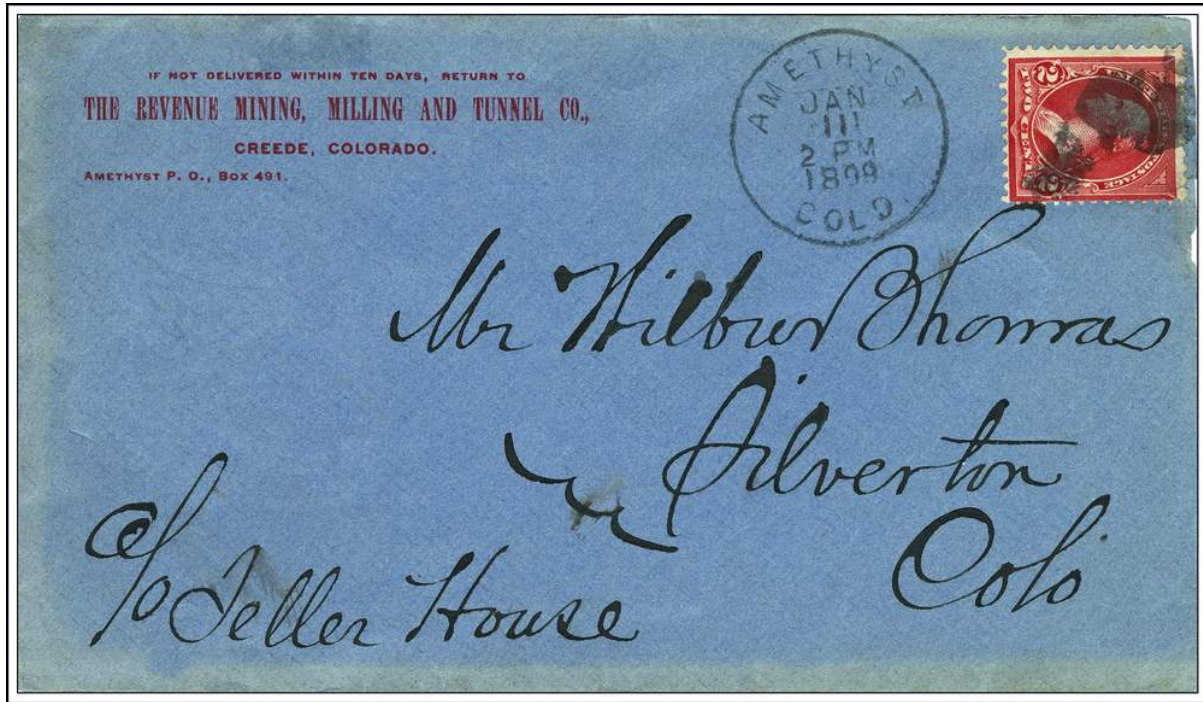
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Chapter X - Mineral County, Part 1 - October 1980  
Mineral County, Part 2 - Jan 1981

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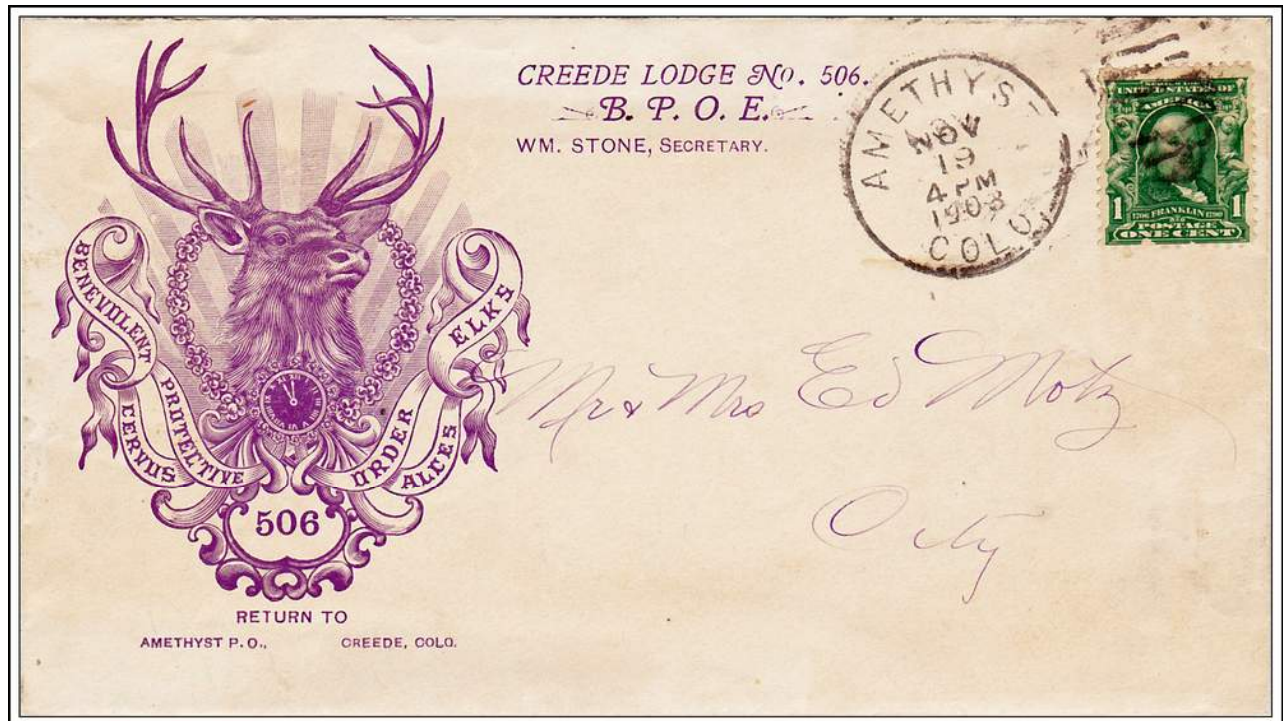
These are documents filed with applications for the approval of a new post office, at the time of a move of a post office and upon periodic requests of the Post Office Department. The documents may include a detailed location using the Federal Land Survey System, references of distance to local streams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

GALLERY OF MINERAL COUNTY COVERS



AMETHYST / COLO.

January 11, 1899

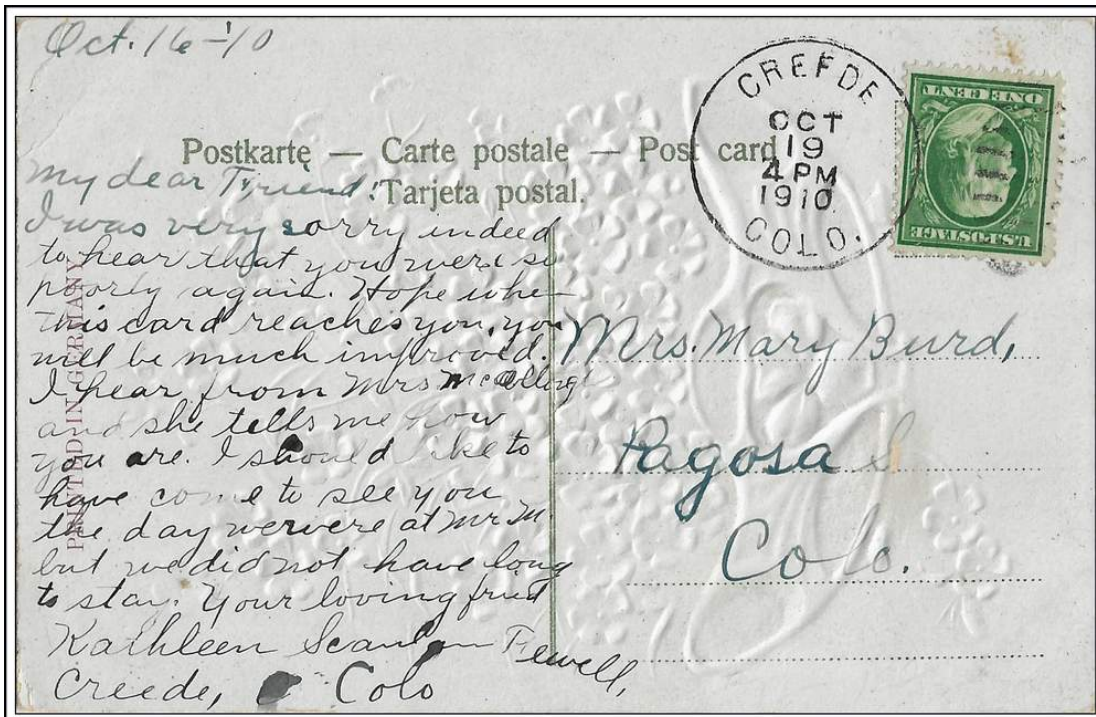


AMETHYST / COLO.

November 19, 1903



ANTELOPE SPRINGS / COLO.    October 30, 1877

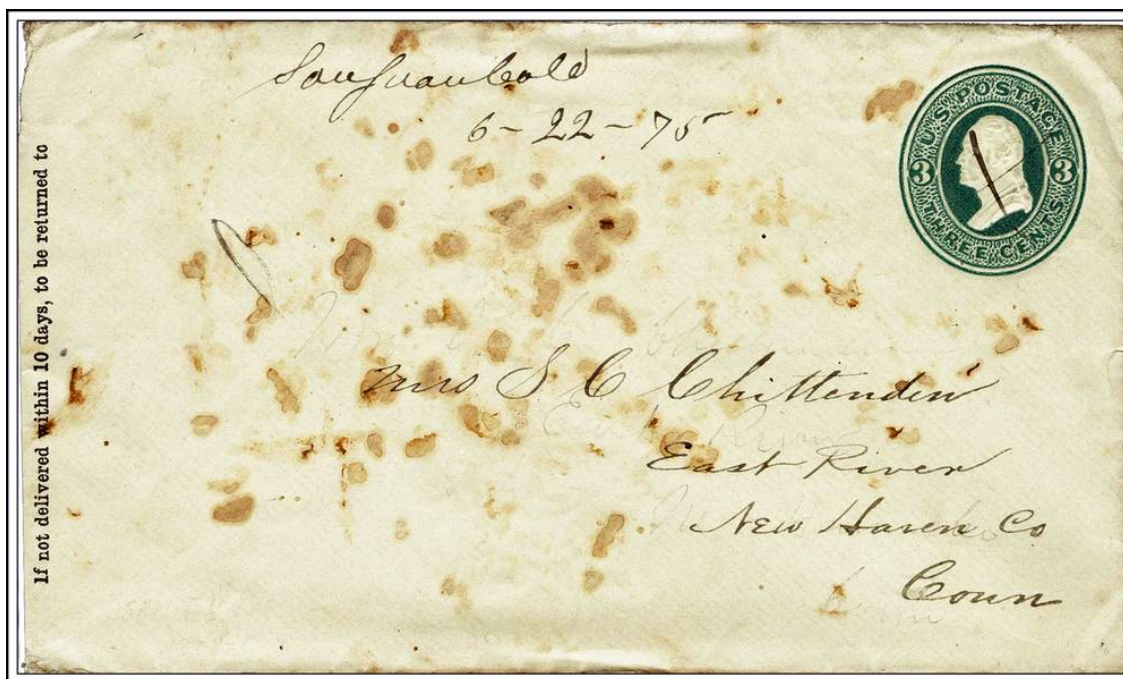


CREEDE / COLO.    October 19, 1910



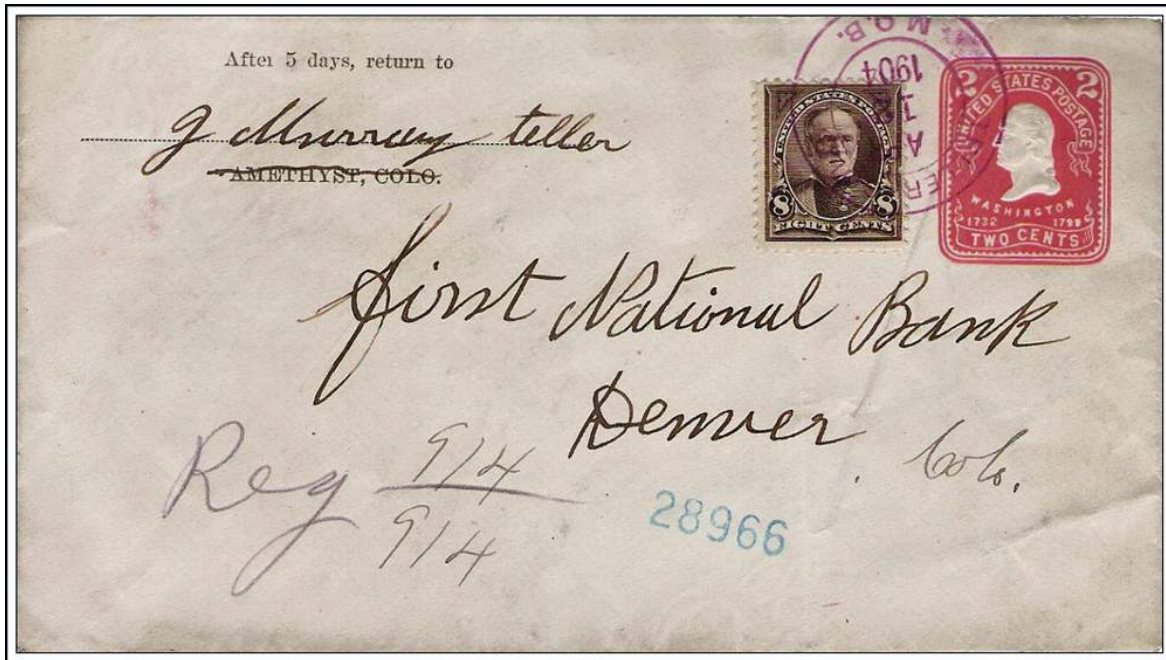
NORTH CREEDE / COLO.

December 23, 1910



San Juan Colo

June 22, 1875



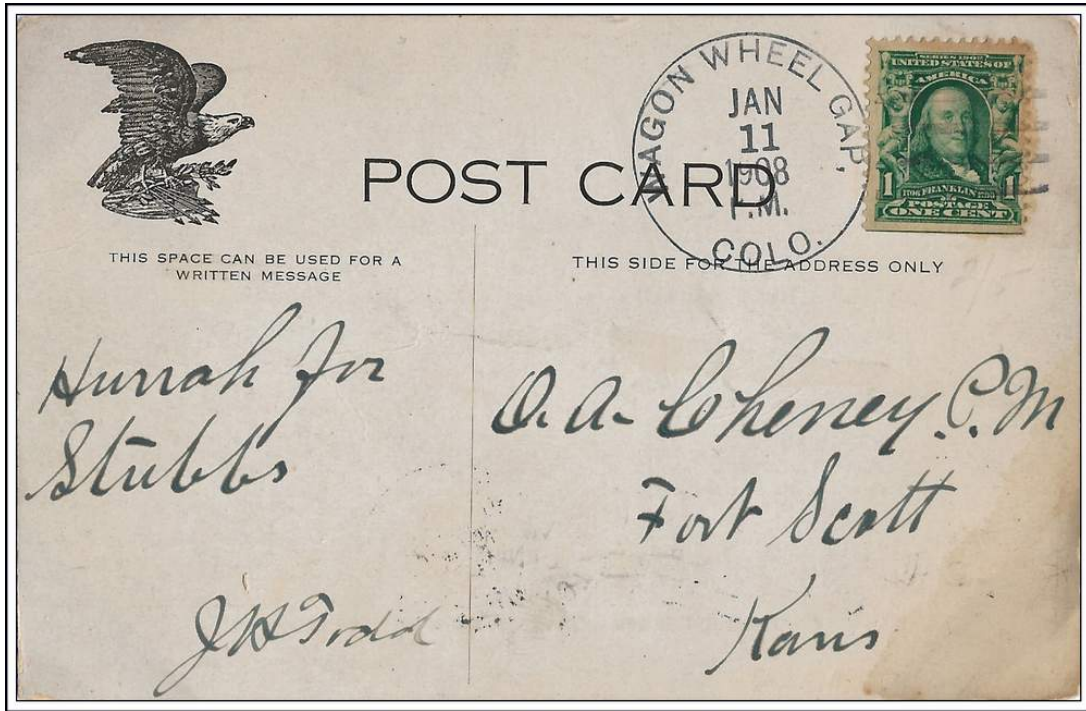
TELLER, COLO. / M.O.B.

April 12, 1904



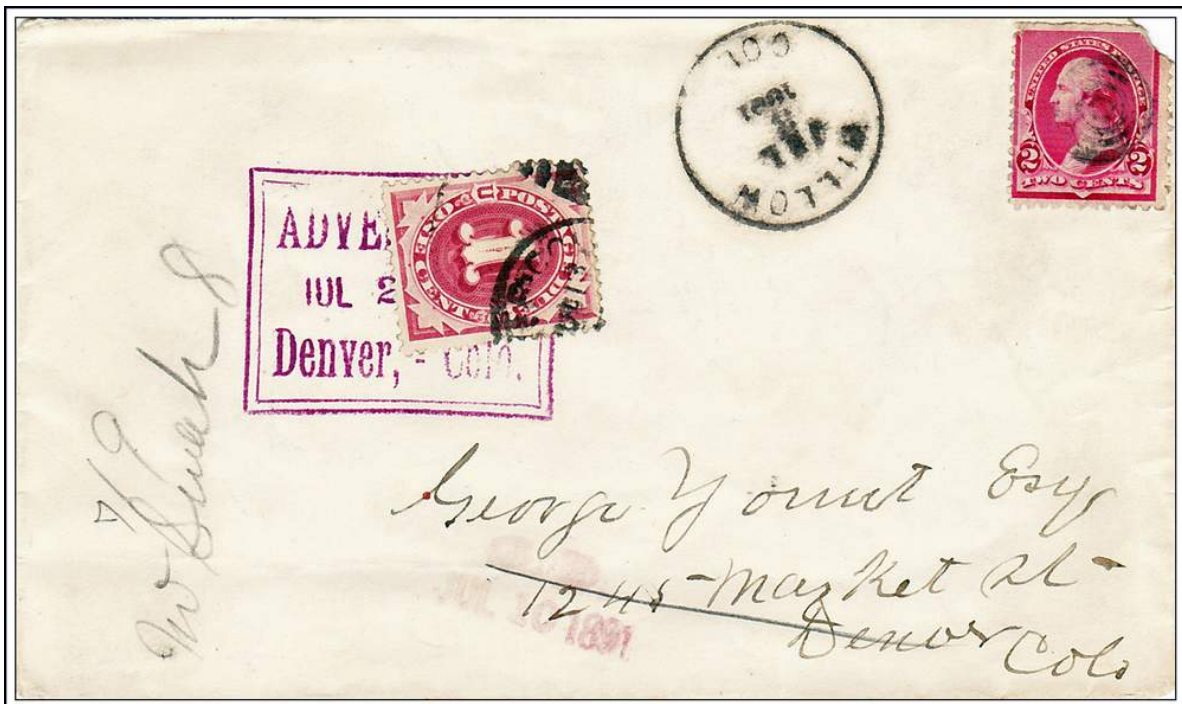
Manuscript postmark: Thornton / Colo

August 22, 1895



WAGON WHELL GAP, / COLO.

January 11, 1908



WILLOW / COL-

July 3. 1891

