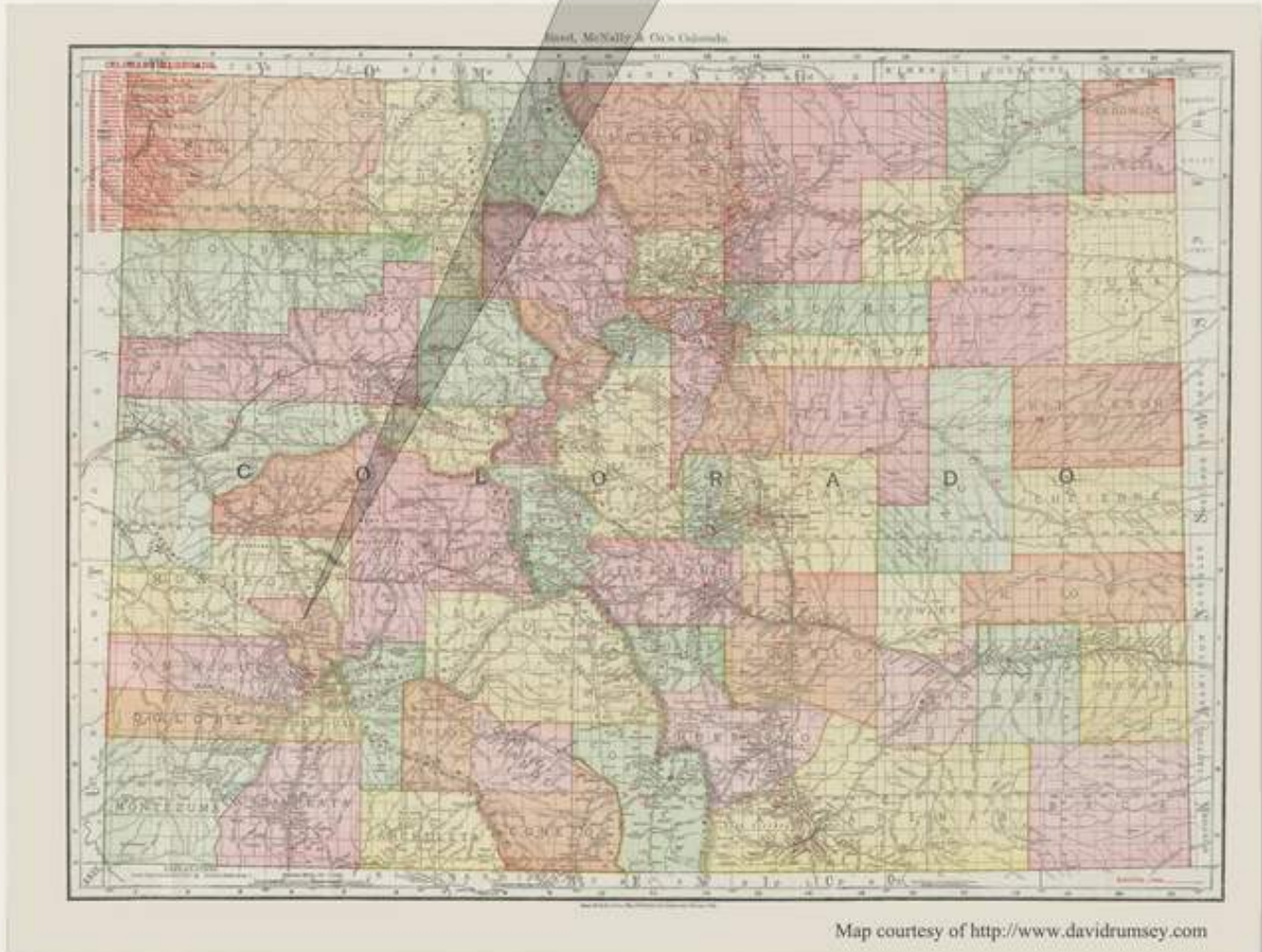


# Ouray County



*Established: January 18, 1877*

*County Seat: Ouray*



## **OURAY COUNTY**

By William H. Bauer

On January 18, 1877 Ouray County was authorized by an act of the Colorado Legislature. The county as originally established, was created from portions of what were then Lake and San Juan Counties. This larger version of Ouray County remained in effect until February 19, 1881 when Dolores County was carved from Ouray County. Ouray County was further reduced on February 11, 1883 with the creation of Montrose County and on February 27, 1883 San Miguel County was authorized. The act of February 27 designated what is now Ouray County as San Miguel County and vice versa. Within a few days, March 3, the naming was revised to the present designations. With those acts of the legislature, Ouray County was reduced to its present boundaries. The legislative act that authorized Ouray County also designated the town of Ouray to be the county seat and it has retained that position.

Today Ouray County is roughly triangular in shape. The northern boundary is an east-west line about twenty-seven miles in length. The eastern boundary follows the divide between The Uncompahgre River on the west and the Cimarron River on the east. The western boundary stairsteps to the southeast to a short distance south of Dallas Divide where it then follows a drainage divide with the San Miguel River to the west. Both of these boundaries converge at Red Mountain Pass. The county is a maximum of thirty miles from north to south. At Red Mountain Pass the boundary is an irregular line four miles in length along the divide with the Las Animas River drainage to the south.

Much of Ouray County is mountainous with a number of peaks exceeding 13,000 feet in elevation. The two highest peaks are Mt. Sneffels at 14,150 feet and Wetterhorn Peak at 14,015 feet. While the northern portion of the county is not as mountainous as the southern portion, it is composed of rolling hills that rise to the higher mountains to the east and west. That land is best suited to raising livestock and there is considerable forest that can be harvested for lumber. North of Ridgway the valley of the Uncompahgre River widens and there is some reasonably level ground for farming.

Nearly all of Ouray County drains into the Uncompahgre River, which flows north to join the Gunnison River. A small portion in the northwest corner reaches the Gunnison River by a different route. There are numerous tributary streams to the Uncompahgre River but the major ones are Dallas Creek and Canyon Creek from the west, Cow Creek from the east, and from the south, Red Mountain Creek.

The Brunot Treaty of 1873 opened the San Juan Mountains to white prospectors and settlers. Prospectors soon came into what would become Ouray County. By 1877 exploitation of the early discoveries was underway. Until 1881 much of Ouray County was part of the Ute Indian Reservation. Following the Meeker Massacre public sentiment forced the removal of the Northern Ute tribes to a reservation in Utah. The Southern Utes were placed on reservations in Montezuma and La Plata Counties.

Mining, principally silver, quickly became the basis for settlement in Ouray County. This remained true until 1893 when repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act crippled the silver mining industry. Fortunately, several of the major mines in Ouray County were producing increasing amounts of gold and mining continued to be important into the late twentieth century. Nearly all of the mining took place in the southern end of the county along Canyon Creek and Red Mountain Creek. There was some short-lived placer mining at points along the Uncompahgre River and tributary streams.

With the decline and eventual end of the mining industry Ouray County has been forced to find a new base for its economy. Agriculture does contribute considerably to the local economy. However, more and more the focus is shifting to service industries and tourism.

The spectacular scenery and wilderness make Ouray an attractive tourist destination. There are numerous hiking trails, mountains to climb and varied wildlife to view. Hunting and fishing are also

important. Jeep tours take tourists from Ouray high into the mountains where normal auto travel is impossible. Several hot springs are available to enjoy and soak away aches and pains.

In recent years portions of Ouray County have become attractive for residential development. Much of this is seasonal or second home occupation but there is a growing portion that is retirement homes. Montrose is an hour away and Grand Junction is another hour or so travel beyond Montrose.

During the nineteenth century access to Ouray County was not easy. The high mountains and the narrow, deep gorge of the Uncompaghre River were major obstacles to access from the south. In 1883-1884 Otto Mears built a toll road south from Ouray through the Uncompaghre Canyon but for several miles it was a hair-raising ride. In 1891 Ouray County purchased the toll road from Otto Mears.

Otto Mears and Dave Wood established roads and freight lines that entered the county from what is now Montrose. In 1887 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built a branch line from Montrose to Ouray and in 1890 the Rio Grande Southern began construction of a railroad from Ridgway, over Dallas Divide to the San Miguel River Valley and on to Durango. Both of those railways are gone but their general routes live on as the major highways in Ouray County.

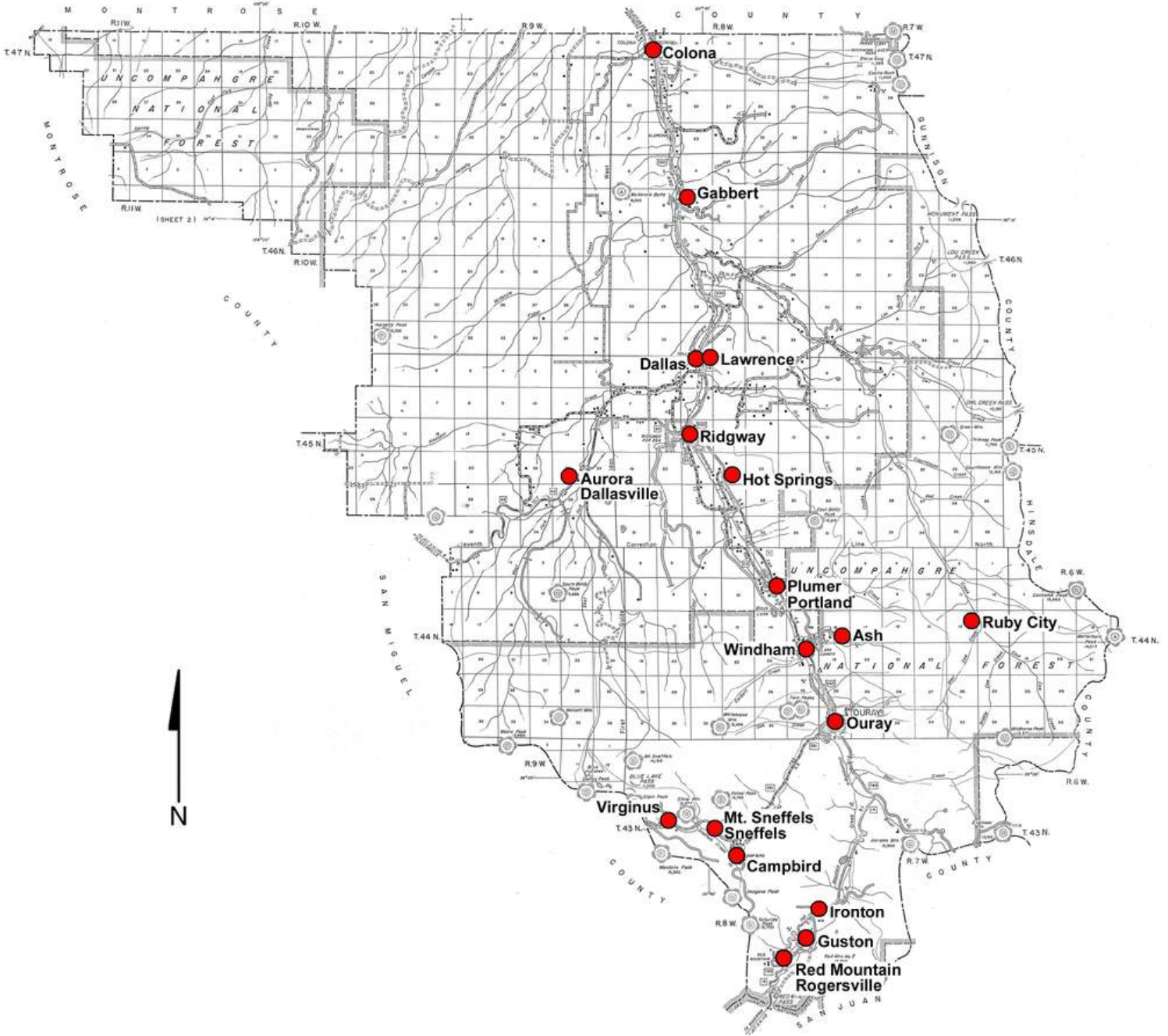
US Highway 550 begins at Montrose, enters Ouray County at Colona, and exits the county via Red Mountain Pass (11,018 feet). Colorado Highway 62 begins at Ridgway and climbs west over Dallas Divide (8,970 feet) before descending Leopard Creek to the San Miguel River. A combination of county and Forest Service roads cross Owl Creek Pass (11,120 feet). This route is mostly unpaved but during the summer months it is no problem for normal automobiles. There are numerous county roads but most either dead end in the mountains or form a grid in the lower elevations. The higher elevations are penetrated by some jeep trails and by an extensive network of hiking trails.

I want to thank Tom Hillhouse of Ouray for reviewing the text for Ouray County. He made a number of suggestions and corrections that have been incorporated in this chapter. Tom was also able to bring to date situations that have changed since I visited these places in 2000 and 2004.



**Red Mountain Reflected in Alpine Tarn in Gary Cooper Gulch Ouray Colorado**

From – <https://www.iz.net/wallpaper-red-mountain-reflected-in-alpine-tarn-in-gary-cooper-gulch-ouray-colorado>



Post Office Location Map – Ouray County

## ASH

Ash was a small mining community on Dexter Creek about a mile and half from the junction of the creek with the Uncompahgre River and some three miles north of Ouray. It was located below the Bachelor Mine and also served the Calliope Mine.

The Bachelor Mine was discovered in 1893 and eventually developed into a good but short-lived producer. It has been reported that during its activity, the Bachelor Mine produced as much as \$3,000,000 in ore.

It would seem that the town was named for a tree - the ash. However, the name was formed from the initials of the surnames of the three owners of the Bachelor Mine - (Charles) Armstrong, (Frank) Sanders and (George) Hurlburt.

From the post office in Ouray, drive north two miles to Ouray County Road 14 - Dexter Creek Road. Go east two and four-tenths miles. That will bring you to where the road makes a horseshoe crossing of the creek. There is a mine dump, the remnants of the Bachelor Mill and an old corral, to mark the location of Ash.

### Chronology of the Post Office

<b>Jun 24 1899</b>	---	<b>SE/4 Sec 18 T44N R7W 2-1/2 miles north of the Uncompahgre On the north bank of Dexter Creek Proposed postmaster - John McRae McLennon</b>
<b>Oct 11 1899</b>		<b>Established</b>
<b>Oct 11 1899</b>		<b>McLennan, John M.</b>
<b>Feb 23 1901</b>		<b>Graham, Melvin E.</b>
<b>Dec 12 1901</b>		<b>Ballou, Richard C.</b>
<b>Oct 23 1902</b>		<b>Sargent, Cora M.</b>
<b>Oct 9 1903</b>		<b>Ordered closed Oct 9 1903 Effective date Oct 31 1903 Papers to Ouray</b>
<b>Oct 17 1903</b>		<b>Closing order rescinded</b>
<b>Oct 16 1903</b>		<b>Souders, Sara E.</b>
<b>Dec 19 1904</b>		<b>Newton, William</b>
<b>Dec 9 1905</b>		<b>Ordered closed</b>
<b>Dec 31 1905</b>		<b>Discontinued Mail to Ouray</b>

### Confirmed Types of Postal Markings

**NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM ASH**

## AURORA

Aurora followed Dallasville on the road from the Uncompahgre River, up Dallas Creek, over Dallas Divide and down Leopard Creek to the San Miguel River. It is believed that Dallasville and Aurora were either the same place or very close to one another.

Nell's map of 1881 locates Aurora on the west side of the West Fork of Dallas Creek about a half mile above the junction with the East Fork. Today the area is ranch land with some scattered homes that may be seasonal residences.

From Ridgway drive west on Colorado Highway 62 to the intersection with Ouray County Road 7. Turn east on Road 7. About a mile from the intersection there is an old, restored log building (1994). I believe that this was part of the Aurora-Dallasville settlement. Aurora was a way station on the aforementioned road and served an area devoted to ranching.

### Chronology of the Post Office

<b>Apr 4 1880</b>	---	<b>No survey made 7 miles west of the Uncompahgre on east side of Dallas Creek Proposed postmaster - Julia E. Trenchard</b>
<b>May 10 1880</b>		<b>Established</b>

**AURORA – Continued**

May 10 1880	Trenchord, Joshua
Oct 17 1881	Culver, Burr
Feb 19 1884	Discontinued Mail to Lawrence

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	AURORA / COLO.	Mar 5 1883
	CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 19mm



**CAMPBIRD /CAMP BIRD**

The area southwest of Ouray, known as the Imogene Basin, was prospected as early as the 1870's. Some silver discoveries were made. George Barber and William Weston located the Una and the Gertrude Mines. Modest quantities of silver were produced until the 1893 repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and economics forced everything to shut down.

In 1895 A. W. (Andy) Richardson, working for Thomas F. Walsh, discovered gold. That discovery led to the establishment of the Camp Bird Mine. The Camp Bird was actually the consolidation of a number of mining claims in the Imogene Basin and the surrounding area. The Camp Bird Mine was in operation, with minor periods of hiatus, from 1896 until 1978. It earned a reputation as one of the most productive gold mines in Colorado, second only to Cripple Creek's Portland Mine.

Tom Walsh operated the Camp Bird Mine until April 1902 when he sold it to a British syndicate for an estimated \$6,000,000. Between 1902 and 1916 the syndicate removed \$23,234,256 in ore, nearly all of that in gold, with minor values in silver, lead and copper.

In 1916 a two-mile drainage tunnel was dug to intersect the earlier workings. Not enough ore was found to keep the mill in operation and there was little activity during the 1920's. In the Depression Years of the 1930's the price of gold supported renewed activity which continued well past the end of World War II. Operations ceased in 1978. In recent years the mill structures have been removed and there has been general environmental cleanup of the area.

From Ouray, drive south on US Highway 550 to the first horseshoe bend on the climb out of the valley. Turn west on to Ouray county Road 361 (Forest Service Road 853). From the intersection with US 550 it is five and seven-tenths miles to the entrance road to the Camp Bird Mill site. The mill site is visible from Road 361 and you can drive three-tenths miles to the bridge over Canyon Creek. The road is blocked at the bridge but I have walked in a short distance in order to photograph the restored mine superintendent's home.

Initially the mine workings were about three miles further up Imogene Creek at what is shown on some maps as Upper Camp Bird. The mill was in the valley where Imogene and Sneffels Creeks join to form Canyon Creek and where the superintendent's home is located.

As a community, Camp Bird was quite elaborate for a mining camp. John K. Aldrich, in *Ghosts of the Western San Juans, Volume 1*, states that, "The men slept in enameled iron beds, and ate from china plates. They had electric lights, steam heat, modern plumbing, and marble-topped lavatories. Walsh also provided a reading room and stocked it with magazines and newspapers."

### **CAMPBIRD/CAMP BIRD – Continued**

There is some confusion as to where the Camp Bird Post Office was located. Some authors have placed it at the mine in Imogene Basin. Unfortunately the Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report provides no definitive location.

The Upper Camp Bird site was very difficult to access. There was a small town at the mill site (Lower Camp Bird) thus it is logical that the post office was at the mill site and not in Imogene Basin. This is confirmed by a 1912 photograph in *Camp Bird and the Revenue* by Jack Benham (1980) that identifies a building below the mill as being the post office.

The mine and the subsequent settlement and post office were named for the Canada Jay, or as it is commonly called, the Camp Robber. Local practice was to spell Camp Bird as two words but the Post Office Department preferred to make it a single word.

Latitude = 37:58:22 North Longitude = 107:43:33 West



**The mine superintendent's house at the Campbird, Colorado**  
 Photograph by William H. Bauer September 21, 2000

### **Chronology of the Post Office**

Apr 4 1898	---	T43N R8W On the east side of Imogene Creek Proposed postmaster - Andrew W. Richardson
Apr 28 1898		Established
Apr 28 1898		Richardson, Andrew W.
Oct 23 1902		Orendorf, Marshall
Feb 18 1915		Kuchs, Louis F.
Jan 29 1916		Orendorf, Gray C.
Mar 15 1918		Discontinued Mail to Ouray

**CAMPBIRD/CAMP BIRD – Continued  
Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	CAMPBIRD / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Target	Apr 26 1902 Dec 23 1902
1.1	CAMPBIRD, COLO. / REC'D. CI 10P 29.5	Hstp No killer	Apr 19 1905
2	CAMPBIRD / COLO. CI 10P 29.5	Dplx Grid, 9 bar oval	Jul 4 1905 Nov 30 1910
3	CAMPBIRD, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x19mm	Nov 15 1912 Sep 8 1914



**COLONA**

Colona began as a small settlement supporting Fort Crawford and the second Los Pinos Ute Indian Agency located a short distance to the north of the present county line. In 1881 when the Ute Indians were removed from the area and sent to a reservation in Utah, the settlement continued to exist as a farming village along the Uncompahgre River.

At first the settlement was called Hotchkiss for Preston Hotchkiss, but that name conflicted with the town of Hotchkiss in Delta County, that town having been named for Enos Hotchkiss.

It appears that the name Colona was adopted in 1882 and is said to be Spanish for, “colonist.”

Colona was never a large community. In 1930 it had a population of only 100. The post office did last from 1891 to 1943.

Colona is still a small community with limited, minimal services. It is located on US Highway 550 immediately south of the Montrose-Ouray County line. Most of the present town lies on the west side of US 550.

Latitude = 38:19:30 North Longitude = 107:46:45 West

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Sep 20 1891	---	NW/4 Sec 17 T47N R8W 500 yards west of the Uncompahgre River 300 yards west of the D&RG Proposed postmaster - James F. Osborn
Oct 19 1891		Established
Oct 19 1891		Osborne, James F.
Dec 15 1894		Pinckley, Andy M.
Jun 5 1896		Thatcher, William H.

COLONA – Continued

Jul 30 1896	---	NE/4 Sec 17 T47N R8W 1/16 mile west of the Uncompahgre River 1/2 mile west of Onion Creek 100 yards west of the D&RG	
Jun 20 1898		Hotchkiss, Preston H.	
Sep 15 1900		Hotchkiss, Martha J.	
Jun 29 1903		Middleton, Tom	Declined
Sep 29 1903		Hays, William T.	
Jun 30 1904		Richey, John H.	
Jul 22 1912		Greene, Wilbur A.	
May 8 1914	---	SW/4 Sec 17 T47N R8W 1/4 mile west of the Uncompahgre River and Onion Creek 570 feet west of the Denver & Rio Grande	
Apr 11 1916		Ricketts, Albert O.	
Apr 15 1918		Roberts, Max E.	
Jun 31 1921		Remington, Charles M.	
May 2 1922		Frank, Joseph R.	Acting
May 15 1922		Frank, Joseph R.	Confirmed
Jun 28 1922		Frank, Joseph R.	Commissioned
Jul 1 1922		Frank, Joseph R.	Assumed Charge
Oct 20 1941	---	SW/4 Sec 17 T47N R8W D & RG Station is 300 feet east of post office	
Oct 1 1942		Frank, Mrs. Alberta C.	Assumed charge
Nov 3 1942		Frank, Mrs. Alberta C.	Acting
Mar 2 1943		Ordered closed	
Mar 31 1943		Discontinued	

Confirmed Types of Postal Markings

1	COLONA / COLO. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring indistinct	Mar 9 1899
2	COLONA / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target	May 24 1907
3	COLONA, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x14mm	May 7 1910 May 5 191-
4	COLONA / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Jul 22 1913 Apr 7 1917
5	COLONA, / COLO. CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-??x19mm	Feb 11 1933
6	COLONA, / COLO. CI 10P 33.5	4bars S-24x20mm	Dec 28 1936 Mar 15 1943



## **DALLAS**

In its early days this community had a variety of names among which were Gold City, Dallas and Dallas City. Placer gold was found in 1879 but that activity was very brief. Dallas did become a junction point for freight and travel up the Uncompahgre Valley to Ouray and beyond, or on the road branching to the west to the San Miguel Valley and Telluride. In 1887 the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad briefly reinforced that position. However, true to its usual practice, the Denver and Rio Grande chose a site two miles beyond Dallas and the town of Ridgway was born.

Dave Wood, who owned much of the land in the area, declined to cooperate with Otto Mears who wished to connect his Rio Grande Southern Railroad to the Denver and Rio Grande at Dallas. The railroad connection was made at Ridgway and Dallas began to decline.

Most sources claim that the town was named for George N. Dallas, diplomat, and Vice President of the United States in the James K. Polk administration (1845-1849). It has also been suggested that the community was named for Joseph Dallas, a friend of John Neely Bryan who founded the town.

Most of the buildings of the town were on the east side of the Uncompahgre River. The school and a few homes were on the west side of the river. On September 10, 1888 a fire destroyed nearly all of the buildings on the east side of the river. The town was quickly rebuilt but another fire, likely in the winter of 1891-1892, again destroyed much of the town. This time very little was rebuilt as the town of Ridgway, two miles to the south, was growing rapidly and soon supplanted Dallas as the commercial center for this section of the Uncompahgre Valley.

For a time Dallas rivaled Montrose as a shipping point for livestock from the Norwood and Paradox regions to the west.

Begin at the intersection of US Highway 550 and Colorado Highway 62 on the east side of Ridgway. Drive about two miles north on US 550 to the intersection with Ouray County Road 24. Dallas was located north of Road 24 and between the highway and the river. There are some modern buildings in the area but nothing is left from the early days of Dallas.

The earlier post office of Lawrence (1883-1884) was located in nearly the same place as Dallas. Post Office Department records indicate that the Lawrence Post Office was "moved" to Dallas.

Robert L. Brown, in *Ghost Towns of the Colorado Rockies*, tells the following tale.

On May 13, 1899, the newspapers reported that Mrs. Carmichael postmistress for the last 10 years had been arrested by United States authorities when her accounts were found to be four thousand dollars short, due to embezzlement. Also caught in the same net was Mrs. Eunice J. Smith who carried the strange title of "Postmistress of the Dallas City Bank." Apparently Mrs. Smith was not as adroit as Mrs. Carmichael since her accounts were short only three thousand dollars, accomplished through the ingenious device of false cancellations. Although the firm members of Smith & Carmichael were arrested, subsequent papers failed to report on the disposition of their cases.

I have to question this story since the name of Mrs. Carmichael does not appear in the Post Office Department Records of Postmaster Appointments. A Mrs. Emma J. Smith is listed as postmaster from 1891 to 1899.

Latitude = 38:11:00 North Longitude = 107:44:39 West

### **Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Jan 16 1884</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>Not Known 20 rods east of the Uncompahgre River 1/4 mile southeasterly of Dallas Creek Proposed postmaster - Max R. Krausnick</b>
<b>Feb 11 1884</b>		<b>Post office moved from Lawrence</b>
<b>Feb 11 1884</b>		<b>Krausnick, Maximilian R.</b>
<b>Nov 19 1885</b>		<b>Mann, Abner G.</b>

DALLAS – Continued

Jul 27 1888	Rice, Elijah S.
Mar 30 1889	Dunham, Ed
Dec 31 1889	Marshall, Richard M.
Dec 4 1891	Smith, Mrs. Emma J.
Jun 30 1899	Trenchard, Henry
Oct 14 1899	Ordered closed
Oct 31 1899	Discontinued Mail to Ridgway



DALLAS, / COLO. August 8, 1885

Confirmed Types of Postal Markings

- |   |  |                           |                         |
|---|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | DALLAS, / COL.<br>CI 11P 27.5/25.5       | Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm  | Jul 13 1884 Apr 13 1885 |
| 2 | DALLAS, / COLO.<br>CI 21P 27.5/26.5/18.0 | Hstp Grid, 9-bar circular | Aug 2 1885 Nov 24 1885  |
| 3 | DALLAS / COLO.<br>CI 10P 27.0            | Hstp No killer            | May 6 1887 Aug 23 1888  |
| 4 | Dallas Colo<br>MS                        | Mscp Pen cancel           | Nov 6 1888              |
| 5 | DALLAS / COLO.<br>CI 10P 28.0            | Hstp Target, 4-ring 16mm  | Dec 6 1888 May 20 1890  |



## **DALLASVILLE**

It is believed that Dallasville and its successor, Aurora, were either at the same location or very close to one another. There is another possible location for Dallasville about a mile further west from Aurora, on Colorado Highway 62 and a short distance before the intersection with Ouray County Road 9 (West Dallas Road). This location is on the east side of Highway 62 and in 1994 was open ranchland.

The Dallasville Post Office was on the toll road from the Uncompahgre River to the San Miguel River. It would also have provided some services to early ranchers in the surrounding area.

It has been suggested that the Dallasville settlement was moved to a more convenient location and renamed Aurora. The Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report places Dallasville "eight miles west of the Uncompahgre River." The Site Location Report for Aurora places it "seven miles west of the Uncompahgre River." That difference of one mile supports the idea that Dallasville and Aurora were not at the same physical location.

### **Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Dec 20 1877</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>Not reported 8 miles west of the Uncompahgre River 1 mile west of Dallas Creek</b>
<b>Dec 21 1877</b>		<b>Established</b>
<b>Dec 21 1877</b>		<b>Thompson, Return</b>
<b>Oct 17 1878</b>		<b>Kerr, James</b>
<b>Jun 21 1879</b>		<b>Thompson, Mrs. Emaline</b>
<b>Jul 9 1879</b>		<b>Discontinued</b>

### **Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM DALLASVILLE**

## **GABBERT**

Very little has been written about Gabbert. The one reference I have found states that it was a station on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad immediately northeast of the confluence of Cow Creek with the Uncompahgre River. The Post Office Department Geographic Site Location Report confirms that information.

On a 1927 Denver and Rio Grande and Interstate Commerce Commission map, and in the 1920 railroad timetable, this location is identified as Mayfield.

From Colona drive south five miles crossing the Uncompahgre River and Chaffee Creek. One half mile after crossing Chaffee Creek you will be in the vicinity of Gabbert. In 2007 there was an old, dark-red sided house on the west side of US 550 and a modern house on the east side of the road. I believe that the older house is a remnant of Gabbert. It is believed to have been the old Gabbert School.

The area around Gabbert was, and still is, best suited for livestock and for some farming near the Uncompahgre and the other streams.

### **Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Feb 4 1898</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>NW/4 Sec 9 T46N R8W 200 yards east of the Uncompahgre River 1/4 mile north of Cow Creek Proposed postmaster - Martha Jane Thatcher</b>
<b>Apr 22 1898</b>		<b>Established</b>
<b>Apr 22 1898</b>		<b>Hays, William T.</b>
<b>Apr 24 1902</b>		<b>Miles, Isaac L.</b>
<b>Jun 24 1903</b>		<b>Weaver, George F.</b>
<b>Sep 24 1903</b>		<b>Ordered closed</b>
<b>Oct 14 1903</b>		<b>Discontinued Papers to Ridgway</b>

### **Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM GABBERT**

**GUSTON**

Guston was on the headwaters of Red Mountain Creek, just below the summit of Red Mountain Pass. Two other post offices were Rodgersville and Red Mountain located to the south, between Guston and Red Mountain Pass. All three were on the east side of Red Mountain Creek.

During the summer of 1881 John Robinson and three companions, Andrew Meldrum, Gust Lang and A. Dietlaff made the initial strike that became the Guston Mine. The nearby Yankee Girl Mine was discovered in 1882. The Orphan Boy and Robinson were other prominent mines at Guston. These mines operated until 1896 when the low price of silver forced their closure. There was sporadic activity during the early years of the twentieth century.

The source of the town name is uncertain but it is possible that it was named for Gust Lang, a member of the initial discovery party.

The difficulty of access to the site slowed development. Otto Mears toll roads reached the area in 1883 and 1884. It was the arrival at Guston of the Silverton Railroad in October 1888 that began the real boom for the mines and settlements on Red Mountain Creek.

Guston developed into a modest community with 200-300 residents. It possessed two saloons, a shoe shop, two restaurants and a miners supply store - all essential to a mining community. The Reverend W. Davis bullied the residents of Guston into building a church, the only one in the area. One old miner donated a mine whistle, thus the Guston church called people to worship with a shriek instead of the pleasant sound of a bell.

The principal product of the mines at Guston was silver. With the 1893 repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act the price of silver declined precipitously. Only a few mines remained marginally profitable. The population of Guston declined. The Silverton Railroad, which had reached beyond Guston to Ironton and a short distance further down the valley to the Albany Smelter, ceased operations beyond Red Mountain Town. In subsequent years the railroad would operate intermittently and mining at Guston was also an on-and-off proposition.

In addition to the fall in the price of silver, a drop in the quality of the ore and extremely acid water in the mines contributed to the decline of Guston.

Approximately a half-mile north of the Ouray-San Juan County line a rough dirt road, to the east, goes down hill to the site of Red Mountain Town which is little more than a half-mile from US 550. From the site of Red Mountain Town there is a road that continues to the north towards Guston. I have not driven that portion, as it is little more than a trail. It could be walked, another mile plus, to the mines and the location of Guston. This road is not recommended for standard automobiles, as it is steep and full of potholes but reportedly it is passable for 4-wheel drive vehicles.

If you are not that adventurous, you can get a good overview of Guston and the eastern side of the Red Mountain Creek Valley from the viewing area on US 550, just below the site of the Idarado Mine. The ruins of several mine structures and the large mine dumps can be seen from the viewing area.

Latitude = 37:54:59 North Longitude = 107:41:23 West

**Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Aug 20 1891</b>	---	<b>SE/4 Sec 2 T42N R8W 1/8 mile east of Red Mountain Creek</b>
		<b>Proposed postmaster - Jonathan Longmire</b>
<b>Jan 26 1892</b>		<b>Established</b>
<b>Jan 26 1892</b>		<b>Longmire, Jonathan</b>
<b>Nov 16 1898</b>		<b>Discontinued Papers to Red Mountain</b>

**GUSTON – Continued**

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**1 GUSTON / COLO.  
CI 10P 28.0**

**Jun 5 1893 Jul 25 1896**

**Hstp Target, 4-ring**



**HOT SPRINGS**

Hot Springs was another of the small Colorado resorts that were located at one of the many thermal springs in the Colorado mountains. According to Indian lore the hot springs in Ouray County were once a geyser and possessed medicinal properties. During the late 1870's this was a popular stopping place providing hot baths for both Indians and other travelers. For a little more than two years there was a post office at the site.

Because of their proximity to Ouray it seems reasonable to assume that the hot springs continued to be popular. At some point in time, a small resort developed and took the name of Orvis Hot Springs. Modern maps locate it with that name.

From Ridgway, at the intersection of US Highway 550 and Colorado Highway 62, drive southeast one and two-tenths miles to where the road turns due south. A short distance from the turn a side road on the east leads into Orvis Hot Springs where there are a number of modern structures. Orvis Hot Springs is alive, well, improved and is open to the public. Some days are clothing optional! There is an RV Park, a propane distribution center and an abandoned greenhouse complex.

When I visited the site in September 2000 the remnants of a large log building were still visible. All that remained were the stone chimneys that had been at either end of the building. The imprints of the logs that formed the building were evident on the backs of the chimneys. On a more recent trip, passing the site, I failed to see those chimneys.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Apr 2 1877</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>Unsurveyed Land 1/2 mile east of the Uncompahgre River</b>
<b>May 4 1877</b>		<b>Established</b>
<b>May 4 1877</b>		<b>Stoddard, William W.</b>
<b>Jan 25 1878</b>		<b>Hammond, Mary J.</b>
<b>Jun 25 1879</b>		<b>Merling, Mrs. Mary E.</b>
<b>Aug 28 1879</b>		<b>Discontinued</b>

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM HOT SPRINGS**

**IRONTON**

The mining excitement in the Red Mountain District began in 1881-1882. By 1883 it had spread northward along the Red Mountain Creek Valley. In late January construction had begun at a place called Copper Glen. The location was at the upper end of the more level and wider portion of the valley. Not long after its founding the name of the settlement was changed to Ironton reflecting the iron content of the ores being mined in the area. The plat for Ironton was filed on March 20, 1884.

**IRONTON – Continued**

The Silverton Railroad was completed to Ironton in mid-1889. The railroad continued northward until it reached the Albany smelter near the head of the Uncompahgre Canyon, an impassible barrier for a railroad. Ironton was the nominal end of track and thrived as a residential and trade center for workers at the smelter and nearby mines.

During the early years silver was the principal product of the mines in the Red Mountain District. The silver panic of 1893 hit hard. Many of the mines closed, population declined and the railroad became intermittent in operation.

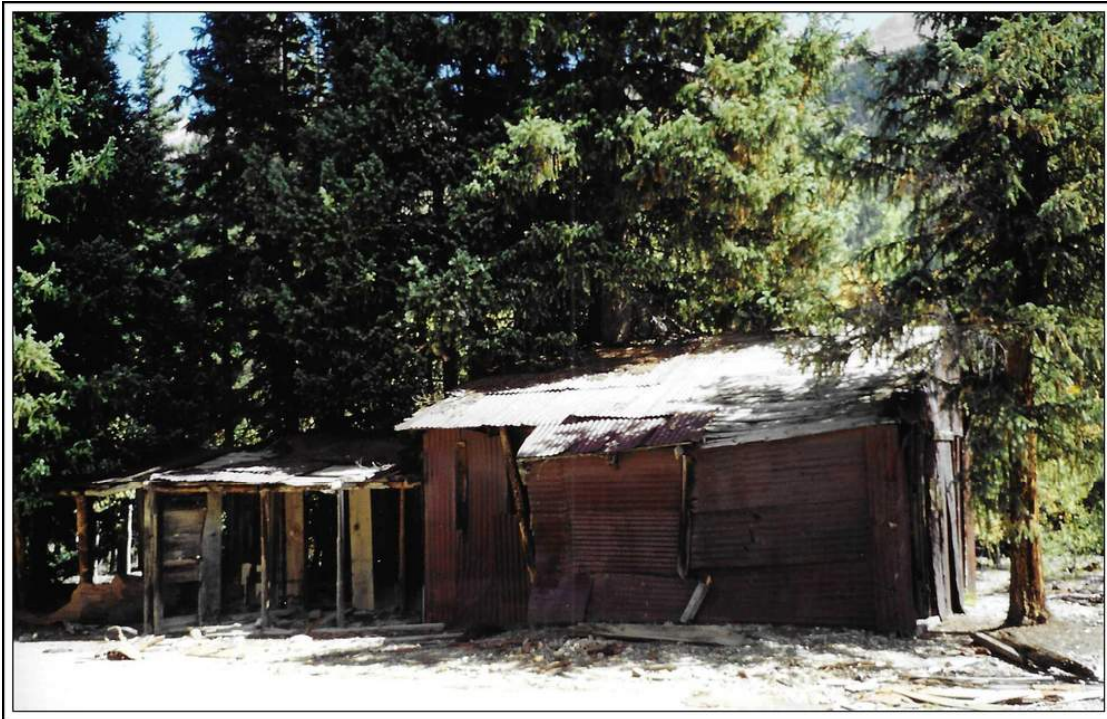
Ironton did not die. A change in emphasis to gold and base metal production from the nearby Treasury Tunnel kept Ironton alive for several more years; although at a reduced level of activity. Eventually the Treasury Tunnel became a part of the Idarado Mine that continued active into the 1970's.

Ironton, on US Highway 550, is at the foot of climb to Red Mountain Pass, before you begin the series of switchbacks that pass the remnants of the Idarado Mill. From the north there is a side road to the east that parallels the highway and Red Mountain Creek. This area has become somewhat of a campground.

Although Ironton was once a substantial town very little remains. In 2000 there was one building still standing, however, from all appearances that was a temporary situation. There were also scattered remnants of a few other buildings and considerable trash. Just south of the turn into the "campground," and on the east side of US 550 there was another building - a small square log building with a pyramidal roof, that had recently been renovated.

The Ironton townsite has been acquired by Ouray County and is now a county park, although there are no facilities. Several of the old structures in the area have been stabilized using funds from the Colorado Historical Society.

Latitude = 37:55:58 North Longitude = 107:40:47 West



**Ironton, Colorado – derelict "buildings" on the east side of US Highway 550**  
Photograph by William H. Bauer September 16, 2000

**IRONTON – Continued**

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Apr 16 1883 --- Unsurveyed Four miles south of the Uncompahgre River on both sides of Red Mountain Creek  
Proposed postmaster - Andrew W. Richardson

May 2 1883 Established  
May 2 1883 Richardson, Andrew W.  
Aug 23 1883 Sewall, A. W.  
Jan 11 1887 Bruner, Augustus G.  
Jan 8 1889 Hunter, Thomas  
Dec 10 1890 Winchester, Josiah  
Aug 16 1893 Brashears, Isaac H.  
Sep 11 1893 Discontinued Papers to Guston  
Oct 26 1893 --- Sec 31 T43N R7W 300 yards east of Red Mountain Creek  
Proposed postmaster - Van S. Slingerland

Jan 18 1894 Re-established  
Jan 8 1894 Slingerland, Van S.  
Nov 30 1894 Carr, John C.  
Jul 27 1896 Brashears, Isaac H.  
Jul 26 1898 Gibson, James G.  
Jan 13 1900 Stewart, Watson H.  
Oct 14 1910 Nardin, Clara J.  
Jul 7 1911 Butcher, Nellie  
Dec 23 1918 Smith, Robert A.  
Nov 29 1919 Closed Mail to Ouray  
-----  
Closing order rescinded  
Jan 16 1920 Miner, Claude G.  
Aug 7 1920 Discontinued Mail to Ouray

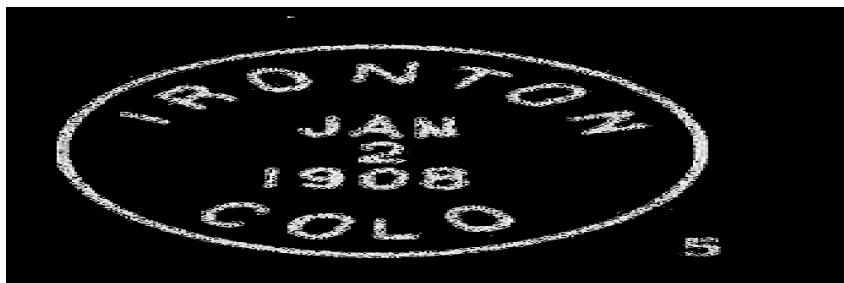


**IRONTON / COLO.**

**September 17, 1891**

**IRONTON – Continued****Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	IRONTON / COL. CI 10P 26.0	Hstp Not present	Nov 16 188-
2	IRONTON / COLO. CI 20P 32.0/29.0	Hstp Cork, 7-bar grid 18x15mm	Apr 30 1884
3	IRONTON / COLO. CI 21P 29.0/27.5/16.0	Hstp Not present	Jan 12 1891
4	IRONTON, / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Cork, smudge	Sep 17 1891 Jun 7 1893
5	IRONTON / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring	Jan 2 1908 Feb 4 1909
6	IRONTON, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Apr 11 1913 Sep 25 1911

**LAWRENCE**

Lawrence is closely associated with its successor – Dallas. It is not clear whether the two settlements were one and the same or were at slightly different locations. The Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Reports place both Dallas and Lawrence close to the Uncompahgre River.

The Lawrence Post Office lasted a few days longer than a year. The Post Office Department records indicate that it was “moved” to Dallas, which implies some separation of the two locations.

One reference supposes that Lawrence was on the ranch belonging to Dave Wood who was the most prominent of the freight line operators in this portion of Colorado. With that thought in mind and looking at what is present on the ground today, I am of the opinion that Lawrence was somewhat further from the river than the Site Location Report states. I would place it on the east side of US Highway 550. Dallas was on the west side of the modern highway.

The area east of the highway is more open and better suited to ranching. On the north side of Owl Creek Road, a half-mile from US 550, there is a large ranch complex that includes several older buildings. There is a more modern ranch complex closer to the main highway. Either of these ranch complexes could have been the location of Lawrence. This general area is in rough agreement with the 1883 Postal Route Map that places Lawrence to the south of the eventual location of Dallas. Further research is needed to determine where Dave Wood’s ranch was located.

**LAWRENCE – Continued**

From Ridgway drive north on US Highway 550 about a mile and a half to Owl Creek Road. The cited ranches are visible from the intersection.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Jan 20 1883	---	Land not sectionalized [Document filed under Gunnison County] 30 rods east of the Uncompahgre 60 rods north of Dry Creek Proposed postmaster - James Percy Williams
Feb 5 1883		Established
Feb 5 1883		Williams, James P.
Feb 11 1884		Post office moved to Dallas

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	LAWRENCE, / COL.	Jul 17 1883	--- -- 1883
	CI 20P 28.0/27.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring	18mm



**MOUNT SNEFFELS**

In October of 1875 W. H. Brookover and Edward Wright crossed over from Silverton and staked a claim, the Wheel of Fortune, in what would become the Mount Sneffels Mining District. Located in a relatively flat area of a few acres a small town soon developed. At first it was called Porters for a pioneer storekeeper but when the post office was acquired in 1879 it took the name of Mount Sneffels.

The name, Mount Sneffels, is a few degrees of separation from its origin. The town was named for the prominent, nearby 14,150 foot mountain of that name. The name of the mountain is that of the peak featured in Jules Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*. That name then traces back to Mount Snaefells, a spectacular mountain in Iceland. The Colorado mountain is said to strongly resemble the one in Iceland.

The Yankee Boy and the Weston were other good mines at Mount Sneffels. The best producer in the area was the Virginius, discovered in 1877, one and half miles further up the valley and 1,600 feet higher in altitude. In 1893 a tunnel, the Revenue Tunnel, was cut through to tap the Virginius lode. This made it possible to bring ore directly out to the mills at Mount Sneffels.

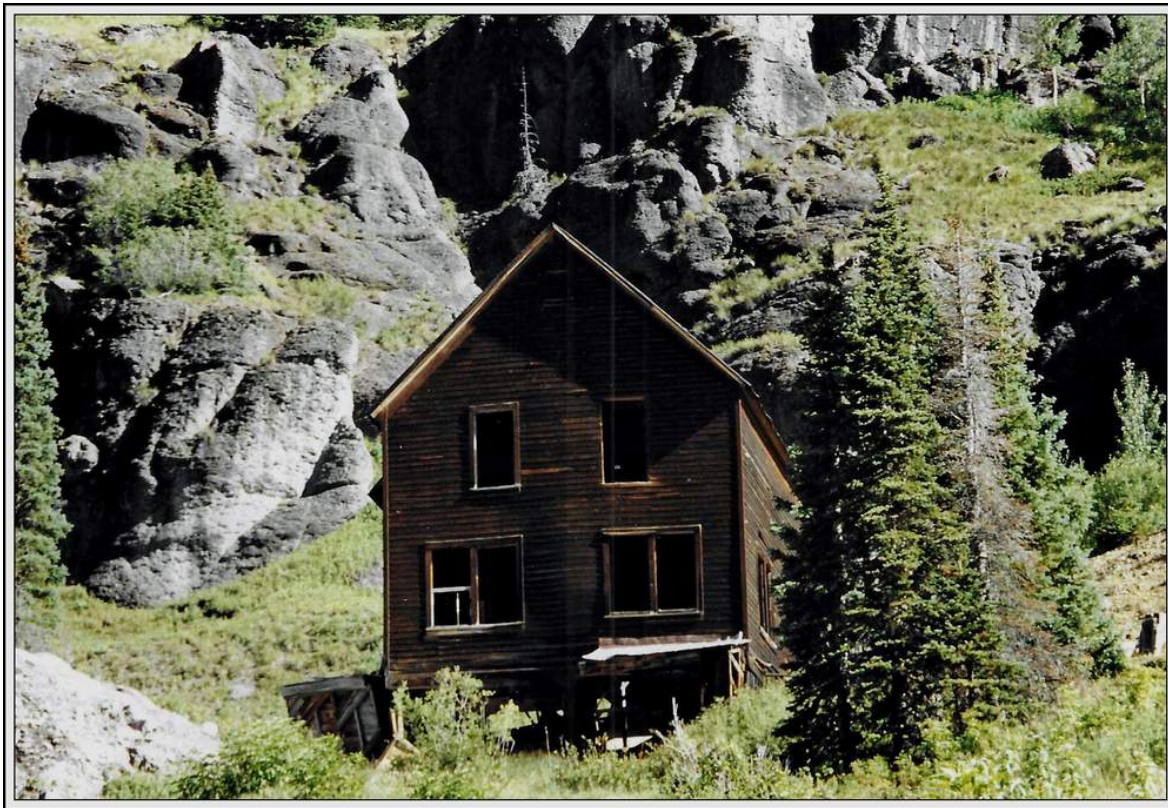
1893 was the year of the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. But, with increasing gold values in the ores of the Mount Sneffels District, mining continued. Between 1881 and 1919 the area produced more than \$27,000,000.

Activity at Mount Sneffels continued well into the twentieth century and there is some evidence that in recent years there have been attempts to restart one or more of the mines. The biggest obstacles to those efforts are difficult transportation/access and the long, hard winters.

In 1895 the name of the post office was shortened to Sneffels. This was another in the Post Office Department's program to simplify and shorten post office names.

Follow the directions previously given to visit Camp Bird. However, instead of turning in to the Camp Bird Mill site continue on Forest Service Road 853.1B. In *Ghost Towns Colorado Style - Volume Three - Southern Region*, Ken Jessen vividly describes the road from Camp Bird to Mount Sneffels.

## MOUNT SNEFFELS – Continued



**The only remaining building at Mount Sneffels, Colorado**  
 Photograph by William H. Bauer September 21, 2000

In this case “more reasonable” is the operative phrase. There are a couple of steep stretches with loose rock and no part of this portion of the trip is suitable for anything but a four-wheel drive vehicle. From Mount Sneffels it is another mile up the Sneffels Creek Valley to the vicinity of Virginius.

Several large mine dumps are present at Mount Sneffels and as late as 2004 a large, three-story building was still standing on the north side of the road.

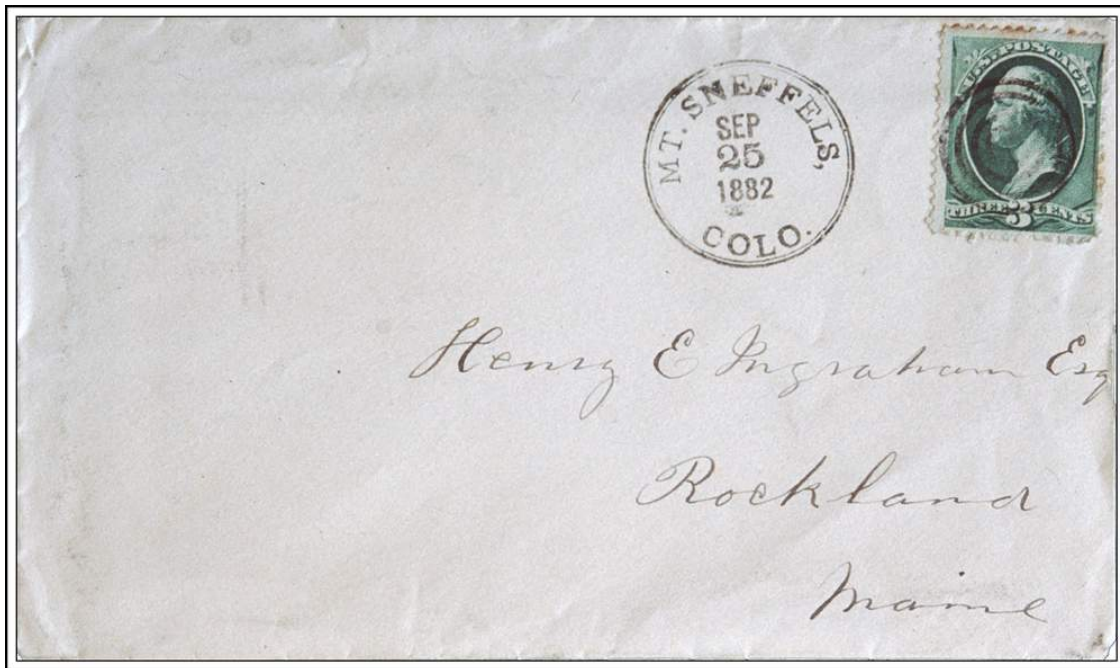
**Chronology of the Post Office**

Oct 10 1879	---	Not reported On Canon Creek ????
		Proposed postmaster - Andrew W. Richardson (he moved around!)
Oct 31 1879		Established
Oct 31 1879		Richardson, Andrew W.
Jun 13 1881		Porter, George R.
Apr 1 1885	---	Not reported 100 feet northeast of Sneffels Creek
Apr 3 1895		Name changed to Sneffels

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	MT. SNEFFELS, / COLO. CI 20P 27.5/26.0	Sep 25 1882 Mar 24 1884 Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm
2	MT. SNEFFELS, / COLO. CI 10P 34.0	Apr 7 1890 Jan 19 1891 Hstp Target, 3-ring 20mm

**MOUNT SNEFFELS – Continued**



**MT. SNEFFELS, / COLO.**

**September 25, 1882**

**OURAY**

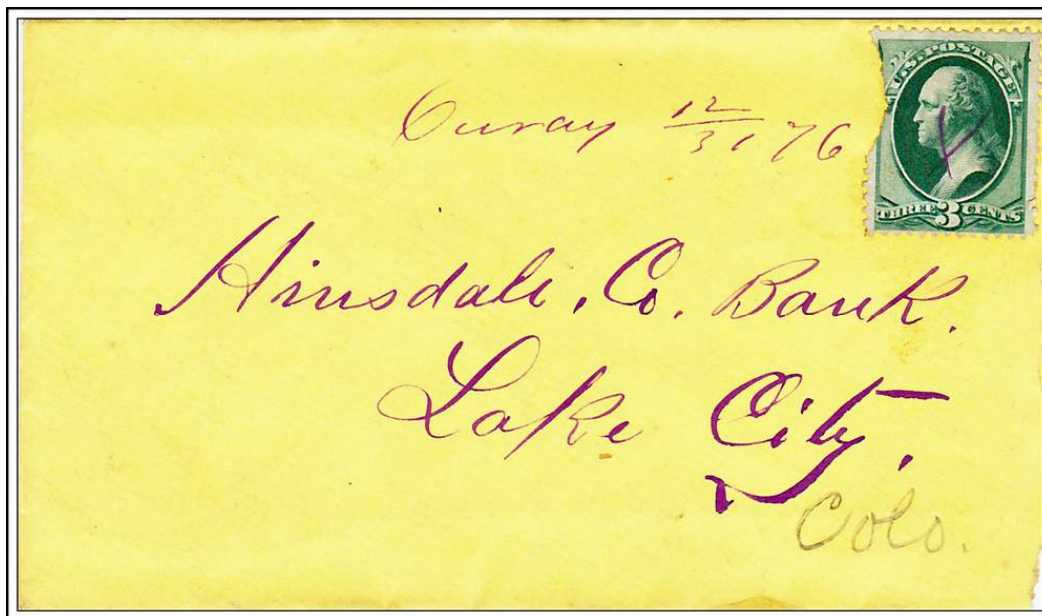
In the early summer of 1875, A. W. (Gus) Begole, Jack Eckles, R. F. Long, M. W. Cline, A. J. Staley, John Monroe, Logan Whitlock and perhaps several other men discovered ore in place where Canyon Creek joins the Uncompahgre River. The important early claims were the Mineral Farm, Trout and, Fisherman.

A. W. Begole and Jack Eckles are credited with staking out a townsite. At first the new settlement was called Uncompahgre or Uncompahgre City. That title lasted only a short time before the name was changed to Ouray for the noted Ute Indian Chief.

In 1875 D. W. Brunton made a rude survey of the townsite. Another surveyor, Reed, began a formal survey on August 19, 1876 and completed it on October 30. By 1877 Ouray had a population of 400 with over 200 dwellings. It is reported that Ouray was incorporated in 1877, although other reports give 1884 as the year of incorporation.

Silver mining was the basis for the early economy of Ouray. However, early travel to Ouray required a lengthy trip through Ute Indian Territory to the Uncompahgre River then upstream to Ouray. Otto Mears was critical to the construction of early toll roads and Dave Woods headed the principal company bringing freight to Ouray.

## OURAY – Continued



Ouray

December 31, 1876

Ouray was only a few miles north of the rich mining area surrounding Silverton. But, travel up the Uncompahgre Canyon was difficult. A toll road was built, and in 1887 the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad reached Ouray but went no further south towards Silverton.

As was true for all of the silver mining towns of Colorado, the 1893 repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act was a major blow to the economy of Ouray. Fortunately gold prospects were found and by 1896 Ouray had become the principal supply town for the mining camps of Camp Bird, Mount Sneffels and Virginus.

As the twentieth century progressed, mining declined in importance and was replaced by tourism and outdoors recreational activities.

Ouray is reached by US Highway 550 from Montrose on the north or from Durango and Silverton to the south. It is a thriving community focused on its history and providing services for the tourists, hikers, campers, hunters and fishermen that are drawn to the spectacular scenery of the San Juan Mountains. The surrounding area is also growing in popularity as a location for retirement and summer homes.

Latitude = 38:01:22 North Longitude = 107:40:15 West

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Oct 28 1875	Established
Oct 28 1875	Moore, Stephen S.
Mar 20 1876	Discontinued
May 9 1876	Re-established
May 9 1876	Randall, William W.
Aug 8 1876	Cline, Milton W.
Oct 22 1877	Stoddard, William W.
Apr 21 1879	Brugaw, Robert S.
Jul 24 1879 ---	Sec 31 T44N R7W 1/4 mile east of the Uncompahgre River 1/16 mile north of Portland Creek

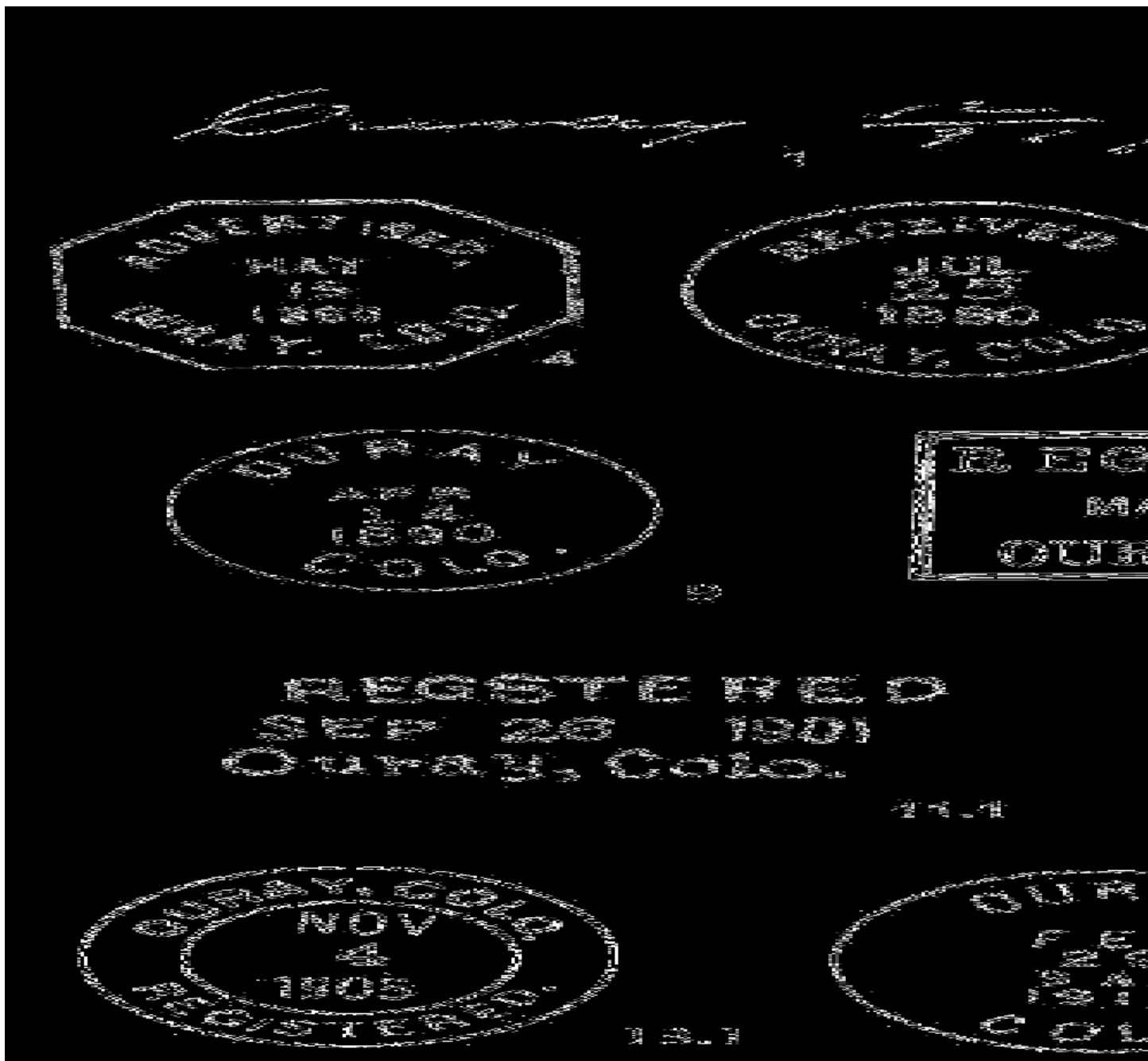
**OURAY – Continued**

Mar 19 1880	Dunbar, A. G.	P&S [Apptd. by President & confirmed by Senate]
Jun 13 1883	Moore, Albert	P
Dec 20 1883	Moore, Albert	P&S
Jun 2 1885	Frakes, David	P
Dec 1 1886	Frakes, David	P&S
Jun 18 1889	Rice, John F.	P
Dec 21 1889	Rice, John F.	P&S
Jan 29 1894	York, T. J.	P&S
Jan 10 1898	Derry, Anna G.	P&S
Jan 23 1902	Long, James W.	P&S
Aug 27 1906	Strout, Mabel C.	P
Dec 6 1906	Strout, Mabel C.	P&S
Jan 11 1911	Bradley, Lafayette E.	P&S
May 13 1914 ---	NE/4 Sec 31 T44N R7W	
Jan 12 1915	Mowatt, Thomas	P&S
Aug 5 1919	Mowatt, Thomas	P&S
Apr 30 1923	Richards, Miss Anna	Acting
Dec 18 1923	Richards, Miss Anna	Appointed
Dec 17 1927	Richards, Miss Anna	Confirmed
Jan 4 1932	Richards, Miss Anna	Nominated
Jan 22 1932	Richards, Miss Anna	Confirmed
Feb 25 1932	Richards, Miss Anna	Commissioned
Apr 13 1936	Grabow, Mrs. Anna L.	Nominated
Apr 21 1936	Grabow, Mrs. Anna L.	Confirmed
Apr 24 1936	Grabow, Mrs. Anna L.	Commissioned
Apr 15 1940	Grabow, Mrs. Anna L.	Nominated
Apr 24 1940	Grabow, Mrs. Anna L.	Confirmed
May 10 1940	Grabow, Mrs. Anna L.	Commissioned
Oct 21 1941 ---	Sec 24 [Sic] T44N R8W (Main Street) [SRM: Location data are surely in error] Uncompahgre River is 2 blocks east of the post office	
Jun 30 1945	McCullough, Mrs. Minnie H.	Acting
Jul 1 1945	McCullough, Mrs. Minnie H.	Assumed Charge
Jul 16 1946	McCullough, Mrs. Minnie H.	Nominated
Jul 31 1946	McCullough, Mrs. Minnie H.	Confirmed
Aug 1 1946	McCullough, Mrs. Minnie H.	Commissioned
Aug 31 1962	Flor, Leo	Assumed Charge
Sep 5 1962	Flor, Leo	Acting
Feb 19 1965	Spencer, Mrs. Barbara M.	Acting
Apr 4 1968	Spencer, Mrs. Barbara M.	Appointed/Confirmed/Commissioned
Apr 26 1968	Spencer, Mrs. Barbara M.	Assumed charge
Nov 19 1976	Canavan, Mrs. Ruby W.	Officer in charge
Jul 16 1977	Canavan, Mrs. Ruby W.	Appointed

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	Ouray MS	Dec 31 1876 Jun 19 1877
2	OURAY/ COLO. CI 10P 24.0	Mscp Pen cancel Aug 15 1877
3	OURAY, / COLO CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm Aug 29 1877 Apr 30 1882
4	OURAY, COLO. // ADVERTISED. OC 10P ????	Hstp Pen cancel; Target; Cork, smudge; Fancy positive star in circle May 15 1880
5	OURAY, COLO. // RECEIVED CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Recorded and traced from a reduced copy Jul 25 1880
		Hstp No killer

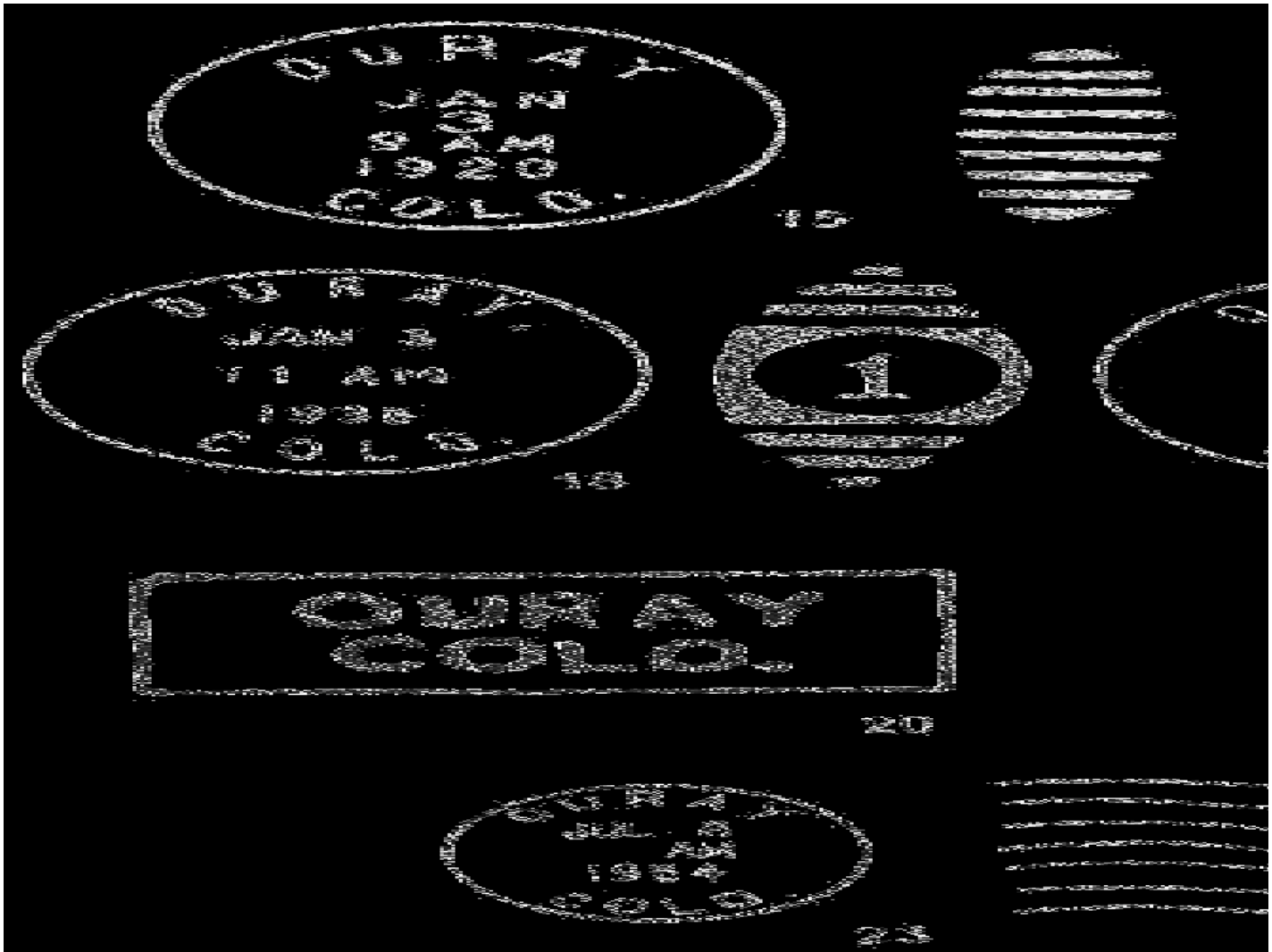
## OURAY – Continued



- |     |   |                             |                         |
|-----|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6   | OURAY, COLO. // REGISTERED.<br>OC 10P 27.0                | Hstp Pen cancel             | Aug 15 1878 Apr 3 1882  |
| 7   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 26.0                              | Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads | Jun 21 188- Aug 15 1882 |
| 8   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 27.5                              | Hstp Cork, Smudge           | Jun 15 1883 Aug 27 1887 |
| 9   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 27.0                              | Hstp Cork, Negative X-roads | Aug 28 1887 Dec 9 1893  |
| 9.1 | OURAY, COLO. // REGISTERED<br>RC 11HP 41.0x25.0/39.0x23.0 | Hstp No killer              | May 12 1892             |

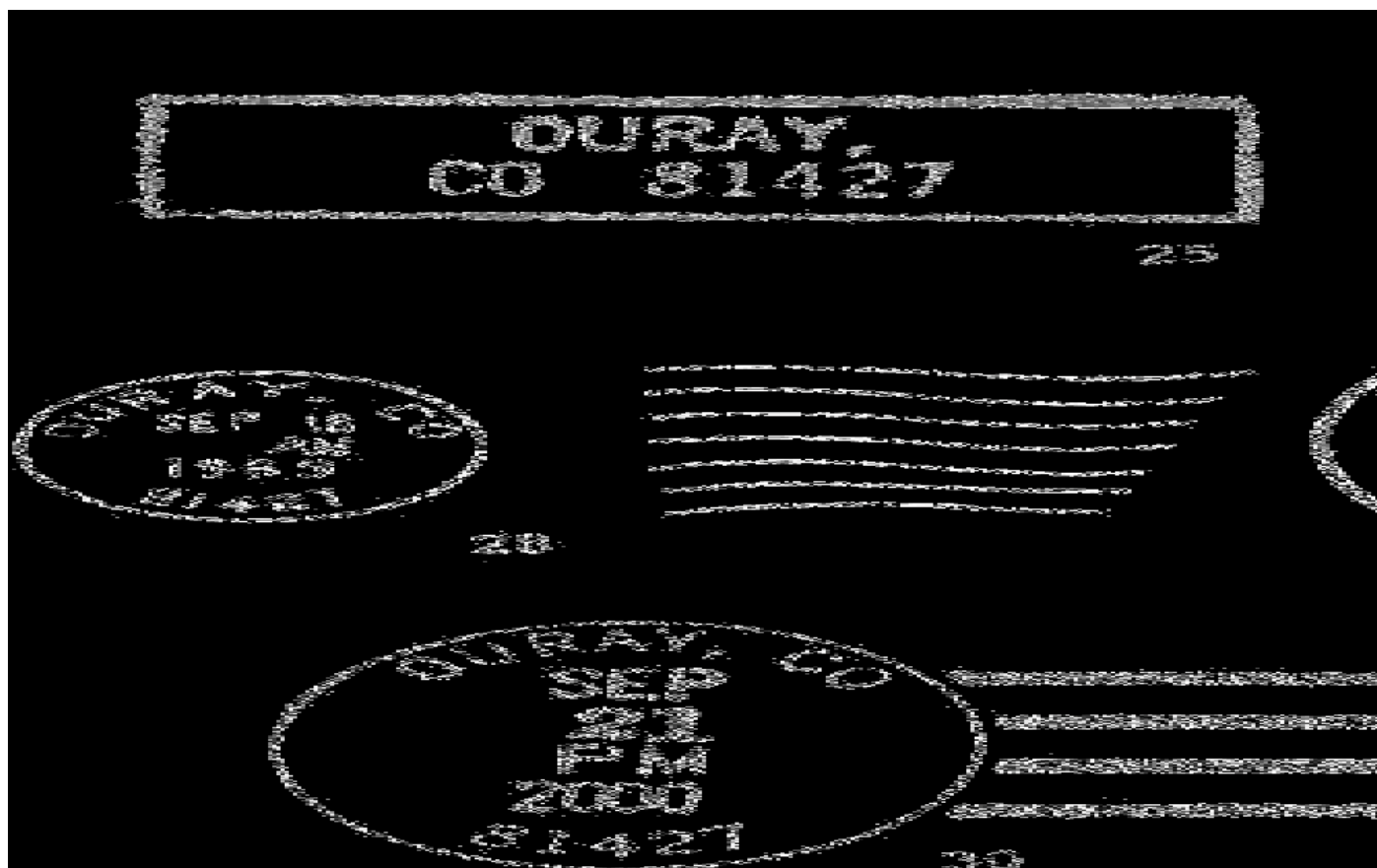
**OURAY – Continued**

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| 10   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 28.0                   | Mar 25 1897 Dec 14 1899<br>Hstp Not recorded                 |
| 11   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 28.0                   | Dec 31 1898 Apr 9 1902<br>Hstp Cork, Smudge, 9-bar oval grid |
| 11.1 | Ouray, Colo. // REGISTERED<br>SL 00R 41.0x18.0 | Sep 26 1901<br>Hstp No killer                                |
| 12   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 30.0                   | Apr 9 1902 Aug 27 1903<br>Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval              |
| 13   | OURAY, / COLO.<br>CI 10P 26.0                  | Nov 7 1904 Feb 27 1907<br>Dplx Grid, Oval with 1 and circle  |
| 13.1 | OURAY, COLO. / REGISTERED.<br>CI 10P 29.5/18.5 | Nov 4 1905<br>Hstp No killer                                 |
| 14   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 29.0                   | Dec 10 1907 Sep 22 1915<br>Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval             |
| 14.1 | OURAY, / COLO.<br>RC 10P 35.0x17.0             | 1910s<br>Hstp No killer, Parcel Post Box                     |
| 14.2 | OURAY COLO. / REC'D.<br>CI 10P 30.0            | Feb 13, 1910<br>Hstp No killer, yr date from front of cover  |
| 15   | OURAY / COLO.<br>CI 10P 30.0                   | Jan 3 1920 Nov 30 1931<br>Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval              |
| 16   | OURAY, COLO. / REGISTERED<br>CI 11P 30.0/18.0  | Apr 19 1923<br>Hstp No killer, backstamp                     |



OURAY – Continued

17	OURAY, / COLO. RC 10P 34.0x16.0	Apr 19 1923 Hstp No killer, parcel post box style
18	OURAY, / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Apr 11 1935 Jan 4 1968 Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval
19	OURAY / COLO. CI 10P 23.0	Oct 16 1935 Apr 20 1949 Mach 7 wavy lines
20	OURAY / COLO. RC 10P 40.0x20.0	--- -- 1940s Hstp No killer, Parcel Post Box style
21	OURAY / COLO. CI 11P 30.0x20.0	Nov 20 1949 Hstp No killer
22	OURAY / COLO. CI 11P 30.0/19.0	Sep 8 1955 Apr 27 1957 Hstp No killer
23	OURAY / COLO. CI 10P 20.0	Aug 1 1956 Oct 6 1964 Mach 7 wavy lines
24	OURAY, / COLO. RC 10P 50.0x20.0	Jan 1 1968 Hstp No killer (sample strike, device available but not in daily use)
25	OURAY, / CO 81427 RC 10P 49.0x20.0	Jan 1 1968 Hstp No killer (sample strike, device available but not in daily use)
26	OURAY, CO / 81427 CI 10P 32.0	Nov 12 1971 Nov 15 1971 4bars S-23x20mm
27	OURAY, CO / USPO CI 11P 28.0/18.0	Nov 15 1971 Hstp No killer



**OURAY – Continued**

28	OURAY, CO / 81427 CI 10P 20.5	Mach 7 wavy lines	Sep 16 1969 Sep 16 1987
29	OURAY, CO / 81427 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-25x18mm	Jul 22 1992 Apr 13 1993
29.1	OURAY, CO / 81427 CI 10P 20.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	May 28 1993
30	OURAY, CO / 81427 CI 10P 32.0	4bars S-24x19mm	Sep 21 2000 Aug 20 2001
31	OURAY, CO 81427 / USPS CI 11P 29.0/18,5	Hstp No killer	Aug 26 2004
32	OURAY CO 81427 / USPS CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-16x23mm	May 13 2008

**CELEBRATE THE CENTURY STATION**

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Jun 15 2000 Operated as a Special Commemorative Station

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

- 1 Ouray, CO 81427 // Celebrate the Century Station Jun 15 2000  
SL 00R 89.0x3.0 Pict Text only - CENTENARIAN / -- 100 -- /  
The Life of a Century



**PLUMER**

In 1900 there was a brief renewal of activity at the former site of Portland. A post office with the old name was requested but there was, at that time, a Portland Post Office in Fremont County. The re-established office took the name of Plumer. The revival was brief and only a few scattered houses remain along US Highway 550 where once was the community of Portland/Plumer.

Please refer to the discussion of Portland for the history of this location and directions to the site.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

May 5 1900 -- NE/4 Sec 11 T44N R8W 25 rods east of the Uncompahgre River 1/2 mile south of Cutler Creek  
Names suggested - DAY, DAYTON, PLUMER, or ROBERTS  
Proposed postmaster - Sallie Fitts McMullin

May 28 1900 Established  
May 28 1900 McMullin, Sallie F.  
Nov 23 1901 Ordered closed  
Dec 14 1901 Discontinued Papers to Ouray

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM PLUMER

## PORTLAND

Preston and Enos Hotchkiss founded the town of Portland. The settlement was located where the Uncompahgre Valley begins to widen out enough that some farming was feasible. The area around Portland was envisioned as supplying produce to Ouray, five miles to the south. Other names that were applied to this settlement included Dayton, Helena, Ramona and Chipeta. By 1881 George Crofutt could describe Portland as, "One store, ranche and a few scattered settlers..." By 1885 the population was reported as 100.

In late 1886 a group, including Denver and Rio Grande Railroad officials, laid out a new, large townsite that included the existing village of Portland. This was done in anticipation that the approaching Denver and Rio Grande Railroad would make Portland the terminus of its branch line from Montrose, rather than traverse the remaining difficult miles to Ouray. However, a group of Ouray businessmen "volunteered" \$35,000 to help pay for the construction on to Ouray. The railroad accepted the offer and also chose to build on the west side of the Uncompahgre leaving Portland to wither on the east bank of the river. The rise of Ridgway, only a few miles to the north also contributed to the decline of Portland.

The Portland Post Office was discontinued in 1896. At the turn of the century there was a brief revival at Portland but by then there was a Portland Post Office in Fremont County so the re-established office took the name of Plumer.

I have found no information as to the source of either of these names.

From the Post Office in Ouray drive six and three-tenths miles north on US Highway 550 to the bridge over Cutler Creek. Portland (Plumer) was just south of the creek and some 200 yards north of Ouray County Road 23. There is a side road called Whitehouse Vista and nearby an old house. This is also six miles south from Ridgway.

Latitude = 38:04:53 North Longitude = 107:42:03 West



**PORTLAND, Colorado July 12, 1885**

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

Dec 29 1877	---	Unsurveyed Land 1/4 mile east of the Uncompahgre River 10 miles south of Cow Creek	
Jan 11 1878		Established	
Jan 11 1878		Cobb, George W.	
Oct 14 1880		Slane, Andrew	
Jan 8 1883		Cobb, George W.	
Jan 11 1886		Clemmons, James B.	
Jul 11 1888		Criswell, Joseph L.	
Dec 20 1888		Snow, Richard C.	
May 24 1889		Criswell, Charles E.	
Sep 15 1891		James, Charles	Declined
Dec 4 1891		Paquin, Moses	Declined
Dec 28 1891		Johnson, Jonathan M.	
Dec 15 1894		Wood, Andrew F.	
Jan 7 1896		Grewell, Isaac W.	Not commissioned
Mar 25 1896		Discontinued Mail to Ouray	
Mar 31 1896		Closing order rescinded	
Apr 1 1896		Haney, George W. Jr.	
Apr 24 1896		Discontinued Mail to Ouray	

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

0.1	Portland MS	Mscp Pen cancel	May 17 1881
1	PORTLAND, / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm	Jul 1 1882 May 1 1884
2	PORTLAND / Colorado. CI 20P 28.0/26.5	Hstp Cork, Smudge	Dec 13 1885 Jul 12 1885
3	PORTLAND, / COLO. CI 10P 22.0	Hstp Fancy, Double outline Maltese cross	Jun 25 1886 Oct 14 1888
4	PORTLAND, / COLO. CI 10T 29.0	Hstp Not present	Mar 10 1890
5	PORTLAND / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Target	Jan 5 1894 Apr 6 1894

*Portland  
07/7/81*

0.1



1



2



**RED MOUNTAIN (TOWN)**

The name Red Mountain often leads to confusion. There are three Red Mountain Peaks, Red Mountain Creek, Red Mountain "Town" and Red Mountain "City." The latter was actually on the south side of Red Mountain Pass (11,018 feet) in San Juan County. The Red Mountain Post Office was always in Ouray County at Red Mountain "Town." The post office that served Red Mountain City was called Congress. It was the bright rust color of the peaks that generated the name for these places.

To further confuse the situation, in Colorado there have been two other Red Mountain Post Offices: Grand County (1878) and Gunnison County (1880-1881).

Initial settlement was at Red Mountain City on the San Juan side of the county line. But it soon spilled over the divide to the north and that portion became known as Red Mountain Town. It rapidly became the dominant one of the two and continued to grow north in the valley quickly incorporating Rodgersville, a few hundred yards from the center of Red Mountain Town.

Red Mountain became the primary commercial center for the mining activity on the upper reaches of Red Mountain Creek. The mines, producing silver, were rich and soon Otto Mears was building his Silverton Railway to Red Mountain and beyond to Guston and Ironton.

The first mention of a "town" was in Silverton's *La Plata Miner* of December 30, 1882. Actually the reference was to the settlement that became Rodgersville. Because of its proximity to the rapidly developing Red Mountain the name Rodgersville soon disappeared.

When the Red Mountain Post Office opened on January 29, 1883 Red Mountain Town was no more than a few tents in a clearing several hundred yards south of the town's eventual location near the National Belle Mine. Red Mountain Town was incorporated in May 1883. By 1890 the population had risen to over 600. There was a schoolhouse and a telephone office.



**The remaining building of the National Belle Mine at Red Mountain, Colorado**  
Photograph by William H. Bauer August 25, 2004

**RED MOUNTAIN (TOWN) – Continued**

A number of authors date Red Mountain (Town) to 1886 but there is ample evidence that it was in existence at least three years prior to then.

In 1883 Otto Mears built his “million-dollar highway” to Red Mountain. Five years later, on September 19, 1888, the Silverton Railroad, also a creation of Otto Mears, reached Red Mountain.

The economic history of Red Mountain was typical of Colorado’s silver mining towns. The first disaster to strike the town was a fire in 1892 that burned much of the town. The town was reconstructed but then came the silver panic of 1893. When another fire in 1895 again destroyed much of the town Red Mountain was only partially rebuilt. In 1939 a forest fire destroyed nearly all of the remaining structures.

The National Belle was the principal mine at Red Mountain. It eventually closed in 1897 but with other mines in the area operated sporadically until about 1912. 1912 was the last year the Silverton Railway showed any significant passenger revenue.

Approximately a half-mile north of the Ouray-San Juan County line, Ouray County Road 31, a dirt road to the east, goes down hill to the site of Red Mountain Town. This is a little more than a half-mile from US 550. There are still some large mine dumps and a few relicts of the mining activity at Red Mountain. The most prominent is one of the buildings that were part of the National Belle Mine. It is a modest size wooden building that sets on a low rise below a mine dump and a prominent rock outcropping. Much of the siding and roof are gone, but there appears to have been some stabilization of what remains (2004). Because of its remarkable setting, this structure is one of the most photographed remnants of Colorado’s mining history.

While the future of the Red Mountain area was uncertain for a number of years, the Red Mountain Task Force, working with Colorado’s Congressional Delegation, Fort Lewis College, the Trust for Public Land and the U. S. Forest Service, has been successful in acquiring and preserving 9,000 acres of former patented mining claims in the area. While there are still several parcels in private hands, most of the area subject to private development has been acquired for the public (T. Hillhouse, 2008).

Latitude = 37:54:13 North Longitude = 107:42:07 West

**Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Jan 3 1883</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>None reported 1/8 mile east of Red Mountain Creek</b>
		<b>Proposed postmaster - William E. Leslie</b>
<b>Jan 29 1883</b>		<b>Established</b>
<b>Jan 29 1883</b>		<b>Leslie, William E.</b>
<b>Aug 20 1886</b>		<b>Sheahan, Daniel</b>
<b>Jan 12 1891</b>		<b>Long, Thomas</b>
<b>Mar 21 1891</b>		<b>Seaman, George W.</b>
<b>Dec 23 1893</b>		<b>Strayer, George W.</b>
<b>Mar 16 1895</b>		<b>Discontinued Mail to Guston</b>
<b>Apr 8 1896</b>	<b>---</b>	<b>SW/4 Sec 11 T42N R8W Six miles south of the Uncompahgre River</b>
		<b>On the east side of Red Mountain Creek</b>
		<b>RED MOUNTAIN - PLOMO crossed out</b>
		<b>Proposed postmaster - Aaron E. Hewey</b>
<b>Apr 27 1896</b>		<b>Re-established</b>
<b>Apr 27 1896</b>		<b>Hewey, Aaron E.</b>
<b>Nov 4 1898</b>		<b>Thomas, Gilson B. Jr.</b>
<b>May 8 1906</b>		<b>Roper, John F.</b>
<b>Jan 16 1909</b>		<b>Cassell, George A.</b>
<b>Dec 16 1909</b>		<b>Mount, George E.</b>
<b>Feb 28 1913</b>		<b>Discontinued Mail to Ironton</b>

RED MOUNTAIN (TOWN) – Continued



Red Mountain Colo.

April 10, 1883

Confirmed Types of Postal Markings

1	Red Mountain Colo. MS	Mscp Pen cancel	Apr 10 1883 Jul 28 1883
2	RED MOUNTAIN / COL. CI 10P 27.0	Hstp Target, 4-ring 17mm	Mar 21 1884 Jun 13 1888
3	RED MOUNTAIN / COLO CI 10P 27.5	Hstp Not present	Sep 1 1891
4	RED MOUNTAIN / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Cork smudge; Target 4-ring	Nov 25 1893 Jul 26 1909
5	RED MOUNTAIN, / COLO. CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-25x20mm	May 31 1911 Jul 10 1911



**RIDGWAY**

In 1890 Otto Mears and Fred Walsen acquired a townsite three miles south of Dallas. This would be the junction point of their proposed Rio Grande Southern Railroad with the existing Denver and Rio Grande Railroad branch line from Montrose to Ouray.

Initially it was believed that the best site for the junction would be at the town of Dallas. However, Dave Wood who owned much of the land around Dallas, was obstinate, perhaps because he feared the competition of the railroad with his freighting operations. The railroad company then went south, buying 490 acres of land from Charles McClellan, Arthur Hyde and J. H. Israel. Fred Walsen and D. C. Hartwell organized a company to lay out the new town. For an unknown reason, it was intended to name the town Magentie. However, the official name became Ridgway Junction. This was soon shortened to Ridgway probably because the Post Office Department had developed a dislike for cumbersome post office names. The town was named for R. M. Ridgway, superintendent of the Mountain Division of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, who had loaned equipment for construction of the Rio Grande Southern. Ridgway was established in 1890 and incorporated the following year.

The Rio Grande Southern built shops at Ridgway and for many years railroading was an important aspect in the economy of Ridgway. In addition, Ridgway became a major shipping point for agricultural and mining products and an important trading center for this portion of the Uncompahgre Valley.

Several years ago it was proposed to construct a storage reservoir on the Uncompahgre River to provide irrigation water for crops down the valley. The original plans seemed to doom Ridgway, however the facility was built several miles to the north and Ridgway survived.



**RIDGWAY, / COLO.      June 21, 1941**

Ten miles north of Ouray, Ridgway lies principally on the western side of the Uncompahgre River. The railroads for which it was once a junction point are gone but the modern US Highway 550 and Colorado Highway 62 intersect on the east side of the river. The main portion of Ridgway now lies on Colorado 62 but in recent years a commercial district has developed along US 550 on the east side of the river.

**RIDGWAY – Continued**

Ridgway is a thriving community. It has a number of businesses catering to local residents, tourists and travelers. Ridgway was one of the logistical bases for the filming of the movie *True Grit* starring John Wayne and Glen Campbell. The “True Grit Café” on the main street facing the town park memorializes that event.

When I first visited Ridgway in 1972 the post office was in an old brick building. On my next visit (1987) the post office was in a new, small frame building opposite the northwest corner of the town park.

Ridgway maintains much of its historic charm and also provides one, if not the only (2004) modern motels in Ouray County.

Latitude = 38:09:10 North Longitude = 107:45:90-W

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Sep 8 1890	---	SW/4 Sec 16 T45N R8W 1/4 mile west of the Uncompahgre River 1 mile south of Dallas Creek Proposed postmaster - John Weed	
Oct 1 1890		Established	
Oct 1 1890		Blovin, John E.	
Jun 26 1891		Gibbs, Otto L.	
Feb 12 1894		Lambert, Irene	
Dec 21 1894		Criswell, Joseph L.	
Dec 11 1899		Brockway, Pettit F.	
Jul 1 1903		Edwards, James H.	
Apr 4 1907		Nichols, Jesse W.	
Jul 3 1907		Ede, Horace P.	
Aug 16 1909		Johnston, Mrs. Willa E.	
Jul 1 1912			Office made Presidential
Jul 11 1913		Nichols, Judith	P&S
May 2 1914	---	NW/4 Sec 16 T45N R8W 650 feet west of the D&RG tracks	
Jan 24 1918		Nichols, Judith	P&S
Mar 18 1922		Roscoe, Edward W.	P&S
Mar 22 1926		Roscoe, Edward W.	P&S
May 1 1929		McLean, Coya	Acting
Sep 18 1929		McLean, Coya	Confirmed
Jan 5 1934		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Acting
Jan 21 1934		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Assumed Charge
May 23 1934		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Nominated
May 31 1934		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Confirmed
Jul 9 1934		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Commissioned
Apr 29 1938		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Nominated
May 3 1938		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Confirmed
May 31 1938		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Appointed Presidential
Jun 8 1938		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Commissioned
Oct 31 1941	---	NW/4 SW/4 Sec 16 T45N R8W (Main St.) D&RGW Station 1000 feet east of post office	
Aug 24 1942		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Appointed
Sep 28 1942		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Confirmed
Sep 29 1942		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Appointed Presidential
Nov 10 1942		Hufnagle, Grover C.	Commissioned
Apr 7 1947		Hainey, Dean Shumate	Acting
Apr 8 1947		Hainey, Dean Shumate	Assumed Charge
Sep 29 1948	---	Not Reported (Clinton Street) D&RGW 450 feet east of post office Uncompahgre River 500 yards east	
Feb 17 1949		Hainey, Dean Shumate	Nominated

**RIDGWAY – Continued**

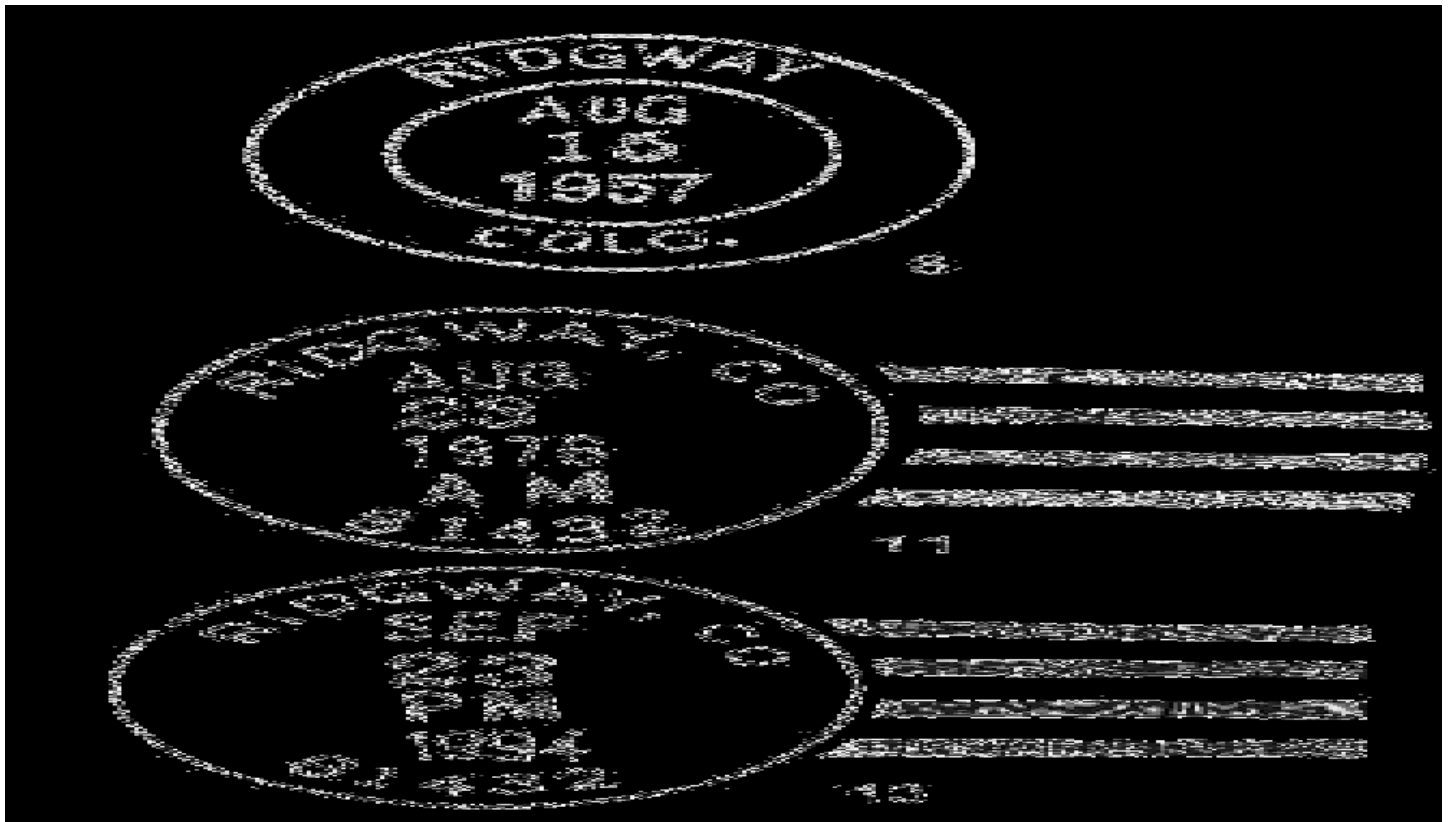
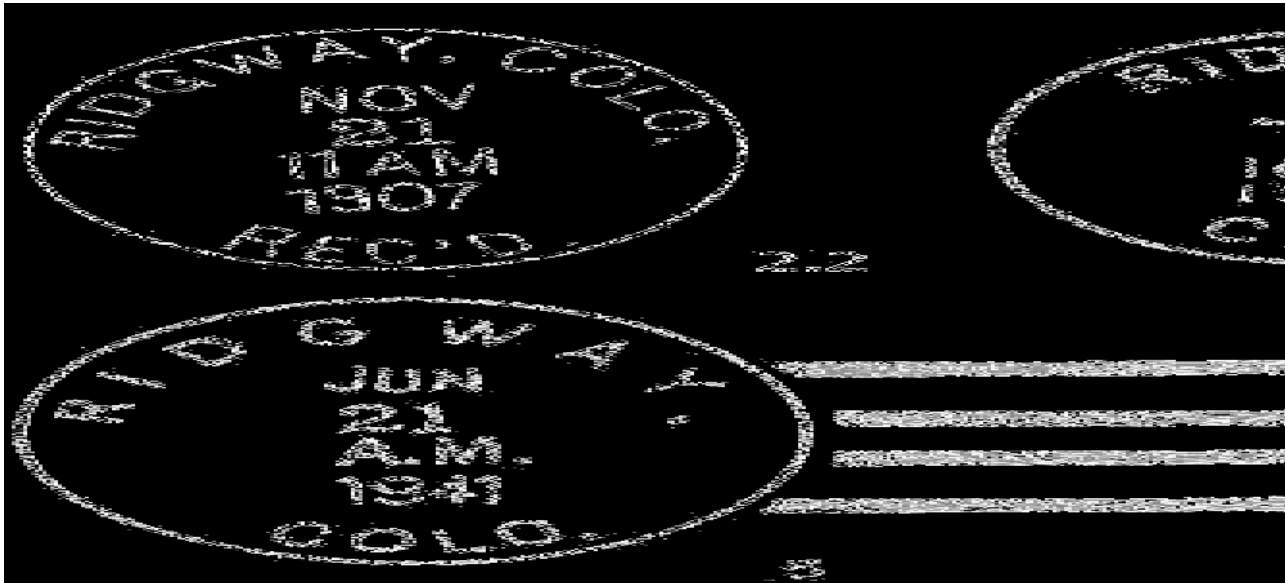
Mar 16 1949	Hainey, Dean Shumate	Confirmed
Mar 17 1949	Hainey, Dean Shumate	Commissioned
Dec 31 1973	Wolford, Mrs. Sarah F.	Officer in charge
Apr 13 1974	Pollard, Bernard E.	Appointed
Dec 26 1980	Sharman, Donald	Officer in charge
Feb 21 1881	Murphy, Darrel L.	Appointed

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	RIDGWAY / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target 4-ring	Feb 14 1891 Jul 21 1891
1.1	RIDGWAY, COLO. // REGISTERED SL 00R 33.0x15.0	Hstp No killer	Nov 16 1891
2	RIDGWAY / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Cork smudge,	May 30 1893 Sep 3 1903
2.1	RIDGWAY, / COLO. CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-24x14mm	negative X-roads Oct 9 1907 Aug 25 1909
2.2	RIDGWAY, COLO. / REC'D. CI 10P 31.5	Hstp No killer	Nov 21 1907
3	RIDGWAY / COLO. CI 10P 29.5	Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval	Mar 10 1910 Mar 8 1927
4	RIDGWAY, / COLO. CI 10P 34.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Oct 28 1927 Apr 5 1940
5	RIDGWAY, / COLO. CI 10P 34.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Dec 6 1940 Jul 23 1944
6	RIDGWAY / COLO. CI 10P 34.0	4bars S-24x20mm	Jul 9 1948 Dec 18 1950
7	RIDGWAY / COLO. CI 10P 30.0	Dplx Grid, diamond with 1	Jan 3 1953 Apr 4 1959
8	RIDGWAY / COLO. CI 11P 31.0/20.0	Hstp No killer	Apr 10 1957 Aug 15 1957
9	RIDGWAY / COLO CI 11P 36.0/28.0	Rolr No killer	Aug 11 1964
10	RIDGWAY, CO / 81432 CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-25x20mm	Aug 15 1969 Oct 26 1973
11	RIDGWAY, CO / 81432 CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-24x18mm	Aug 23 1976 Apr 7 1987
11.1	RIDGWAY, CO / 81432 CI 10P 23.0	Mach 7 wavy lines	Oct 26 1985 Feb 6 1986
12	RIDGWAY, CO / 81432 CI 10P 20.5	Mach 7 wavy lines	Mar 2 1990 Sep 23 1994
13	RIDGWAY, CO / 81432 CI 10P 31.0	4bars S-23x18mm	Sep 21 1990 Sep 23 1994
13.1	RIDGWAY CO 81432 / USPS CI 11P 29.0/19.0	Hstp No killer	Aug 3 1993
14	RIDGWAY CO / 81432 CI 10P 33.0	4bars S-20x16mm	Sep 20 2000 Aug 20 2001



RIDGWAY – Continued



**RIDGWAY STATION**

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Oct 1 1990      Operated as a Special Commemorative Station

**RIDGWAY – Continued**

**RIDGWAY STATION – Continued**

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**1 RIDGWAY, CO STA. / 81432  
CI 10P 30.0**

**Oct 1 1990**

**Pict Scene - Steam engine; Text - 1890 -1990/  
Text - RIDGWAY / 100 YEARS OF SERVICE**



**RODGERSVILLE**

Less than two months after the opening of the Red Mountain Post Office the Rodgersville Post Office was opened. One report states that the two post offices were only 500 feet apart. That created some controversy, as the residents of Red Mountain could not understand the justification for another post office that close to theirs.

Oliver Matthews, Jack Rodgers, B. P. Renstrom and Samuel Houghton staked several claims, laid out and surveyed a townsite to be called Rodgersville “in honor of our worthy and enterprising citizen, John Rodgers, who was one of the first to prospect and locate property in the now famous camp.”

Rodgersville was located at the northern end of the same basin that was eventually filled with the buildings of Red Mountain Town. Red Mountain Town began at the southern end of the basin and quickly grew northward overrunning and absorbing the fledgling Rodgersville.

Most references to Rodgersville place it in very close proximity to Red Mountain Town, even mentioning the National Belle Mine in their descriptions. Some do place Rodgersville further north, perhaps at or near the later site of Guston.

I now accept the location at Red Mountain Town as the most likely. Therefore to visit the site, follow the directions to Red Mountain and consider Rodgersville to be at the north end of the open area below and beyond the rock knob and the remaining building of the National Belle Mine.

Note: The name of this place has been frequently misspelled as Rogersville. Since it was named for John Rodgers the correct spelling would be Rodgersville.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

<b>Mar 19 1883</b>	<b>Established</b>
<b>Mar 19 1883</b>	<b>Stewart, William H.</b>
<b>Apr 2 1883 ---</b>	<b>None reported [Document filed under San Miguel County] Silverton 12 miles southeast Ouray 12 miles northeast On the west side of Red Mountain Creek</b>
<b>Jun 15 1883</b>	<b>Discontinued Mail to Red Mountain</b>

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM RODGERSVILLE**

**RUBY CITY**

For me, determining the correct location of Ruby City has been a problem - one that I am not certain has been fully resolved.

The Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report places the Ruby City Post Office thusly: "Ouray is 7 miles southwesterly, 7 miles southwest of the Uncompahgre River, on Canon Creek." That description is partially inconsistent. The portion that places it southwest of the Uncompahgre River and on Canon Creek is logical but from that point Ouray would be northeasterly not southwesterly.

Ray Newburn, writing about Ouray County in *Western Express* (October 1976 and July 1977) states the following: "The Postal Route Maps for 1877, 1879, and 1881 and Nell's maps of 1880 and 1881 all plainly show Ruby City some seven miles EAST of the Uncompahgre River, a bit north of Ouray, and apparently located on upper Cow Creek."

Unfortunately, overlooking the above, for many years I could not find a map that showed a location for Ruby City. Several years ago I acquired a batch of correspondence and documents related to David Wood and his freight operations. One piece dated November 7, 1887 bore the letterhead of the Mears System of Toll Roads. On the back was a map of the region from Montrose to Silverton that showed the various toll roads operated by Otto Mears. There is no scale to the map but at a point approximately seven miles northeast of Ouray, on the upper end of Cow Creek, is a place labeled "Ruby City." I made an assumption that was the probable location of the Ruby City Post Office. Below you will find my directions as I attempted to visit that location.

In recent correspondence with Tom Hillhouse, he questioned the location on Cow Creek and states that the location southwest of Ouray is "approximately the site of the Ruby Trust Mine, but it would be within a mile or two of the Sneffels Post Office location." Tom also equates the location on Cow Creek with the "New York Tunnel."

When you compare the dates of operation of the Ruby City Post Office (May 17, 1878 – July 31, 1879) to the date of establishment of the Mount Sneffels Post Office (October 31, 1879) there is no real conflict. Ruby City would have been closed and then three months later a new office opened at Mount Sneffels.

This location for Ruby City is on Sneffels Creek about a mile further west from the site of Sneffels. It is at the junction of the roads to Yankee Boy and Governor Basins. At that location there was a sign that read: "RUBY TRUST MINE / HIGH GRADE SILVER 1880'S / TO PRESENT. ALSO SITE OF / RUBY CITY. PEAK POP. 80"

If that interpretation is correct, and I now suspect that it might be, then the Site Location Report stating Ouray 7 miles southwesterly is wrong. That would not be the first time I found an inconsistency in the Site Location Reports. The applicants for a post office were supposed to state the distance and direction **from** their proposed location. Sometimes they did the reverse. In this case it looks like they did both - one reference from and one reference to. In any event the question still remains definitively unresolved. Ah, the joy of historical research!

Not knowing any better, on September 21, 2000 I set out in search of Ruby City on the upper end of Cow Creek. Herewith, for your amusement, my travel log for that thrilling ride. The day's trip began in Ouray and included some side trips prior to heading for Ruby City.

Mile 70.5 Junction with Colorado 62

Mile 72.3 Turning east on Ouray County Road 10, the road to Owl Creek Pass This was the approximate site of Lawrence

Mile 73.2 Road bears left

Mile 74.9 Turning right on Ouray Road 10A

Mile 76.2 Turn left on to Ouray County 12

Mile 76.6 The road has deteriorated, but has been recently bladed

**RUBY CITY – Continued**

- Mile 79.0 Reached Cow Creek. Believe I want to go about 4 miles.
- Mile 79.4 Ford Cow Creek (no bridge)
- Mile 80.9 Court House Trail
- Mile 82.0 Ford another creek
- Mile 84.2 End of the road and I am turning around. I think I have reached what might have been the site for Ruby City. There is some open area above the creek and it is now used as a campground
- Mile 87.6 Ford the creek again
- Mile 87.6 Back at the trailhead
- Mile 89.1 Back across Cow Creek. I think I will fix lunch.
- Time 12:22 Have fixed lunch, now to get out of the canyon. From here back to where I turned around is very steep in places, narrow, rough, many wash-overs and mudholes, and some shelf road. Definitely one lane and definitely a Jeep road.
- Mile 92.3 Ouray Road 10A
- Mile 93.5 Back on Ouray Road 10
- Mile 96.2 Back on US 550 As Roy Rogers would say "Happy Trails"

**Chronology of the Post Office**

- May 4 1878 --- **Unsurveyed Land Ouray is 7 miles southwesterly 7 miles southwest of the Uncompahgre River, on Canon Creek [This description seems confused - WHB] NOTE - W.H.B.: It appears that there were two "Ruby" communities in Ouray County. This one southwest of Ouray and another to the northeast on the upper end of Cow Creek Both were probably mining communities.**
- May 17 1878 **Established**
- May 17 1878 **Richardson, Andrew W.**
- Jul 31 1879 **Discontinued**

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

**NO POSTMARKS HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM RUBY CITY**

**SNEFFELS**

In 1895 the name of the post office at Mount Sneffels was shortened to Sneffels. This action was part of the Post Office Department's campaign to simplify and shorten post office names.

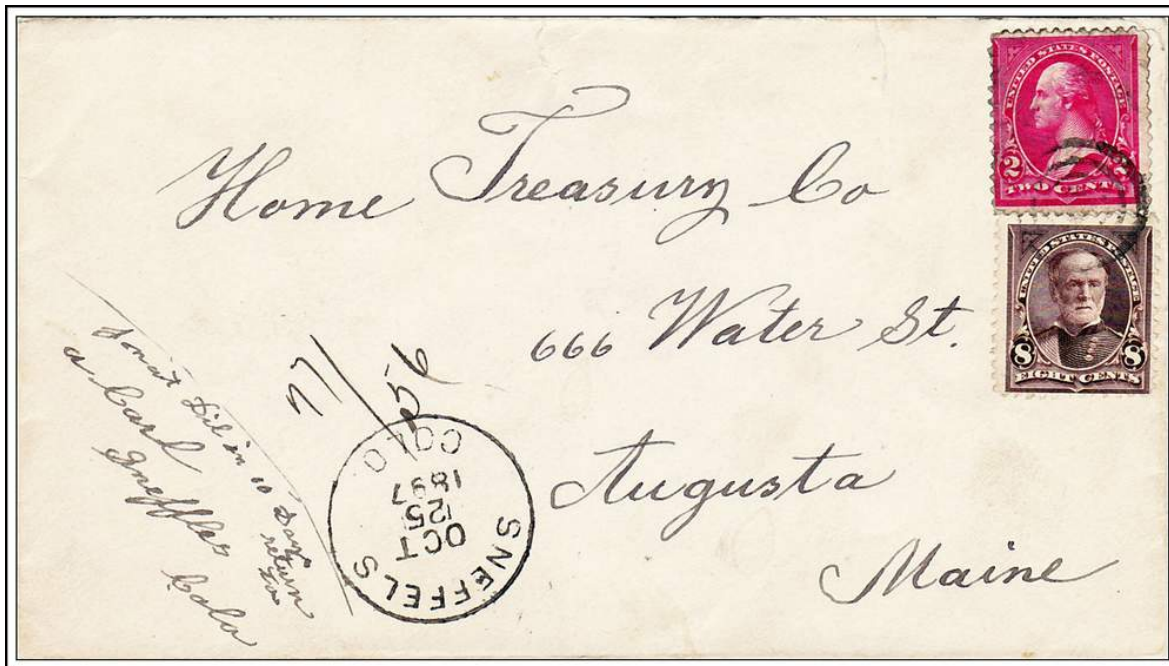
For the history and directions to Sneffels, please refer to the discussion of Mount Sneffels.

Latitude = 37:58:31 North Longitude = 107:45:57 West

**Chronology of the Post Office**

- Apr 3 1895 **Name changed from Mount Sneffels**
- Apr 3 1895 **Van Horn, George**
- Apr 30 1895 --- **SE/4 Sec 21 T43N R8W On the west side of Sneffels Creek**
- Apr 24 1907 **Reynolds, Charles A.**
- Jul 11 1914 --- **Not reported 35 feet (?) north of Canon and Sneffels Creeks Campbird is 2 miles southeast**
- Sep 10 1914 **Buskirk, Frank A.**
- Aug 27 1919 **Kuchs, Louis F.**
- Sep 29 1930 **Ordered closed**
- Oct 6 1930 **Discontinued Mail to Ouray**

SNEFFELS – Continued



SNEFFELS / COLO.

October 25, 1897

Confirmed Types of Postal Markings

- |   |                                  |                          |                         |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | SNEFFELS / COLO.<br>CI 10P 27.0  | Hstp Target, 4-ring 18mm | Mar 1 1897 Feb 8 1902   |
| 2 | SNEFFELS / COLO.<br>CI 10P 30.0  | Dplx Grid, 9-bar oval    | Nov 12 1903 May 10 1904 |
| 3 | SNEFFELS, / COLO.<br>CI 10P 31.0 | 4bars S-25x19mm          | Mar 6 1911 Jul 24 1912  |



**VIRGINIUS**

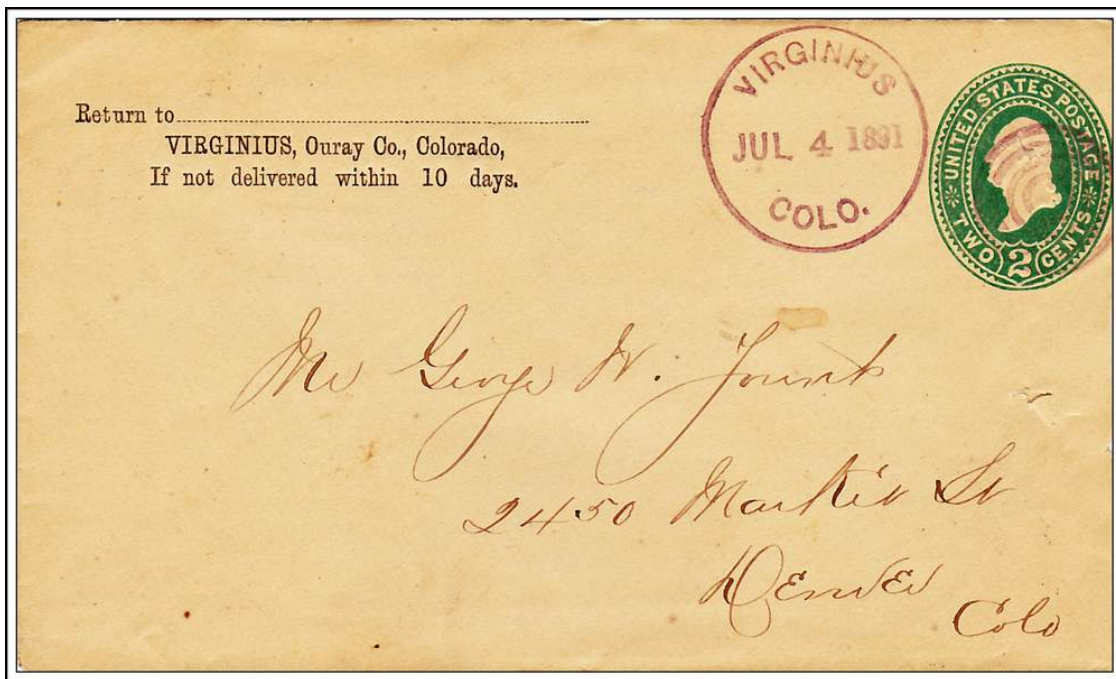
Virginus was located at the Virginus Mine in Governor Basin at an elevation of about 11,700 feet.

From Mount Sneffels, continue up the valley a little over a mile to where there is a side canyon. The road forks, with one fork going up the canyon into Governor Basin and the other continuing up Sneffels Creek towards Yankee Boy Basin. There are mine dumps all along the way as well as on the slopes of the side canyon. About half a mile from Mount Sneffels are the remnants of the large Atlas Mill on the hillside across the creek.

**VIRGINIUS – Continued**

Discovery, in 1877, of the Virginius Mine is attributed to William Freeland. The mine was worked at several levels, through several miles of tunnels. As development and exploitation of the Virginius Mine continued it was decided to cut a tunnel from the level of Sneffels to intersect the Virginius lode. The connection was made and the combined Revenue-Virginius property became a major producer. The mine eventually produced \$27,000,000 in ore.

Albert Eugene Reynolds and John H. Maugham acquired the Virginius claim in 1880. Several buildings including a four-story boardinghouse were built at the mine portal. The post office and a store were also at the mine portal. What is not clear is whether all of this remained at the mine portal after completion of the Revenue Tunnel in 1893. It may be that once the tunnel was completed and in operation, all associated activity was transferred to Mount Sneffels.



**VIRGINIUS / COLO.      July 4, 1891**

Jim Ozment and I visited the area in August 2004. We drove beyond Mount Sneffels to where the road forks but did not go further. These are the roads to Yankee Boy Basin (west) and to Governor Basin (south). Looking at the roads I chickened out. In 2004 there was or had recently been, quite a bit of activity around the junction. It appears as if an attempt will be made to reopen the Ruby Trust Mine which was located here.

To reach the vicinity of Virginius follow the directions to Camp Bird and from there to Mount Sneffels. Then continue up the valley for another mile or so. To reach the site of Virginius would require making the difficult climb from the road junction to Governor Basin. There is plenty to see, and the surrounding scenery is magnificent.

Latitude = 37:58:08 North    Longitude = 107:46:25 West    VIRGINIUS MINE

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

Jul 20 1887	---	Unsurveyed Land On one fork of Sneffels Creek Three miles beyond Mount Sneffels on same road Proposed postmaster - Herbert F. Jones
Aug 16 1887		Established
Aug 16 1887		Jones, Herbert F.
Apr 4 1890		Dollarhide, Charles A.
May 8 1891		Bradley, George T.
Apr 24 1894		Discontinued Mail to Mount Sneffels

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	VIRGINIUS / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Cork, smudge	Aug 17 1889
2	VIRGINIUS / COLO. CI 10P 29.0	Hstp Target	Jun 27 1890 Mar 25 1892
3	VIRGINIUS / COLO. CI 10P 28.0	Hstp Target	Mar 25 1894

**WINDHAM**

Very little is known about Windham. According to George Crofutt it was a small ranch, a post office and a few buildings located at the mouth of the Uncompahgre Canyon three miles north of Ouray.

The Post Office Department Geographical Site Location Report places Windham on the east side of the Uncompahgre River, two miles south of Portland. That is just south of Dexter Creek, near Ouray County Road 14 - the road that goes to the site of Ash. At that point there is a group of modern buildings along US Highway 550.

**Chronology of the Post Office**

Nov 19 1878	---	Unsurveyed Land Portland is two miles northerly Ouray is 2-1/2 miles southerly from post office 50 yards east of the Uncompahgre River Proposed postmaster - Mrs Sarah C. Woodward
Dec 9 1878		Established
Dec 9 1878		Woodward, Mrs. Sarah C.
Jun 20 1881		Discontinued

**Confirmed Types of Postal Markings**

1	WINDHAM / COLO. CI 10P 28.5	Hstp Not present	Mar 14 1879
---	--------------------------------	------------------	-------------



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PLACE NAMES IN COLORADO - Alternate Title: THE NAMES OF COLORADO TOWNS

Prepared by the Colorado Writers Project; Colorado Magazine; Serialized in Volumes 17-20

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Chapter V - Ouray County, Part 1 - October 1976

Ouray County, Part 2 - July 1977

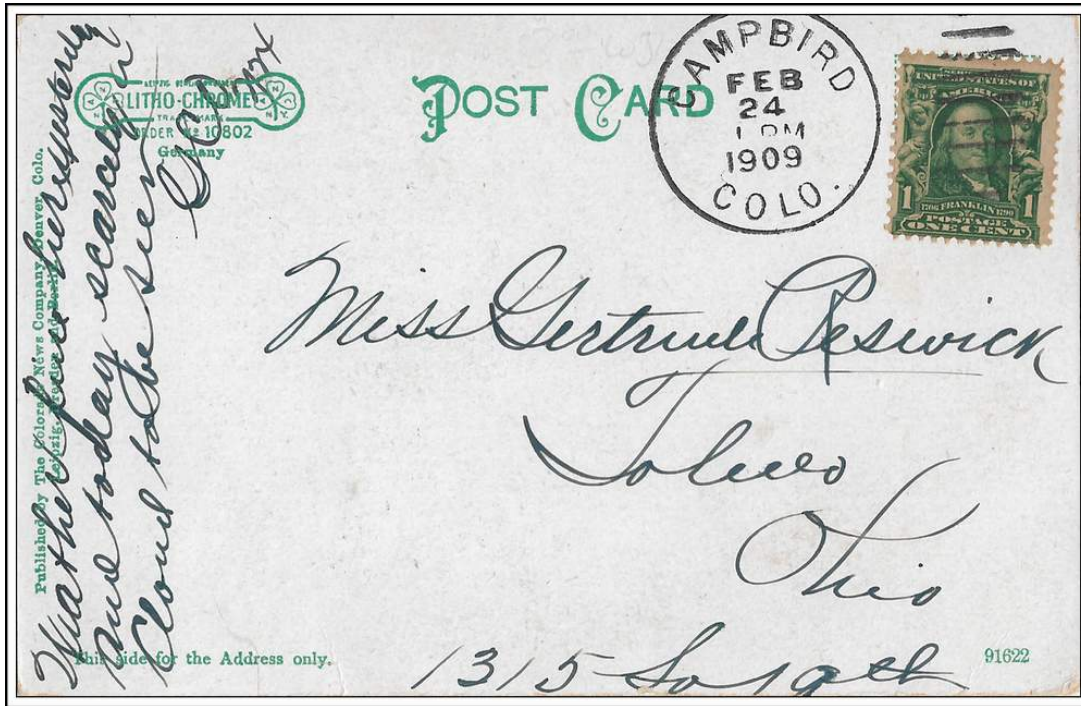
**PERSONAL COMMUNICATION**

Tom Hillhouse 2022, Emails in October and November

**GEOGRAPHIC SITE LOCATION REPORTS OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT**

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, reference of distance to local streams and rivers, to railroads and to nearby existing post offices.

A GALLERY OF OURAY COUNTY COVERS



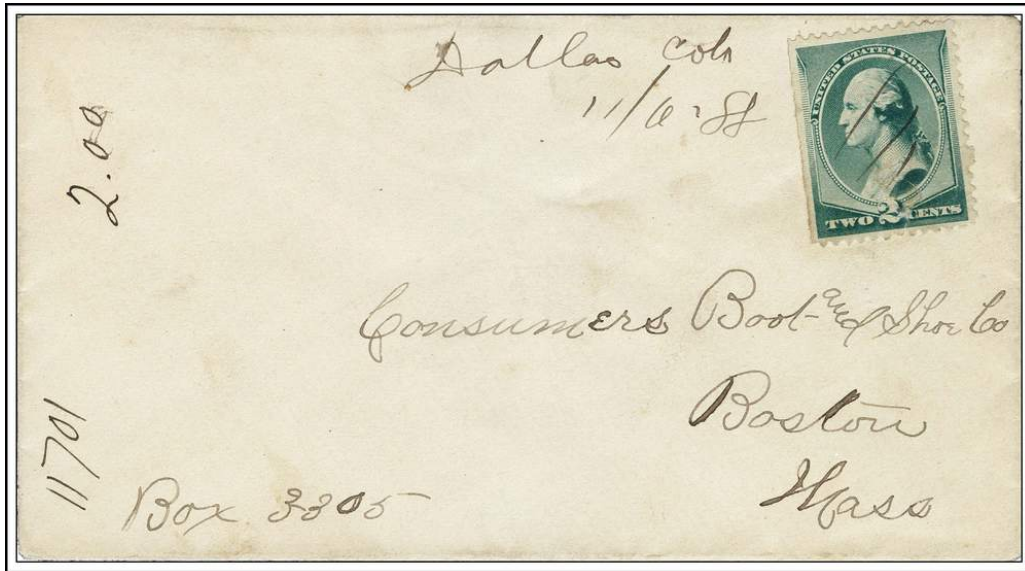
CAMPBIRD / COLO.

February 24, 1909



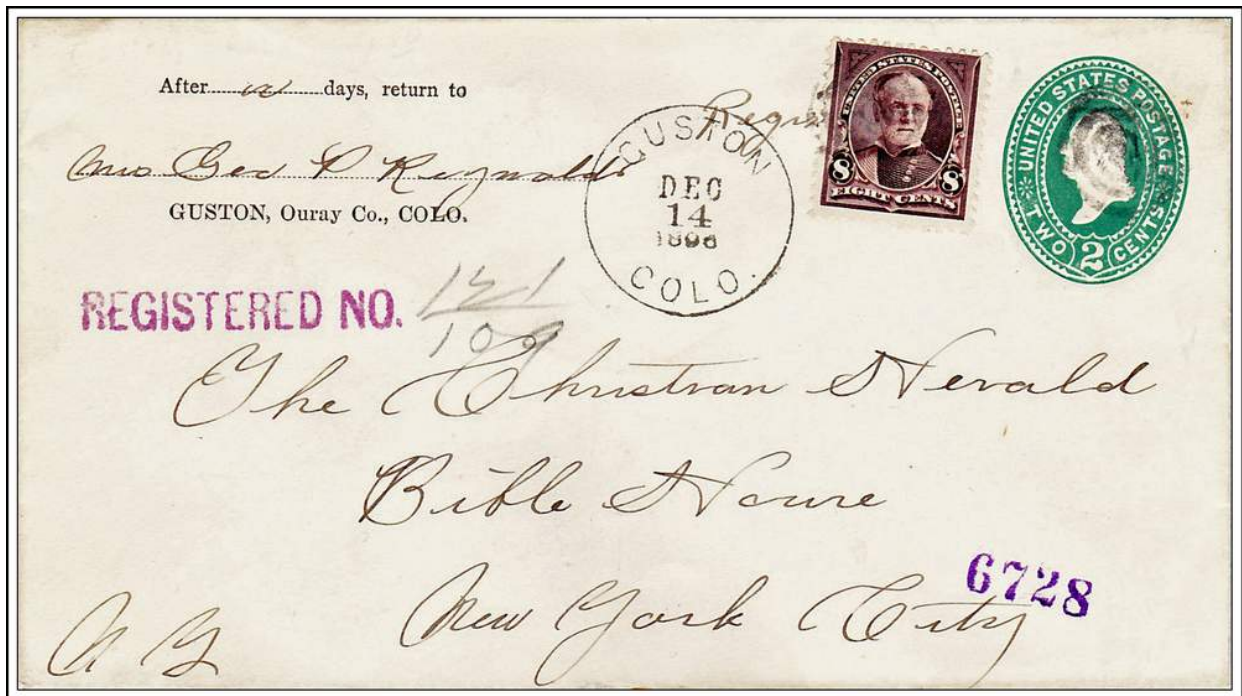
COLONA / COLO.

July 22, 1913



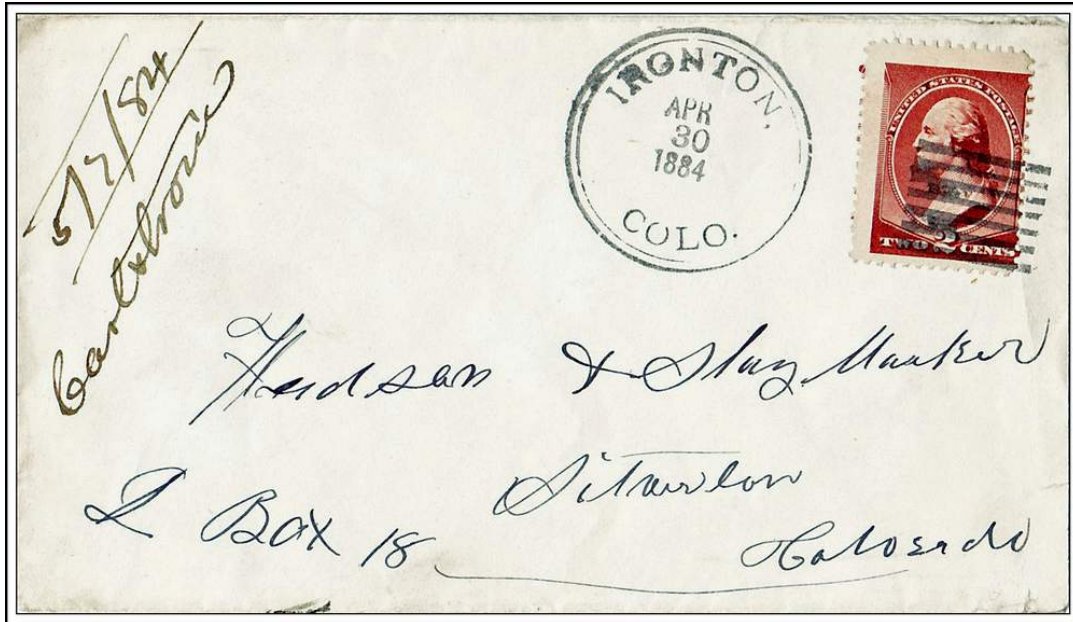
Dallas Colo

November 6, 1888



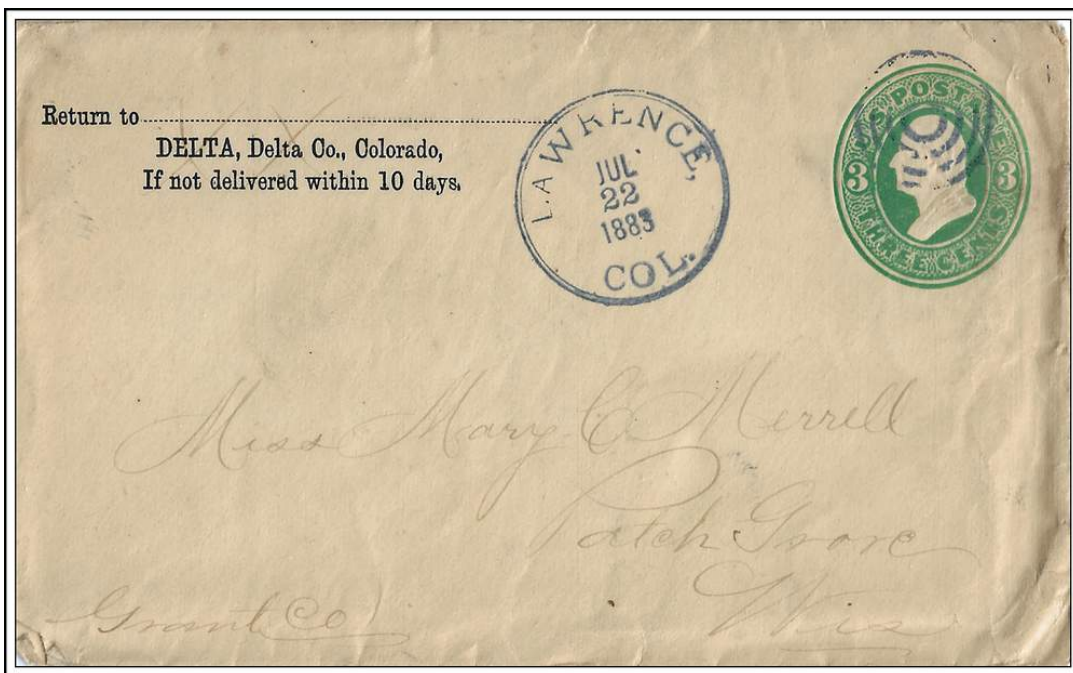
GUSTON / COLO.

December 14, 1896



IRONTON, / COLO.

April 30, 1884



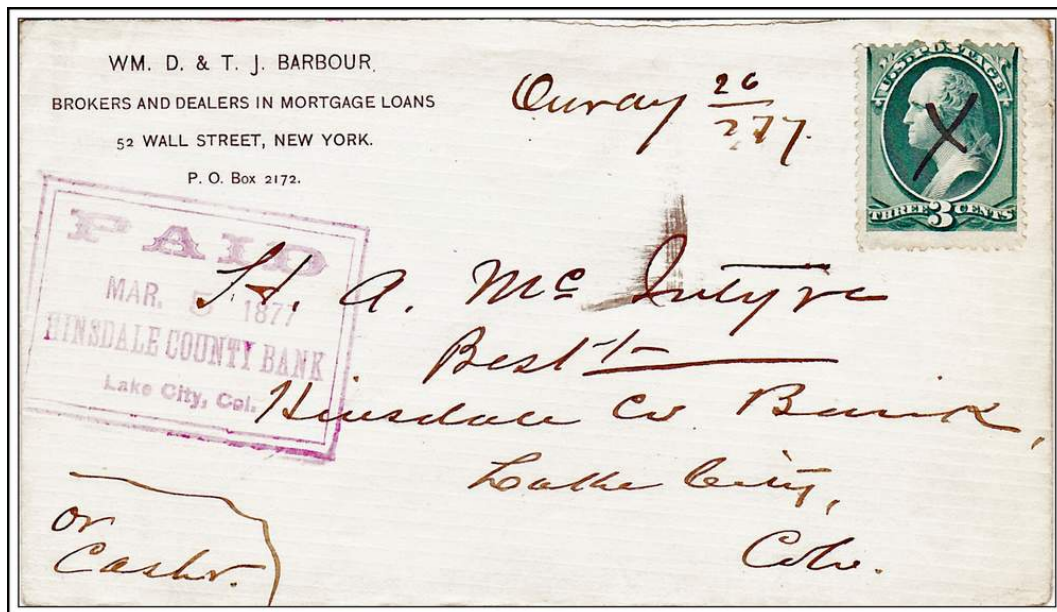
LAWRENCE, / COL.

July 22, 1883



MT. SNEFFELS, / COLO.

September 27, 1883



Ouray

February 26, 1877



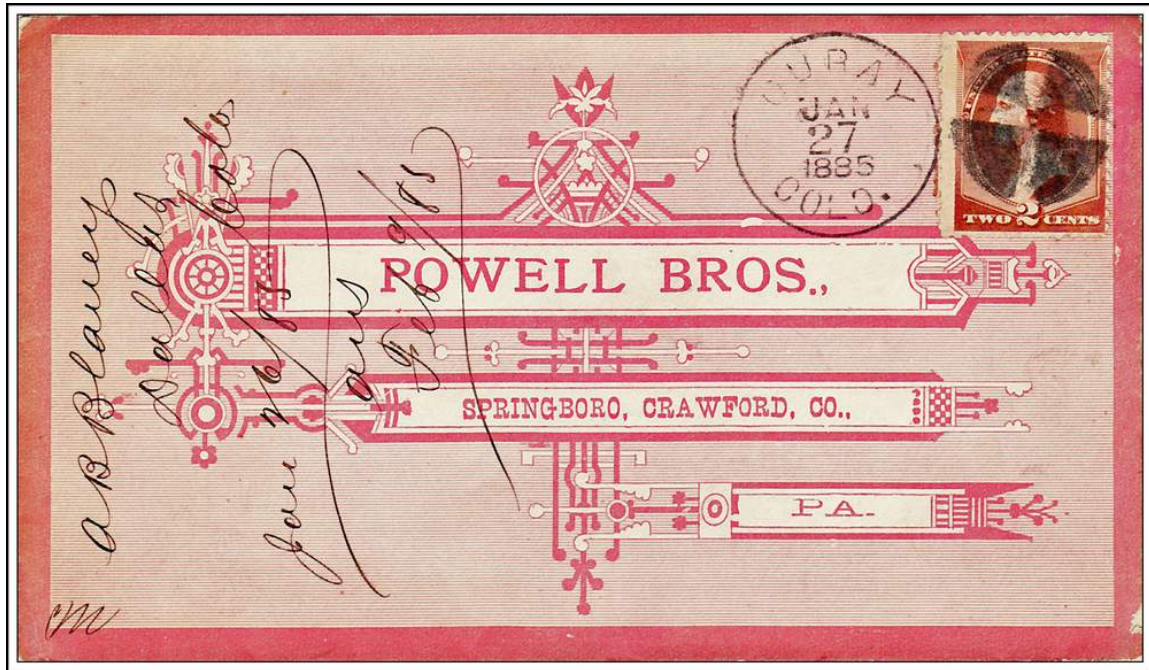
OURAY, / COLO.

December 20, 1877



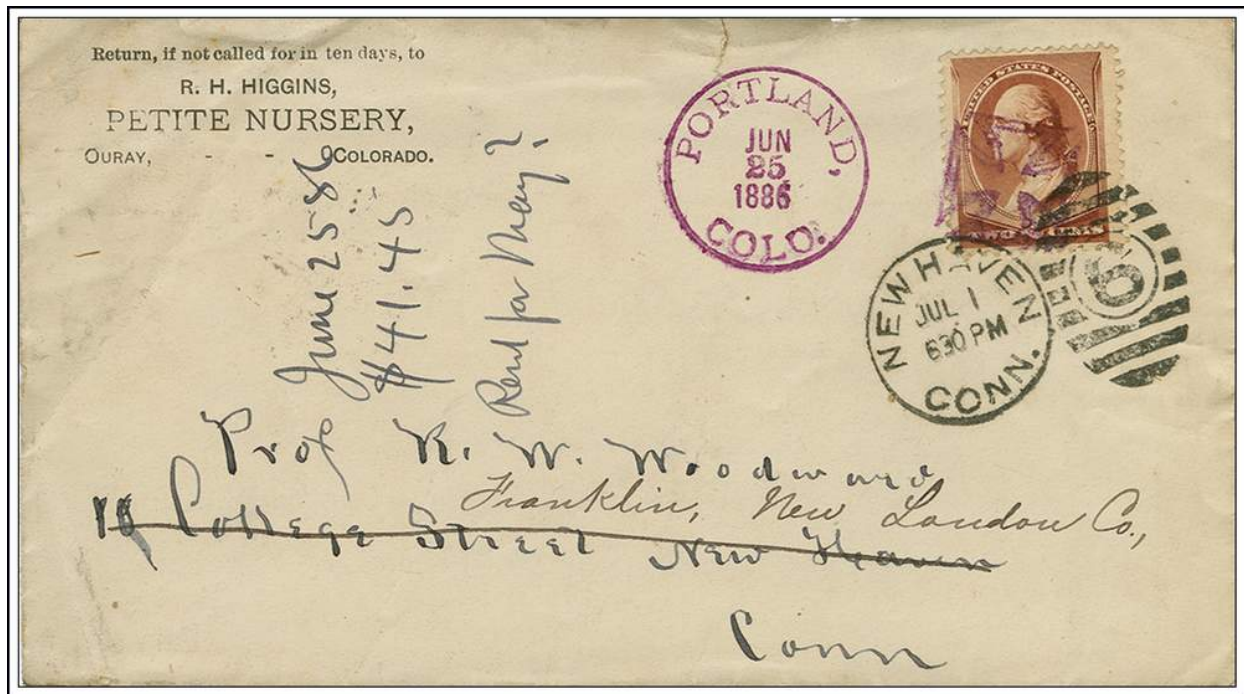
OURAY, COLO. // REGISTERED.

September 20, 1880



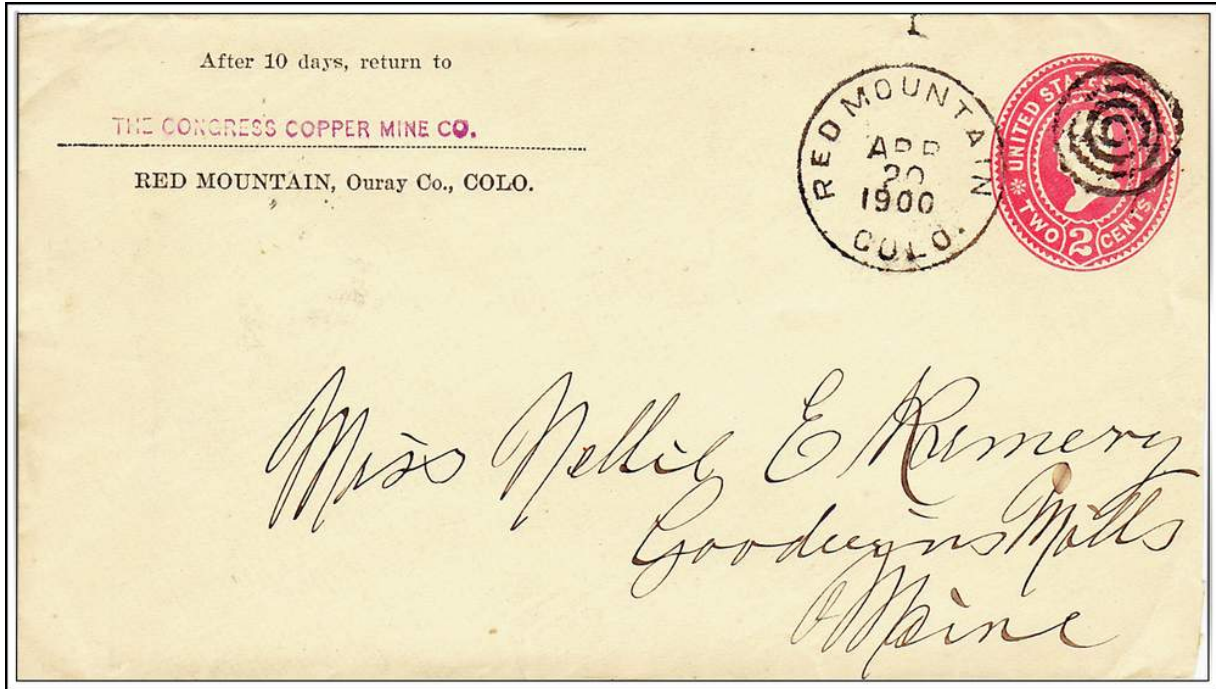
OURAY / COLO.

January 27, 1885



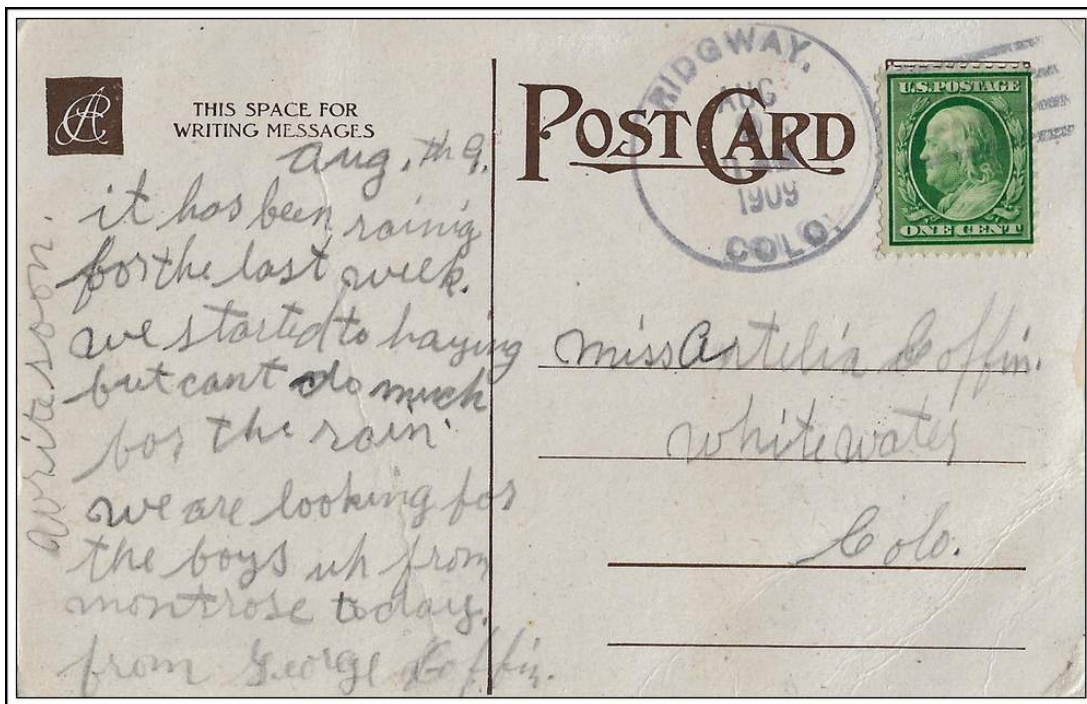
PORTLAND, / COLO.

June 25, 1886



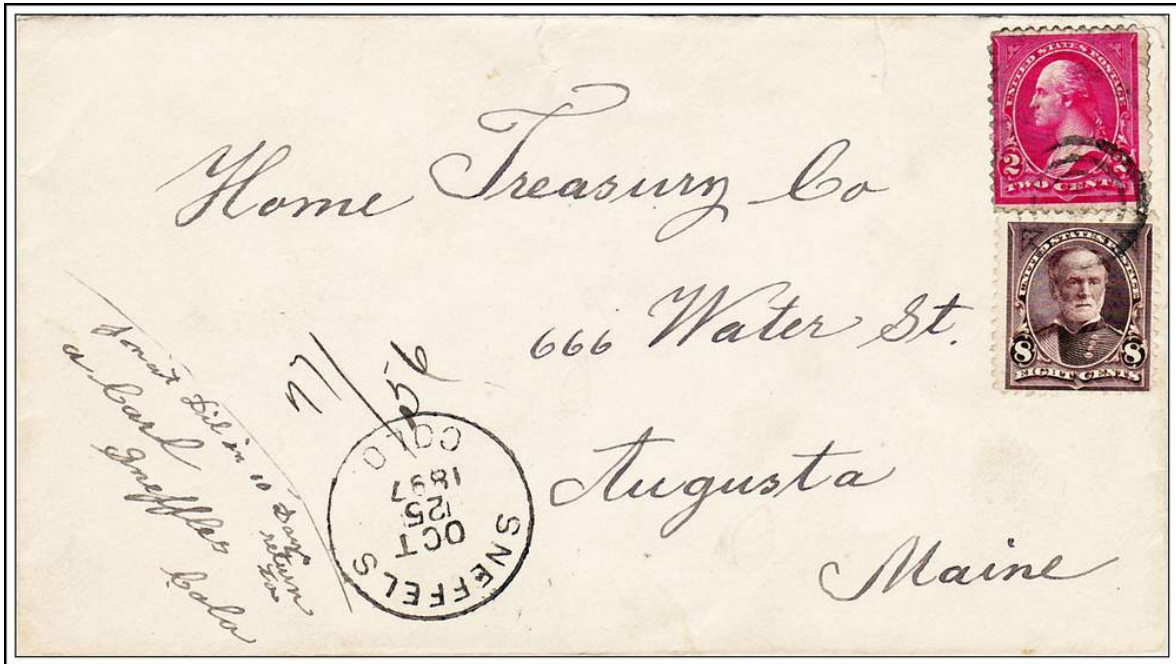
RED MOUNTAIN / COLO.

April 20, 1900



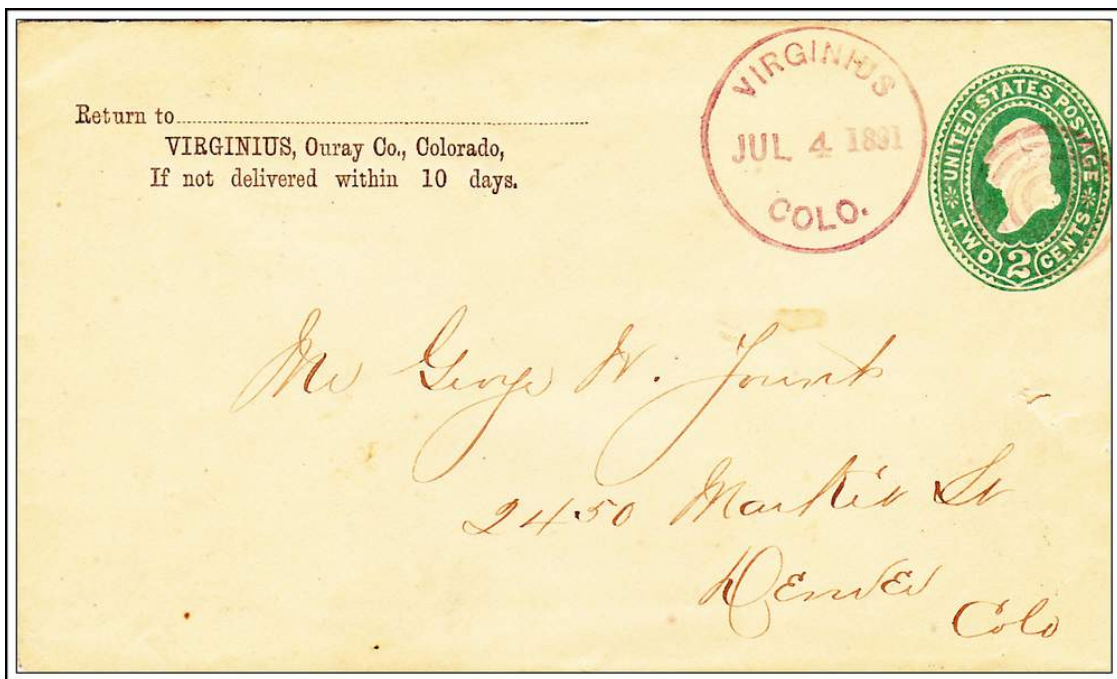
RIDGWAY, / COLO.

August 9, 1909



SNEFFELS / COLO.

October 25, 1897



VIRGINIUS / COLO.

July 4, 1891