

SAN JUAN COURIER

A Periodical Publication of the San Juan County Historical Society

Summer 2004

Silverton, San Juan County, Colorado

Powerhouse Restoration Underway After Delays

By William R. Jones

After what seemed to be never ending delays during 2003, construction work finally began on the 1906 Animas Light & Power Substation building in December 2003. Crews from Klinke & Lew Restoration Contractors removed windows and doors from the building and repaired them during the winter months at an off site shop facility. The original windows were generally of high quality construction which facilitated repair.

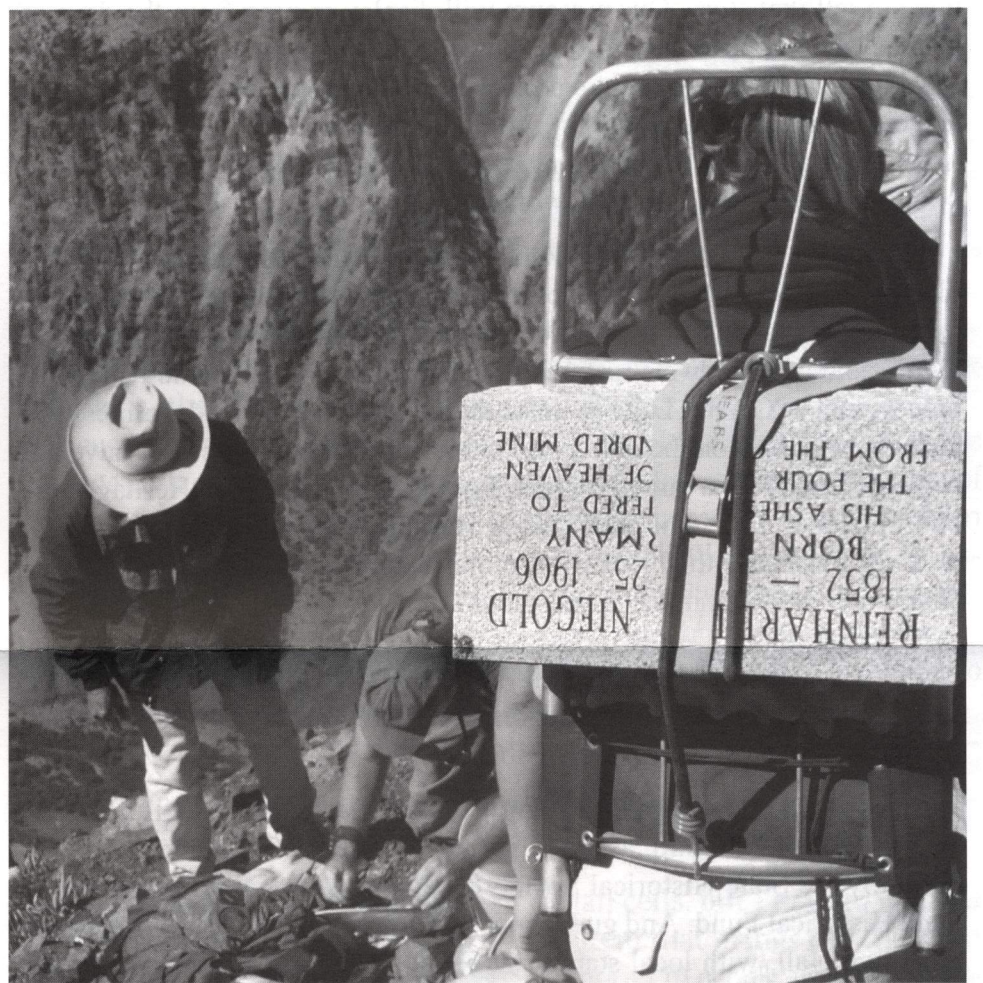
In early May, work began on the masonry brick structure which has been badly damaged by water over the years. A portion of the shed over the 1960s truck scale was removed and scaffolding installed on the north elevation. The roof decking was partially removed along the contact with the masonry parapet. Selective demolition of the parapet was performed and the parapet rebuilt using salvaged original brick and closely matching used pressed brick. Since it was built as a utilitarian industrial structure, the original brick on the building varies considerably in color and dimension.

During demolition, it was discovered the masonry walls do not contain adequate internal bonds or ties between the tiers. The lack of internal bonds has resulted in additional problems where the exterior tier was cut in the past for flashing later shed roof additions. The unsupported tier above the cut often fails due to this lack of bonding, requiring additional work. A new steel "I" beam was installed in the south bay to replace a beam that had been removed in the past. The beam was inserted with a crane through an opening in the roof and into the existing pockets cut into the masonry wall. Repairs are proceeding well and the workmanship and quality of the repaired sections are high.

David Singer, a restoration specialist with Klinke & Lew, proposed rebuilding the center window which had been roughly converted to a doorway in the 1960s conversion to a warehouse. Initially this door was to be retained to be used for the adaptive reuse of the building as commercial rental space. However, as the north elevation is the principle historic façade for the structure, rebuilding of the original window has been approved by the architects at Jay Lynch & Associates. It has been over 70 years since this impressive side of the building has been seen in its original configuration.

Design of the interior to meet the needs for a business incubator and commercial space has been completed. The interior of the masonry structure will be divided into three rentable areas with separate electrical metering. The wooden shed addition will remain as a fourth rentable area. A common area will contain restrooms and mechanical room. An in-floor hot water heating system is planned. The interior design will retain significant architectural features of the building by opening windows now blocked, and minimizing interior dividing walls. Original electrical fixtures are being retained in place.

Barring unforeseen problems, the restoration of this large structure will be completed in the spring of 2005, and ready for rental to new businesses in the community. This will help ensure the building's long term survival by making it an economically viable structure once again. This work is being funded in part by grants from the State Historical Fund of the Colorado Historical Society, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade.



Volunteer Lisa Richardson carried the 50 pound burial marker for mining pioneer and promotor Reinhardt Niegold high above Cunningham Gulch to the vicinity of the Old Hundred. Niegold's ashes were scattered there after he died in 1906.

23 Burial Stones Placed, Including One Off Site

by Mary Beaber

Volunteers placed twenty-three burial stones on previously unmarked graves in Hillside Cemetery during the tenth annual volunteer work day held last June. The stone markers were made possible by Family Craft Memorials in Durango. In addition to the placement of the stones in Hillside Cemetery, one stone was placed outside the cemetery for early San Juan pioneer, Reinhardt Niegold, who died in 1906 at the age of 54 years in San Diego. Silverton resident Lisa Richardson carried Reinhardt Niegold's fifty pound tombstone attached to her backpack and assisted by other volunteers, placed the stone on Galena Mountain off

the Old Hundred boardinghouse trail.

The following is noted by the selected account of Reinhard Niegold from Freda Peterson's revised edition, *Volume II, The Story of Hillside Cemetery*:

"Niegold requested that his ashes be scattered to the four winds of heaven from his former mine, the Veta Madre (Old Hundred), near the top of Galena Mountain in Cunningham Gulch. It seemed like fate that his ashes should lie on that mountain where he spent the best years of his life actively engaged in mining. Here the Old Hundred Mine made the Niegold brothers,

Continued on Page 2

Chairman's Report

Dear Members:

As I write to you today, the sky is cloudless and bright and the forecast is for beautiful weather through the 4th of July. I can report that we had a very good winter—plenty of snow, which is filling reservoirs downstream as the sun melts the snow in the high country. The monsoons should start soon, keeping the wildfires away and the wildflowers in bloom.

Much work has been accomplished in the Mining Heritage Center. Zeke Zanon, Jerry Hoffer, and Scott Fetchenhier labored through the winter, often in subzero temperatures to keep the project going. The second story mezzanine level has been built, complete with stairs! And not just ordinary stairs, dear members, pieces of art. The building itself is a beautiful design—incorporating the Caledonia Boardinghouse into a mill-like structure framed in 12 x 12 timbers. It is connected to the jail with a tunnel—you will enter the new part of the museum under ground! Our first exhibit is built—a tram tower, which illustrates the importance of the vast systems of tram lines that transported ore from the high mines to the mills far below. Someone once said that the San Juans were the "Silicon Valley" of their time—the most modern technology was developed here and we hope to tell that story. Our museum will display mining from the days of the earliest prospectors with their burros and single jacks to modern-day mucking machines which moved hundreds of tons of ore a day. We will leave a legacy! Special mention should be made of the Mountain Studies Institute and the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Assistance Program for helping fund the new work.

The Red Mountain Task Force just purchased the northern end of Ironton Park. That area of the park is home to a very rare wetland composed of iron fens. Iron fens are composed of plant species able to tolerate highly acidic groundwater saturated with dissolved iron. In mid-June, volunteers met at Crystal Lake to make an inventory of old trails, mines, and historic structures on the purchased property. Many of these sites have not been accessible for a hundred years. Look for Red Mountain Heritage Day on September 18th. The first annual Heritage Day was held last year to rave reviews—and this year even more historic sites will be open! The Task Force was just notified that grant money will be forthcoming for the stabilization of the "white house" at Ironton townsite. This building with its round tower is quite compelling—who built it? How had this Victorian gem been constructed in this wild, remote place? What is its story? Ah, that is what historical societies are all about.

A special showing of "Saving Colorado's Treasures" will be shown on July 21st at 7:30 p.m. at the Silverton Town Hall. This video was produced by the State Historical Society to showcase projects funded by the State Historical Fund. And guess which project is highlighted? The Silverton Town Hall, with local stars Fritz Klinke, Loren Lew and yours truly. The film is well done and as you watch, makes you want to visit the many historic sites in Colorado that it touches on. Although no admission for the showing will be charged, donations will be welcome—they will be used for matching funding for a workshop to be held September 13-17.

The Mayflower Mill will be the "classroom" for a preservation workshop which will cover all aspects of Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) documentation and Historic Structure Assessment, creating measured drawings, photographic standards, historic research, principals of stabilization and preservation, understanding structure and failure in historic buildings, developing a Historic Structure Assessment, and conceptual cost estimates. This project will be the initial step toward the overall objective of stabilizing and preserving the Mill. Despite its excellent integrity, the Mill is in urgent need of numerous repairs to preserve the structure and keep it safe for visitors.

Last year we were given a grant to fund a film on our Old 100 Stabilization project. This film is due to be finished in September, so watch for the world premier to be announced! It will feature the history of that fascinating mine and tell the story of the stabilization of the boardinghouse and tram house, a feat accomplished with a fine crew and helicopters. Those buildings are set for another one hundred years!

As usual, dear members, what we do couldn't be done without your support and the volunteer work of a dedicated little band of preservationists. Thank you for your support.

Bev

Grave Marking is a Major Project of Society

Continued from Page 1

Reinhardt, Gustave, Oscar, and Otto money.

The Niegold brothers were the most interesting and flamboyant family to live in Cunningham Gulch in the early years. They originally came from Germany with Reinhardt coming to the San Juans in 1872. The brothers located a group of mines on Green Mountain and also on Galena Mountain, six miles above Silverton, in the early 1870s, where they built their cabins in the area where Stony Pass and Cunningham Gulch meet. The community became known as Niegoldstown. They had acquired the cultivated tastes of their ancestors and were noted for their lavish style of living and entertaining. Their standard of living included the best in food and drink...imported wines and Turkish tobacco. Their gourmet meals were prepared from German, Russian and Italian cookbooks. All the brothers were musically inclined and could sing and play the piano well, Reinhardt being an accomplished pianist and Gus having sung opera professionally in New York City. They had a Weber grand piano shipped in by pack train. The brothers performed the latest operas for their friends and neighbors in the San Juan, appearing in Knick-

erbocker pants, powdered hair and buckle shoes.

The Niegolds remained in Cunningham Gulch after they lost their mining interests and after an 1884 avalanche which destroyed most of Niegoldstown, where they resided for a little over a quarter of a century and of which there is no evidence of remains of the town today. Otto left the San Juans before 1880 and the remaining brothers sold their claims on Galena Mountain for \$400,000 in 1904. Because of their lavish life-styles, they went through their money very quickly."

Additional information on Reinhard Niegold, his brothers and Niegoldstown can be found in the following publications:

Ghosts and Gold, The History of the Old Hundred Mine by Scott Fetchenhier and *Many More Mountains Volume II* by Allen Nossaman

Since 1985 the marking of older graves has been a project of Hillside Cemetery Fund. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation to this project, send to: **Hillside Cemetery Fund, P.O. Box 115, Silverton, Colorado 81433.** We have many more burials to mark.

New Museum Building Will Allow Better Display of Old Exhibits and Additional Retail Space

It is with great anticipation that we all await the completion of some parts of the new mining museum building so that we may have additional retail space in our reception area. As you know, some very outstanding display items are in that room, and are becoming more difficult to enjoy because of the interesting items for sale that are positioned in the way.

Not only will the museum cases be enhanced by new positions, but it will enable us to bring to the museum several very fine display cases, counters, and an unusual type case that are now

in storage. We have many fine items for sale that are not open and out for you to see.

Last summer saw fewer foreign tourist visitors, mostly from the UK, France and Germany, but that should change in 2004 as the dollar is in their favor. Also people were buying as many souvenirs and gifts as usual, but at the lower end of the price range. Items and books priced higher than \$20.00 did not move well.

BUT a new season is here and we'll do well.

Remember!

Your tax deductible donation will help the society complete the Mining Heritage Center. Please send a check today.

Thank you.

SAN JUAN COURIER

George Chapman, Editor

Contributors: Bill Jones, Beverly Rich, Mary Beaber, Freda Peterson, Duane Murphy, Scott Fetchenhier

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San Juan County, Colorado.

**San Juan County Historical Society
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Society Receives Grant for Caboose

by William R. Jones
Word has been received from the Colorado Historical Society that the San Juan County Historical Society has been awarded a grant of \$4,800 to do a Historic Structure Assessment on our caboose. The assessment will be done by Ray Ludwig and Jeff Ellingson of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

D&RG Caboose #17 was built in 1880 as part of a group of 35 cabooses (#13-38) built that year at the railroad's shops. It followed a design adopted in 1876 based on a car purchased from Billmeyer & Small. The car is 16 feet long with four 26" wheels on a 9 foot wheelbase. They had three windows per side plus end windows. These windows were often covered over in later rebuilds. Stoves were added in 1886. In the 1885/1886 renumbering, caboose #17 became #0516.

By 1895 D&RG Caboose 0516 was being leased to the Silverton Railroad, owned by Otto Mears, for 30 cents per day. At this time Mears was building the new Silverton Northern Railroad to Eureka from Silverton. In October 1895 the Silverton Railroad Company purchased the caboose from the D&RG for \$350.00. There is no record of the car being renumbered for the Silverton Railroad and it was probably purchased for use on the Silverton Northern.

Later the car was listed as Silverton Northern caboose #1005. Unlike similar D&RG cars, few structural modifications were made to the car because the Silverton Northern was not required to adopt certain safety improvements required of the D&RG. It therefore retained its distinctive original cupola design and side windows.

The caboose was probably retired well before 1930 and the car body was used as a storage shed at the Western Colorado Power Company office located adjacent to the Silverton Northern line. In the 1960s it was donated to the San Juan

County Historical Society and moved to Silverton for use as an information booth. Having had its interior walls removed, the car suffered continued deterioration from the elements and vandals. It is now stored at the D&SNG railroad yards in Durango.

This car is unique as it is the oldest surviving D&RG caboose and is one of only two that retain the original body and cupola style. Caboose #49 built in 1881 has been restored at the Colorado Railroad Museum to similar four-wheel configuration but exhibits some later modifications made by the D&RG.

The goal for this HSA is to provide sound plans for the restoration of the caboose and cost estimates for fund-raising purposes. The ultimate goal is to restore the caboose and put it on display in Silverton. The HSA should be finished by October 1.

There are many railbuffs on the Society's membership rolls. Railbuffs are a breed apart in the preservation world. We must thank them for their many contributions to the preservation of the history of our country. They document; they refurbish; they write books; and they have strong networks. We propose to tap into these networks for donations.

The history of the caboose demonstrates that it is one of the most historic railroad artifacts in the United States. Because of the rarity of the resource, we think that funds can be raised to match State Historical Fund monies for the restoration. We are preparing press releases to be sent with photographs to all of the major railroading magazines, the major railroading clubs for their newsletters, and to railroading websites. A bank account has been set up at the Citizens State Bank of Ouray to accept donations. The D&SNGRR uses the Society's railbus "Casey Jones" for excursions during Railfest in August, giving the Society part of the proceeds. They have asked that they be able to use the caboose in the same way. This will provide a small revenue stream for ongoing maintenance.

San Juan County Historical Society

Application for Membership — 2004

San Juan County Historical Society • Post Office Box 154 • Silverton, Colorado 81433

I wish to enroll as a member of the San Juan County Historical Society in the class designated below for the calendar year 2004. I understand that this membership entitles me (and my spouse, if applicable) to a vote at the annual meeting in October, 2004.

- ☐ **Member:** Voting privilege [\$10.00]
- ☐ **Family Member:** Voting privilege, man and wife [\$16.00]
- ☐ **Supporting Member:** Voting privilege, couple, and museum admission for season for immediate family. Discount on books and Archive research [\$25.00]
- ☐ **Society Patron:** Voting privilege, couple, and season museum admission for immediate family and listing in the San Juan Courier, Discount on books and Archive research [\$50.00]
- ☐ **Life Membership:** All privileges for life [\$350.00]

Name: _____

Address: _____

Archive is a Busy Place

by Freda Carley Peterson
Computerization of the archive records continues, as well as the cataloging of new documents and photographs. Another row of steel shelving has been added to the vault, giving us much needed storage space, and we plan to repaint the exterior of the building.

A large and gratifying project has been the transferring of our oral history tapes (some more than 30 years old) to compact disks, thanks to a donation from one of our members, and a large chunk of volunteer labor by three Tucson citizens; they are now referred to as the "Tucson branch of the San Juan County Historical Society." We are having two copies made of each cassette, so one disk will be available to family members or interested parties. These would make wonderful family mementos.

Another member has taken a special interest in our "Movies" project, collecting information, videos, photos, posters, movie stills, stories, and memorabilia of the movies filmed in and around Silverton, mostly in the 1950s. We have also received a large number of donated vintage postage stamps to use, greatly reducing our postage expense.

Other donations received during the year include books on crystallography and mineralogy; slides of the Mayflower tram taken while riding in an ore bucket; ledgers, docu-

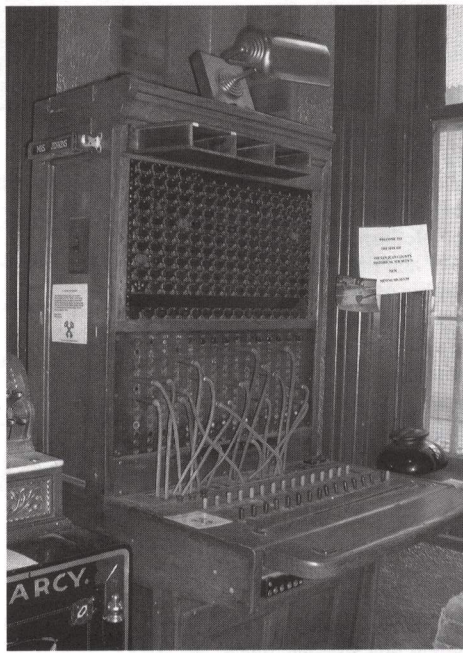
ments, and maps of the Silver Wing Mine; documents and letters dealing with striking miners in the 1930s; the William A. Graves 15 volume work on San Juan Mine and Mill structures; dummies, paintings, and other material from the former Vern Parker collection; and other gifts. We very much appreciate each one.

Again this school year we have worked closely with the Silverton school on several projects. Individuals researching mines, structures, people, churches, schools, businesses, locations, roads, railroads, ethnic groups, snow, rivers, and about anything you can think of, have made use of our extensive records.

Over the years, the Historical Society has accumulated many duplicate items and artifacts. We anticipate the sale of such duplicates, to further the Society work and make much needed storage space available for other needs. At the Archive, duplicates of several different years of the high school's Annual or Yearbook are available, although there are still some years for which we have no copies at all.

We are looking forward to the summer, and the able assistance of our volunteers. We plan to be open to the public Wednesdays and Thursdays, and other times by appointment. The phone number of the Archive is 970-387-5609. We hope to see you soon!

Switchboard is a Popular Exhibit



by Duane Murphy
Our museum gets better every year. We are continuously surprised by the new things that are brought in by those who love and want to preserve Silverton.

We look forward to more wall space for pictures and old photographs. It is no secret that visitors love our museum. You should sit where I am for part of a day and just listen to their enthusiastic comments.

Everyone loves the prune soup can, and, of course, the amazing, ee-

rie jail cells, but I have to say that the item that brings out the most memories in people seems to be the old telephone switchboard.

The switchboard on exhibit is one the served Silverton for many years and was last actively used in the mid-1950s.

It seems as if everyone over 50 has either used one or knows someone who did; or had that kind of wall phone in their home. Many get excited over recalling their old phone number, 2-6-J. They love to explain how that wonderful invention worked to anyone who will listen

It is probably a mistake from the preservation standpoint that the switchboard is a "touchable" exhibit, but visitors find it irresistible. Remember the operator's name plate that turns around and the little number plates that drop down when a call is coming in?

Remember, the museum hours are nine to five every day during the summer season. Come and see the switchboard and all of our other interesting exhibits again this summer. We'll be waiting for you.

San Juan County Historical Society

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James Beaton Was the Pioneer

Founder of the Caledonia Mine

by Scott Fetchenhier
Dr. James Beaton came to the San Juans in 1872, spending most of his time in the Minnie Gulch area where he located the claims that comprise the Caledonia mine in 1873-1876.

He eventually formed the Beaton Silver Mining Company in 1880, and was part owner of the Peerless San Juan Mining Company in 1905. Though Beaton worked hard to open up his properties, and promoted them heavily, he was never able to obtain a significant financial gain from the mine and lost ownership of the Caledonia in 1913.

It is Beaton's early history that provides a fascinating account of the type of pioneer that migrated to the San Juans in the early 1870s. Beaton was born in Scotland on October 19, 1842 and immigrated to America in 1848 after his father was forced to leave Ireland because of his political affiliations. He grew up in Urbana, New York and listed his occupation at 21 years of age as a druggist.

Caught up in the fervor of the Civil War, Beaton enlisted in the 21st New York Infantry on May 6, 1861 for a service of two years. For almost a year Beaton's regiment was involved in the laborious work of building the numerous forts that surrounded Washington D.C. By the spring of 1862 they were given marching orders that eventually brought the regiment to the Second Battle of Bull Run in late August. Beaton was severely wounded on August 30, 1862 on the second day of the battle, receiving wounds that shattered the fingers on his left hand and imbedded a bullet in his right elbow joint. The wounds would plague him the rest of his life. Surgeons were unable to remove the bullet at a battlefield hospital and almost killed him in a second surgery. The bullet was finally removed in a hospital in Philadelphia, but surgeons had impaired the use of his hand and arm after cutting nerves

and tendons. Beaton was discharged from the army March 24, 1863 and reenlisted in the Marines as a quartermaster's helper on June 16, 1864. He eventually ended up in the U.S. Navy as a surgeon's steward on the U.S.S. Moccasin, part of the blockade fleet on the Potomac River. It is there that he may have received the title "Doctor", though the possibility remains that Beaton eventually went on to medical school, or was nicknamed "Doctor" because of his earlier occupation of druggist.

After leaving the Navy in August, 1865, Beaton went back home to New York. Finding the climate and indoor work as a druggist to be hurting his health, Beaton decided to head west in 1866. After a short stay in St. Louis, he ended up in Denver and headed to the hills to try his luck at prospecting. Unfortunately, the severe wound that he suffered to his elbow inflamed with the hard labor of shoveling and picking, and Beaton ended up in Denver for over a month to recover. Beaton was in Denver for at least a year, and may have spent some time in Pueblo, and possibly even Del Norte. He arrived in the San Juans to prospect in the latter part of 1872. Again his elbow inflamed and he either rode or walked the full distance to Fort Garland where doctors almost amputated his arm. It took him almost two months to recover in the Fort hospital. This inflammation occurred anytime Beaton performed manual labor and severely limited the types of work that he could do. By 1876 he had filed several claims in Minnie Gulch and continued to promote his properties for over twenty-five years.

World War II Exhibit

Material Requested


An exhibit of Silverton-San Juan County history during WWII has been proposed for the new museum.

Ted Johnson has offered to start collecting material, pictures, artifacts, etc. of the period. The exhibit will include information about San Juan county service members, as well as information and artifacts such as pictures, newspaper clippings, locally produced socks, bandages, etc. relating to activities on the home front in support of the war effort.

The role of mining for strategic metals critical to the war effort will also be an element of the exhibit. If you have materials or information that could assist in preparing this exhibit, or just some thoughts on this project, please contact Johnson at P.O. Box 435 or call (970) 387-0130 or e-mail: RSICdgo@juno.com.



Reserve Some Time
for a VISIT TO JAIL...
Next to the Court House



San Juan County's
MUSEUM
the former San Juan County Jail
OPEN 9-5 daily
thru mid-September
10-3 thru mid-October

* Fantastic local mineral collection

* Collection of notorious Derringer handguns

* Actual County Jail cells as they were used

* Collection of authentic Otto Mears Silver Railroad Passes, from the 1800's

3 FLOORS OF PERIOD AND HISTORIC DISPLAYS

Did you know?

Supporting Members, Society Patrons, and Life members all receive a discount on book purchases and research fees from the society.

And...on top of this they receive free admission to the museum. If you are not already a member, join now to obtain these valuable privileges.

A membership application is found on Page 3.