Summer 2006

Silverton, San Juan County, Colorado

Pioneer Sub-Station Celebrates 100 years

One mile north of Silverton stands an imposing square brick structure that played an important part in the development of the area's pioneer electrical system. Built in 1906 by the Animas Power and Water Company, the building served as the main sub-station and distribution point for the power generated at Tacoma, 25 miles south of Silverton. In serious disrepair when donated to the Society in 1996, a \$375,000 renovation and repair has just been completed. Known locally as the "Powerhouse," it today houses Scotty Bob's custom ski manufacturing and Fisher Woodworks.

The Animas Power and Water Company was organized in Indianapolis, Indiana to serve the mines of the Silverton area. Prior to 1906, electric power at individual mine sites was generated by coal fired steam plants. When snow blockaded the railroad, coal supplies would run low, forcing the mines to close. The new power plant at Tacoma was a hydro-electric facility generating 6,000 horse power and feeding a 44,000 volt line up the Animas Canyon to the Silverton Sub-Station building. Here four large transformers dropped the voltage to 17,500 volts and sent it on to the mines. Such famous properties as the Silver Lake, Gold King, Gold Prince, Sunnyside, and Old Hundred were served by the system. Power costs dropped by 50% reducing mine operating costs and sparking a boom in mine development. An office and residence building was also built next to the "Powerhouse" and later a mule barn. Mules served as the "Jeeps" of the past, to maintain the lines strung up the gulches.

Later the system became part of the larger Western Colorado Power Company and tied into their lines via Ophir Pass and Red Mountain Pass. In the 1930s and 1940s, Hammond Mathews was the local manager and introduced such innovations as the county's first aluminum transmission line (to the Mayflower Mine) in 1941, and the suspended aerial lines Cunningham and other gulches that eliminated poles in avalanche prone areas. By the mid-1950s, automatic sub-stations replaced the older manual technology inside the building, which became vacant. In 1959 Standard Metals Corporation bought the office and sub-station buildings for their headquarters and warehouse space. In 1988 the office was moved to become the present Silverton Visitor's Center at the entrance to town on U.S. 550. Meanwhile the Powerhouse building continued to deteriorate.

At the time the building and ten acre site was donated to the Society by Sunnyside Gold in 1996, the Powerhouse was in bad shape. Bricks were disintegrating and falling off the walls each winter. Water was seeping into the walls and the metal roof decking was rusting through. The Powerhouse Business Incubator Project was begun in 1999 to renovate the structure and put it back to use to help new business development in the county, whose economy was in tatters after the mine closed in 1991. Grants from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Colorado Office of Economic Development and Inter-national Trade, and the State Historic Fund were matched with over \$70,000 in Society funds to pay for the project. Local restoration contractor Klinke & Lew performed the time-consuming restoration work.

Today the Powerhouse is once again helping Silverton's newest industry: skiing. Scotty Bob's Skis has leased the main building to expand their custom ski manufacturing business. Inventor of a popular and innovative backcountry ski design, Scotty Bob Carlson tests new ski designs along the same canyons where once pioneer electric power lines connected back to the venerable brick building. The Powerhouse's new role in Silverton's economy is a fitting community.



This 1930s photo shows the Powerhouse, the office building now moved and used as a visitor center, and the mule barn.



This rare 1920s photo shows the Powerhouse interior with its gleaming equipment.

Mayflower Mill Documented; Further Restoration Grant Requests Planned

Thanks to members David and Julie Singer, the Society was awarded a \$90,000 grant from the State Historical Fund to perform a Historic American Engineering Report (HAER) and a structural assessment of the National Historic Landmark Mayflower Mill.

The National Park Service thought that this project was so important that they put \$26,000 into it.

Last summer, six interns (two sponsored by the international ICOMOS program) mapped, photographed, measured, and documented every aspect of the Mill.

The documents produced are located at the National Archives and the San Juan County archives. We hope that they will help us to get further grant funding to repair the Mill, and to that end we have applied for funding from the Save America's Treasures program.

The Mill HAER project is featured in a 12 page spread in the current issue of *Common Ground*, a publication of the National Park Service.

Chairman's Report

Dear Members:

As I write today, I am listening to the sound of rain—and, boy do we need it. It has been very dry and unseasonably warm—into the mid-70s. It is amazing how one good rain greens things up. The chokecherry tree at the museum is in full bloom and smells heavenly. I am sure it is enjoying its nice drink of water.

Board members Zeke Zanoni, Jerry Hoffer, and Scott Fetchenhier have been laboring on exhibits that interpret the fabulous mining history of the San Juans in the Mining Heritage Center. Among them are a blacksmith's shop, a "machine doctor's" shop and a tram tower display. The detail in these exhibits give the visitor a real feel for what the mining industry really was. Combined with the Old 100 Mine Tour and the Mayflower Gold Mill Tour, the Mining Heritage Center offers a world-class mining history attraction. It is completely handicapped accessible, as is the Archive. We want to thank the USDA for funding half of the elevator. We still have many exhibits to build so we are only partially open—the museum will not be finished for years, but that is how it works in a volunteer organization.

Next week local non-profits will be hosting funders for *Philanthropy Days in Southwest Colorado*. This is a program to get funders, both private foundations and government, out of the Denver area and into rural Colorado every four years in hopes of raising their awareness about our issues and needs. We are going to start at the Mining Heritage Center greeted by the famous Silverton Brass Band. The last time the funders visited, the Center was a big hole in the ground and a slide show by Zeke. It will be fun to show them the progress we have made.

But, you know, dear members, the building that makes us our money—the old jail museum, has been neglected for years. Isn't that the way it is—the carpenter lets his own house fall down? However, we got a grant to do a Historic Structure Assessment of the building and armed with that, will apply to the State Historical Fund for funding to fix it up. I cringe every time I look at the window sills when I walk in the door. Fixing up the basement will allow us to move some exhibits around and free up some retail space. In these days of declining attendance, museum stores are becoming more and more important.

We are having our 13th annual Cemetery Workday on June 17th from 10 o'clock to noon. Then we take a sack lunch to Mary and Paul Beaber's yard at the Cotton House, Silverton's oldest house, and listen to speakers. We have had a marking program for many years, working with the fine folks at Family Craft Memorials of Durango. For \$100, Family Craft will make a nice stone to mark an unmarked grave. Various people sponsor stones and we set them during Cemetery Workday. It is one of the finest days of the summer. For your information, the Historical Society has taken on handling burials at the cemetery for the Town. If you have any questions about burials, call me or Freda Peterson at the Archive.

Elsewhere in these pages you will read about the guardian angel who bought the Yankee Girl head frame—that icon of the Red Mountain Mining District, and you will read about the capital campaign for Caboose #17. You will also read about some of the almost finished projects like the Powerhouse and about some adventures that we are about to start—the Mill. There is never a dull moment when you are involved in the history business, is there, dear members? And thanks to your support, we are preserving the history of a very special place.

Thank you.



George Chapman, Editor
Contributors: Bill Jones, Beverly Rich, Duane Murphy,
Brison Gooch, David Singer
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persons interested in the preservation of the history of
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San Juan County Historical Society Officers and Directors, 2006

Beverly Rich, Chairman
Scott Fetchenhier, Secretary
Jerry Hoffer, George Chapman, George Darnall Zanoni, Directors

Oral History is Important Part of Archives; Duplicate Disks Available for Purchase

Nestled between the old jail museum and Cement Creek is the Archive Building of the San Juan County Historical Society. Within its confines are a wealth of records which shed light on the region's past. In addition to newspapers and a variety of official documents, a large volume of photographs and family histories provide concrete details about local life and particular people, going back to the early days of Silverton's history.

Among these holdings are a substantial number of compact disks containing interviews with long-time residents. Several different interviewers are represented, but most were conducted by historian Allen Nossaman as part of an oral history project. A few of the interviews were taken from recorded radio programs as well as other settings.

A goodly number occurred decades ago and featured residents then in their advanced years. Many had clear memories of their earlier life as well of events told to them by their parents and grandparents. While some were very articulate, in other cases memories were not as clear and obviously some recollections were less accurate. To listen to these CDs is to experience a personal encounter with the details of Silverton's colorful past.

Featured on the disks are prominent names from families contributing to Silverton's growth: Bawden, Berquist, Cole, Dalla, Doud, Giacomelli, Glanville, Landry, Loftus, Lorenzon, Maffei, Matties, McNamara, Patterson, Pitcher, Plantz, Rice, Scheer, Schmalz, Sutherland, Todeschi, Van Bocken, and others.

The myriad of topics include: Growing Up in Silverton, Mining in the

Nestled between the old jail San Juans, Mountain Road seum and Cement Creek is the Construction and Maintenance, Phive Building of the San Juan Railroading in the San Juans, General Reflections, Silverton Homes, and the Sunnyside and Eureka.

The Archive has arranged to have these early accounts transcribed to CDs and in a number of cases has duplicate CDs. These duplicates are being offered for sale for the price of \$25.00 each. When the interview takes two disks, these go for \$45. Purchases may be arranged by contacting the Archive of the Historical Society at Box 154, Silverton, Colorado 81433.

This is an opportunity to hear in one's own home or car, witnesses of an era that otherwise can only be read about. These indelible voices add reality and personality to invaluable descriptions, all the while directly linking us to our community's past and its people.

Support the Restoration of Silverton Northern Caboose 1005

Purchase a t-shirt now!

Mail \$18.00 and your shirt size (S-M-L-XL) to

San JuanCounty Historical Society P.O. Box 154 Silverton, Colorado 81433

Now's the time to help the Society: Join Today!

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 2006. I understand that this membership entitles me (and my spouse, if applicable) to a vote at the annual meeting in October, 2006.

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

Name:	 	 	
Address:		 	



New T-Shirt Added to Fund Raising Program

D&RG Caboose #17 was built in 1880. By 1895 the Caboose 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 since 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. This car is unique as it is the oldest surviving D&RG caboose and is one of only two that retain the origi-

nal body and cupola style. In 2004, the Society was awarded a \$7000 grant to conduct a Historic Structure Assessment on the caboose.

The HSA was done by Ray Ludwig, foreman of the car shop at the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. He determined that it will take approximately \$75,000 to restore it. We are planning to apply for funding from the State Historical Fund, but that requires a 25% match, so we will have to raise \$18,750. Last summer we started a capital campaign to do just that by selling a tshirt designed by member Don Kramer. We have already raised \$4,200. As a fund-raiser for the caboose this year, Don has designed a companion shirt featuring Casey Jones. We are planning one printing for this t-shirt, so it will really be a collector's item. It sells for \$15.00 + \$3.00 shipping—buy your t-shirt now and help us restore Colorado's oldest caboose!

Many More Mountains, Volume I Roots Into Silverton

by Allen Nossaman

Out of print for several years, we are proud to announce the publication of a reprint of this important and critically acclaimed book.

With all the exciting color and detailed history of the Silverton area. exactly as it appeared in Sundance's first printing, this book is an absolute must for any serious student of the history of this area.

The reprint price of \$70.00 is well below the used book market pricing on the original printing which has ranged as high as \$1000.00

There are only a few hundred of this second printing available. Please remit \$70.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping and handling, along with appropriate sales tax if you are a Colorado resident.

San Juan County Historical Society P.O. Box 154 Silverton, Colorado 81433

Book also available through quality regional booksellers and at the Jail Museum.

Workshop Receives Nationwide Attention; A Variety of Topics Were Covered

The Shenandoah-Dives Mill HAER and Historic Structure Assessment Workshop took place last summer. The workshop was a unique and exceptional undertaking in the United States, uniting materials scientists, industrial archeologists, geologists, architectural historians, and experts in Historic American Engineering Recordation techniques from across the US, toward a concerted effort to document and preserve the history and fabric of our Shenandoah-Dives Mill complex.

The workshop was the direct result of a partnership between the Society and Silverton Restoration Consulting and was sponsored by NCPTT (National Center for Preservation Training and Technology), the National Park Service's Department of HAER (Historic American Engineering Record), the National Trust and the J. Paul Getty Trust. The workshop was held at the Mountain Studies Institute's headquarters at the historic Avon Hotel and other venues including the Mill site in mid-August.

Topics covered during the workshop included: Historic American Engineering Recordation (HAER) drawing typology, photogrammetry, laser scanning, total station laser mapping, large format photography, Historic American Landscape Survey, GIS cultural data collection, historic research, principals of stabilization and preservation, developing a Historic Structure Assessment, building forensics, and seminars on the historic development of the mining and milling process within a regional and national context. The mill will be the case study resource for this high tech study in historic documentation.

Owned and operated as an interpretive museum by the Society, the mill is listed as a National Historic Landmark. The mill provides an extraordinary vision of the development of ore processing mills in the first half of this century. The mill's buildings, technology, and collection of equipment have scarcely changed since it was built, presenting a striking and rare case of an early twentieth century flotation mill.

Constructed in 1929, the Shenandoah-Dives Mill was designed for milling metals from low-grade gold ore. At the time of construction the mill was considered state-of-the-art, with the most modern mining and milling equipment available.

Prominent features of the mill complex include the mill, crushing plant, office/assay building, tailings ponds, tram terminal, and aerial tramway which connects to the Shenandoah-Dives Mine.

David Singer, Principal at Silver-

ton Restoration Consulting, a firm that specializes in historic building restoration, and his wife Julie Coleman-Singer, Heritage Team Lead Archaeologist for the BLM and Forest Service Public Lands Office in Durango, Colorado, organized the workshop in partnership with Bev Rich, Chairman of the San Juan County Historical Society.

The Washington, D.C.-based National Park Service HAER Team, led by Senior Historian Richard O'Connor, spent the week in Silverton finalizing their documentation of the mill complex and participating in the various seminars on the technology they employeed for the project.

Historic Landscape Architect, Cari Goetcheus of Clemson University and Diedre McCarthy, GIS specialist with the NPS presented seminars on HALS standards and field implementation.

Materials scientist Dave Woodham of Atkinson-Noland and wood scientist, Ron Anthony of Anthony and Associates, presented ground-breaking Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) technology, in handson examinations of wood, stone, and concrete.

Bruce Bartleson, retired head of the Geology Department at Western State College provided a seminar on the mineral deposits of the San Juan region, and industrial archeologists John Horn and Eric Twitty led a field session to the Silver Lake Mining district where much of the ore processed at the mill was mined.

NPS photographer Jet Lowe presented a seminar discussion and onsite presentations of Large Format Photography and photographic standards, and Dana Locket, NPS architect presented hands-on laser and AutoCad based documentation technology

An evening lecture series, open to the public, was held during the week. Singer said that the list of students at the 2005 Workshop was almost as impressive as the presenters, including the Architect for Mesa Verde National Park, and other regional stewards of publicly owned Cultural Resources like the San Juan Mountains Association, Colorado, Wyoming and Alaska Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service personnel, and Alpine Archeology, a Montrose-based consulting firm.

"We're trying to establish a community based educational experience, bringing the top consultants in the field of historic preservation to share their knowledge, and focus on the San Juan's incredible mining and architectural heritage," said Singer.

Membership Roster

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Important Landmark Saved

The Red Mountain Task Force is thrilled to announce that the icon Yankee Girl head frame has been saved. Montrose County Coroner Mark Young and his wife Mary bought the head frame and 23 acres of land between Silverton and Ouray on the San Juan Skyway.

Very visible from the U.S. Highway 550, the head frame has become the icon of the Red Mountain Project, a project which put 3000 acres of private property into public ownership. Its former owner, Frank Baumgartner, threatened to bulldoze the head frame if he wasn't paid 10 million dollars. He later tore down and burned the historic Kohler boardinghouse, near the Yan-

Mr. and Mrs. Young plan to put the Yankee Girl and adjoining property into a conservation easement. The head frame is on the verge of collapse so the Task Force will do some emergency stabilization work this summer using funds from the Gates Foundation and the Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology.

Our Museum is a Treasure

One of my favorite moments is to find people waiting outside, early on a beautiful Silverton morning, when I come to open our old historic white door. They are always enthusiastic, especially if they are some of our many repeat museum visitors. They get more appreciative of what we display as they move on through the building. We previously noted the great popularity of the authentic early telephone switchboard.

But for now, it is time to sing the praises of some of our other visitor favorites. In the kitchen, sitting on the old coal-fired cook stove, is an old can, intact and filled, with Campbell's Prune Soup. Our visitors can be heard laughing and talking about it all the

way back out to the front door. They are trying to guess its year of appearance with speculations on its lack of success on the soup market. (An occasional person wouldn't mind trying a sip of it.)

Across the back wall in the kitchen is a large Rube Goldberg sort of contraption. You remember, it looks like a giant version of an apple peeler. We have traditionally thought it might be a potato peeler because of its size and the strange cutting blade. But last summer, a visitor with a gleam in his eve, sought to prove to us that it is a corn cob "de-kerneler," used to mechanically take the corn off the cob. Maybe so!

Come in this summer and point out your "favorites."

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