

San Juan Courier

Summer 2019

Silverton, San Juan County, Colorado

Showcase of Silverton's Rich Railroad History Continues to Expand

Silverton Northern Engine House

The big news for 2018 was winning a \$200,000 grant from the State Historical Fund for Phase III of the restoration of the Silverton Northern Engine House — the charm of the third try. Phase I was a joint project by the San Juan County Historical Society and the Durango Railroad Historical Society to restore the two pits and front doors and add track from the engine house to a three-block section along Cement Street, with a connection to the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad track. Phase II was a project of the San Juan society to perform a detailed assessment of the engine house.

Phase III is another San Juan society project to restore the exterior envelope: foundation, exterior walls (including adding insulation), windows, structural reinforcement, and roof. The entire corrugated sheet metal roof will be replaced with new material. Salvaged roof sheets will be used to replace damaged sheets on the walls. The Society is the general contractor with Beverly Rich as the administrator and Jerry Hoffer as the Project Manager, both supported by George Niederauer of the Durango group.

To prepare for this major construction project, several volunteers from both groups moved material away from the exterior building walls. In doing so they found piles of tie plates, splice bars and spikes, which were sorted and marked for size. As much as possible they will be used in building the new railcar display tracks (a Durango group project). For example, over 1,000 usable spikes were salvaged. Inside the engine house material left over from restoring the Silverton Northern caboose was removed from the car pit and either stored or trashed, as was other material scattered around the floor. Then the floor was swept, making it the cleanest it has been since new.

This spring volunteers will move material away from the interior walls to allow access to restoring windows. To provide a place to store material, the Durango group acquired two boxcar bodies and a reefer body in 2017 and had them placed on the east side of the engine house. The car bodies were leveled and some repairs were made in 2018. This summer repairing will be finished, the cars will be painted and lettered, and shelving will be added.

Structural engineering was done this past winter, and packages of construction documents were provided to the State Historical Fund, the Town of Silverton, and the main subcontractor, Hotter Construction. Once the great

amount of snow from last winter is gone and the ground has dried out, construction will begin. Although the schedule is conservatively set for two years, the work is expected to be completed this fall, weather permitting.

Silverton Northern Oil Shed

Jerry Hoffer is managing this Silverton Society project, also supported by the Durango group. In 2018 an outer plank and batten door was added to protect the four-panel interior door from weather. Volunteers made and installed exterior window sill and trim on the single window, which is on the back wall. The squeaky plank floor was quieted with longer finishing nails, then the floor was sanded, cleaned up, and sealed with urethane spar varnish. Major work on applying drywall compound was all but completed.

Remaining work this year is to finish mudding the wallboard, paint the ceiling and walls, paint the trim and eaves, add electric fixtures, and finish the nonworking back delivery door. Then the oil shed will be repurposed as a combination library, office, and break room by moving the furnishings and supplies stored in the boxcar to the shed. This should be done by fall.

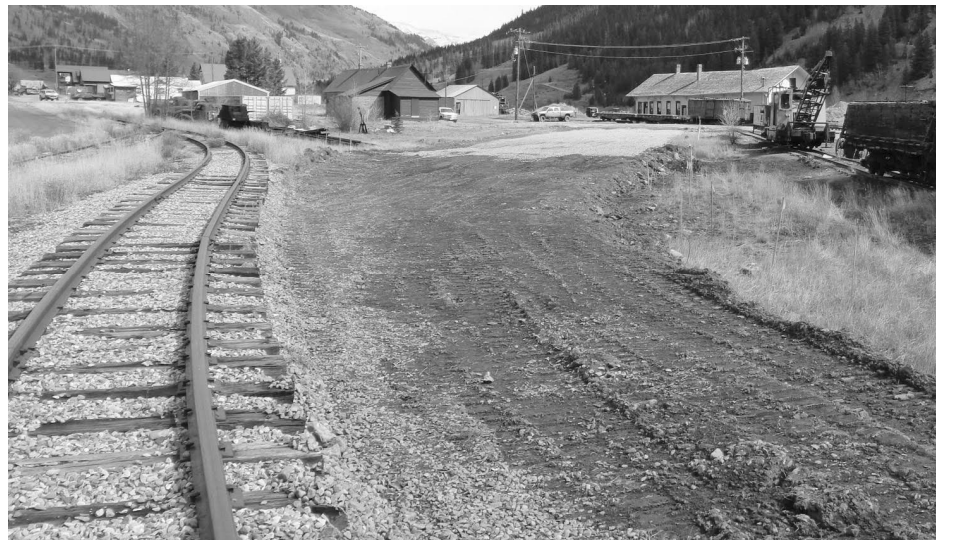
Volunteers

Several volunteers, most from out of town, spent from one to five weeks working on the above projects: Lewis and May Anne Dahm of Golden, Colorado; Ron and Judy Schlueter of St. Charles, Missouri; Steve and Karen Schlueter of Phoenix, Arizona; Russell, Charlie, and Jenny Thomas of Westminster, Colorado, and, of course, Jerry Hoffer. Other volunteers included George Niederauer, Duane Danielson, Joe Weigman of Durango, Roy Walston of Albuquerque, New Mexico; Gene Lincoln of Delta, Colorado, and Dave Hibel of Montrose, Colorado.

Railcars Display Track

Jerry Hoffer and George Niederauer are managing this Durango backed project to construct a pair of railcar display tracks on Durango & Silverton property in a direct line between the Silverton Northern engine house and the railroad's depot. The tracks are designed to hold a dozen railcars and in the future will have an open shed over them with a raised platform at car floor level. The track will be on the north side of the railroad's Shenandoah Loop, with enough clearance for service vehicles to drive between the shed and equipment on the Loop.

The Durango & Silverton has provided an easement to the Durango Society for the track, shed and platform. The Galloping Goose Society of Dolores again made a permanent loan for the straight pieces of rail (they supplied most of the rail and ties for the Silverton Northern track in 2009). San Miguel Power Associa-



In the above view, the graded area on the right is the new roadbed from the Silverton Northern track eastward towards the Durango & Silverton depot (upper right) Dark earth is where two switches and short sections of track will be placed. Light, graveled area is where the two display tracks and car shed will be built. Eventually a dozen railcars will be on display in a covered, open sided shed. The Durango Railroad Historical Society has already restored eight cars for display.

tion was already planning to replace the nearby power pole and put the new one farther away to give plenty of clearance for the shed.

Last fall Goff Engineering & Surveying of Durango surveyed and staked the area. The plan was to complete the roadbed and tracks in 2018, but the fire, flood, and resulting problems delayed the work until August. Maisel Excavating was able to build the major part of the roadbed and lay gravel on the car shed area. The rest of the materials for the track were delivered August: ties, rails and hardware for three switches; tie plates, splice bars, bolts, and spikes. We had not been able to find antique switch stands of the correct style.

Luck came our way when Dennis Manwarren of Olathe, Colorado donated four that matched what we had on the Silverton Northern track. Fall weather in October made it too late to begin laying track.

By 2016 Durango group had restored six cars: drop bottom and high side gondolas, single and double deck stock cars, bunk car, and flanger. In 2018 they finished two more: refrigerator car and flatcar. We fully expect to complete the track project this summer and move the railcars into position in the display area, along with their interpretive signs.

*By George Niederauer
and Jerry Hoffer*

Summer Lecture Series

Please mark down these events on your calendar.

Night at the Museum: Friday, July 19th, 5:30 to 7:30

FREE night at the Museum to see our new exhibits. Everyone is invited and light refreshments will be served.

Scot Jackson: Friday, July 26th, Town Hall, 7pm

Life at the South Pole. Silverton resident, Scot Jackson, will give a presentation on what it is like to live and work at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, one of the most remote and harshest places on the planet.

Southern Ute Elder, Russell Box: Friday, August 9th, Town Hall, 7pm

The San Juan County Historical Society presents an evening with Southern Ute Elder, Russell Box Senior, and author of his biography, Judith A. Stone. The lecture will focus on artwork and stories from Mr. Box's biography, *Russell Box Senior, the Physical and Spiritual Journey of a Southern Ute Elder*. (Russell's books will be available.)

Andrew Gulliford: Thursday, August 29th, Town Hall, 7pm

Western Women We Respect: Durango's Own Olga Little, Colorado's Only Female Jackpacker.

Message from the Chairman

As I write today it is spitting snow in between bursts of sunshine, making us realize that it is only May—summer is not here yet! And, boy, what a winter we had. After being in drought conditions for a couple of years, we got a winter that we really needed. And, I can attest to how much moisture was in the snow this year, as I shoveled a ton of it. The avalanches that came down this year were mind-blowing—hundred, two hundred year slides. Eureka is a mess. Liz Francisco, our archaeologist from the Bureau of Land Management and I are waiting to get out into the high country to see how many casualties we have from snow weight and slides. Lake City, just over the hill, has been declared a disaster area, because of slides backing up the Henson Creek drainage, threatening to flood the town. Our brethren in Lake City have been moving items out of their museum to higher ground just in case. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Grant Houston and the Hinsdale County Historical Society.

We are looking forward to a really good summer this year, and we can surely use it. As you know, Silverton had a really bad summer last year with fires, then floods knocking out the train tracks and closing the highway for weeks. I was so happy to hear that first train whistle this year—welcome back to town, number 486! Museum clean-up day was May 18th and much was achieved. New exhibits include an exhibit about the movies shot in Silverton, mainly in the 1950s. Also on tap is a major mine lamp and candlestick exhibit—move over Smithsonian, this is an exhibit that puts us over the top!

We had damage at the mill this year from the snow weight breaking rafters. By the time we could get up there, there was 14 feet of snow on the roof of the amalgamation area. We have pictures—really, 14 feet of snow. This summer Loren Lew and his very fine crew will finish the inside of the assay office building. It will be space for interns, rental space and space for a museum exhibit about assaying. Bill Jones is helping to design it and has donated various assaying tools. People do not know how much labor goes into getting a pound of zinc or an ounce of gold out of that rock they broke in the mine—pretty fascinating stuff. It will be a good exhibit.

Cemetery Work Day is June 15th this year—it has always fallen on the third Saturday of June, but this year the first Saturday in June is the first—thus accelerating our schedule. This year the Town is on it—getting flyers out and arranging for a group of LDS church members to help. They

do a service project every year, so thank you for choosing us. I am looking forward to the potluck!

Super fund: We are following the unfolding story of a letter from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Bureau of Land Management saying that they should be exempt from following the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 on a certain drilling project that they have scheduled. BLM attorneys have written back that they want both laws followed on any site which is overseen by their organization. Sunnyside Gold Corporation has entered the fray by writing an excellent letter to the State Historic Preservation Officer that sides with the BLM—they are required to follow the law, so why isn't the EPA? We wonder, too. These are laws. What we are afraid of is that if they get away with it this time, will they try it on every site slated to be worked on? We are following this very closely.

A bright note—our friend Liz Francisco at the BLM has found us \$20,000 a year for the next few years to do little preservation jobs along the Alpine Loop—such things as working on the tram towers on the Buffalo Boy Tram and removing graffiti at the Duncan House at Animas Forks. Also slated are replacements of interpretive signs that are faded or are otherwise beat up along the route. The Alpine Loop gets so much use, that these will be nice enhancements for our guests in the high country.

Fritz Klinke wants everyone to know that he is back in Silverton and is recovering well from the massive stroke he suffered last July—he is living on his own with a little help during the day. He is faithfully doing his rehabilitation exercise and it has paid off. He is happy as heck to be back up here in the mountains and we are happy to have him back. The Silverton Northern Railroad is on hold, but...you never know!

With that, dear members, we look forward to summer—come and see us—the best darn mining museum in the country! Thanks for your support!

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More New Exhibits This Year; Come and See Them in 2019

Several new exhibits will open this season. The Museum acquired an extensive collection of mining artifacts from David Zanoni. Board member Zeke Zanoni has cataloged, cleaned and displayed these in a ten foot long case, which had housed our “Mining Rescue and Safety” exhibit. There are hundreds of various items in the new exhibit, including carbide lamps, brass containers, candle sticks, hard and soft miner's hats, alcohol lamps, gold scales, candles, and original wooden crates with labels. Many items also have the original retail boxes. We have previously displayed similar artifacts, but the sheer number of items in the new collection is stunning. While Zeke worked on the new collection I designed a new case for the Mine Rescue and Safety display. The new exhibit has more space and displays the artifacts much better in a larger case.

Several new cases were built to house new donations: a large German made Cinderella doll of the early 19th Century vintage and a new display of artifacts from Peter Orella's Standard Bottling Works. Some of the bottles are embossed with the company name and “Silverton, Colorado”, while others have the original paper labels. They are quite rare. Similar bottles have sold for as much as \$950.

Last fall, the Museum was given a matching set of parlor furniture. This set with beautiful upholstery and hand carved details is on display in the parlor of the jail.

During that same time period, we were given a large doll house depicting a typical two story Victorian home. The scale is approximately one inch equals one foot and the furnishings and the details are awesome. All doors and windows (double hung) work, cabinet doors and drawers function and

all lights and sconces work. The house was built like its full size counterpart with framed walls and individual shakes for the roof. The case we constructed required nearly two 4x8 sheets of Plexiglas to properly display the model. It can be viewed in the 1902 Jail.

I designed and constructed a gun case to display our vintage shotguns and a Sharps .50 caliber rifle. It is located in the Sheriff's Office in the Jail. Our collection of small pocket pistols and Derringers was also. These additions make the office much more believable, and our video cameras maintain security.

I also installed an exhibit on Communications, which displays Edison wax cylinder recorders, early telegraph keys, vintage radios and numerous telephones previously used in Silverton, including a Princess Phone. The exhibit also contains an early switchboard once used in town.

Since Silverton has been in the movies on several recent film projects we expanded our exhibit with the addition of several color photographs taken during the productions and a lit Marquee displaying copies of vintage movie posters promoting the Hollywood westerns filmed in Silverton and, or about, the Durango/Silverton Railroad. Many famous actors such as James Stewart, Marilyn Monroe, Audie Murphy, James Cagney, Clark Gable, Walter Brennan, Rory Calhoun, James Garner, and other Hollywood stars made excellent westerns here.

There is always something new at the Museum, so if you haven't visited us lately, you need to soon!

Stephen F. Rich
Exhibits Preparator

New Funding Source Tapped for Courthouse Roof Replacement

The San Juan County Commissioners have been working to restore two of the finest masonry structures in the County, the Courthouse and the Miner's Union Hospital. The high style architecture of the courthouse is a reflection of the level of wealth being generated by the mining industry at the time of its construction. San Juan County's mining industry was at its peak from 1895 to 1908 allowing construction of several of its most enduring buildings including the Courthouse and the Miner's Union Hospital. James Murdoch, was the architect selected for the Courthouse and it was completed in 1908 at a cost of \$79,000.

Starting in 1999 Klinke and Lew Construction had begun the repair of the ornate tower and bell cupola, and south and east entry porticos. When I arrived in 2002 we began interior rehabilitation work. The coffered plaster ceilings in the courtrooms were peeling and crumbling, the maple floors were

severely worn and every window in the building needed repairs. Work continued by abating the asbestos on the steam lines and boiler, installing a back-up propane boiler system and making significant repairs to the slate roof and ornamental dormers.

Working with the County over the past ten years we've completed the installation of a waterproofing package around the foundation, masonry repairs on the east entry and installed a wheel chair lift to access the main floor. These projects have been paid for through a mil levy. The County's limited funding ability for many of the remaining poas been enhanced by an award of \$400,000 to replace the failing slate roof and improve the hydronic melt system designed to protect the eaves and valleys from massive ice build-up.

Cooperating with County Judge Anthony Edwards, the funding was obtained from the Underfunded Courthouse Facility Com-

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Edited by George Chapman

San Juan County Historical Society Officers and Directors, 2019

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Scott Fetchenhier, Secretary/Treasurer

Jerry Hoffer, Darnell Zanoni, Patty Dailey, Stephen Rich, Kim Davy
Eisner, Directors

George Howard was an Important Pioneer in the San Juan Country

George Howard was 20 years old when prospecting in the Fort Garland, Colorado area at the “Gray-back Diggings” that were not “the richest” area as promoted. Within 24 hours of hearing about the Baker “excitement”, a party of 60 men were anxious to join Howard. They took off as soon as possible, following Baker’s route and arriving in Baker’s Animas City in November 1860. The group of interested prospectors finally gathering to wait out the winter in Animas City numbered an estimated 1000 men, women and children.

The pioneers explored the area of the San Juans in 1861 looking for gold and silver mostly by panning the rivers as had been done in other parts of Colorado. The results were not great as this is a hard rock area and little ore would break off falling into the streams. Then in the fall of 1861, the Civil War build up and the increasing Indian discontent lead to a great exodus. Howard joined the First Colorado Regiment and was discharged in 1864. He traveled to Yellowstone and back to Colorado. In 1871 he heard the Adnah French and Johnson party had secretly left La Loma for the San Juans to continue their discoveries of 1870. Howard was hot on their trail.

Howard kept a diary of his 1871 trip in which he described an early spring trip encountering rain and snow which slowed his progress. His one priority was to take Sunday off to fix his favorite meal—baked beans. He really liked baked beans. Cooking dried beans at high altitude over an outdoor campfire sounds like a real challenge.

Cunningham Gulch close to where it joins the Animas River gained Howard’s top interest. He camped there and located his first two claims: the Winnemuche and the Keystone mine claims. Eventually he built his cabin at this area in 1872.

Nossaman Archive Makes Progress; Major Newspaper Project Underway

Were you born at the Miners’ Union Hospital in Silverton? We are creating an exhibit displaying pictures of those born in at the newly renovated hospital. If you would like us to hang a picture of you in our display, please bring or send us a picture of YOU! (School pictures are the most fun!) More information? Call the Archives at 970-387-5609.

Ray has been scanning and cataloging hundreds of slides of underground mining activities and mine interiors from a member’s private collection from the 1970s on. Underground images are quite rare, so these are a big deal. These images will not be offered to the public at this time, but you may view them on our public computer, which now has approximately 14,000 image files.

We provided historic prints for a local hotel, a new restaurant opening this summer, United States Geological Survey, new Museum exhibits, and for ordinary folks finding images at the Archive of their families, mines and homes.

We purchased a new digital audio recorder (no more cassettes for

Many prospectors entered the San Juans in 1871, and Howard had an important friendship with Ruben McNutt who camped in the Eureka area. They were prospecting up the Poughkeepsie Gulch area when a strong wind, rain, and hail storm hit. Hiding under a rock outcropping was little help—they were soaked and cold. Heading toward the sun over the top of the ridge, they viewed the shinning ridge to the north and there located the Sunnyside and other connecting claims.

Building a cabin was a difficult undertaking for Howard in 1872. His mules helped drag the logs to his site, but he needed help placing the logs on the walls. He placed the first few then balanced a whiskey jug on top and waited for a newly arriving prospector. Offering a much appreciated swig, he asked for help lifting up a log. When the first helper left, there was always another prospector walking by. This worked to build the whole cabin.

In 1874 the area was really booming and finally recognized as part of Colorado Territory. A cabin near Howard’s cabin was designated as the San Juan County Court House and Howard offered his cabin for County record keeping. The first court was held in 1874 which handled a dispute in ownership of the Little Giant Mine. The Denver Post newspaper wrote about the trial mentioning the rainy day that liberally irrigated the juror’s log seating where all but one juror was thankfully wearing leather pants made by George Howard.

The San Juan County Mining Museum has a display of George Howard’s bean pot, leather pants, Sharps rifle, photos and other items.

This article is part of the book I am writing about Howardsville.

By Kim Eisner, Board Member

us!) to document interesting conversations that abound at the Archive, to add to our audio collection begun by Allen Nossaman. We shall also be documenting with video.

Society chairman Beverly Rich applied for a grant in March for the Archive to convert our local newspapers microfilms (94 rolls) of several local newspapers dating back to 1874 into searchable PDFs. This way we will rarely have to go into the vault and disturb the original paper versions of these newspapers. We will be converting the Animas Forks Pioneer (which there are few of), the La Plata Miner, Red Mountain City, San Juan Herald, Daily Standard, San Juan Mountain Register, Silverton Weekly, Red Mountain Journal, Silverton Weekly Miner, San Juan Democrat, Silverton Democrat, and last, but not least, the Silverton Standard, and the Silverton Standard & the Miner. In May, we were notified that we received the grant from the Ballantine Family Fund for \$4,000 to begin this worthy project. A life member donated another \$1,000 for



The George Howard cabin as it looked in the 1920s, some 50 years after it was constructed.

the project. Now, we only need \$8,000 more to complete it. We will get there, slowly, but surely.

A family descendent of Edward Stoiber, Chris Stoiber from Baltimore, dropped in and spent two days researching the Stoiber family, who owned the Waldheim Mansion and Silver Lake Mines at Silver Lake for a book that she is writing about Lena Stoiber. She went home with about 100 images of Stoiber family pictures, mining properties, and interior shots of Edward’s brother, Gus’ home on Reese Street, which still exists and has belonged to Fritz Klinke for over 50 years. This should be a good book as Lena was quite the character.

Map scanning continues! One day a week, we scan mining maps of which there are hundreds, if not thousands. This has been an ongoing project over the last year and a half. To date, we have cataloged over 500 maps and recorded all information from these maps into a spreadsheet. If you own a mining property and would like a digital or printed copy of your claim, contact us, we probably have a map for you (there is a fee).

Speaking of scanning, We would like to thank Judy Zimmerman and Darlene Bolfig for the time they have devoted to the daunting and overwhelming task of scanning and cataloging hundreds upon hundreds of items donated to the Archive that have been piling up over the years. Judy and Darlene’s ongoing help has been invaluable. We cannot thank them enough!

There is a new display of movies filmed in Silverton over at the Museum. We scanned original movie posters for this exhibit.

Speaking of movies, the Museum was visited by *Mysteries of the Museum* TV show in December. They needed images of blasting caps and dynamite for the story they were filming; we had what they needed, of course! Their team consisted of two producers and a photographer/videographer. They actually traveled here by plane just to photograph a few of our mining artifacts. We showed them the sights of town and they used a few images of Silverton and the Museum in their segment. They were invited to attend the Brown Bear’s Christmas Party with us, so we all had a blast.

We received several new donations this year including: mining books, pictures, various documents, and trinkets.

If you haven’t been to the Archive, drop by some Thursday and we will be delighted to give you a tour. Remember, we have a public computer where you may sit down in a warm and friendly environment and peruse our photo collection. Choose images to be printed (for a fee) for your home, office, gifts or whatever. Again, if you have any pictures of Silverton or Silverton’s past residents and would like to share them to tell more of Silverton’s story, you can donate them to the Society where they will be preserved and cared for, or we can make copies of images for the Archive and return the originals to you. We are beginning to have requests for pictures of the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Really?—wasn’t that just a couple of years ago! Visit our website: sanjuancountyhistoricalsociety.org and while you are there, be sure to sign up for our e-newsletters, usually sent one or two times a year.

Make sure that you check out the Museum’s 2019 exhibits!

By Casey Carroll and Ray Dileo

Join the San Juan County Historical Society Today!

Box 154, Silverton, Colorado 81433

I wish to enroll as a member of the San Juan County Historical Society in the class designated below (please circle desired membership) for the calendar year 2019.

I understand the membership entitles me and my spouse, if applicable, to a vote at the Annual Meeting in October 2019.

1. **Member:** \$25.00 per year entitles a couple to one vote each in meetings of the general membership, discount on books, and free museum admission.
2. **Family Membership:** \$50 per year entitles an individual one vote in meetings of the general membership, discount on books, and free museum admission.
3. **Society Patron:** \$100 per year entitles an individual or couple to voting privileges, a museum pass for the season, and discount on books.
4. **Life Member:** \$1000 entitles an individual or couple to all of the privileges for life.

Name:

Mailing Address:

Email address: