

# San Juan Courier

Summer 2022

Silverton, San Juan County, Colorado

## Silverton Northern Railroad 2021 Engine House Work Detailed by Workers

The Engine House work in 2021 was a continuation of the work started in the fall of 2020. This is being done under a grant from State Historical Fund (SHF) for the interior restoration. The COVID-19 pandemic made SHF short of funds, so the only tasks funded were interior foundation re-pointing and sewer line installation. Work started in late May with SJCHS personnel Steve Rich and Clay Custer sorting through the large pile of scrap and rotten wood left over from previous years' exterior work. This pile was in the way of the proposed sewer route and, except for a few items, went to the SJCHS burn pile north of town.

In late May, when Scott Craig and his crew of Kyle Roberts and Jason Roberts started work on the interior foundation, it was almost impossible to walk on the remaining floor because it was covered with stacks of removed floor planks, piles of used nails and debris from the unusable parts of the original window frames. In mid-June, Jerry Hoffer said the DRHS flat car could work as "out of the way" storage for the planks, so Lewis Dahm, George Niederauer and he moved the flat car to the northwest big door of the engine house.

In late June Russell Thomas with his wife Jen and sons Charlie and Henry arrived for their annual work session. They were tasked with loading the flat car with floor planks and some floor joists from the engine house main room. They were assisted by Jason Roberts, Joe Weigman and George Niederauer. While this was being done, MaryAnn Dahm and Jason Roberts picked up much of the scrap wood and moved it to a new scrap pile at the northwest corner outside building. It was now less difficult to walk around the main room. Once the foundation crew finished the westerly side of the main room, the flat car was pushed inside the building for storage. In mid-July the foundation work was completed. The crew did an excellent job.

In mid-August a meeting to discuss the tap for our sewer line and future water line project was held with Pete Maisel, our sewer contractor, and John Sites, the Silverton public works director. John moved our proposed sewer connection location north up the alley 30 feet, making the line shorter. Since an archeologist is required by SHF when digging on the engine house property, a trenching schedule between Pete Maisel and

Mona Charles, our contracted archeologist, needed to be coordinated. Pete had taken on an emergency job of cleaning up mud slides for the former owner of the Mayflower Mill, so he relinquished his contract and asked Cody Braford to perform the work. The job was finally scheduled for the last week in September and things were going okay with five feet to go when Cody's excavator blew a difficult to reach hydraulic hose. Three days later the repairs were made, then trenching, sewer pipe installation and archeological monitoring were completed on October 1.

On December 1 the State Historical Fund awarded the San Juan County Historical Society \$223,319 for the interior restoration of the Silverton Northern Engine House. This phase will complete the restoration of the engine house. The project will be done during the 2022–23 seasons. The tasks for 2022 are (1) to restore the floor and its substructure to ensure a level and strong floor, (2) upgrade electrical service to add outlets along the walls and pits and for future wood and metal shops, and (3) paint the exterior. Other tasks are (4) repair broken and replace missing wall and ceiling boards, adding insulation above the ceiling, (5) repair existing door and reconstruct back door, (6) build a bathroom and add a water line, (7) paint the interior, and (8) create interpretive signs.

*Jerry Hoffer and George Niederauer*

***Because of ongoing concern  
with Covid 19, please check  
with Society about any planned  
summer programs***

### 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 2021.

I understand the membership entitles me and my spouse, if applicable, to a vote at the Annual Meeting in October 2021.

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:

## Message from the Chairman

Dear Members:

As I write today we are experiencing another dry, windy day in the San Juan Mountains, but there is a promise of rain in the air, of course right before Cemetery Workday. As a member told me yesterday "that is what hats are for". We will work in the rain, dancing happily in the drops. We need rain so badly, dear members.

We opened the museum this summer on our traditional Memorial Day weekend and have been experiencing good visitation already this early in June—bodes good tidings for the summer. And the Mayflower Mill is doing equally well. Fred Canfield and his son Mark are at the helm there and are putting in a rock shop along with the tour. Why in the world do we not have a really good rock shop up here in the land of rocks—beautiful rocks, valuable rocks, pretty rocks, precious rocks—the world-famous geology that we have. Heck, they are writing textbooks about our geology in the 1880s—in several languages! It will be a wonderful attraction for our town.

What fun it is to be a historian. Yesterday I was in touch some folks who are doing research into tramways. I might not know a whole lot about trams, but I do know some folks who do. In fact, I know a lot of folks who know a lot about lots of things—particularly, our history. Boy, thank goodness for our railbuffs.

Tomorrow is Cemetery Workday and Russ and Jenny Thomas are in town for that. Russ has been helping since he was 19 years old and, now he has a son who is in high school! How did that happen?! Thanks, Russ, for lending our Engine House project a hand. We are finishing up that project—phase five—and have saved the only roundhouse left that was built by Otto Mears.

This year you will find new exhibits at the museum, but, as I have

always told you: I love it when our visitors expect a nice, little small town museum and they get a world-class mining museum. They are so amazed. It makes our day; we are so proud. I tell them that I have three retired miners and a retired museum professional who are making all of this possible; making Zeke Zanoni's vision come true. We all work for him and gladly so.

We have a going concern at the Powerhouse—a group of artists have rented the building and given it new life. They call themselves the Powerhouse Guild. Good for them and good for us. They bring young energy and creativeness to our little town. I wish them well, and, as you know, a building that is occupied is a building that is taken care of. Thanks to member John Richardson for his ongoing support of these young people and taking on the hard jobs to make it work.

But, now I get to brag on our school. What an incredible school we have in our little town with teachers who are committed to our children and making them into good and really smart citizens, who in turn will be contributors to our shared society. This year we worked with our fourth and fifth graders (combined class). They toured the museum and found that we did not have an exhibit about the Utes—the very people who lived here centuries before white settlement was allowed. It is a grievous omission for us, and we acknowledge the fact. So our kids decided to make an exhibit for us about the Utes. They visited the Ute Museums in Ignacio and Montrose, they got mentors from the Southern Utes and the Ute Mountain Utes. They learned about how much land the Utes owned before white settlement. They learned what plants the Utes used both to eat and use for baskets and soap. They learned about the ancient Utes and about modern-day Ute life. They made a presentation to us, complete with artwork they got from Ute artists and themselves (they are pretty darn good artists, those kids). We are waiting to get some of the elements of their research back from the printers and we will have a great new exhibit, thanks to our smart, smart fourth and fifth graders. Thank you, you guys!!

And so, dear members, you can be proud of us and what we do. And we could not do it without your support. Thank you.

Bev

# Newspaper Publisher Arrived Soon after Town was Platted

On June 19, 1875, a young man named John R. Curry walked into Howardsville and announced his intention to start a newspaper. Although residents of the former county seat encouraged him to do it there, he opted to travel a little further to Silverton. In less than a month, on July 5, he came out with Volume 1, Number 1 of the LaPlata Miner. Thus was started a string of continuous newspaper publication in now San Juan County, that is almost 150 years old.

The Miner eventually changed its name in 1886 to the Silverton Miner and was even briefly published as a daily.

In 1895 then publisher Thomas Tulley (father of Hollywood actor Tom Tully) renamed the paper the Silverton Weekly Miner. In 1920 the faltering Miner was absorbed by the Silverton Standard and henceforth the paper was the Silverton Standard and the Miner, today's historic Silverton newspaper.

Of interest at this point is the fact that Thomas Tulley was a son-in-law of famous newspaper publisher of the Solid Muldoon of Ouray and later Durango, Dave Day. That fact probably clouds the real story of the

society's Hoe press even more. (See adjacent story.)

Unfortunately, copies of the first several years of the LaPlata Miner have never been located, leaving something of a gap in detailed Silverton history

The Miner was the first of six newspapers founded by New York native Curry, all in Southwest Colorado. The others were the Dolores News, Montezuma Journal, Red Mountain Pilot, San Miguel County Journal and the Rico News.

Likewise, any equipment Curry packed into the county over Cunningham Pass has long since disappeared. The press he used was one of the many variations of the iron hand press which was ubiquitous on the frontier because of its reasonable weight and ease of transportation.

Although Curry founded the first San Juan County newspaper, there were many more.

According to Colorado newspaper historians Walter and Elam Stewart, writing in 1977, there were 16 newspapers in the county. Since then there has been at least one more, the Silverton Mountain Journal, founded in 2000 by Jonathan Thompson.

## The Society's Mysterious Hoe Cylinder Press

In the old west, as elsewhere in the country, newspapers were often the fabric of the community. In addition to publishing the periodical newspaper, the shops that produced that paper were usually the only source of commercial printing for the small communities they served.

With that in mind, it is appropriate that the San Juan County Historical Society Museum dedicate some space to printing. There were at least ten different newspapers in San Juan County before 1900.

One of the most interesting printing artifacts displayed in the museum is the 1830 Hoe Cylinder Press. Over 190 years old, the press is indeed a rare one and obviously had substantial use before it made it to Silverton.

In 1958 a director of the Hoe Company viewed the press and talked with Standard publisher Ross Beaber. Resulting from that visit was a letter from the president of the company, J. L. Auer, verifying that the press was manufactured in 1830 but admitting that some company records were lost during a 1929 move. He could not furnish any additional detail of the early history of the press.

In 1921 Ed Hillman became sole owner of the Standard and there is some evidence, based on personal recollections of former publishers, that the displayed Hoe came with Hillman. We do know that Beaber used the press to publish the paper at least from the time he took over in 1939 to the late

1950s. A picture of moving the press from the Grand Imperial where the newspaper office was located to 1257 Greene Street in 1952 exists. Legend has long had it that the press was previously used by Col. Dave Day in the production of the Solid Muldoon in Ouray (he moved the paper to Durango in 1892). A civil war Medal of Honor winner, Day is perhaps the most famous of all western newspaper editors of the post-Civil War period.

In the sometimes inaccurate collection of sketches about early residents called *Pioneers of the San Juan Country* produced by the Sarah Platt Decker Chapter of NSDAR, Helen Searcy, writing in 1942, quotes Ray Cooper's *Short History of San Juan County*. Cooper says "*The Silverton Standard* was started in 1889 on the old original press used by Col. Dave Day for the printing of his *Solid Muldoon* in Ouray, and is still in use on *The Standard*, though it has its ups and break-downs and has to be repaired occasionally." Cooper's history was printed in the *Silverton Standard* in 1945, although exactly when it was written is unknown. Cooper came to Silverton in 1896 and, along with his father, immediately started collecting historical information.

That Day had a Hoe press seems unquestionable. In the *Animas Forks Pioneer* of April 26, 1884, it was reported that Day was spending \$1700.00 for a new Hoe cylinder press. On June 21, the same paper reported that Day was still waiting for new rollers for his press so he could start using it.



***In 2017, the 1830 Hoe Cylinder press was removed from the former home of the Silverton Standard on Greene Street and taken to the museum for display. The press had been in the building since 1950 when it was moved there by then Standard publisher Ross Beaber and was still in use at that time. Many other facts about the press remain an unsolved mystery.***

If *The Standard* was started with a press previously owned by Day, it was not the Hoe cylinder press on display at the museum. The second issue of the paper on November 9, 1889 stated the following: "One ranchman and two miners have called in to look at our jobber and have read the sign 'Old Style Gordon' on it, (That press is on display at the museum.) and wanted to know why we did not buy a new style press. We lead them on to the Washington, which thank goodness, hasn't its age engraved upon it and explained that that is the very latest style and they went off happy, after paying a year's subscription. Some people want the earth." That statement alone leaves one to believe that the Standard was started with an iron hand press, much like Curry has brought to town fourteen years earlier.

In August of 1900, *The Standard*, now owned by Toots and Ollie Klinger (who are worth a whole story by themselves), reported a news item from the *San Miguel Examiner* that said, "The Silverton Standard is about to indulge in a new press and Klinger Bros. will soon be ready to put a high-class, artistic squeeze on anything from a half-sheet poster to a gaiety girl."

Nothing further for a year, but in August of 1901 the following appeared: "*The Standard's* Cement creek mining edition on or before Sept. 7 will be the most complete newspaper undertaking yet gotten up of any one section. We are now waiting on a new press capable of printing half-tone pictures of which there will be a goodly number. Those desiring extra copies will do well to have their orders in prior to placing it on the press." On September 21 they noted the press was delayed.

Finally, the second issue in

October appeared in a new tabloid format, obviously better printed than prior issues. The long awaited Cement creek edition appeared the following week with, as promised, several large half-tones.

Ahha you say, the Hoe finally appears. No, that is probably not the case. We say this because a well-known photograph of the Standard pressroom attributed to 1910 and including then owner John T. Joyce, has a press in the picture that is obviously not the Hoe. Another well-known picture shows the Standard in operation in the Grand Imperial Hotel with a later owner, Ed Hillman. The paper moved to that location in 1921, after absorbing the almost defunct Miner (staying there to the early 1950s). The Hoe is in that picture!

Former publisher, the late Allen Nossaman, said that his recollection was that Ross Beaber, the publisher from whom he bought the paper in 1963 said the Hoe (which was no longer in use at that point) came with the business when Hillman bought it. Perhaps, but more research involving microfilm searching will need to be done if that point can actually be verified.

The conclusion one must draw is that between 1892, when Day went to Durango, and sometime in the teens, the press was not in Silverton. Did Day take it to Durango? Or was it sold to Lake City? (another point of which Nossaman had some recollection). Or was it really in Silverton in the hands of one of the other papers?

All of these questions will probably never be answered factually but visit the museum and view this important artifact of the early days of newspapering and printing in the San Juans.

### San Juan Courier

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San Juan County Historical Society,  
a non-profit Colorado corporation, for its members and all persons  
interested in the preservation of the history of San Juan County,  
Colorado.

*Edited by George Chapman*



# Multi-year Restoration of Historic Miner's Union Hospital Complete

*By David Singer*

The San Juan County Commissioners are glad to announce that the comprehensive restoration of Silverton's Miner's Union Hospital was completed this year! The hospital building, constructed in 1907 at a cost of \$38,000 is a contributing structure within Silverton's National Historic Landmark district. The building was designed by Frank Edbrooke, known as the Dean of Denver architecture, and one of Colorado's greatest nineteenth-century architects. Edbrooke's design of the Miner's Union Hospital is a Turn-of-the-Century Renaissance style called Italianate. The building's low pitched hip roof with decorative cupola, wide overhangs and bracketed eaves and rusticated limestone masonry foundation are character-defining elements of the style. Edbrooke created a statement of Silverton's prosperity with his design of the Miner's Union Hospital, exemplifying the strength and influence of the Union. Today, the building is owned and operated by San Juan County, and remains the community's primary health care facility. The building is critical to Silverton's 600 residents, housing the County's Nursing Program, Office of Emergency Management, a visiting psychologist, the office for KSUT and its radio transmitter, a private law firm, and has housed several of the community's non-profit groups including the Mountain Studies Institute.

The Silverton Miners Union, Local #26, was at its peak membership when the hospital was built. The basement had private rooms for the doctor and his family, a large kitchen and pantry for preparing meals for patients, and the upper floors housed the wards, private rooms, the doctor's offices, and a state-of-the-art operating room. Today, the operating room still retains its large solarium windows, and the building's original layout and features remain essentially intact. Historically, almost every miner in Silverton was a Union man, and charitable events involving the local Union member's families were frequent, and were absolutely critical to the fundraising effort for the hospital's construction and equipment.

Silverton and San Juan County residents can be extremely proud to see another invaluable building fully restored to its historic magnificence; especially a building that has always played an integral role in service to our community's health care! The restoration of the building included three phases of work, and construction costs totaled approximately \$1.1 million. Funding for the project was raised through a series of grants, prepared by San Juan County in partnership with Silverton's local Historic Preservation Specialist David Singer. The balance of the funding came from the State Historical Fund and the Department of Local Affairs, with cash matching donations from the Gates Family Foundation and San Juan County's historic building preservation mill levy.



***This photograph from the south shows the completed work on the building including the new handicap entrance and ramp on the Bluff Street end of the building.***

The first phase of the project focused on establishing much needed ADA access for the County's Nursing Program. Work included the significant challenge of installing an elevator core within the confines of the existing building's floor plan. Singer, along with Durango engineer, Tracy Reynolds, designed and oversaw the installation of a heated handicap accessible ramp, and a new entrance foyer with remote operable doors along the west elevation on the alley. A remodel of all the building's restrooms was completed to achieve full handicap accessibility with compliant new fixtures, baby changing stations and bottle-filling water fountains on each floor level. A comprehensive restoration of the building's hard-press brick masonry walls and decorative limestone, and all exterior woodwork was also completed in the first phase. Crumbling belt-course limestone and the decorative ashlar stone foundation stones were patched and/or selectively replaced, and mortar re-pointed where areas of brick had decayed. The three chimneys were cleaned of coal soot, re-pointed, and new cast stone chimney caps were installed to match the historic limestone. Finally, the east entry's massive stone stair treads were disassembled, new concrete stem walls were hidden below to support the historic limestone cheek walls that were also reset, preserving almost all the original stone in the process. The balance of the exterior restoration also included rehabilitation of all 50 deteriorated window sash and frames, made operable with repairs to counter-



***The original 1908 cornerstone of the building is still proudly displayed on the southeast corner of the building.***

weight mechanisms, glass and glazing replacement, hardware repairs and new spring bronze weatherstripping. All exterior wood components of the roof soffit, the dormers and central cupola were also repaired, consolidated and painted and an ice-melt system and new gutters and downspouts installed in the small timber-framed shed roof over the east and south entrances.

The second and third phases of the project, completed this past year, focused on the interior restoration and historic finishes of all three levels of the building. Interior work included the consolidation, repair and partial replacement of a tremendous amount of delaminated wall and ceiling plaster. Restoration of interior wood baseboards, chair rails, all casings and doors had their finishes and hardware repaired and

replaced as needed. Tattered carpeting throughout the building, installed in the 1980s, was removed and the original wood flooring was exposed. The old wood floors were patched in several basement locations that were severely deteriorated, and all floor surfaces beautifully restored throughout the building, which brightened the interior significantly! New code compliant electrical service to each floor, and period appropriate replica lighting fixtures were installed to replace all the industrial-style fluorescent units. A modern smoke and fire detection system was installed throughout the building as part of this work, with the new system expanded into the attic space,

***Continued on next Page***



# Nossaman Archive Continues Active, Important Society Role

Highlights of the past year:

We received a donation of beautiful portraits of the Stoiber Family members (Silver Lake Mill). We love receiving donations of pictures. They tell us more of the story of Silverton.

Over the last year, we had two film companies perusing our historic images for documentaries featuring Silverton.

The \$13,000+ newspaper microfilm collection conversion to searchable PDFs project is almost complete and should be online by next spring.

The Archive furnished artifacts, images and journals to help with a local author's goal of writing a book of short stories about Silverton, from the 1880s to the present. The book, "Silverton Stories", by Cynthia Chertos, is now available at the Museum gift store.

The Francis Snowden family visited the Archives and found a few images that they did not know existed. Snowden had the first cabin in Silverton. It is exciting and very

rewarding when we find pictures or artifacts that families have never seen before.

We acquired Past Perfect Museum Software from generous donations from our awesome and loyal members and the software has been recently activated. Now, we are in the process of learning how to use it! Upon completion of the learning process, we will have approximately 10,000+ lo-resolution images that will be available for purchase as high-resolution images from our website.

The Archives Mapping Project welcomed Chris Landry a few months ago to help with scanning and cataloging our thousands of mining maps. Chris is doing a great job and he is now the primary mapping scan man. There are now over 1,800 maps currently scanned and ONLY a few thousand left to go!

If you have not been to the Historical Society's Facebook page hosted by Judy Zimmerman, you must check it out. Judy is doing a



*Silverton pioneer Francis Snowden, posed in front of his Silverton cabin, said to be the first in town. His family was one of many benefiting from the contents of the Nossaman Archives this past year.*

## Hospital Restoration - Continued From Prior Page

where new access decking, a pull-down ladder and blow-in insulation was installed.

It's remarkable that more than 90% of the interior floor plan of the building was left essentially unaltered. It's a testament to the quality and utility of Edbrooke's initial design. An important and dramatic change however, was designed into the restoration of the basement level, specifically, the alteration of the west end of the basement hallway. Visitor's to the building will see that the dividing wall that once partitioned the historic kitchen space was removed and trimmed with replica wood casing to match the adjacent finishes. The design of this sympathetic change now extends the hallway into the new elevator lobby. The alteration has brought in much needed natural day-lighting to what was a very dark unwelcoming circulation path in the basement. Part of the hallway extension included the adaptive re-use of the former dining room space into a new public conference room with emergency back-up power for the County Nursing and Emergency Management offices when needed.

Wrapping up the project, a new interpretive sign will be installed on the south lawn and a tree planting will be scheduled later in the summer. Casey Carrol has been working on a collection of photographs of Silverton citizens that were born in the hospital that will also soon be put on display in the new elevator lobby. A beautifully cast bronze re-dedication plaque has already been installed in the foyer of the east entry. Lead contractor, and master craftsman, Loren Lew, was invaluable to the success of the project, involved in all aspects of the restoration and contributing his tremendous exper-

ience through to a magnificent restoration for San Juan County. As well, John Richardson, and his local crew including Scott Craig wrestled with the extremely difficult tasks in the initial phase of the project, installing the elevator core, constructing the cut stone and concrete handicap ramp and new ADA alley-side entrance, new and replica hand rails and so much more. The San Juan County Commissioners, and County Administrator Willy Tookey have been weaving Historic Preservation into the fabric of our local governance for decades. San Juan County has wisely invested in the economic benefits of historic preservation through heritage tourism as both the life blood of our economy, and out of a community-wide sense of honor for those hearty individuals who settled in these mountains in the 1880s. A building that started its life as a gift from the Silverton Miner's Union members and their families, continues to serve the community to this day as a model for charity, public spirit, and social responsibility.

*David Singer arrived in Silverton in 2002 and soon after established a small historic preservation consulting firm, Silverton Restoration Consulting (SRC). SRC works as part of a team to develop the architectural construction documents for each project, and Singer manages the implementation of the restoration work, and also prepares assessments, budgets and phasing for these buildings as well as interpretive signage. Singer prepares grant applications to fund these projects pro-bono. Singer's local projects include the San Juan County Courthouse and the Historical Society's museum at the 1903 Jail, the Mayflower Mill, The Sound Democrat Mill, The Townsite of Animas Forks, and Ouray County's Hospital museum.*

marvelous job and has hundreds, and often times, thousands of visitors viewing historic images and learning more about Silverton's past. Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/San-Juan-County-Historical-Society-320902954597517>

We would AGAIN like to thank Ray Dileo for more than 10 years of volunteering as our database manager, and BIG kudos go out to Darlene Bolfig, our "Chief Image Scanner", and to Judy Zimmerman, for her passionate scouring of the vault to find pictures and stories to provide the great Facebook page, which she has achieved!

On a final note, the Archives will miss Mark Esper and his weekly

visits to the Archives. Mark was always in search of an interesting photo or story to use on his Silverton Standard's Caboose page, now appropriately named, *Esper's Caboose*. Mark was a great newspaperman and will not be forgotten.

**The Mayflower Mill Tour**

Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

**Do Not Miss It!**

**Archive Hours**

Open Year Around, Thursdays 10 to 4 or by Appointment: 970-387-5609, [archives@sanjuancountyhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:archives@sanjuancountyhistoricalsociety.org)

**San Juan County Historical Society**

**Officers and Directors, 2022**

Beverly Rich, Chairman

Scott Fetchenhier, Secretary/Treasurer

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

**Mining Museum and Jail Hours**

May 28th until mid -October (call)

Open Daily 10 to 4

Admission: \$10

Children (5-12) \$3

970-387-5838, [admin@sanjuancountyhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:admin@sanjuancountyhistoricalsociety.org)