

Durango FAM commentary topics

Topic	Summary
Bailey to Jefferson / Kay Willson	<p>Highway 285 from Denver was the Ute Indian Trail to Bayou Salade. With the coming of goldseekers, it became the wagon road, then stagecoach route over Kenosha Pass to the gold diggings. The arrival of the Denver, South Park &amp; Pacific RR on this route created opportunity for resorts, mining, and other businesses such as ice-harvesting.</p> <p>Along this route is the road to/over Guanella Pass, as well as the Roberts Tunnel, built to bring water to Denver. Wilderness on Wheels near Grant provides an outdoor recreational opportunity for the disabled.</p> <p>Notables in the area included Maggie Crow, pioneer mail woman, and the Reynolds Gang, which committed robberies to provide monies for the Confederacy cause. Their hidden loot no one has ever found--something out of the "old West"</p>
South Park City / Carol Carder	<p>Gold was discovered in South Park in 1859, and the rush was on. Hordes of gold seekers spilled into the 900 sq. mile basin, and within a few short months the mountains were dotted with mining camps sporting names like Tarryall, Leavick, Eureka and Buckskin Joe. These camps grew to become boom towns, thriving communities on the edge of the frontier. As the mining dried up, the people moved on, leaving the camps to the elements, until all that remained were decaying ghost towns.</p> <p>In 1957 Leon Snyder from Colorado Springs organized the South Park Historical Foundation and purchased the land in Fairplay. He started with seven existing historical buildings. Buildings were then moved from the old mining camps. Local residents donated 60,000 artifacts to represent life in the boom towns from 1860 to 1890s. The 43-building town was named South Park City because that was the original name of the town before the Colorado Legislature changed it to Fairplay in 1874.</p> <p>The restored town is on the National Register of Historic Places and is open to the public from May 15 to October 15. For more information, go to <a href="http://www.southparkcity.org">www.southparkcity.org</a>.</p>

Silverheels / Lily Ewing	<p>Silverheels (proper name unknown) was a popular dance hall girl at Buckskin Joe and the subject of many apocryphal stories. Mount Silverheels is named in her honor.</p> <p>A local hero and legend emerged in the town in 1861 -- a dance hall girl named "Silver Heels." From the day she stepped off the stagecoach at Buckskin Joe, her beauty captivated the entire mining camp. The beloved Silver Heels prepared to travel on after a few nightly performances, but when the miners showered her with gifts and begged her to stay, she agreed.</p> <p>In the winter of 1861, the deadly disease small pox invaded the mining camp. Within a matter of days, the rutted dirt road to the cemetery became lined with the living carrying the dead up the hillside for burial. The citizens of Buckskin Joe sent to Denver for nurses, but none came.</p> <p>All through the deadly horror of the smallpox explosion, Silver Heels stayed in cabin after cabin, nursing the sick, caring for the families, burying the dead. By the spring of 1862, the worst was over, at least for the mining camp of Buckskin Joe. In the aftermath, Silver Heels had vanished. Some say she, herself, had contracted smallpox, leaving her once beautiful face horribly scarred. A few years later, it was said that a heavily veiled woman was seen in the Buckskin Joe cemetery who many thought might have been the missing Silver Heels. The people of the area named a mountain "Mount Silver Heels" in gratitude to this brave woman.</p>
Ute history & culture / Elsie DeHerrera	<p>The Southern Ute people are the oldest residents of Colorado. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century as the Spaniards advanced toward into Ute territory, the customs, livestock and language began to influence the Ute's way of life. Today they still perform Pow Wows, the Bear Dance in the spring and the Sun Dance in late summer. They are the richest tribe residing in Ignacio, Colorado, owning a resort and casino, tribal Academy, Tribal housing in a new development called Cedar Point and a cultural center. Their community center has a gym, fitness center and swimming pool all at no charge to their tribal members. The tribe also benefits from its oil and gas reserves.</p>

Ouray / Robert Roswell	<p>Ouray was the Ute negotiator for the tribe with the US government over treaties, and was known as the peacemaker. He spoke four languages: English, Ute, Spanish, and Apache.</p> <p>Although Ouray sought reconciliation between peoples, with the belief that war with the whites likely meant the demise of the Ute tribe, other, more militant Utes, considered him a coward and called him <i>The White Man's Friend</i>. Ouray never cut his long Ute-fashion hair, though he often dressed in the European-American style.</p> <p>Ouray and others traveled to Washington, DC to consult on the reservation. When President Rutherford B. Hayes met Ouray in 1880 in Washington, DC, he said that the Ute was "the most intellectual man I've ever conversed with." Ouray also met President Ulysses S. Grant.</p> <p>Ouray refused to go to the Ute reservation and died at age 47.</p>
Chipeta / Patricia Roswell	<p>Chipeta (1843-1924) married Ouray (1833-1880) when she was only 15. His wife had died and Chipeta took care of his son, named Paron (Apple) for his round cheeks. At the age of 7, Paron was kidnapped, probably by Sioux when Ouray took him on a buffalo hunt. This kidnapping is significant as the U. S. Government often promised help in finding him as a way to get Ouray to come to Washington to negotiate treaties. The government never followed through in helping find his son.</p> <p>Additionally, when Ouray traveled to negotiate treaties, Chipeta traveled with him, something very unusual at that time. She thus also became known as a Peacemaker as she advised Ouray and was well received and respected by those he met for negotiations. The famous photographer, Matthew Brady, took a formal photo of Chief Ouray and Chipeta during their last trip to Washington D. C. In the photo the beautiful beadwork which Chipeta became known for can be seen on their buckskin. She continued her beloved beadwork even after she became nearly blind in old age.</p> <p>Chief Ouray and Chipeta are not buried together, as she died in a reservation in Utah, her body later reburied with great ceremony near Montrose, Colorado. Ouray had died much earlier at the age of 47, refusing to go to the reservation, and the Southern Utes chose not to bury his</p>

	body beside hers, rather burying his body in Ignacio, Colorado.
Otto Mears / Mary Fike	Otto Mears was called "the Pathfinder of the San Juans" because of the extensive network of toll roads he built in the San Juans, a rugged mountain range in southwestern Colorado. It was Otto Mears who promoted the idea that Colorado's capitol rotunda should be lined in gold foil, not silver as was more common.
Ute Indian Museum at Montrose / Jillian Allison	<p>The museum, which is closed for renovations and which will have its grand re-opening in the summer of 2017, is unique because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*it has one of the largest collections of Ute objects;</li> <li>* one of the few museums dedicated to Native American history and culture and run by a non-tribal organization;</li> <li>*it is History Colorado's only community museum in the western area of the state</li> <li>* it is built on Chief Ouray's homestead</li> </ul> <p>The new museum will display exhibits created in consultation with the three Ute tribes and will focus on cultural survival, political self-determination, economic opportunity and the Bear Dance.</p>
Million Dollar Highway / Adrian Swensen	<p>The Million Dollar Highway most likely received its name from the phrase "I would not drive that road for a million dollars". It is Highway 50 spur 550 from Ouray to Ironton Park. It is part of the San Juan Skyway Scenic Byway. Originally it was an Otto Mears toll road. Tolls in 1883 were \$3.75/wagon and \$.75 (cents) for a horse</p> <p>It is 12 miles in length. It recently had some guardrails installed on the "dead man's curve" section. The road is noted for its lack of guard rails and shoulder; the drivers going south from Ouray have the more challenging route and spend more time hugging the center yellow line.</p>
Chimney Rock / Barbara Johnson	Chimney Rock is a 1000 year old community built by the Ancestral Puebloans near two rock formations in southwestern Colorado. This community was an outlier of Chaco Canyon, the cultural center of this part of the

	country. The Great House Pueblo was built to mark and revere the lunar event known as the Major Lunar Standstill, occurring every 18 years, when the moon rise pauses for three years at the same point on the horizon, which is between the two rock spires on Chimney Rock.
Movies filmed in western Colorado / Ellen Casey	From movies such as “”Around the World in 80 Days”” through “”Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid”” to “City Slickers,” it is readily apparent that the spectacular scenery is appreciated by people and production companies in other parts of the country.
Native American Treaties & Territory / Mary Bendelow	Native Americans assisted the newly arrived Europeans in the early days. The United States made attempts to culturally assimilate the tribes, moving some on the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma. Treaties were first negotiated to provide for land for the tribe as a whole. Later treaties provided land for individual Native American men. Each successive treaty expanded the land given up, and diminished Native American holdings that were “reserved” for them. Eventually the tribes sued for government mismanagement, and the courts are finding for the tribes. Billions of dollars is being paid to the tribes.
Denver & Rio Grande RR / Nancy Brueggerman	<p>The Denver &amp; Rio Grande RR was built to service the mines – both silver and gold -- and was the most famous narrow gauge railroad in the country.</p> <p>By the mid-1880s the Denver Rio Grande Railroad had the largest narrow gauge network in North America – through Colorado, New Mexico and Utah – 2,783 miles of track and there were over 11,000 miles of narrow gauge track nationwide</p> <p>The DRG RR went bankrupt in 1893 – financial panic</p> <p>Over time the narrow gauge railways disappeared though there are three still operating in Colorado: Durango to Silverton, Georgetown and Leadville</p> <p>The railroads were the originators of our time zones which were accepted in 1883: East – at the 75<sup>th</sup> parallel; Central – at the 90<sup>th</sup> parallel; Mountain – at the 105<sup>th</sup> parallel – which is marked on the pavement in front of Union Station in downtown Denver; Pacific – at the 120<sup>th</sup> parallel</p>

	Another idea started by the railroads was First Aid Kits
Alamosa / Bonnie Custer	<p>Alamosa is popular for hub and spoke tours in central Colorado. If conducting a tour with a large group, make sure you have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* a comfortable hotel that will cater to the group, with free breakfast, elevator, parking for bus, ADA if necessary, possible comps</li> <li>* attractions within reasonable driving distance to come back to at site if going out again next day, like Fort Garland, Great Sand Dunes, alligator farm. Perhaps lunch in Canon City for a lunch ride on the train to/from the Royal Gorge.</li> </ul>
Extraterrestrials in the San Luis Valley / Eileen Pearl	<p>Highway 17 in the San Luis Valley is sometimes called the Cosmic Highway due to the number of unusual stories told by locals - silver balls in the sky, saucer shapes, animal mutilations, and even abductions by aliens.</p> <p>Hooper is home to the UFO Watchtower, built in 2000 as a place for interested people to come to study the sky and share stories about UFOs. It is a 10 ft high platform, holding up to 60 people. It had 20,000 visitors in its first 11 years. It stands next to a "portal garden," a place that some psychics claim is a portal to other universes.</p> <p>Stories and legends go back to the 1600s. Twelve different native American tribes considered the San Luis Valley to be a sacred place, the location of Sipapu - the place of emergence.</p> <p>Crestone, nestled in the Sangre de Cristo mountains to the east of the San Luis Valley, is home to dozens of spiritual organizations and retreat centers.</p>
Stories of the Twin Peaks / Spanish Peaks / Mike Pearl	<p>The Spanish Peaks are a pair of prominent mountains located in southwestern Huerfano County, Colorado. The Ute Indians named them Huajatolla (pronounced Wa-ha-toy-a), meaning "two breasts" or "breasts of the Earth." The two peaks, West Spanish Peak (13,626 ft or 4,153 m) and East Spanish Peak (12,683 ft or 3,866 m), are east of, and separate from, the Culebra Range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. West Spanish Peak is the easternmost mountain over 4,000 meters in the United</p>

	<p>States. They were an important landmark on the Santa Fe Trail. Travelers from the east saw these peaks from as far as 100 miles distant. The Spanish Peaks were designated a National Natural Landmark in 1976 as one of the best known examples of igneous dikes.</p>
How and Wet of Pueblo / Tom Jensen	<p>Pueblo is the gateway to Fowler and Rocky Ford, with canyons and plains. Pueblo played an important part in Colorado's history. The El Pueblo Museum details the pre-US experiences. The early industrial development of Pueblo is explored in the Steelworks Center of the West. The historic commercial district reflects its past.</p>
Military presence in El Paso county / Larry Foos	<p>Colorado has a strong connection with military installations, many in the area around Colorado Springs, including:</p> <p><b>Fort Carson</b>, approximately 8.7 square miles in area, is used as a ground maneuvering training site, and has around 14,000 people in population.</p> <p><b>Peterson Air Force Base</b> became the hub of the Air Forces Space activities. Peterson Air Force Base is the home of approximately 5,000 military and civilians. Today Peterson Air Force Base has numerous space related operations stationed or assigned to the AF Base. Many of the assigned operations are stationed throughout the U.S. and several are in other countries.</p> <p><b>Schriever Air Force Base</b> In 1979 the Department of Defense approved plans for developing another base to provide control of the existing and planned, satellites constellations. Midway through the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Schriever AFB hosted nearly 70 major and minor facilities and employed more than 6200 people.</p> <p><b>Air Force Academy:</b> Congress passed the bill establishing the Air Force Academy and Colorado Springs was the first choice. Colorado contributed \$1million to the purchase of the land. In July 1955, construction began in Colorado Springs. In June 1959, the academy graduated its first class of 207. The present authorized strength is 4,000. Women entered the AF Academy June 1976 and the first class with women graduating was 1980. The Academy has now graduated over 37,000 officers serving their country.</p>

