

A Study
of
La Plata County Rural Cemeteries



Gravestone at Hay Gulch Cemetery -1895

Prepared for the State Historical Fund
Project Number 2015-M1-023
San Juan Mountains Association

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August 2018

This project was paid for in part by a History Colorado, State Historical Fund grant (Project Number 2015-M1-023). The content and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of History Colorado.

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Acknowledgments

We thank all who helped with this project; our sincere appreciation to those who shared their stories and history of the cemeteries. This project benefited by their interest and knowledge. A special thanks to the cemetery associations and caretakers for permission to visit and document the cemeteries. Thanks to Bea Mohar from the Elco Cemetery Association; Laura Whitt, Emma Shock, and Ralph Klusman at the Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District; Fred Robyns of the Florida Mesa Cemetery Association; Judy Albrecht and Trent Taylor from the Kline/Redmesa Cemetery Corp.; Lila Greer of the Marvel Cemetery Association; Rebecca Atencio Hunter, Ph.D. and Danny Jaques, Ph.D. of the Martinez Family Cemetery; and L. Beth Sower from the Pine River Cemetery District. Their assistance and encouragement was greatly appreciated over the course of this project and during all of our field operations.

This project received generous funding from the State Historical Fund, the Ballantine Family Fund and the San Juan Mountains Association. Thank you to these funders and the staff of the project partners. At the State Historical Fund, thanks to Michael Owen, Katie Arntzen, and Korbin Pugh for important comments and guidance. Thanks also to former SHF staff Estella Cole and Heather Bailey, Ph.D., for their suggestions and review during the early stages of this project.

The Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College has been an important support partner for this project with their generous offer to host the database for this project. Through their participation, the project data will reach a greater audience providing research assistance to local, and regional historians, genealogists, and family history researchers. We thank Center Director Shelby Tisdale, Ph.D., and Archives Director Nik Kendziorski for their support and assistance.

This project benefited from the enthusiasm and interest from community and San Juan Mountains Association member volunteers. Volunteers participated in field documentation and cemetery research and they persevered through heat, rain, wind and snow. The completion of the project is due in large part to their efforts. Our thanks to volunteers Wendy Allen, Sherry Bowman, Ann Felty, Deb Hendricks, Joan Isgar Kellog, Judy Peel, Kelly Rubin, T.J. Trump, and Tish and Pete Varney. Fort Lewis students Erin Pierce and Whitney Wyngaart also assisted with research and fieldwork for the project. A special thanks to Whitney who continued with the project long after her internship ended. Finally, we are very grateful to Susan and Doug Jones for their expertise in the website database design and implementation. Without their assistance, the project data would not be available on-line to a wide audience.

Lastly, sincere thanks to the SJMA Board and especially our former Executive Director Susan Bryson for support of this project. Susan has provided guidance and encouragement over the duration of the project.

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Photo Credits

Photo 3: Colorado Historical Cemetery Association

Photos 1,2, & 4: R. Lambert

Photo 19: Denver Public Library

All other photos from project.

Introduction

In 2014, the San Juan Mountains Association began a study to document several small rural La Plata County cemeteries.¹ The project compiled historical information, data from past field observations, burial records, and mortuary data. Fieldwork was conducted to verify the presence and condition of grave markers and identify markers that have not been previously recorded. The condition of cemeteries and grave markers was assessed and recommendations made for additional documentation and the prioritization for treatment. This report assembles cemetery history, condition and burial data into one document. The information is available in hard copy and electronic formats. Photographs of the gravestones are found on the CDs appended to this report.

This study is the result of past historical projects and community interest in historic cemeteries. The cemeteries are historic and date as early as 1877 and they chronicle the early lives of pioneers and ethnic groups to our county. These cemeteries are the resting places of early Hispano settlers, Mormon pioneers, German and Austrian farmers, other Euroamerican pioneers, and Scandinavian miners. These cemeteries were focal places during early settlement. For many pioneers, these forgotten headstones are the only record of their contribution to our history and the cemetery contains the only evidence of their legacy. Sadly, many burials are young children and these gravestones are often the only testament to their young fragile lives.

Several years ago burial inventories for some rural cemeteries were compiled. Some of these cemetery inventories were based on observations made in the early twentieth century, providing an early record of burials. At some cemeteries, the accounts list grave markers that are no longer present and/or legible indicating a loss of historic information. In the early 1990s, this cemetery information was compiled into an index, "The La Plata County Cemetery Index" that included burial information through 1978. Fourteen small cemeteries and the large Durango cemetery, Greenmount Cemetery, were included in the document. The Index contains important historical information; however more recent studies provide additional information. Over the years, the City of Durango has developed a searchable database for the Greenmount Cemetery, but the burials at the small rural historic cemeteries have been overlooked until recently. This project will help to focus attention on these special places.

¹ This project was paid for in part by a History Colorado, State Historical Fund grant (SHF Project # 2015-M1-023. The content and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of History Colorado. Additional project support has been provided by La Plata County Historical Society, Ballantine Family Fund, and the San Juan Mountains Association.

Historic Cemeteries

Development of Cemeteries

Although traditions in countries differed, the earliest European American cemeteries were formally established within church yards in the 17th century. These appeared as graveyards associated with churches along the eastern seaboard of the United States. The graveyards tended to be adjacent to the churches and were often surrounded by fencing to establish the boundaries. Although often crowded, they tended to be somewhat formal in layout with artistic iconography. Burials were generally restricted to church members.

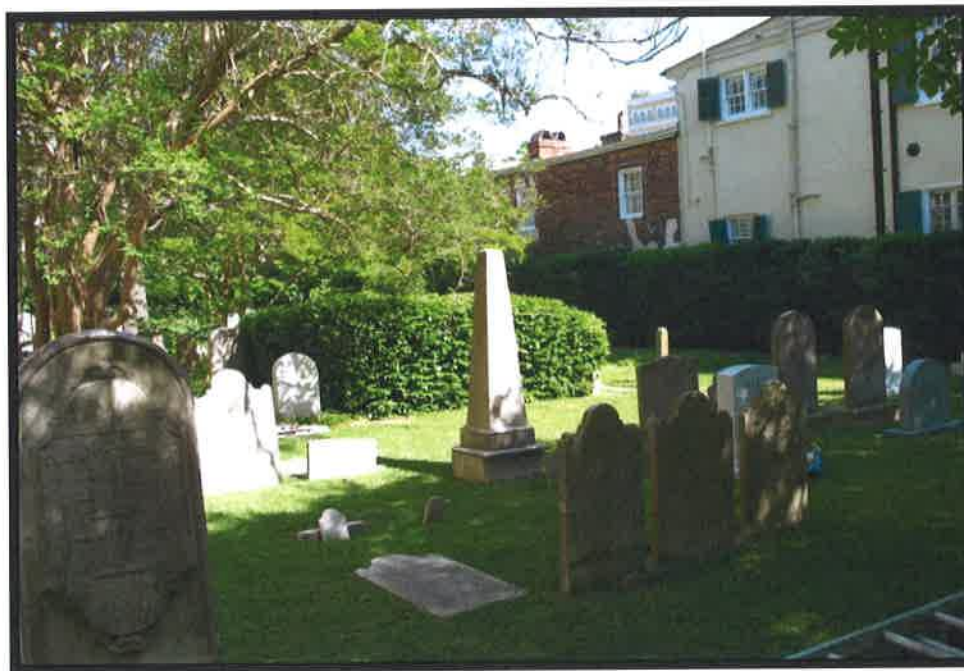


Photo 1. Huguenot Church Burying Ground, ca. 1800. Charleston, S.C.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, city cemeteries were established. These were not necessarily operated by churches and burials were not restricted to church members and included residents of the town or city. These cemeteries tended to be regular in design with minimal plantings and landscaping. Roadways were narrow due to the lack of motorized vehicles during burials and/or grave visitation. Potter's Fields were included in cemeteries to bury the indigent with plain markers.

Cemeteries were also developed on private land during the 17th through the 21st centuries. Family cemeteries were developed on family property with a variety of markers that reflected social and economic status and/or religion. During the 17th and 18th centuries, slave cemeteries were located on plantations in the South. In the West, rural cemeteries began in the 1850s as eastern populations moved west. Rural cemeteries tended to be in

picturesque locations with natural vegetation, three-dimensional markers and located outside of town limits.²



Photo 2. Cemetery at the Dolores Mission, Purgatory River, ca. 1900

From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, cemeteries became park-like with vast lawns. They were pastoral with elaborate upright markers, denoting family wealth and/or social status mixed with headstones that were smaller and some without ornamentation. Memorial Parks evolved from these park-like cemeteries with a predominance of in-ground markers and a few centralized or representative sculptures. As cemeteries became for-profit entities, ornamental statues, sculptures, and markers gave way to flat in-ground markers that facilitated uniform maintenance and lawn care. This shift to simpler uniform markers resulted in the loss of social, economic and genealogical information provided by more traditional markers.

² In Colorado, the first formal cemeteries were established in the 1850s along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, in the Denver area, and the San Luis Valley. The earliest cemeteries in La Plata County are the Animas City Cemetery (1877) and the Parrott City Cemetery (1876). The Parrott City Cemetery location is currently (2017) unknown and the subject of a future SJMA research project.



Photo 3. Riverside Cemetery, Denver. Ca. 1900

Cemeteries as Cultural Places

To understand past societies and groups, we study their material remains. Prehistoric archaeologists combine the puzzle pieces of physical remains and data to make inferences about the past while historical archaeologists combine the physical properties of objects and artifacts and their context, with historical documentation from records and oral accounts. In historical settings, these remains come in many forms and may include remnants of buildings and roads, tools, household and personal items, and written documents. Together these elements provide information about the economy, society, religion, and politics of the group.

Cemeteries and their artifacts can tell us about past life; they provide information at the scale of the individual or family. Cemeteries can be an important clue to learning about the past because they provide information on past activities, social relationships, religious beliefs, health and disease, economics and technology. Headstones provide genealogical information while marker iconography can indicate religious and social information. Individual graves can provide information about social status and health; information from several graves can provide data on the community population. The fabrication of headstones relates information on technology, acquisition of the materials, and financial abilities.

In the West, rural cemeteries tended to be community cemeteries associated with towns or settlements. These cemeteries played an important role in the lives of the early settlers and allowed them to fulfill their burial practices and religious customs as they honored their families and friends. The cemeteries provided a mechanism to record testaments to

loved ones, giving future generations an intimate glimpse into their lives, personalities, and pasts.



Photo 4. Hispano Grave, Monte Vista Workers Union Cemetery

Cemetery Documentation

This project results from previous historical work in the county, work at historic cemeteries, and the interest and concern by community members on the deterioration and loss of information.³ In the early 1990s, “The La Plata County Cemetery Index” was prepared and provided an important first step in detailing burials at several cemeteries. However, since that time additional work has been accomplished on additional cemeteries. This project provided the opportunity to update and expand that Index.

Project Goals and Objectives

The goals of this project are to gather historical information about small historic La Plata County cemeteries and to identify critical preservation needs at the cemeteries. To meet these goals, the project’s objectives are the documentation of the project cemeteries. This project incorporates burial information collected from several sources and field observations to help preserve historic information contained in the headstone inscriptions and iconography, cemetery features, and context.

To meet these objectives, several procedures have been incorporated into this project. Table 1 summarizes the objectives and the strategies to accomplish the objectives.

Table 1. Project Objectives and Strategies

Objective	Strategy
1) Update and expand existing cemetery data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct field visits to cemeteries to record graves & update records - Obtain additional information & records - Photograph graves and cemeteries
2) Provide information in an available format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide a written report updating past data -Provide electronic formats for project data -Create a searchable database for burials - Share preservation information & resources with cemetery caretakers/owners
3) Help to educate the community about historic preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use trained volunteers to assist with hands-on participation -Provide community presentations

³ Seyfarth, Jill and Ruth E. Lambert. *Pioneers, Prospectors and Trout: A Historic Context for La Plata County, Colorado* in *Historic Resources Study of 100 Sites in La Plata County, Colorado*. State Historical Fund Project # 2008-01-012. January 2010. Also, *Animas City Cemetery Assessment Report*, La Plata County Historical Society. 2008, and Ruth Lambert, *An Archaeological Assessment of the Rockwood Cemetery*, San Juan Mountains Association (State Historical Fund Project # 2012-AS-002).

Project Methods

File Search

To achieve these goals and objectives, information was collected from a range of sources. The sources included historical cemetery information, association burial records, mortuary records, obituaries, previous field recordings, the Cemetery Index, and information from knowledgeable individuals. File searches were conducted at the Center of Southwest Studies Delaney Library, La Plata County Historical Society's Animas Museum, and La Plata County Assessors and land records. The holdings at the Denver Public, Durango, Ignacio, Bayfield, Mancos, and Reed (Fort Lewis College) Libraries were also consulted.

Documentation Procedures

Using the burial and historic information from the range of sources, the data were compiled into a master burial list for each cemetery. This information provided historical context for the field recording.

The field documentation compared the compiled burial information with field observations to update the roster of buried individuals at the cemetery. Gravestones that were no longer visible or legible were noted.

The cemetery documentation included an update of the roster of burials and a photograph of each headstone. The History Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's (OAHP) forms were completed for each of the project cemeteries. The cemetery maps were provided by the cemetery association, obtained from aerial photographs, or created in the field.

The cemetery documentation procedure followed the guidelines of the History Colorado's OAHP *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual*. After a cemetery was visited and the field recording completed, the site was recorded on the OAHP *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Management Data Form* (#1400) and the *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Historic Archaeology Component Form* (#1402). USGS topographic maps and aerial photographs were used to define the project area. Terms from the various lexicons were used whenever possible. Past inventories were updated based on current field conditions.

The field visits to document the cemeteries were oriented to visible gravesites; there was no attempt at subsurface investigations. However, the project director is a trained field archaeologist and she used her field survey skills when documenting and assessing the cemeteries.

Cemetery Data

Cemetery data collected during this project are included and summarized in this report. The report appendices contain the cemetery maps and the burial database organized in two parts. Part I is an alphabetical listing of all individuals and the cemetery where they are buried and Part II is

a listing of all cemeteries and the individuals buried at that cemetery. A third appendix includes the photographs of the graves. These are organized by cemetery and they are included on the CDs that accompany this report. The original field recording forms and materials are housed at the San Juan Mountains Association in Durango. The project report, appendices, and photographs can be accessed through website links at the Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College, Durango Public Library, La Plata County, La Plata County Historical Society, History Colorado, the Denver Public Library and the San Juan Mountains Association.

Project Collaboration

This project benefited from the collaboration of many individuals. Several cemetery associations were helpful with their generous sharing of information and records. Cemetery associations were contacted at the outset of the project and all were encouraging and helpful. In addition, all cemetery associations provided written permission to record and photograph the graves. Table 2 indicates the associations for each project cemetery.

Table 2. Project Cemetery Associations & Caretakers

Site Number	Cemetery	Caretaker Association
5LP10887	Elco	Elco Cemetery Co. Inc.
5LP10888	Florida/Hood	Florida Mesa Cemetery Assoc.
5LP10889	Hay Gulch	No Association
5LP10890	Ignacio East	Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District
5LP10891	Ignacio West	Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District
5LP10892	Kline	Redmesa/Kline Cemetery Corp.
5LP10893	La Posta	No Association
5LP10894	Martinez	Martinez/Jacques Family
5LP10895	Marvel	Marvel Cemetery Assoc.
5LP10896	Oxford	Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District
5LP10897	Pine River/Bayfield	Pine River Cemetery District
5LP10898	Redmesa	Redmesa/Kline Cemetery Corp.

Project Volunteers

To further the educational goals of this project, community volunteers were trained to assist with the project. Volunteers were recruited from interested organizations and project partners via newsletters, email lists, a public presentation, and public announcements. Ten volunteers assisted with this project. In addition, two public history student interns assisted with the project and continued on as project volunteers. Volunteers were given in-field training and they were provided with a training handbook.⁴ Volunteers were required to adhere to project protocols that relate to

⁴ A copy of the La Plata County Historic Cemetery Documentation Volunteer Training Handbook is available for review at the San Juan Mountains Association.

respectful visitation, site confidentiality, preparedness and safety.⁵ Volunteers assisted with archival research, field trip assistance, grave recordings, data base assistance, and photography. Volunteers donated about 500 hours to this project.



Photo 5. Project Volunteer Ann Felty Documenting Headstones

Educational Materials

Several types of educational materials have resulted from this project. These include public presentations on rural cemeteries; in-field cemetery documentation for volunteers; a training handbook; a project brochure highlighting the cemeteries, the project and the results; cemetery data base; and the project report.

A printed copy of the project report is provided to History Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, the Center of Southwest Studies, the La Plata County Historical Society, the cemetery associations/caretakers, and the Durango, Bayfield, and Ignacio Libraries. The report, database, cemetery maps and photographs are available on-line at the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College website. Links to this website are posted on library and historical society websites.

⁵ A copy of "Protocols for Cemetery Work" is included in training handbook.

La Plata County Cemeteries

The first permanent Euroamerican settlement in La Plata County began in 1873/1874 in the valleys along the Pine, Florida, Animas and La Plata Rivers. Although there were scattered earlier settlements, legal non-Indian settlement in the north portions of the county began with the signing of the Brunot Agreement of 1874. The earliest residents seem to have occupied farms and ranches in the upper Animas Valley in the Hermosa area (1873/1874), along the Pine and Florida River valleys (1874-1877), and in the upper reaches of the La Plata River (1874- 1879). The southern portion of the county was open to non-Indian settlement in 1899 through the second Ute cession.

With the founding of small settlements and the farms and ranches of permanent residents, small cemeteries were created to allow settlers to fulfill their burial practices and customs as they honored their families and friends. The cemeteries provided a mechanism to record their testaments to a loved one, giving future generations an intimate glimpse into their lives, personalities and pasts.

The earliest known cemeteries in the county are at Parrott City (1876) and at Animas City (1877).⁶ The small cemeteries in the southern part of the county date from about 1900 when permanent settlement resulted in the establishment of nearby cemeteries. Table 3 lists the cemeteries in the county.

⁶ The Parrott City Cemetery location is uncertain. However, the Cemetery is noted in various historical documents and it dates from about 1876 when Parrott City was the county seat for La Plata County. The Animas City Cemetery has been previously documented and the earliest burials occur in October 1877, although they are not marked.

Table 3. Cemeteries in La Plata County⁷

Name	Location	Dates of Use	Status	References⁸
Allison-Tiffany	CR 329	1908 -	Active	1,2,5
Animas City	Durango	1877-1965	Inactive	1,2,6, 7, 8
Crestview	CR 172	1955 -	Active	1,2
Elco	CR 213	1901-	Active	1,2,7,12
Florida/Hood	CR 225	1880-	Active	1,2,6,7,10
Fort Lewis	Hwy 140	1881-1891	Inactive	8
Greenmount	Durango	1888-	Active	1,2,3,6
Hay Gulch	CR 120	1889-1926	Inactive	6, 7
Hermosa	Hwy 550	1889 -	Active	1,2,3,6,7,15
Hesperus	Hwy 140	1881-1965	Inactive	1,2,3
Ignacio West	Ignacio	1926-	Active	1, 7, 14
Ignacio East	Ignacio	1918-	Active	1, 7, 14
Kline	CR 119	1904-	Active	1,2,3, 7,11
La Boca	Hwy 172	1899 -	Active	1,2, 7
La Posta	CR 213	1902-	Active	1,2,3,6,7
Martinez	Near CR318	1918-	Active	1,2,7
Marvel	CR 131	1907-	Active	1,2,3, 7,13
Oxford	CR 311	1925-present	Active	1,2, 7, 14
Pine River/Bayfield	CR 501	1882 -	Active	1,2,3,7, 9
Redmesa	Hwy 140	1909 -	Active	1,2,3,7,11
Rockwood	CR 200	1890 – ca.	Inactive	1,7,8
Sheck Family	CR 240	1910s	Inactive	1, 7
Thompson Park	CR 105	1896-1988	Inactive	1,2,6,7
Tiffany	CR 326	1925 -	Active	1,2,6,7
Ute/Ouray Mem	Ignacio	1911-	Active	1

Note: Unmarked/unknown cemeteries include:

Gold King Cemetery
Parrott City Cemetery

⁷ This listing of cemeteries does not include private family burial locations.

⁸ References include: 1) Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies, “Colorado Cemetery Directory”, 1985; 2) Genealogical Research Society of the Four Corners, “La Plata County Cemetery Index” 1997; 3) Tombstone Project, Colorado, U.S. Genealogical Web site; 4) D. Ellis, Serious and Grave Plots, 2002; 5) Allison Tiffany Cemetery Committee, Obituaries and Community History for the Allison-Tiffany Cemetery, 2011; 6) La Plata County Historical Society, Animas Museum, Durango; 7) San Juan Mountains Association, on-going research by Lambert; 8) Mona Charles, Animas Museum; 9) Pine River Cemetery District; 10) Florida Cemetery Association; 11) Redmesa/Kline Cemetery Corporation; 12) Elco Cemetery Co, Inc; 13) Marvel Cemetery Association; 14) Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District and 15) Hermosa Cemetery Association.

Cemeteries Not Included in This Report

Some La Plata County cemeteries were not included in this documentation project. These cemeteries are not included in this report because they were previously recorded for other projects, they are small private family plots, or they were inaccessible for recording. In addition, City of Durango's Greenmount Cemetery maintains an active database. Also, the Hesperus and Ute/Ouray Memorial Cemeteries are under the care of the Ute Mountains Ute and Southern Ute Tribes and these were not recorded. These cemeteries are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Cemeteries Not Included in This Project⁹

Cemetery	Comment	Reference
Allison-Tiffany	Previously Recorded	1,2
Animas City	Previously Recorded	1,5
Breen	Private Property	7
Crestview	Previously Recorded	3
Cedar Grove	Location Uncertain	-
Folsum Family	Private Property	1
Fort Lewis	Previously Recorded	6
Greenmount	Previously Recorded	8
Hermosa	Previously Recorded	5
Hesperus	Tribal Land	-
La Boca	Previously Recorded	4
Rockwood	Previously Recorded	9
Shreck Family	Private Property	-
Thompson Park	Previously Recorded	4
Tiffany	Previously Recorded	4
Ute/Ouray Memorial	Tribal Land	-

⁹ References include: 1) Colorado Council of Genealogical Societies, "Colorado Cemetery Directory", 1985; 2) Allison Tiffany Cemetery Committee, Obituaries and Community History for the Allison-Tiffany Cemetery, 2011; 3) URS Greiner Woodward Clyde, R. Mutaw, 1998 4) A Study of Four Rural Cemeteries, Ruth E. Lambert, San Juan Mountains Association, 2013; 5) The Study and Documentation of the Animas City and Hermosa Cemeteries, Ruth E. Lambert, San Juan Mountains Association 2014; 6) Old Fort Lewis Documentation, Mona Charles, n.d.; 7) Field visitation, Sandy Campbell & Ruth E. Lambert, 2015; 8) City of Durango, Parks & Recreation Dept: 9) An Archaeological Assessment of the Rockwood Cemetery, Ruth E. Lambert, San Juan Mountains Association, 2014.

Study Cemeteries

This report provides information on twelve rural cemeteries in La Plata County. These are: Elco, Florida/Hood, Hay Gulch, Ignacio East, Ignacio West, Kline, La Posta, Martinez, Marvel, Oxford, Pine River/Bayfield, and Redmesa Cemetery. Because area settlement history influenced cemetery establishment, the cemeteries are organized by geographical area. These areas are the Pine and Florida River valleys; the Ignacio area; the Animas River Valley; and west county cemeteries,

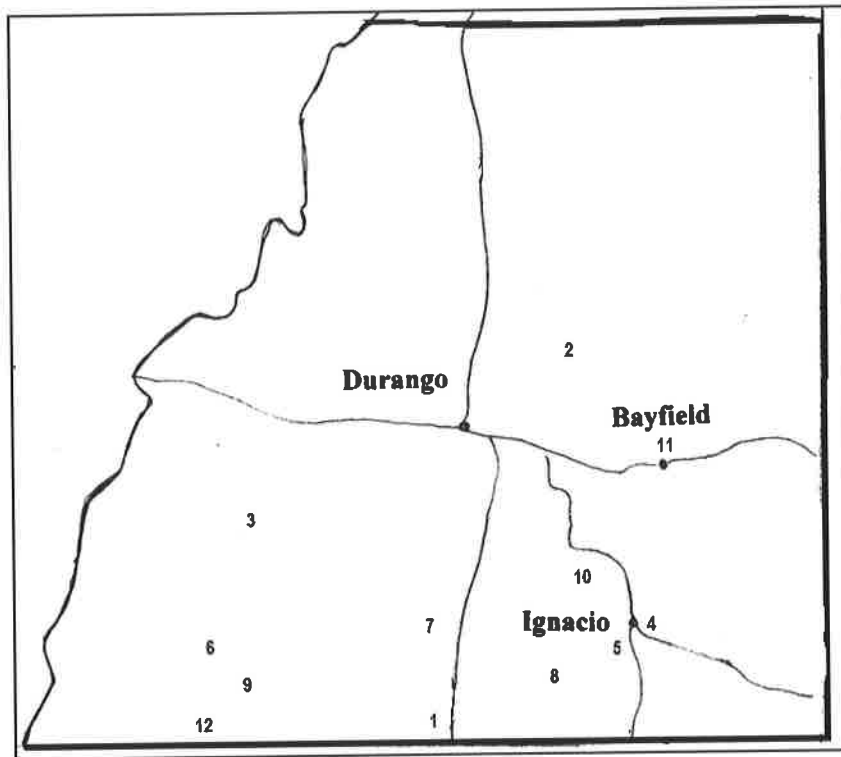


Figure 1. Study Cemeteries: 1 Elco; 2; Florida/Hood; 3 Hay Gulch; 4 Ignacio East; 5 Ignacio West; 6 Kline; 7 La Posta; 8 Martinez; 9 Marvel; 10 Oxford; 11 Pine River/Bayfield; 12 Redmesa

Within these geographical areas, historical information is provided to understand the development and establishment of the cemeteries. In addition, information on each cemetery is presented. Cemetery information includes a brief history, dates of operation, and management information. Appendix One includes the cemetery maps. At smaller cemeteries, the burial locations are shown on one map. For larger cemeteries, a cemetery orientation map is provided with cemetery sections noted. Detailed maps of each section are provided indicating individual burial locations. The numbers on a cemetery map represent the grave number/location and correspond with the individual listed on the cemetery roster provided in Appendix Two.

The individuals buried at a cemetery are listed in the Appendix Two alphabetically by cemetery. The burial lists include first and last names, other names (such as first marriage), birth and death dates, the cemetery where buried, and the grave number. The grave number is shown on the cemetery map, found in Appendix One. See these appendices for additional notes and details.

This project report and the information contained in the appendices can be found on-line at the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College website at <https://swcenter.fortlewis.edu/>. The database (Appendix Two) is searchable in an Excel format. The searchable fields are name fields, date of birth, date of death, and cemetery. Links to marker photographs are provided within the database. The cemetery maps, described above, are also accessible at the site.

Florida and Pine River Valley Cemeteries

The Florida and Pine River valleys drew early settlers because of the lush river bottom lands and the presence of perennial streams. Indian bands frequented these valleys for hunting and trapping and with the opening of this portion of the county to non-Indian occupation, settlers quickly claimed lands and filed homesteads. The locations of these cemeteries are shown on Figure 1.

Florida/Hood Cemetery

The Florida River area was one of the first areas settled in La Plata County following the ratification of the Brunot Agreement allowing non-Indian settlement in the northern part of La Plata County. The river valley was a lush verdant area with year-round water and open meadows suitable for farming, hay production and grazing.

The first non-Indian residents began to arrive in the mid-1870s. The first residents to settle were Timothy McCluer, his wife Mella Gallegos McCluer, and his half-brother, Daniel Murray who arrived during the summer of 1875. They were the first white settlers to homestead along the Florida River. In fall 1875, they were joined by Columbus Evan (C.E.) Hampton. These early pioneers built homes and developed small farms and ranches along the banks of the Florida River and constructed ditches to deliver water to their properties. In the early 1880s, additional settlers arrived including Samuel Hood, Levi Patterson, and C.E.'s brothers Grason and Albert. With the 1877 federal survey of the land, all of these settlers filed homestead claims.

Although scattered along the river and creeks, the Florida settlement became focused on a new school that was constructed on land donated by Samuel Hood. The school district was formally established in November 1877 to serve the children of the area. The school also functioned for social gatherings and church services were held in the building.

In 1880, tragic circumstances led to the informal establishment of the Florida/Hood Cemetery. Grason and Martha's infant son, Sefton, died and he was buried on the family land. His burial became the first on land that would later become the Cemetery. His death was soon followed by several other children's burials in 1881 through 1897. As with many small rural cemeteries, the Cemetery was not formally established until there were several burials and this concentration of graves led to the formal designation of the Cemetery.



Photo 6. Florida/Hood Cemetery Ornate Grave Enclosure, 2017

In 1887, Hampton sold his holdings to John Conway and moved to Aztec, NM. The following year, John Conway gave a cemetery parcel of almost four acres to the First Baptist church of Durango as there was no formal cemetery association.

In 1912, the Florida Baptist Church was established as an affiliate of the First Baptist Church of Durango. This new congregation constructed a wood frame church adjacent to the Cemetery and the school. In 1914, Conway donated about five acres to the Florida Baptist Church. The combination of these parcels form the present-day Florida/Hood Cemetery.

The Florida Baptist Church, Cemetery, and the school become the focus of the Florida River community. The church had an active congregation into the depression years of the 1930s when regular services became intermittent as the congregation dwindled.

The Florida Mesa Cemetery Association was formed in 1929 and oversaw the Cemetery burials and maintenance. In 1970, the Baptist Church conveyed the church structure and cemetery to the Cemetery Association. Today the historic church building is used for funeral services and other gatherings. The Church and Cemetery were listed on the La Plata County Historic Register in 2008.

The Cemetery is about six and one half acres in size. The Florida River is located in a shallow valley on the west side of the property. The river trends north/south and the bottom lands are used primarily for hay farming. The Cemetery landscape is a combination of pinyon and juniper trees and native grasses. The entrance to the Cemetery is through an arch with "Florida Cemetery" overhead. The historic Florida Baptist Church is adjacent to the Cemetery on the north.

Within the fenced area, the graves are located throughout the parcel in north/south rows. A total of about 605 individuals are buried in the Cemetery. The burial dates range from 1880 to 2017 and burials continue at the Cemetery on an infrequent basis. Individuals buried in the Florida/Hood Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 7. Florida/Hood Cemetery, 2017

Pine River/Bayfield Cemetery

The Pine (also known as Los Pinos) River originates in the San Juan Mountains and flows south through the Pine River area, Bayfield, and Ignacio to New Mexico. The Pine River valley is a verdant area well-suited for agricultural and stock raising. The first residents of the Pine River valley established homes in the mid-1870s. Former Civil War soldier and slave, John Taylor, is reported to have lived in the Valley as early as 1873. He claimed to be 'the first white man in the Pine River Valley', apparently referring to himself as the first non-Indian resident.

In 1875 the first cattle were introduced to the Valley by the Grimes brothers with their cattle drives from Texas. They were soon followed by other settlers, who primarily ranched in the lush valley meadows along the Pine River. In about 1876, Charley Johnson operated the first store, hotel, and post office at the Los Pinos stage stop on the Pagosa Springs/Animas City stage road. Los Pinos was located about 3 miles north of present-day Bayfield.

By 1877, there were 15 families living in the Valley, including the Wommer, Shroder, Higbee, Nelson, Pargin, Montgomery, Johnson, and Dunham families. The first burial in the area was Mrs. Montgomery in 1877 at an unknown location, and one of the first marriages was Henry B. "Squire" Wallace and Lizzie Dunham, daughter of John B. Dunham, a justice of the peace.

A few miles south on the Pine River, George Morrison ranched and ran cattle on the land that would later become Bayfield. The land was sold to the Bay family in 1894. In 1898, the Bays donated 80 acres of the land to create the town. The Schiller family also donated land for the town, land that was first homesteaded by Walsh Keith in 1879. There was a local debate on the name for the new town. The names considered were Bay's Field (later shortened to Bayfield) and Schillerville. By the flip of a coin, the town was named Bayfield.

Located far from the railroad, Bayfield was a regional supplier for the Pine River Valley. The new town was an agricultural center serving local farmers and ranchers. Community buildings included the Calvary Presbyterian Church (1900), and the post office that was originally established three miles north at Los Pinos; it was relocated to Bayfield in 1899. By 1904, the town had its own water powered flour mill and a telephone company. Hardware companies were in business soon after 1900, including Lewis Hardware, which is still operating today. Other community buildings and services included a school, general store, the Pine River Cemetery, a creamery, a hotel, drugstore, livery barn, Free Methodist and Union Churches, a newspaper, the *Bayfield Blade*, and later The Pearl Theater. Bayfield was incorporated in 1906 and provided community services to rural residents in the Pine River Valley, both north to the future Vallecito area and south to Ignacio.

Bayfield struggled to have enough capital to fund a bank. The Farmers and Merchants Bank opened in 1910 and closed in the 1930s, a victim of the Depression. No new bank

opened in the town until the 1970s. The early planning and construction of the Pine River Dam (later renamed the Vallecito Dam) provided controlled water runoff to farmers and stimulated the local economy.

The Pine River Cemetery is located about one half mile north of Bayfield. It is also known as the Bayfield Cemetery but the earliest burials relate to the Pine River Valley residents and it was well-established prior to the founding of Bayfield. The Cemetery is on land that was first settled by John B. Dunham in 1877. In November 1882, he filed for a homestead of 160 acres. Dunham was a justice of the peace; his wife, Susan Mildred Rowe Dunham, was a local midwife. Together they had several children including Walter, Alfred, John T. Franklin, Larna, Ralph, Elizabeth (Lizzie), and Dora. In September 1882, Susan Dunham died and John Dunham buried her on his land. Around this same time, Elijah York, a neighbor of the Dunhams, passed away and he was also buried near Mrs. Dunham. John Dunham continued to live on his homestead with his son Walter and his family, passing away in 1903. Ironically, John is not buried in the Pine River Cemetery, but in the Peoples Cemetery in Dolores, Colorado. In 1905, Walter, who inherited his father's land, officially donated about three acres to the Pine River Cemetery Association, including the land where his mother and Elijah York were buried. Over time, additional land was donated to the District and the parcel is now about eight and one half acres. In 1953, the Pine River Association became the Pine River Cemetery District. Today the Cemetery is administered and maintained by the District.



Photo 8. Headstone of Gussie Rea, 2017.

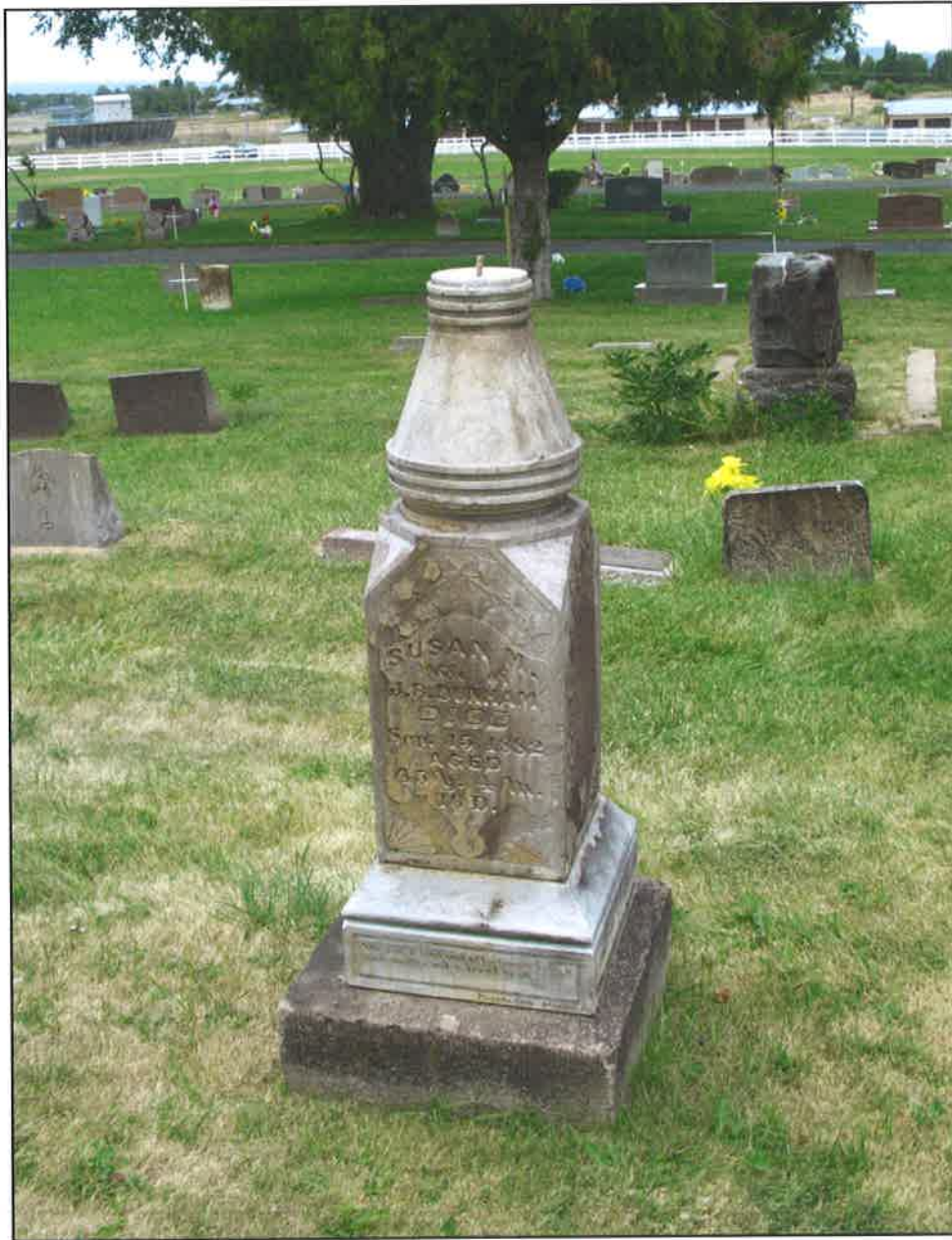


Photo 9. Pine River Cemetery - Susan M. Dunham Gravestone, 2017.

The Pine River Cemetery is almost nine acres in size and oriented north/south. It is located on a low mesa that overlooks the Pine River to the west. The Cemetery is grass covered with scattered pine trees on the western portion of the Cemetery with a few lilac bushes planted with irregular spacing. The Cemetery is fenced with chain link and a gate.

Within the fenced area, the eastern portion of the Cemetery is flat and open with no trees. This portion of the Cemetery has the most recent burials and it has a granite structure for cremated remains. The western portion of the Cemetery is the oldest with scattered trees and bushes. This area slopes to the west and overlooks the Pine/ Los Pinos River to the

west. The graves are located throughout the parcel in north/south rows. The individual graves are oriented east/west and most of the headstones face east. The exception is an original main road that runs north/south bisecting the parcel. Headstones on the east side of this road face west to the road for visitor visibility. A total of about 2072 individuals are buried in the Cemetery. The burial dates range from 1882 to present. Individuals buried in the Pine River/ Bayfield Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 10. Norman Bates, Zinc Gravemarker, 2017

Ignacio Area Cemeteries

The project cemeteries located in the greater Ignacio area include Ignacio East, Ignacio West, Oxford, and Martinez. The locations of these cemeteries are shown on Figure 1.

The cemeteries in the Ignacio area reflect the history of the Ute, Hispano, and Euroamerican (Anglo) settlement in the area. The Utes occupied southwest Colorado from at least the 1700s, the Hispano settlement in southern Colorado had its roots in the historical events of northern New Mexico in the 1700s and 1800s, and the Anglo settlement began in the late 1800s. Together these histories contributed to the establishment and development of Ignacio and the history of the area cemeteries.

Early Ute History

The Utes were a loosely affiliated federation of seven nomadic bands by the time the United States assumed control of the region in 1848. The Utes and the federal government entered into their first treaty in 1849, establishing an agency at Taos that opened in 1850. Several treaties were made between the Utes and the federal government in the following years, generally with the purpose to define and constrain tribal lands to make way for permanent non-Indian settlement. A treaty of 1868 reduced tribal lands and stipulated the establishment of Indian Agencies in southwestern Colorado.

Undeterred by the boundaries set by the treaty, miners and would-be settlers poured onto Ute lands. Under increasing pressure from the United States, the Utes entered into the Brunot Agreement in September 1873, in which they were to receive annual payments of \$25,000 in exchange for ceding 3.5 million acres. Congress ratified the Agreement in April 1874, and began a lengthy process to remove the Utes from their San Juan homeland.

The Brunot Agreement stipulated that the previously established Los Pinos Agency be moved to the southern portion of the Ute reservation. In 1875, the agency moved to the area of present day Montrose, and was renamed the Uncompahgre Agency. However, the Southern Utes continued to travel to the more conveniently located Indian agencies that they had traditionally frequented at Abiquiu and Cimarron, N.M. Concerned northern New Mexico residents applied pressure on the government to confine the Utes to their Colorado reservation and to construct the promised Los Pinos Agency. In 1877, the Los Pinos Indian Agency was established along the Pine River at present day Ignacio.

For seventeen more years the federal and state governments continued in their efforts to relocate the Southern Utes. In February 1895, a 'solution' was found with the enactment of the Hunter Bill, which was derived from the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act. The Dawes Act advocated for individually owned Indian allotments separate from tribal lands. The act intended to 'civilize' Native Americans by promoting agricultural practices. The Hunter Bill specifically applied these principles to the Ute bands in Southern Colorado.

This bill allowed Southern Utes to choose land that they would individually own, and also allowed for the western-most tribal lands to be held in common. The Mouache and the Capote Ute Bands (now the Southern Ute Tribe) accepted these terms and members applied for allotments. The Weminuche Band (now the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), located in the southwest corner of the state, opted to retain their lands in common and they did not participate in the allotment process.

Tribal members selected allotment lands in 1896 through 1898 and the remaining unallotted lands were opened for non-Indian purchase and settlement in May 1899. The available lands, located in a 15-mile wide band that extended east/west across La Plata County, became known as the 'Ute Strip'.

These land allotments resulted in new sub-agencies at Navajo Springs near present day Towaoc and at a location on the Piedra River that is now under the waters of Navajo Reservoir. These sub-agencies were under the direction of the Los Pinos Agency in Ignacio that continued as the location for government oversight and provisions.

Over time, the Los Pinos Agency added new buildings and a post office opened on January 31, 1882. The Agency established a store/trading post, the government Indian boarding school, other agency buildings and homes for agency staff by 1907. The town of Ignacio was platted in 1909 and incorporated in 1913. The presence of the Agency was, according to many, the stimulus for the later development of the town.

In 1934, Congress passed the Indian Reorganization Act (also known as the Wheeler-Howard Bill). This act attempted to reverse the past U.S. government policies to assimilate Native Americans through the allotment system, erode tribal sovereignty, and damage native cultures. It called for the creation of tribal governments and constitutions. The Act also ended tribal allotments established under the Dawes Severalty and Hunter Acts. As a result of the Indian Reorganization Act, 200,000 acres of unsettled Ute Strip land were returned to Southern Ute Indian Tribal ownership in 1938. These policies and land practices created the checkerboard nature of the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.

Early Hispano History

Hispano settlement in southwestern Colorado is interwoven with the events associated with Ute history. The earliest Hispano occupation is the result of migrations to the west from the San Luis Valley and northwest into the San Juan Basin from New Mexico. The Mexican government awarded land grants to encourage settlement and the first grants located in Colorado were the Tierra Amarilla Land Grant (1832) and the Conejos Land Grant (1833). In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, transferred present day New Mexico to American rule and the presence of the U.S. Military provided security and encouraged settlement. However, permanent settlement in Colorado was slowed by continuing hostilities with Native Americans until the founding of Colorado's first permanent settlement in 1851 in the San Luis Valley.

As previously noted, the Brunot Agreement of 1874 opened the San Juan Mountain

mining areas to non-Indian settlement. This agreement stimulated development of mining and related industries in southwest Colorado and was an important factor in the development of routes into Colorado from northern New Mexico. The increased access to mineral deposits prompted the exploration and later development of the railroad to Durango and Silverton and the many related support businesses. Logging operations were established to supply railroad ties and building materials, and exchange and trade to Durango and mountain mining camps increased along established wagon routes.

By 1881, the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) extended from Antonito in the San Luis Valley through Chama, New Mexico and west toward the Animas River. In Archuleta County, the D & RG passed through the small Hispano settlements of Juanita, Caracas, Gato (later known as Pagosa Junction) located along the San Juan River. At the confluence of the Piedra and San Juan Rivers, a large railroad station was established at the old settlement of Arboles. As the rail line moved west through La Plata County toward Durango, railroad sidings and section houses were established with the first station in Allison and three miles to the west in Tiffany. About five miles farther to the west, La Boca station was established on the west bank of the Los Pinos River. The station was important as it had more extensive railroad facilities, a water tank, a trading post, school, and cemetery. From La Boca, the railroad proceeded about seven miles north to Ignacio and the Indian Agency. Ultimately, the railroad arrived in Durango in August 1881 and in Silverton in July 1882.

The availability of land for traditional agriculture and herding, the development of the railroad and related industries, the mining activities in the San Juan Mountains and the establishment of the Indian Agency in Ignacio offered Hispanos opportunities in addition to farming and sheep raising along the San Juan River. Finally, when Ute tribal members were offered individual allotments in the late 1890s, the lands were often worked by Hispano farmers for a share of the produce.

At the turn of the century and the earliest decades of the 1900s, Hispano settlement was scattered across the southern portion of Archuleta and La Plata Counties. In Archuleta County, Hispano settlements continued south of Pagosa Springs along the San Juan River system and the railroad line in the areas of Edith, Trujillo, Juanita, Gato, La Piedra and Arboles where isolated Hispano life along the rivers continued with little regular contact with other areas.

However changes took place as some residents began to move to the Ignacio and the Tiffany areas. The inability to patent their farm lands due to federal land withdrawals and employment in Ignacio with the Indian Agency prompted some families to move.

Throughout the area, a variety of circumstances promoted settlement including land opportunities through the relinquishment of Indian allotments and subsequent purchase by Hispanos, agriculture and herding, labor for shares on Ute allotments, railroad and related services and industries, and wage work at the Indian Agency in Ignacio.

Euroamerican/Anglo History

Anglos first settled in the Ignacio area due to the establishment of the Los Pinos Indian Agency in 1877, the arrival of the D&RG Railroad in 1881, and the availability of land in 1899. The establishment of the Indian Agency brought the first permanent Anglo residents as employees and agents of the federal government lived at the Agency and provided government services to the local Ute population.

The town of Ignacio and the Ute Indian Agency shared a railroad stop. The railway station was located south of Ignacio and included a depot, section house, water tank and storage and maintenance facilities. This rail station was a larger stop along the D&RG line, in part because the Ute Indian Agency had been established prior to the arrival of the railroad. The area included a concentration of farms and associated community services. Unlike other settlements and towns along the railroad line, Ignacio had a more diverse economic base and the railroad was one part of the economy.

Homesteading

Prior to 1899, land in the Ignacio area was unavailable for non-Indian settlement. In other areas of the United States, settlers with visions of living off the land were drawn by the opportunities presented in the Homestead and Desert Lands Acts. Enacted in 1862, the Homestead Act authorized the claims of up to 160 acres of land by any head of a family or over twenty-one years of age. While 160 acres may have been sufficient in the midwest, the drier climate and the soils in the west demanded larger acreages for reasonably productive yields. Congress amended the act to allow for larger parcels under the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act, and again in 1916 to allow for a full 640 acre section under the Stockraising Homestead Act.

The Desert Land Act of 1877 provided another mechanism to obtain western land. The act allowed a homesteader to claim 320 acres of land if the land was put under irrigation within three years. This act intended to reclaim desert lands and to provide homesteaders with family farms and ranches. Wells, or much more commonly, irrigation ditches brought water to the claims.

While these acts pertained to other states and parts of Colorado, in La Plata County legal non-Indian settlement in the southern portions of the County did not occur until 1899. As described above, in 1899 unclaimed Indian allotments on the 'Ute Strip' were available to non-Indians for settlement.

At noon, on May 4, 1899, unclaimed Ute Strip lands were opened for homesteading. Early reports indicate that there was a 'land rush' although not of the magnitude of the land rush under the Homestead Act in 1862. Settlers could either 'run' for the land, or (more sedately) file on a parcel in Durango.

Following the initial "run" and settlement, land parcels were actively advertised and marketed. In the Ignacio area, prospective settlers or speculators were encouraged to

contact the Los Pinos Indian Agency Superintendent for descriptive information and brochures on available properties. Land within the Ute Strip was actively bought and sold through the purchase of unclaimed land and the sale of allotments. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 ended the homestead period on the Ute Strip, by returning any land that had not been settled to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Previously, agricultural areas in the County had been primarily in the Pine, Florida, and Animas River valleys. With the opening of the Ute Strip, new settlement at lower elevations provided for a greater diversity of agricultural crops and new opportunities for hopeful settlers. The available land with the opening of the Ute Strip, was the beginning of Anglo permanent settlement in the southern portions of the County.

Ignacio

The town of Ignacio grew up adjacent to the 1877 Los Pinos Indian Agency. The D & RG established a depot and station facilities in 1881, south of Ignacio. The rail station was a larger stop along the D&RG line, in part because the Indian Agency had been established prior to the arrival of the railroad. The Ignacio post office opened in 1882 and a trading post was in operation by 1896. As the home of an Indian agency, Ignacio was an established trade center.

Ignacio also benefited when the Ute Strip area was open to non-Indian settlement and available lands were actively promoted and advertised. As a result, Anglo residents established farms and ranches in the area as well as operated many businesses and services in town.

In 1909, the north and central parts of the town were platted. By the 1930s, the range of businesses that were located in the town included stores, the Lindsay Hotel, a school, a blacksmith, the Burns Hall (a community hall) and the Bee Shanty that sold honey. The town had water wells and hand pumps on several corners where residents got their water. There was some running water from a reservoir on the hill on the west side of town. The town had electricity by 1937. There are numerous cement block buildings due to a cement block business in town.

In contrast to the development of the northern portions of Ignacio, Hispano residents tended to locate in the southern areas closer to the railroad depot. Businesses at the south end of town included Billiard Pool Hall, bakery, café, stores, the Garcia Store, a barbershop, and the Commercial Hotel. An early resident of the town, describes many of the Hispano homes as constructed of adobe. One building, the hall for *La Sociedad Proteccion Mutua De Trabajadores Unidos*, or SPMDTU, was constructed of adobe by local Hispano men for dances and celebrations. The lodge was established in 1916, the first outside of the San Luis Valley. The presence of the SPMDTU indicates the concentration of Hispanos in and around Ignacio.

Ignacio Cemeteries

There are four known cemeteries in Ignacio; the Ignacio Cemetery (sometime known as the Old Ignacio Cemetery), Ouray Memorial Cemetery, Ignacio East Cemetery and Ignacio West Cemetery. The histories of all the cemeteries are linked and represent the various burials traditions in Ignacio, often called a 'tri-ethnic community' due to Anglo, Hispano, and Ute residents.

The earliest known cemetery in Ignacio was located on the mesa west of the town. This cemetery, now known as the Ignacio Cemetery, dates from the late 1800s to about 1911 when some of the burials were moved to the new cemetery east of the Los Pinos River, now the location of the Ouray Memorial Cemetery.

This early Ignacio Cemetery was officially unknown prior to 2013 when a construction project for a new school inadvertently uncovered burials. The project excavations revealed the graves of 27 individuals, of which six that had been historically exhumed in approximately 1911. Associated burial goods, clothing, and physical attributes suggest that the individuals were children, adolescents, and adults of Native American and/or Hispanic ancestry.

Historical research indicates that the cemetery location was originally part of the Southern Ute Indian Allotment #1 to Frank Green (also known as Tawaumire) awarded in June, 1896. Following Frank Green's death, the allotment appears to pass to his sons Frank and John (also known as Juan) and later to John Taylor a relative who sold the land in 1907 to H. Halls for designation as part of the town of Ignacio.

In 1895, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs formally designated 360 acres for the Indian Agency and on October 7, 1910, two adjacent two acre cemetery parcels within the Indian Agency were reserved for purposes of a cemetery, one 'for the Catholic Church' and the second 'for the Indian Agency'. This designation was recorded in November 1910 on the BLM tract books and area map. Historical research indicates that several bodies were exhumed from the Ignacio Cemetery and reinterred in the 'Catholic' cemetery during 1911 when the town of Ignacio had ordered the cemetery moved to land designed by the government. Although no new burials appear to have occurred at the Ignacio Cemetery after that date, many graves dating from the late 1880s until 1910 remained. With the 2013 construction project, the remaining 21 individuals were discovered and reburied in 2014 in the Ignacio West Cemetery.

Ignacio East Cemetery

From 1911 until 1918, burials continued in what is now known as the Ouray Memorial Cemetery, in sections first designated for Catholic and Protestant church members. In 1918, the Ignacio Cemetery Association (now the Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District) acquired land from May Shoshone and established the Ignacio East Cemetery.

May Shoshone received Southern Ute Indian Allotment # 5 in 1896 consisting of 120 acres adjacent to her father Henry Shoshone's Allotment #4 of 320 acres also awarded in 1896. May inherited a portion of her father's allotment and in June 1918 sold 15 acres to the Ignacio Cemetery Association for \$375.00, including mineral, and oil and gas rights. As reported in the *Ignacio Chieftain*, this sale established the Ignacio East Cemetery. The cemetery is located on a mesa east of the Los Pinos River. The original entrance to the cemetery was on the north off an east/west road that is now Highway 151, up the mesa and between two cobblestone pillars that are still visible today. The first burial occurred in September 1918 for Fred O. Hamilton. Later, several individuals were reburied from the cemetery at the Agency (now the Ouray Memorial Cemetery) and possibly from the old Ignacio Cemetery on the west mesa. After the establishment of the Ignacio East Cemetery in 1918, burials in the Ouray Memorial Cemetery were primarily for tribal members.



Photo 11. Ignacio East Cemetery, 2017.

According to the Cemetery District records, some burials predate the establishment of the Cemetery and the burial location of some of these individuals is unknown. During fieldwork in 2017, a few of these individuals were found at the Ouray Memorial Cemetery.

The majority of the individuals buried in the Cemetery were early Euroamerican/Anglo families. The first burial was in 1918; the Cemetery is active and occasional burials continue in 2017. The rows of graves are north/south and the individual graves are oriented east/west, common in Christian cemeteries. There are about 454 graves in the cemetery and the oldest graves appear to be located in the northern portion of the Cemetery. Based on a count of individuals by surname, 95% of the 454 burials are Euroamerican/Anglo, 5% are Hispano, and less than 1 % are Ute. Individuals buried in the Ignacio East Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 12. Elizabeth Price Gravestone (reburied from an earlier location).

Ignacio West Cemetery

The Ignacio West Cemetery is located on land originally awarded to James Moore (also known as Patcotch), as part of Indian Allotment #9 approved in June 1898. The first recorded burial on the cemetery land is that of a 10 month old baby boy, Faustin Romero in December 1926. It is uncertain when the cemetery became formally established, but in the 1930s it was well known as the 'Catholic' cemetery where the majority of internments were Hispano. About 90% of the 352 burials in the Cemetery are associated with Hispano families, an indication of the close-knit Hispano community within Ignacio. From the surnames on the marked graves, 90% are Hispano, 2% are Ute, and 8% are Anglo. Over time there have been some burials of Ute Tribal members, however, the majority are buried in the Ouray Memorial Cemetery. Although there are a few Anglos buried in this cemetery, the majority tend to be buried in the Ignacio East Cemetery, which has been informally, and incorrectly designated as a 'Protestant cemetery'.



Photo 13. Ignacio West Cemetery

The cemetery is adjacent to Highway 172 about one mile south of Ignacio. The cemetery is slightly less than five acres in size and oriented north/south. The entrance to the Cemetery is about 100 feet off of the highway through an iron arch that has two original cobblestone pillars on each side.

The graves oriented east/west in fairly regular north/south rows. This east/west grave

orientation is very common in Christian burial grounds. There are a total of 384 known graves in the cemetery plus a recent burial plot of 21 unknown individuals that were reburied in 2014 as a result of the school development project previously discussed. The oldest graves appear to be located in the eastern and northern portions of the Cemetery. The Cemetery is active and the most recent burials have occurred in 2017. Individuals buried in the Ignacio West Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 14. Fedlina Romero Gravestone, 2015

Oxford Cemetery

The Oxford Cemetery is associated with early to mid-19th century Euroamerican settlement of Oxford located about 6 miles northwest of Ignacio. The settlement was established by 1881 with the development of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad. The settlement was originally named Silla by the railroad and it functioned as a railroad station. In October of 1909, J.M. Denning of Iowa filed a plat for the Town of Oxford creating about 100 small parcels with the railroad route bisecting the town. A post office named Grommet operated there from March, 1904 to January, 1908 when the post office name was changed to Oxford. Oxford had a stone schoolhouse and Grange No. 196, which was established in April 1911. Today nothing remains of the railroad facilities at Oxford. The old post office building and the school were demolished in 2011. A new grange hall and fire station was constructed in 2012 using the stones from the historic school. The only remaining site related to the historic settlement of Oxford is the cemetery.



Photo 15. Pioneer McCaw Grave at Oxford Cemetery, 2016

The cemetery was developed to provide a burial place for families in the Oxford settlement and the surrounding farms. The earliest burial is Mrs. Maynes who died in 1918 on the journey from Ignacio to the hospital in Durango. She was buried on land homesteaded by Robert Crosby in 1921. Between 1918 and 1948, about 12 individuals were buried in the area and in 1948, Mr. Crosby sold a 10 acre parcel to the cemetery trustees for the Oxford Cemetery. This appears to be the first formal designation of the

cemetery. In 1958, the trustees transferred the ownership to the newly formed Ignacio Allison Oxford Cemetery District. The Cemetery is still owned and maintained by the District.

The Cemetery is a fenced rectangle 10 acre parcel located on the northeast corner of County Road 311 and 313 about one mile south of the Oxford townsite. The Cemetery is on a slight ridge that slopes to the east. The surface is rocky with pine needles, native grasses, cactus, yucca, and some cheat grass. There are juniper and a few pinyon trees scattered throughout the cemetery. The graves are scattered primarily along the southern boundary. The graves are arranged in irregularly spaced rows that trend north/south. These irregularities depend on vegetation and topography. Within the rows, the graves are oriented to the east with only a few exceptions. A total of 85 graves were identified during field documentation. The earliest reported burial is 1918 and the most recent 2016. The majority of the burials are from local pioneer families and their descendants that settled the Oxford area. Some of these include the Klusman, Hahn, and McCaw families. Pioneer descendants still remain in the area reflecting the development of the settlement and the persistence of the families in the area. Individuals buried in the Oxford Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 16. Hahn Family Graves at Oxford Cemetery, 2016

Martinez Cemetery

The Martinez Family Cemetery is associated with the early Hispano migrations into southern La Plata and Archuleta Counties from the San Luis Valley and northern New Mexico. The Martinez family in La Plata County originated in the San Luis Valley with the 1882 marriage of Luis Martinez Sr.(1862-1934) and Urselita Atencio (1866-1943). Over time, the Martinez' had nine children: Luis Jr, Maximo, J. Trinidad, Flavio, Juan J., Virginia, Adelina, Merced, and Luz. Based on birth and death records, the family had moved from the San Luis Valley into the Ignacio area by 1902 for the birth of Juan J. and J. Trinidad in Ignacio.

It appears that the current family land was likely settled by 1911 when Maximo (1893-1918) filed and received a patent for 240 acres, including the area where the Martinez Cemetery is located. The patent was awarded in June 1921, three years after the death of Maximo. Apparently, the patent passed to his parents with his death. In 1935, Urselita, then a widow, deeded the land to her son Juan Trinidad. Although the size of the holding has decreased over time, the portion with the Cemetery (overall 20 acres), remains in the family as it has passed down to descendants. In all, the Martinez family has farmed and owned the property for about 100 years.



Photo 17. Martinez Family Cemetery, 2014

In keeping with strong family ties and traditional land use patterns, the Martinez family established their family cemetery on their land. The Martinez Family Cemetery is the resting place for members of the Martinez, Trujillo, and Vazques families, all related through descent and marriage. The first burial in the Cemetery was in 1918 for Maximo Martinez an older son of Luis Sr. and Urselita who had filed for a patent on the land. His marker is a large sandstone headstone placed beneath the large ponderosa. Subsequent burials radiate out from this first grave. The most recent burial was in 1997 for Rosita O. Melrose, granddaughter of Juan J. Martinez, son of Luis Sr. and Urselita. All of the burials are Hispano from the extended Martinez family and convey their cultural traditions. Many phrases are in Spanish and the iconography reflects their religious beliefs and Catholic faith. Statuary, including Madonnas, Christ Child, crosses, and hearts are evident on the hand-crafted stones. The Cemetery burials embody the burial customs, funerary art and iconography and language of this early Hispano family and the Cemetery is a physical reminder of their early settlement in the area.

The Cemetery is located about seven miles west of Ignacio. The Cemetery is about a half-acre in size and oriented northwest/southeast. It is located on private land on a pinyon and juniper covered mesa. The Cemetery is fenced with an old looped woven wire fence supported by old cedar posts. Within the fenced area, the graves are located throughout the parcel in north/south rows. The individual graves are oriented east/west. A total of about 29 individuals are buried in the Cemetery; about 12 of these are unmarked. The burial dates range from 1918 to 1997. Individuals buried in the Martinez Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 18. Maximo Martinez Gravestone

Animas River Valley Cemeteries

The project cemeteries located along the west side of the Animas River valley include Elco and La Posta Cemeteries. Their locations are shown on Figure 1.

The settlements of La Posta and Elco on the west side of the Animas River, south of Durango, had their beginnings with the allocation of lands to the Ute tribal members under the Hunter Act of 1895, the opening of the area to non-Indian settlement in 1899, and the development of the existing trails and stagecoach route between Aztec, N.M. and Durango.

Prior to 1899, non-Indian settlement across the southern portion of La Plata County was not allowed because this was Indian land under the terms of the 1868 federal treaty. After several years of attempts to relocate Ute Indian bands from the southern area of the County to make way for Euroamerican settlement, the federal government enacted the Hunter Bill, which was derived from the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act. The Dawes Act advocated for individually owned Indian allotments separate from tribal lands. The Hunter Bill specifically applied these principles to the Ute bands in Southern Colorado. This bill allowed Southern Utes to choose land that they would individually own. The Mouache and the Capote Ute Bands (now the Southern Ute Tribe) accepted these terms and members applied for allotments.

Many tribal allotment lands were along the west side of the Animas River in the vicinity of La Posta. The proximity of lands near the river and the construction of ditches insured that the irrigable lands would be productive. Several of the Ute households and extended families selected adjacent allotments resulting in large holdings. Because these claims required additional workers and because many Utes had good relations with Hispano area settlers, several Hispanos worked on the Ute allotments for a portion of the produce. In addition, many of the Hispanos married Utes further solidifying land holdings. These relationships were very successful and La Posta was a thriving agricultural community by 1900.

Tribal members selected allotment lands in 1896 through 1898 and the remaining unallotted lands were opened for non-Indian purchase and settlement in May 1899. The available lands, located in a 15-mile wide band that extended east/west across the southern portion of La Plata County, became known as the 'Ute Strip'.

The opening of the 'Ute Strip' lands resulted in the filing of homesteads by settlers that had previously taken up residence (preemptions) as well as newly selected homesteads. Claims were filed under the 1862 Homestead Act for 160 acres as well as the Desert Claims Act of 1877 for up to 320 acres. Along the west side of the Animas River, Hispanos filed for homesteads in the La Posta area where they now had relationships and family ties.

Further south, in the Elco area, Euroamericans filed for homesteads and developed farms and ranches. The southern area was predominately Euroamerican with cultivation of hay

and cattle ranches. The differences between the settlement in the La Posta and Elco areas may have been the result of the availability of land given that La Posta had been settled earlier and the livestock operations tended to need more land.

The small communities were linked by the existence of roads and trails. The early trails were the result of routes into the San Juan and La Plata Mountains for mining purposes. These were well established in the 1870s as the western side of the river was the natural corridor to the mining activities in the mountains. From about 1890, a stagecoach route operated on a daily basis between Aztec, N.M. and Durango. From Aztec, the route passed through the lower Animas Valley to Elco, La Posta and into Durango. Prior to 1899 there were few settlers in the southern part of the valley. However, La Posta had been settled earlier by Utes and Hispanos and it became the major stop along the route. Before 1899, La Posta had an adobe school, stage stop, grocery and in 1901, a post office named Castelar. Elco developed with the first homestead claims in 1899 and 1900, however it did not develop the range of services of La Posta and the settlement was more dispersed.



Photo 19. River Valley Landscape

Elco Cemetery

The settlement of Elco is located in an area that was first known as Five Mile Mesa. The small settlement was along the Aztec to Durango stagecoach route on the west side of the Animas River. Elco was settled by early pioneers who filed for land when the area was opened for non-Indian settlement in 1899. Unlike La Posta about four miles north, Elco residents were primarily Euroamerican farmers and ranchers. The area homesteads were a combination of irrigated lands along the river as well as upper holdings with dry farming. The homesteads cultivated hay and produce for household consumption and some residents had cattle herds. In 1901 a cemetery was established and in 1903, a temporary frame school house was constructed followed by a more permanent stone school in 1904 that is reported to have had a piano. There was no church in the area and Protestant services were held in the school. The Elco post office operated from 1905 to 1914. In 1905, the Denver & Rio Grande railroad constructed the Farmington Branch between Durango and Farmington on the east side of the Animas River. The establishment of the railroad resulted in a station near Elco that was named Bondad and located on the east side of the river. With the railroad, the focus of development shifted to the Bondad station area and a grocery was constructed there in the 1930s. At Elco, the post office closed in 1914 and the school was consolidated and closed by 1959. Today, the Cemetery is the only remaining element of the Elco settlement.



Photo 20. Elco Cemetery, 2015

The Elco Cemetery is located on land homesteaded by James Frazier in 1907. At some time in the 1910s or 1920s, the cemetery parcel was deeded to the Elco Cemetery Company. A deed of sale for the adjacent property by Frazier in 1938, indicates that the Cemetery parcel had been previously conveyed to the Cemetery Company. The first burial in the Cemetery is a young child, Hugh Frazier, the two year old son of Stella and James Frazier. As with many small rural cemeteries, informal burials on family land often evolved into formal cemeteries at a later date. The origins of the Elco Cemetery appear to follow this pattern. The highest frequency of burials at the Cemetery is during the period of 1901 through 1940; after that burials taper off until more recent times when descendants of early pioneers are buried.

There are 72 graves that have been observed in the Cemetery and 66 have death dates. Individuals buried in the Elco Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 21. Gravestone of Hugh Frazier, First Cemetery Burial

La Posta Cemetery

The small settlement of La Posta began as a stagecoach stop on the road between Aztec, Farmington, and Durango. The route along the Animas River had been well-traveled by miners destined for the San Juan Mountains and mining exploration. By the 1890s, several Ute allotments had been awarded in the area. Many of these allotments were large due the concentration of allotments on adjacent lands by extended families. These holdings led to the circumstance of more irrigable land than some families were able to cultivate. As a result, Hispano laborers often worked these Ute allotments for a share of the produce. They also tended herds of sheep and goats in the area.

This arrangement was successful and by 1901, about 30 Hispano families lived and worked in the La Posta area. The small community had a post office, grocery store, and a school at the beginning of the century. By 1903, St. Joseph's Catholic Church had been established and the area became an important Penitente center. The community remained active until the Durango to Farmington railroad was built on the east side of the Animas River in 1905. With the establishment of the railroad, development and activity shifted to the east side and the use of the stage route through La Posta dwindled. The post office was moved across the river and La Posta became a quiet agricultural settlement occupied by Hispano and Ute/Hispano families.



Photo 22. La Posta Cemetery Tucson Gravestone, 2015.

The La Posta Cemetery is located on land that was patented by Juan Cordova in 1907. In 1912, his widow, Anie Cordova gave one acre of land for the Cemetery to the Theatine Fathers of the Catholic Church. The Cemetery was across the street and slightly north of St Joseph's Church that had been constructed in 1903. There are reports of an earlier 'lost' cemetery that was located about one mile south of the church. The report details strongly suggest that the cemetery was Penitente with rituals that were specific to those practitioners, including the lack of headstones. As of the 1950s, there were no traces remaining of this reported cemetery. The earliest community burials may have been at this unnamed cemetery.

The earliest burial in the La Posta Cemetery is Juan Attencio, an infant death in 1902. His burial was followed by his sister, Maria Attencio in 1904. Several burials followed during the period of 1910 through 1959. There are a total of 66 observed graves and another 40 reported by the mortuary, but not observed. Individuals buried in the La Posta Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 23. Carved Sandstone Gravestone for D. A.

West County Cemeteries

The history of the settlements and cemeteries on the west side of La Plata County is linked to the mining exploration in the La Plata Mountains, the establishment of the Fort Lewis military post, the migration of Mormon settlers from the Mancos valley area, and the opening of the area to non-Indian settlement. The west county cemeteries include Hay Gulch, Kline, Marvel, and Redmesa. The location of the cemeteries is shown on Figure 1.

Early Mining Exploration and Settlement

The first exploration into the San Juan Mountains was the Charles Baker party into the San Juan Mountains and the Silverton area in search of gold and other minerals. After searching the high mountains, the Baker Party traveled south from Silverton to winter in the Animas Valley. The following year they left due to the Civil War outbreak. However after the War, interest in the San Juan Mountains resumed.

Following the beginnings of mining activity in the San Juan Mountains in the early 1870s, mineral exploration expanded to the La Plata Mountains, west of the Animas Valley. The next major entry into the area was the John Moss party in 1873 that went on to settle at the base of the La Plata Mountains in the area that became Parrott City. Moss negotiated an agreement with the Ute bands to allow them to mine gold along the La Plata River even though the area was not open to legal non-Indian settlement until the following year.

In 1874, some of the miners from the Moss party, established cabins along the Mancos River near present-day Mancos. These settlers wintered in the area but soon established more permanent structures and by 1876 the area was settled with farms and ranches replacing the seasonal occupation of the miners. In the late 1870s, there were several businesses, a post office and a school. As other structures and businesses continued to coalesce, the town of Mancos was considered settled by 1881.

The first homesteader in the fertile area south of Mancos was a Mr. Weber. He homesteaded a large area in 1878 and the area became known informally as 'Weber'. In the early 1880s, Mr. Weber is reported to have shot his wife's companion and shortly afterward left the area selling the homestead to Mormon emigrants from Salt Lake City; this area became known as the Weber Community.

Fort Lewis Military Post

The federal government began expeditions into southern Colorado in the mid-1800s to develop westward routes for roads and railroads. A number of surveys were conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers to record detailed geographical, geological, and botanical information.

In the late 1860s and 1870s, the federal government continued expeditions into the area

to determine a location for a military fort. The tensions with Ute and Navajo Indians prompted the desire to establish a military presence first to guard routes into the mining areas and later to protect settlers that were beginning to enter the area.

The first European settlers appear to have located along the well-established route from Tierra Amarilla to Animas City. The road passed by the well-known hot springs, Pagosa Springs (meaning “boiling waters” in the Ute language). By 1876, settlement in the Pagosa Springs area was reported. The town is said to have had a general store, post office, stables and livery, the Rose Bud Saloon, and a sawmill in 1878. These facilities indicate that between 1876 and 1878, there was a relatively rapid influx of new residents to the area.

The increase in population in the Pagosa area was likely influenced by the development and improvement of roads through the area to the mining districts of the San Juan Mountains. As a result, the federal government decided to locate a military camp at Pagosa Springs. This camp location had been debated since the late 1860s and in October 1878, federal troops arrived to begin the construction of Camp Lewis. Construction included barracks, stables, commissary, and corrals.

In 1879, the camp was renamed Fort Lewis, indicating the military’s intention that it was to become a permanent station. However, early reservations about the fort’s location proved to be true. The fort was isolated from the majority of the settlers it was designed to protect in the Animas Valley and the winter climate was so harsh that basic food for soldiers and hay for horses could not be supplied.

The “Ute War” over the northwest Colorado Meeker Massacre in 1879 signaled the end of Fort Lewis in Pagosa Springs. The fort was relocated in fall 1880 to the La Plata River, the site of the present-day Old Fort Lewis, south of Hesperus. The fort was occupied from 1880 to 1889. The fort included military quarters, a dairy, parade ground, stables and corrals, commissary, and a cemetery. It was decommissioned in 1889 when the threats of Indian conflicts ceased. During the occupation, the local residents provided hay and grains for animals as well as local produce for the soldiers. The presence of the Fort helped to attract settlement interest in the area.

Mormon Migration from Weber Community

The Mormon settlement in western La Plata County has its origins with early occupation of the Mancos Valley in the Weber Community. The Weber Community had its beginnings with an immigrant caravan that originated in Salt Lake City in 1880. The immigrants had been called by Brigham Young the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon Church) to go out and colonize areas in the southwest. The wagon train journeyed from Salt Lake City with a mission to settle and colonize the San Juan River country in southeast Utah. By spring 1880 they arrived in Bluff, Utah, with the intention to settle and farm the area. However, there was insufficient vacant fertile land and they moved into the western areas of McElmo Canyon in Colorado.

In 1881, Joseph Stanford Smith left the McElmo settlement to explore farming opportunities to the east. He journeyed through McElmo Canyon through the Montezuma Valley to the Mancos area where he worked as a laborer on a farm during the summer of 1881. Recognizing the agricultural opportunities, he returned to the McElmo settlement to organize a move to the Mancos area. In 1882, several Mormon families moved to the Valley. George Halls purchased the Weber property and other families settled in the vicinity. This area became known as the Weber Community.

The Weber Community was settled exclusively by Mormon families that were seeking agricultural land. There were no single adults, cowboys, or other transient individuals. As such, the Community was structured around the Church organization and Church leaders were viewed as community leaders for all day-to-day operations and decisions. Construction was often done cooperatively as residents built cabins, barns, fences, roads, bridges, and Weber Ditch #1. Labor and equipment was shared as needed.

By 1884, the residents were organized into the Weber Branch of the Church. The first church was constructed of logs and services were held in 1885. In keeping with basic tenets of the Church a cooperative store, grist mill, sawmill, granary, and large cooperative farm were constructed and managed. In addition, a coal mine at the south end of the valley was developed cooperatively. The coal mine necessitated the construction of a road that was later extended over the mountains into the Redmesa area.

The population of the Community continued to increase through the 1880s and 1890s. By 1900, the population had increased to the point where arable farm land was no longer available for young families. As a result, the road to the Redmesa area was improved and families migrated over the mountains to the area that became Kline, Marvel, and Redmesa. This migration established the strong Mormon presence in the western portion of the La Plata County.

Euroamerican Homesteading – the Opening of the Ute Strip

Prior to 1899, non-Indian settlement in the southern portion of La Plata County was not allowed because it was Indian land under the terms of the federal 1868 treaty. After several years of attempts to relocate Ute Indian bands from the southern area of the county for Euroamerican settlement, the federal government devised a 'solution'. In February 1895, the government enacted the Hunter Bill, which was derived from the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act. The Dawes Act advocated for individually owned Indian allotments separate from tribal lands. The act intended to 'civilize' Native Americans by promoting agricultural practices. The Hunter Bill specifically applied these principles to the Ute bands in Southern Colorado. This bill allowed Southern Utes to choose land that they would individually own. The Mouache and the Capote Ute Bands (now the Southern Ute Tribe) accepted these terms and members applied for allotments. The Weminuche Band (now the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe), located in the southwest corner of the state, opted to continue to retain their lands in common and they did not participate in the allotment process.

Tribal members selected allotment lands in 1896 through 1898 and the remaining unallotted lands were opened for non-Indian purchase and settlement in May 1899. The available lands, located in a 15-mile wide band that extended east/west across the southern portion of La Plata County, became known as the 'Ute Strip'.

The opening of these lands resulted in the filing of homesteads by settlers that had previously taken up residence (preemptions) as well as newly selected homesteads. Claims were filed under the 1862 Homestead Act for 160 acres as well as the Desert Claims Act of 1877 for 320 acres. With the permanent settlement by Euroamericans, the small settlements of Kline, Marvel and Redmesa were established. These historical events (military, homesteading, and Mormon settlement) are reflected in the histories of the local cemeteries.



Photo 24. Kline Cemetery Looking Toward the La Plata Mountains, 2016

Hay Gulch Cemetery

Hay Gulch Cemetery is located near CR 120 on land that is owned by the State of Colorado and has been in state ownership since March 3, 1875. A well-defined flat valley bisects the area. The cemetery is located on the northwest side of the valley on a low mesa sprinkled with pinon and juniper.



Photo 25. Hay Gulch Cemetery, 2016.

The area was settled by homesteaders in the 1880s and 1890s just prior to the opening of the area to non-Indian settlement. Some of the early homesteaders included the Huntingtons, Tipotsch, and Hunt families. The area was used for growing hay by the first settlers in the early 1880s. The flat verdant valley and creek provided a good environment for hay and the settlers provided the crop to the military site of Fort Lewis, approximately four miles to the southeast. The Fort operated from 1880 until 1889 and the area was dubbed Hay Gulch. During this time, the Hay Gulch Irrigation Ditch was established. Coal mines were also developed in area and provided coal to the Fort.

Although there was no formal central settlement, the area had a concentration of settlers and supported two rural schools. The log Hay Gulch School was constructed in 1888 and was located near the Cemetery. About 10-20 students attended school, depending on the year and season. By 1903, the school was overcrowded and the Rockvale School was built and operated from 1905 to 1948. Apparently as many as 40 students attended. It is

likely that the schools served as the places for community and ditch organizational activities and meetings. A post office was established near the Cemetery at Content, possibly a local ranch or coal mine; it operated from September 1901 until October 1913.

Although no formal documentation about the establishment of the Cemetery has been located, it functioned to meet the needs of settlement's residents to bury their family members. According to local residents, the first burial at the cemetery was a young child, Willie Banks, in 1889 and the last burial was homesteader John Marion Crawford. The recent research and field documentation of the Cemetery indicates that about 12 people are reported to be buried in it. However, evidence of 16 marked and unmarked graves were identified during fieldwork.

The Cemetery is slightly less than a half-acre in size and it is a pentagon shape. It is oriented northwest/southeast and located on top of an unnamed mesa that trends northwest/southeast. The mesa is covered in pinyon and juniper and there is a large coal mining operation about 1/8 miles to the northeast of the cemetery. Natural vegetation around the Cemetery includes pinyon and juniper trees and native grasses. The approach to the Cemetery is a two-track up a ravine through the trees. The track skirts the Cemetery on the west and continues to the northwest. The Cemetery is fenced with chain-link that was installed sometime in the 1970s to replace the fallen wood post fence. Remnants of the original wood and wire fence are visible along the northern boundary of the cemetery.

Within the fenced area, the majority of the parcel is relatively flat but overall there is a slight rise to the north. The ground is fairly barren with scattered juniper and pinyon trees, especially to the east and west edges of the parcel. The graves are located throughout the parcel with the main concentration of graves in east/west rows. The individual graves are oriented to the southeast. A total of 16 graves were identified at the Cemetery. Of these, eight are of unknown individuals; there is one illegible temporary marker and seven unmarked graves. These graves were identified based on the collapsed enclosures that surrounded the graves. The burial dates range from 1889 to 1926.

There is no known cemetery association to maintain the cemetery, although fencing was installed in the 1970s and there is an old small sign on the track to the Cemetery. It is assumed that local families with ancestors buried in the cemetery provide some sporadic oversight. Individuals buried in the Hay Gulch Cemetery are listed in the appendix.

Kline Cemetery

Kline was first settled about 1903 by Mormon migrants from the Mancos Valley area and a few migrants from Arizona. John Eaton platted a portion of his 160 acre parcel for the townsite and recorded the plat on July 8, 1908, however many of the future townspeople had already arrived. The post office and a branch of the Mormon Church had been established in 1904 when a log church was constructed. It later burned and was replaced by a frame building and later a red brick church. The brick building was on land conveyed from Emily Eaton to trustees for the Church on March 2, 1915. Elmer Taylor, a local mason, built the church, reportedly using bricks brought in from Durango. By 1911 about sixty people were living in or near the town. The town never grew much beyond that size. When the Kline Ward of the Mormon Church was merged with the Redmesa Ward in 1955 the old church property was sold.



Photo 26. Kline Cemetery, 2016.

The Kline Cemetery is located on land patented by Chloe Eaton Walker in 1910. Although the family moved to New Mexico, La Plata County land records through 1937 indicate that the parcel was owned by the family. At some time after 1937, the cemetery parcel was conveyed to Everett Forsham. A land deed of sale for the property by Everett Forsham to Brice F. Lee, Jr. in 1960, indicates that the cemetery was a designated parcel at that time but the actual ownership of the cemetery parcel is unclear. However at some time during Forsham's ownership or earlier, the property was conveyed to the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints. In 1995, the Bishopric of Redmesa Ward of the

Church sold the cemetery parcel to the Redmesa/Kline Cemetery Corporation, the current owners.

The earliest reported burial is Lewis Floyd Ivie in 1902. He was accidentally shot while hauling wood. Second and third burials were Ephrian Bleek (1904) and Jake Slade (1908) who were both murdered. The cemetery was most active from the early 1900s until the 1930s and 1940s. It continues to be used today and maintained by the Redmesa/Kline Cemetery Corporation.

The Cemetery is about three acres in size and oriented east/west. It is located in an area of general farming with some plowed fields around the parcel. The land was originally sage covered and the west half of the cemetery is sage that remains uncut. The eastern portion of the cemetery has been cleared and there are a few scattered sage bushes and native grasses. On the north side of the cemetery there is a shallow drainage with some juniper suggesting that water is occasionally present. The cemetery parcel is flat with open views in all directions. The graves are located in the eastern portion of the Cemetery in north/south rows and a small concentration in the southwest corner of the parcel. The individual graves are oriented east/west. A total of about 242 individuals are buried in the Cemetery; about 13 of these are unknown. The burial dates range from 1902 to 2018. Individuals buried in the Kline Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 27. Graves at Kline Cemetery, 2016

Marvel Cemetery

The town of Marvel was platted and recorded in 1917 from land carved out of an original claim of John Henry Miller. The small town was named after the “Marvel Midget” flour mill, a self-contained roller mill that was produced by the Anglo-American Mill Company in Owensboro, Kentucky and installed at the north end of town. The town quickly grew and had three mercantiles, a garage, school, shoe repair shop, blacksmith shop, the Marvel State Bank, pool hall, ice cream store, and more. The town had a post office from 1915 to 1957 (called Kline until 1953) and two churches including the Methodist Church that was established in 1919. The Mormon presence was not as pronounced in Marvel as in the neighboring communities of Kline and Redmesa. Marvel prospered in the 1920s with many businesses but hit hard times when water shortages severely curtailed farm production. Overall, Marvel was a prosperous regional center that provided produce and services to the area.



Photo 28. Marvel Cemetery, 2017.

The Marvel Cemetery was located on land donated by Hanford Miller on his claim. He filed for the land in 1903 and the cash entry patent was issued in April 1910. The Marvel Townsite plat map indicates that the cemetery parcel was separately identified by 1917, indicating that the Cemetery had been formally established. The earliest recorded burial in the Cemetery is William Rafferty a 59 year old neighbor that was buried in 1905. This

burial was followed by several others in the early 1900s with the most frequent burials occurring between the 1910s through the 1940s.

The Cemetery is just over two acres in size and oriented north/south along CR 131. It is a flat parcel that is surrounded by farm fields. The area to the north, outside of the fenced parcel has been set aside for future burials although the current Cemetery parcel is not full. The Cemetery parcel has been cleared in the past and most of the ground surface is bare. There is one prominent pinyon tree in the center of the parcel and there are small bushes along the western fence line. Otherwise there is an occasional bush and native grasses on the ground.

Within the fenced area, the graves are located in north/south rows and the individual graves are oriented east/west. The western portion of the Cemetery is most dense indicating that these are the oldest graves. To the east graves are more spread out and relatively newer. There are a total 410 identified graves in the Cemetery. Of these 335 have burial dates. Approximately 75 graves have no burial dates or they are illegible. The burial dates range from 1905 to 2016. Individuals buried in the Marvel Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 29. Gravestone of John Ott

Redmesa Cemetery

The first settlers in the Redmesa area were from the lower La Plata River area in New Mexico. These were the John Greer, Henry Hall, and the BB Warren families who settled north & west of the area that would become the Redmesa townsite. In order to satisfy requirements for the Desert Claim Act, water had to be brought to the claims. As a result, settlers developed three ditches in the early 1900s. These were the Joseph Freed, Revival, and Warren-Vosberg ditches. In 1908, settlers began work on the Redmesa Reservoir. With the arrival of new settlers from the Weber Community in Mancos Valley, the Redmesa Ward of the Mormon Church was created. Because the majority of the townsite residents were Church members, they requested financial assistance for the reservoir construction from the Church in Salt Lake City.



Photo 30. Redmesa Cemetery 2017

The townsite of Redmesa was formally created in 1913 when Church Trustees were given land for the townsite by homesteader and Church member Mary Frankland. Following the receipt of the land, the Trustees platted town lots and sold these to Church members. Through the years, the community had a school, brick church, and fellowship hall, small country store, post office, the Mesa Mercantile, a cream station, ice house, and cemetery. In 1924, the Long Hollow Mill was constructed to mill flour. The mill was powered by a water turbine that used ditch water. Although non-Church members settled in farms in the immediate area, the Redmesa community was predominately Mormon as was the neighboring community of Kline. However, the small settlement of Marvel was

not a Mormon-based community. In 1955, the Kline Ward was discontinued and membership was consolidated at the Redmesa Ward.

The Redmesa Cemetery is located on two acres on the western edge of the townsite. The parcel was originally part of a claim filed by Henry R Dean as a 1905 homestead but cancelled in September 1906. Dean then refiled and the land was awarded as a cash entry patent on December 4, 1911. At some time after that, the Cemetery became the property of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In 1995, the Church sold the property to the Redmesa/Kline Cemetery Corporation. The Corporation continues to own and maintain the Cemetery. The earliest burial is 1909 for a 16 year old girl. Her burial was followed by several others in the 1920s and 1930s. Burials continue at the Cemetery with the most recent in 2016 for descendants of the early Mormon pioneer families.

The Cemetery is about two acres in size and is oriented north/south. The cemetery parcel is flat with farm fields on three sides of the acreage. There are residences on the east side across CR 103E. The surrounding area has been plowed and there is a row of cottonwood trees that have been planted along the western edge of the parcel, in part to act as a windbreak.

Within the fenced area, the parcel has been cleared and there are some native grasses on the surface. There are some interior pathways oriented on the cardinal directions. The main and most obvious path extends from the gated entrance to the west where it ends. The graves are located primarily in the eastern portion of the cemetery with a few scattered in the western third of the parcel. Within the cemetery there are several areas where there are no graves suggesting that these areas are available for burials in the future. The rows of graves are oriented in north/south rows and the individual graves are oriented east/west. A total of about 221 graves were identified during the fieldwork. The earliest burial data is 1909 and the most recent 2018. Individuals buried in the Redmesa Cemetery are listed in the appendix.



Photo 31. Infant Gravestone, 2017

Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of this project was to compile a list of individuals buried in the small rural county cemeteries and provide accessibility to this list. The methods to accomplish these goals were to assemble burial information from a variety of sources and to field check this information. Field work included cross checking reported burials with observations to determine if the gravestones were present and legible. The condition of the markers were noted. All headstones and markers were photographed.

The collection of these data indicates that all of the studied cemeteries share some common attributes relative to size, location and condition. Most of the studied cemeteries were relatively small although the cemeteries in the towns of Bayfield and Ignacio were much larger. With the exception of Hay Gulch, all of the project cemeteries were active with various frequencies of burials. As a result, all of these cemetery burials exceeded the original burial estimates that were developed from the available existing records at the outset of the project.

With the exception of those located within towns (Pine River/Bayfield, Ignacio East and Ignacio West), the cemeteries were found in relatively remote locations. These environments contributed to a sense of pioneer authenticity and peaceful timelessness within the cemetery setting.

Regardless of size and location, the cemeteries are considered important places to the descendants of the buried loved ones. This is evident in the care of the cemeteries. The majority of the cemeteries are maintained by cemetery associations. However, even without a formal cemetery association, the Hay Gulch and La Posta Cemeteries are maintained by family descendants that tend their ancestor's graves.

Most of the grave markers at the cemeteries were in fairly good condition; however, some of the older gravestone exhibit some issues. The major concerns tend to be instability (tilting, loose fittings between upright and base), and lichen growth, particularly on sandstone and marble veteran markers.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations that resulted from the documentation conducted during this project. These are offered with the desire that the cemeteries and their unique attributes are preserved for future generations.

- 1) The cemetery caretakers should address priority markers due to the identified conditions during documentation. Some of these markers exhibited instability, destructive lichen growth, and other deteriorating conditions. Without attention to the most serious examples, there is a danger of the loss of historic information.

The San Juan Mountains Association can assist the caretakers to address these situations and identify professional assistance and possible funding.

- 2) The cemetery caretakers should continue to monitor the cemetery and the marker conditions. Fortunately, none of the cemeteries has experienced any vandalism and monitoring would assist in the on-going maintenance of the cemetery. The extensive project photographs of the cemeteries and all the graves can provide a baseline for monitoring change in the condition of the stones and the cemetery.
- 3) The cemetery caretakers are encouraged to nominate the cemeteries for listing on the La Plata County Register of Historic Places. The San Juan Mountains Association is prepared to assist associations with information with this process.

The cemeteries studied during this project are unique places that represent our area's history and the individuals and families that have contributed to our past. Hopefully, this study will contribute to the preservation of cemetery information that is so vital to our history.



Photo 32. Gravestone at Florida Cemetery

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Appendices

Appendix One – Cemetery Maps

Appendix Two – Cemetery Burial Data