

Story of Ridgway, Living History Series

Tape Catalogue Card

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Time	Names & Places	Subjects covered
00-38		Ridgway began over 100 years ago. The first white man entered the Uncompahgre Valley from Montrose to the south looking for gold and silver. Ouray was settled in 1875, but Ridgway was not settled until 15 years later.
38-86		Farmers and ranchers settled in the valley north of Ouray, later moving to Ridgway, where the first builders settled. In the 1884 census, there were 54 men. The town of Portland grew up a few miles from Ouray in 1827, which served the needs of the farmers. Ute Indians still lived in parts of the valley. The farmers invaded into Indian territory. The Indians left in 1881. The town of Dallas started in 1879, located where Dallas Creek joins the Uncompahgre. The Dalls Placer Company was formed, but soon collapsed. Dallas attracted freighters and pack trains which carried passengers and freight.
86-120		In 1887, the railroad came to Dallas. The Denver Rio Grand Western railroad tracks were laid from Montrose through Dallas to Ouray. Dallas grew quickly. In September of 1888, fire swept through the town of Dallas. 17 homes were destroyed and all but one business burned. The town rebuilt, and was incorporated in March 1889.
120-148	Robert M. Ridgway, Otto Mears, David Moffat	A ne railroad, the Rio Grand Southern arrived, which tracked off and travelled on to Placerville, Telluride, Trout Lake and Rico. A new town was created a few miles north of Dallas called Ridgway, which would become the railroad center for the Rio Grande Railroad. The town was named for Robert M. Ridgway. Otto Mears and David Moffat worked to incorporate the Rio Grand.
148-168	Otto Mears, D.C. Hartwell, Fred Walson, Charles Nix Palmer	History of Otto Mears. He was born in Russia, his parents died when he was 9 and he was sent to America to relatives. He could not find his uncle in San Francisco, so started selling newspapers and was on his own from then on.
168-221	DC.Hartwell, Fred Walson, Charles Nix	Description and history of the three men who were the fathers of Ridgway--D.C. Hartwell, Fred Walson and Charles Nix.
221-281	A.Hyde. R. Hyde, Charles McClane, J. Middleton, J. Isreal, George Hurlbert, Moffat, D.C. Hartwell	Plans for selecting and settling Ridgway. Names the 5 early settlers whose land was purchased for the town. History of streets and how they chose the names for them. East and West streets were named for men and North and South streets were named for women. The three men proceeded to sell lots to build banks, hotels and were involved in getting electric lights for the town. The railroad ran through Ridgway. Trains came from Dallas and ran up to Ouray. Plans for a depot were made. Other rail road buildings were planned. Article read from the newspaper about the progress of the railroad. Description of Ridgway in 1890.
	Bacon	
	J. Chriswell,	Dallas watched Ridgway grow and caught the fever of success. The

281-300	Hartwell, Nix	business men in Dallas started moving to Ridgway in 1890.
300-326	Jeffry, Bacon, W.Merchant, S.P. Lane	The City Government in Ridgway was formed. Description of steps taken to form town. In 1891, the court declared Ridgway a town, which grew very rapidly. Describes new buildings constructed. The railway ran daily passenger trains from Ridgway to Durango. Otto Mears issued special silver passes for special friends to ride the train. 507 of these passes were issued. Mears hired a famous Denver photographer (W. Henry Jackson) to ride the train and take photographs of the area.
326-338	President W. Wilson	Ridgway's booming years came to a halt during the depression, the Silver Crisis of 1893. The Crisis caused severe impact to Telluride, Ouray and Ridgway. Several people went bankrupt. Hartwell lost all his businesses in Ouray and Ridgway to Nix, whom he had borrowed money from. He managed to save 1000 acres ranch on Miller Mesa. The lake for Ridgway's water supply was located there.
338-389	Chriswell, Nix	The story of the banks closing in 1893. The rail road was bankrupt. Article read from the newspaper about the rail road. Bacon moved his newspaper to Ouray. Many businesses closed. Ridgway was incorporated, but the three men still owned the Ridgway Townsite, which owned the town. Walter Merchant bought the townsite Company from Hartwell, Wilson and Nix. He was ready to move on in 1 year. The Townsite was purchased from Merchant by S.P. Lane of Nebraska in 1904. He sold within 1 month, History of Amos Walther who bought the Townsite Company from Lane.
SIDE B 00-58		In 1917, new businesses were established in Ridgway. Life was changed during World War I. The years following were difficult. The railroad office was abolished. In 1925, most offices were gone. In 1929, the Rio Grande Southern tracks were buried in the Ames mud slide, which was 50 feet deep. The depression was hard on Ridgway.
58-119		Bank of Ridgway failed in December 1912. People lost all their savings.
119-146	*	Ridgway faced unbelievable disasters in the 1920's, besides depression and unemployment. The round house burned twice, once in 1900 and again in 1906, the jail burned in 1908. Earthquake destroyed the top floor of the new school in 1913. In 1920, 2 buildings were dynamited at night. In the 1930's, 5 buildings burned, the elementary school, the Catholic Church, the Criswell building and the Menton hotel. No one ever held accountable.
146-162	*	History of the birth of the Galloping Goose. The first one was made of Buick Master S Automobile. Description of vehicle. Was completed in June 1931. Altogether 8 Goosesees were built.
162-190		World War II in the 1940's. Pearl Harbor bombed in 1941. History of Ridgway during the war.
190-220		In 1946, the relocation of Highway 63 from Clinton Street to Sherman Street. Businesses were bypassed. Beginning of the decline of Ridgway. Rio Grand Southern faced demise. More automobiles and camping and trucking. The mail and freight was carried by truck and passengers no longer used the train. In 1952, the Rio Grand Southern closed its doors.

Plans and talks for a dam where the town sat had devastating effect on the town. Prices and real estate dropped. In 1971, they hear the dam was to be built 5 miles from the town. Ridgway is safe from being engulfed with water. New buildings constructed. New school in 1973. Belief in new future for town.

220-258

The Ridgway State Recreation Area on Highway 550 a few miles north of Ridgway was finished in 1989 and opened for visitors and dedicated in 1990. Opening of dam and rec-area meant new businesses for Ridgway. Clinton Street has come to life again. Ridgway's future looks promising.