

RIMROCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY (RHS)

was founded in 1966 by a group of local citizens wanting to record and preserve the area's rich history. It was incorporated in 1974 as a Colorado non-profit, and has accomplished several preservation projects. In 1976 the group saved from demolition, and relocated the 1923 Naturita Schoolhouse for a current museum and community center. They lobbied successfully in 1994, to have the landmark buildings of the historic mining town of Uravan, preserved and added to the *State Register of Historic Places*, winning the *Stephen Hart Award* for their work. RHS was allocated the historic Uravan Ball Park field in 2012, and converted it into a campground/ picnic area. Throughout 2012 the group worked as a leader in creating the *Montrose County Historical Landmark Advisory Board*, and registered the recently purchased Nucla, Vestal House—home of their future museum and research center. In 2015 RHS was awarded a *History Colorado Historical Structural Assessment Grant*—a first step in the Vestal House preservation project.



Uravan Boarding House C. 1914

RIMROCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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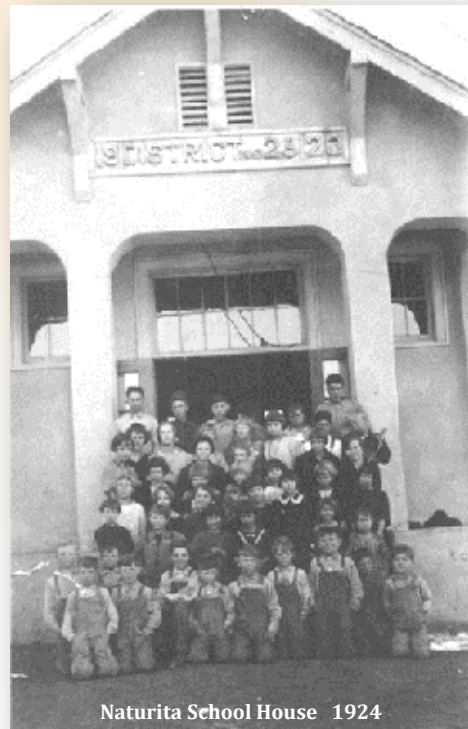
RIMROCKER MUSEUM & OFFICE

Highway 141
Naturita, Colorado

*LOCATED ON THE SCENIC & HISTORIC
UNAWEEP-TABEGUACHE BYWAY*

HOURS: Noon to 4:00 P.M. M-TH
Call for special requests: (970)865-2100
rimrocker.org
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**PROMOTING AWARENESS,
UNDERSTANDING, APPRECIATION,
and PRESERVATION of our area's
PAST and PRESENT.**



Naturita School House 1924

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RIMROCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Of Western Montrose County



One hundred and fifty million years of history.



Nucla Main Street with Vestal House. C. 1908

Layers of History

It all began 150,000,000 years ago when the **dinosaurs** roamed this area. Carbonized plants and animal remains, as well as minerals and ores were deposited in the sandstone beds of the Morrison formation. A rich **mining heritage** begun in the late 1800s, worked these veins through booms and busts. Dinosaur tracks and fossils are scattered across the rugged landscape of canyons and mesas.

The **Ancestral Pueblo** roamed the area between 500 BC and 1300 AD leaving behind their stories in numerous rock art panels.

In 1776 **Friars Escalante and Dominguez** mapped these canyons and waterways while searching for a route to their mission in Monterey, California.

The Tabeguache **Ute Indians** called this land their home, but in 1870 they were moved to a reservation as miners and settlers staked their claims here.

Gold fever attracted the **placer miners** to the banks of the San Miguel River. Rambling tent towns sprang up in the late 1800s. Eastern investors threw their money into projects like the **Hanging Flume**—an engineering wonder listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*.

Pioneers recognized water as the real gold. Building systems of canals and ditches, they watered the high desert to grow their crops. These lush valleys and plateaus supported one of the richest cattle productions in the nation, as well as an era of **cowboys and indians**, and **outlaws and gunslingers**—they were called **Rimrockers**.

In 1881 carnotite ore containing **radium, vanadium, and uranium**, was discovered in these hills. By 1912 mining and milling for these minerals was in full swing. Radium was sent overseas to Madame Curie for use in her radiation experiments. Vanadium was in demand by the steel industry, and then uranium found its place during WWII.

The town of **Uravan** sprang up overnight as a headquarters for this industry, supporting the top-secret **Manhattan Project**. But by 1984 the industry had played out. Uravan became a superfund site and was dismantled, shredded, and buried. Only memories remain.



Mule train loaded with ore from mines. C. 1914

Programs

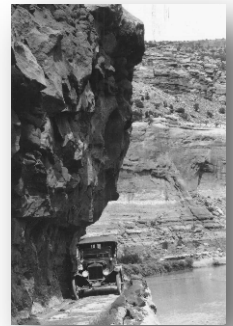
The museum houses a collection of pre-history, Ute Indian, pioneer, and mining artifacts; as well as an extensive research library.

RHS has published several books, DVDs and documents on local history; these are available for purchase at the museum and through our online site.

Historical presentations are given throughout the year, and can be booked through the office and online.

Local, historical, guided group tours are popular adventures, and can be arranged through the office.

These include: Colorado Cooperative Ditch Tour; Petroglyph Tour; Hanging Flume Tour; Mining Tours; and other point-of-interest tours. Many are published in self-guided brochures.



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