

1 **NEW CASTLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
2 **Monday, March 17, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall**

3 **Call to order**

4 Commission Vice-Chair Rippy called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.  
5

6 **Roll Call**

7 Present Commissioner Borgard  
8 Commissioner Erickson  
9 Commissioner Metzger  
10 Commissioner Rippy  
11

12 Absent Commissioner Ellis  
13

14 Also present at the meeting were Town Councilor, Bruce Leland and Administrative  
15 Assistant, Leah Feeley.  
16

17 **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

18 There were no conflicts of interest.  
19

20 **REVIEW MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

21 **Motion: Commissioner Metzger made a motion to approve the minutes of**  
22 **October 21, 2013 and November 18, 2013 as submitted. Commissioner Rippy**  
23 **seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**  
24

25 **COMMISSION COMMENTS**

26 There were no commission comments.  
27

28 **Citizen Comments on Items NOT on Agenda**

29 There were no citizen comments.  
30

31 **Northwest Colorado Cultural Heritage Tourism (NWCCHT) Gateway Sign**  
32 **Project II – Garfield County: Placement**

33 The Gateway Sign will display a map of the town and its history. The Town Council  
34 approved the Town of New Castle's contribution to the production of the sign. New  
35 Castle will need to locate the sign downtown for pedestrians to view. Areas such as  
36 Burning Mountain Park, Ritter Plaza or Town Hall would be appropriate. Mr. Leland  
37 said that staff recommended the small park between the New Castle Branch Library  
38 and Town Hall, because they have high foot traffic. By placing this sign at the edge  
39 of the sidewalk, both sides of the sign will be visible to the public.  
40

41 Mr. Leland also mentioned that the sign could be moved in the future if needed. The  
42 sign will have a concrete foundation, with two metal posts set in it, which the sign  
43 will slide on. Mr. Leland said there will be paper copies available of the sign for the  
44 future community kiosk, so the Town of New Castle's information could be visible in  
45 two places. Commissioner Rippy suggested moving forward with the placement of  
46 the sign between Town Hall and the New Castle Branch Library and the other  
47 Commissioners agreed unanimously.  
48

1 **Town of New Castle Website: History Link and Place Names**

2 Mr. Leland provided the website history link information, New Castle Heritage  
3 (Exhibit A), to the Commissioners for their review and the Commissioners stated the  
4 necessary revisions. Mr. Leland asked for clarification on whom the original owners  
5 of VIX Ranch were, Commissioner Erickson said that the Rohr family owned the  
6 ranch first and then the Cline family. Mr. Leland said he would make the corrections  
7 to the document and then would email a final copy to the Commissioners.  
8

9 **Time Capsule: Picking place and date for burial, final check of contents**

10 Mr. Leland proposed that once a date and a place were agreed on for the burial of  
11 the time capsule a "last call" should be advertised to the community to add any final  
12 mementos to the time capsule. Town Administrator, Tom Baker, suggested in his,  
13 Memorandum (Exhibit B), to bury the time capsule for only 50 years to ensure that  
14 members of the community would still be alive when it was time to open. Mr. Leland  
15 asked the Commission to make a final decision on the burial placement and date to  
16 bury the time capsule.  
17

18 Commissioner Metzger suggested the time capsule be placed in a corner stone at  
19 the Community Center. Commissioner Rippy suggested burying the time capsule in  
20 the sidewalk with a plaque, in front of Town Hall. Commissioner Borgard then  
21 suggested that the time capsule be buried in Ritter Plaza amongst the existing  
22 bricks. After a brief discussion, the Commission unanimously agreed that Ritter  
23 Plaza would be the best burial place for the time capsule.  
24

25 Mr. Leland and Commissioner Rippy then clarified the burial options for the time  
26 capsule. The first option would be to completely cover the top of the time capsule  
27 with bricks, with one brick listing the opening instructions; and the second option  
28 would be to have a Plexiglas cover to display the Town of New Castle logo located on  
29 the top of the time capsule. The Commission agreed to give consideration to bury  
30 the time capsule with a Plexiglas cover for the Town's logo be visible from the  
31 surface.  
32

33 Mr. Leland suggested the time capsule could be buried on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Town's  
34 incorporation, or on July 4<sup>th</sup>, Independence Day or during the River Center's June  
35 fundraiser, which will include elements of New Castle's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.  
36 Commissioner Borgard suggested burying the time capsule during Burning Mountain  
37 Festival in September because it draws a larger audience. Mr. Leland said he would  
38 gather more details on the June event and report back to the Commissioners for a  
39 burial date decision.  
40

41 Commissioner Rippy said additional items to place in the time capsule would be the  
42 Town of New Castle's Newsletters, which provide a lot of the Town's history, and the  
43 Centennial's family signatures from the February 2, 2013 proclamation event. Mr.  
44 Leland suggested adding one of New Castle's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary coffee mug and  
45 asked the Commissioners for any other ideas on items that could be added.  
46 Commissioner Rippy asked about any other previous time capsules being buried in

1 New Castle because he would like to see this current time capsule include more  
2 information about New Castle's history in the past 25-50 years.  
3

4 Mr. Leland reminded the Commission that the time capsule would not be buried for  
5 another 3 to 6 months, depending on the burial date decision, and there was still  
6 time to research any additional items. Commissioner Rippy then suggested adding  
7 photos from the past 25 years, showing how the Town of New Castle has changed  
8 over the past 125 years (ex: the restaurants, the library, construction photos from  
9 Castle Valley Ranch and Lakota Canyon Ranch, and the firehouses). Commissioner  
10 Rippy suggested that each of the Commissioners should find some photos to bring  
11 to the next meeting.  
12

13 **Place Naming: Trials and other features that could be named in honor of**  
14 **someone or something**

15 Mr. Leland suggested another project for the Commissioners to work on would be  
16 titling all unnamed areas in New Castle, Place Names (Exhibit C). Mr. Leland said he  
17 noticed New Castle has a lot of unnamed areas. For example, the South Wild Horse  
18 Trail (the skate park down to the triplexes), the C Avenue Trail, Burning Mountain  
19 PUD trail, the new trail to be constructed this summer to Apple Tree Park, and  
20 naming the other two hills next to Mt. Medarius.  
21

22 Commissioner Rippy stated that the previous naming of streets was based upon  
23 people that lived in New Castle and contributed significantly to the Town of New  
24 Castle. He also suggested that streets such as South B, C, D and E Avenues could  
25 be renamed. Mr. Leland suggested taking this opportunity to continue to name  
26 streets after people that have lived here to make New Castle a more unique and  
27 interesting town. Mr. Leland suggested the Commission research names for the next  
28 meeting.  
29

30 **SET NEXT MEETING**

31 The Commission set its next regular meeting for Monday, April 21, 2014 at 6:30  
32 p.m., Town Hall.  
33

34 The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.  
35



TOWN OF NEW CASTLE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

  
Steve Rippy Commission Vice-Chair

36  
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41  
42 ATTEST:

  
Leah Feeley, Administrative Assistant

## New Castle Heritage

Before there was a New Castle, before there was a Colorado, before there was a United States of America, before Europeans knew that there was a North America: the Ute people knew this region. They called themselves the Nuche, which means “the people.” The Nuche hunted on the Flat Tops, and used it as a crossing between the east and west sides of the Rockies. The Colorado River Valley, along with tributaries like Elk Creek, provided a winter home, as well as a safe haven to raise their families and bury their dead.

In 1881 the Ute Tribe were removed by force from Northwestern Colorado to the Uinah and Ouray Reservation in Utah. The other two Ute reservations are the Southern Ute Reservation and the Ute Mountain Reservation, both in southern Colorado. Soon afterward, white settlement of the area began.

**1883:** Jasper Ward, who had been operating a freight business with his brothers in Leadville, brought his wife Annie and daughter Netti to Carbonate, the original Garfield County seat on the Flat Tops. This town of 5000 was abandoned when the Flat Tops winters became unendurable, and the Wards made their way to the Colorado River Valley.

Ward claimed a homestead site at the confluence of Elk Creek and the Colorado River, becoming the first white settler to build a home in New Castle in 1883. The Ute Chief Colorow had remained in his ancestral home, and became a frequent visitor and friend to Jasper Ward. New Castle honors Chief Colorow with the Colorow Trail, which loops through the hills just north of town.

**1887:** Memories of the Meeker Massacre in 1879 were still fresh, and in 1887 County Sheriff Jim Kendall instigated a small battle near Meeker with Colorow’s followers. Kendall requested help from Colorado Governor Alva Adams, who sent seven brigades of the Colorado National Guard. Jasper Ward joined this group hoping to negotiate a peaceful settlement with his friend Colorow. Unfortunately as Ward was approaching the Utes for negotiations, a shot was fired by a Guardsman. More followed, and Ward, caught in the open, was killed. He was buried in Linwood Cemetery in Glenwood Springs.

**1887:** Four years after Ward built his cabin, New Castle had over 1000 residents. The sudden growth was due to the vein of high quality coal which lies in the Grand Hogback. While coal was mined in other areas of the 100-mile-long Hogback, the place where it intersects the Colorado River Valley gave the easiest access.

Coal was important because silver mining was already well established in the Rockies. Coal was converted to coke, which was then used to smelt the silver taken from mines near Leadville and Aspen.

There were several mining barons who amassed huge fortunes from the Rocky Mountain silver mines and the associated industries. Walter Devereux came to Colorado to manage the Aspen Mining and Smelter Company for James Wheeler. He became president of the Grand River Coke and Coal Company with mines through western Colorado.

Devereux was active in establishing Glenwood springs, and he built the Hotel Colorado in 1891. In New Castle he purchased mining property on Burning Mountain and a lot of land in town. It was his work, beginning in 1884, that led to the incorporation of the town in 1888.

There were five mines in New Castle: The Consolidated, the Keystone, the Coryell, the B&M and the largest of them all, the Vulcan.

**1888:** The Town of New Castle, which had briefly gone by the names Grand Buttes and Chapman, was incorporated in February 2, 1888.

**1888:** Highland Cemetery, which was at the time north of town (now is Lakota Canyon Ranch), was established the same year the town was established. Among the earliest burials were Civil War veterans who settled in the New Castle area after the war.

**1888:** In October of 1888 the Colorado Midland Railroad reached New Castle, providing both convenient passenger service and, more importantly, a way to move large quantities of New Castle coal to the coke ovens in Cardiff and Redstone.

Both the Colorado Midland and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Company were in a race to reach the Western Slope. James John Hagerman, president of the Colorado Midland, planned a route from Leadville over the mountains to Basalt. At the same time he planned the line from Aspen to New Castle. The Denver and Rio Grande route was through the Colorado River Valley and Glenwood Canyon, and the tracks reached New Castle shortly after the Colorado Midland.

The Colorado Midland tracks terminated in New Castle, while the Denver and Rio Grande continued its tracks west toward Grand Junction. Both lines shared the tracks west of town.

**1891:** Congress authorized the establishment of forest preserves in March 1891. In October the White River Plateau Timberland Reserve became the second national forest in the country.

**1893:** Conditions in the mines were difficult for the miners. They worked long hours in darkness underground, in poorly ventilated mine shafts which were sometimes only three feet high. They had to buy their own tools.

In October of 1893 The Vulcan had failed to give workers their paychecks for two months. The workers walked off the job for two days and the matter was quickly resolved. In the meantime, at the Consolidated, miners were ordered to cover their lamps to prevent possible explosions. This meant working in the dark, and in exchange the miners demanded more pay and adjustments in working conditions. In response the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company offered a pay cut.

After three months the owners made some concessions, but only hired back a fraction of the miners and at lower pay. The long period with no pay forced the miners lucky enough to get work back into the mine.

**1896:** On February 18, 1896, methane gas exploded in the Vulcan Mine. 49 Miners were killed that day. Many of the miners are buried in Highland Cemetery.

**1897:** Mine explosions weren't the only disasters to plague the town. Two competing railroad companies shared tracks between New Castle and Grand Junction, and trains raced to make the journey without stopping at switches to allow an oncoming train to pass. Accidents were not uncommon.

The most noteworthy accident occurred on September 10, 1987. Westbound Rio Grande no. 506 and eastbound Colorado Midland 22 collided head-on at GraMid (named for the two railroads) just west of New Castle.

**1899:** After the Vulcan explosion mining continued in New Castle's other mines, but in 1910 the Consolidated, located in Ward's Peak (Burning Mountain) caught fire. Attempts to quench it failed, and the mine was closed.

**1903-04:** Attempts at unionization were vigorously opposed by the mine owners, especially Perry Coryell, owner of the Coryell Mine directly south of town. Coryell also owned one of the town's newspapers and the residential property along 7<sup>th</sup> Street known as Coryell Town.

Strikes had occurred previously, but the 1903-04 strike, involving 200 miners, erupted in violence. In December 1903 four homes belonging to leaders of the United Mine Workers were dynamited. Coryell's newspaper accused the miners of blowing up their own homes, as well as other atrocities. In May 1904, miner and union official John Lawson confronted Coryell in a Main Street barber shop. The argument spilled into the street and Coryell grabbed a shotgun and shot Lawson in the leg. Lawson survived and Coryell left the state later in 1904.

**1905:** Teddy Roosevelt had hunted in Colorado before he became president, but his April 1905 trip was special. President Roosevelt came first to Glenwood Springs, where his aides set up a Western White House at the Hotel Colorado. Then a special train brought the President to New Castle, where he gave a short speech and the set off on horseback with his guides up Divide Creek.

As it often does, snow fell in April in 1905. Toward the end of the trip, a blizzard kept the hunting party close to camp for several days. The President spent three weeks up Divide Creek, and the party killed 10 bears, which were displayed in New Castle. Rather than take the train back to Glenwood Springs, Roosevelt rode his horse, stopping to talk to farmers and ranchers on the way.

**1908:** With coal mines closing, the discovery of gold in East Elk Creek Canyon brought excitement to the town. The Grey Eagle mine opened about 10 miles from town, and soon John Higdon struck gold further up the canyon. Unfortunately the gold veins proved insignificant and the gold rush ended in 1909.

**1910:** Billy Griffith was a former Town Marshall, a popular baseball player and a saloon owner. On November 9, 1910 he was convicted in court of assault, unfairly he believed. The next day, November 10, he accosted Frank Sample, one of the people who had testified against him, on Main Street.

Town Marshall John Rennix came to the rescue, and Sample was able to escape. Griffith had two pistols out, and he shot Rennix in the stomach. Rennix was able to get off a couple shots before collapsing, and he managed to wound Griffith.

All this happened in front of the Trimble building, and Griffith ran inside and up to the second floor. Meanwhile William Davis and Town Councilor Hugh Miller had rushed to Marshall Rennix to try to help. Griffith started firing from a second floor window, and hit Davis in the head, killing him.

When no one else dared to follow Griffith into the building, his girlfriend, Lelia McMichael, volunteered. Inside she discovered that Griffith had turned his gun on himself and shot himself in the head. Rennix died the next day at the sanitarium in Glenwood Springs.

Griffith, Rennix and Davis are all buried in Highland Cemetery.

**1913:** The Vulcan Mine had been closed after the 1896 explosion. In 1910 new owners, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, opened a new entrance and resumed mining. On December 16, 1913, the Vulcan exploded again, killing 37.

**1918:** Three mine workers who were cleaning a small area of the Vulcan Mine were killed in an explosion on November 3, 1918. Following this accident, New Castle's most productive mine was permanently closed.

The Vulcan coal seam is still burning in Coal Ridge, south of the Colorado River, and the Consolidated Mine still burns in Burning Mountain. The heat from the fires destroys vegetation and melts snow along long scars in the Hogback.

**After Coal:** After the boom brought by coal mining, New Castle experienced a bust when the mines closed. While other towns experiencing a similar bust simply disappeared, New castle survived. There is fertile land surrounding New Castle which gave rise to farms and ranches. We had peaches, sugar beets, potatoes, along with cattle and sheep that were sometimes herded down Main Street.

Nearby forests provided additional economic support. Trees were harvested on the Flat Tops and the Clinetops and trucked down the Buford Road and the treacherous Clinetops Road to the railroad depot on Main Street. The local saw mill, operated by William and Earl Rippy, was on the Flat Tops, near the present location of Triangle Park.

**1932:** The National Forest Service Forest Service created the Flat Tops Primitive Area, which was the first protected wilderness in the country.

**1938:** Garfield County's first public library was installed in a room at the west end of the New Castle School on Main Street.

**1967:** Garfield County built the first county library building in New Castle, designating it the main library in the county system. Little remains of the 1967 building following extensive rebuilding and expansion in 2012.

**1971:** Interstate 70, paralleling the Colorado River and New Castle's Main Street, was completed through town in 1971. Full interstate access to the east was delayed, however, until 1992, when the "final link" through Glenwood Canyon was opened.

**1982:** May 2, 1982 is known in Garfield County as Black Sunday. During the 1970's the search for a method to profitably extract oil from the shale deposits in Northwest Colorado. A large influx of federal funds supported the efforts of several oil companies.

The evening newspapers on May 2, 1892, reported that Exxon, the largest employer in the area, was shutting down its oil shale operations. 2100 people lost their jobs. Other companies followed suit, and between 1982 and 1985, nearly 24,000 people left Garfield and Mesa counties.

**1984:** The new Town Hall and the Community Center were built in 1984. The old Town Hall on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, became the town's historical museum.

**1989:** For most of New Castle's history, the land north of Mt. Mederis was farm and ranch land. In 1989, 101 years after the town's incorporation, the platting of Castle Valley Ranch was approved, marking the beginning of the housing boom which brought the population to 4500 in 2010.

**1994:** Storm King Mountain is located just east of New Castle. On July 2, 1994, a lightning strike sparked a fire which grew to create one of the most disastrous wildfires in Colorado history. On July 6, 20 Hotshots from Prineville, Oregon, joined the attempt to control the fire. In the late afternoon, flames rushed uphill toward firefighters, eventually overtaking and killing fourteen.

Hot Shot Park in New Castle is named in honor of the firefighters, and a memorial trail up the mountain begins at the terminus of Route 6, east of New Castle.

**2004:** Lakota Canyon Ranch Golf Course opened in 2004. The course, rated among the top 20 in Colorado, was designed by James Engh.

**2012:** The original building in the Garfield County Library system, on Main Street in New Castle, was scheduled for remodeling in 2011. During the design and construction process, most of the original library was replaced and the floor space doubled from 5000 to 10,000 square feet. The new library reopened on April 14, 2012.



Memorandum

To: Historic Preservation Commission  
From: Tom Baker and Bruce Leland  
Date: March 17, 2014  
Re: 2013 Time Capsule: Picking a Place and Date for Burial

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Exhibit B  
to  
Historic Preservation Committee  
Minutes 3/17/14

**Purpose:** The purpose of this item is to pick a location and place for the time capsule to be buried.

**Background and Discussion:** As part of New Castle's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year, the Council acquired a time capsule. LaRue Wentz and others lead the effort to discover documents to put in the time capsule (Bruce will bring contents to the meeting) and Bob Gordon discovered a brick made in New Castle in the 1800's also for the time capsule. To date, LaRue has no suggestion of where or when to bury it. LaRue and a small group of interested community members suggested that this capsule be opened in 50 years so that there will be someone around that remembers the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year events.

**Request:** We are requesting that HPC offer their ideas for:

- A place to bury the time capsule
- A date for the burial to take place
- Suggestions for additional time capsule materials
- A future date to open the time capsule.

## Place Names

Many of the place names in New Castle commemorate people or events which were part of our history. The first honorees were the early settlers for whom New Castle's three mountains are named. It is presumed that these three leading citizens exerted their influence to achieve this honor.

**MT. MEDERIS:** The mountain in the middle of town was once New Castle's northern border. It was named for Harry Medaris, the owner of the largest hotel on Main Street.

**WARD'S PEAK:** Named for Jasper Ward, the first settler in New Castle. The mountain on the west side of town is now known as Burning Mountain, for the coal seam fire burning in the old Consolidated mine. In fact the entire Grand Hogback burns in the New Castle area, but the burn scar on Burning Mountain is the only one visible from Main Street.

**RODERICK'S RIDGE:** Milton Roderick owned ranchland south of town and operated the ferry across the Colorado River. Since most of the miners working for the Vulcan and Coryell mines lived in town, they need to take the ferry in get to and from work. Roderick's Ridge is now better known as Coal Ridge. Roderick Lane is also named in his honor.

**COLOROW TRAIL:** The trail which traverses three miles of BLM land north of New Castle was built over three summers by the Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers. It was named for Colorow, the Ute chief who remained in the area after his people were forced to a reservation. He befriended Jasper Ward, New Castle's first white settler.

**ROLLIE GORDON PARK:** Rollie Gordon moved from New Castle, Wyoming, to New Castle Colorado in 1948. He worked as a carpenter and owned property on both sides of 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. In 1999 he donated the parkland to the town so a bridge to the Elk Creek School could be constructed. Rollie Gordon trail runs in both directions from the park along Elk Creek.

**RITTER PLAZA:** The downtown park honors the Ritter family. J.W. Ritter (1859-1944), with his partner John McCrae, operated a store in the building to the east of the plaza. J.W. served several terms as Mayor, as did John C. Ritter (1896-1991). Mary Ellen Ritter (1875-1969) also served as New Castle's only female Mayor.

**MATTIVI PLAZA:** The small plaza sits in front of the Mattivi Building, which once housed Pete Mattivi's Phillips 66 gas station and Studebaker dealership and Mattivi Avenue. Mattivi (1905-2009) served as Garfield County Commissioner from 1957 to 1977, and as Mayor of New Castle from 1954 to 1969 and again from 1974 to 1981.

**WHEELER LANE:** The short road commemorates Jerome Wheeler, who is more gloriously recognized in the Wheeler Opera House in Aspen. Wheeler owned silver mines in Aspen, built a tramway to carry the coal and invested in the Colorado Midland Railway. He backed Walter Devereux's development of mining in Burning Mountain, tapping the Wheeler Vein.

**KAMM AVENUE:** Name for Fred and H.R. Kamm. Fred served as Mayor of New Castle in 1915; H.R. opened the dry goods and grocery store east of Ritter Plaza.

**VANDEVENTER AVENUE:** Merritt Vandeventer (1846-1919) served as the first Mayor of New Castle from 1888 to 1890.

CORYELL LANE: The short road on the west side of town recalls that this area was once a separate community called Coryell Town, established by Perry C. Coryell.

FAAS RANCH ROAD: Honors Faye Faas, the owner who annexed the property which is now Lakota Canyon Ranch into the Town of New Castle.

HOT SHOT PARK: The Town conducted a contest to name the new park near South Wildhorse Road. The winning name dedicated the park to the Hot Shot firefighters, who battled the Storm King fire in 1994. Fourteen Hot Shots lost their lives in that fire.

VIX RANCH PARK: The large park on the north side of town honors the VIX Ranch, owned by the Rohr family, then by the Cline family. The ranch flourished north of Mt. Medaris before New Castle entered its period of growth in the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

KATHRYN SENOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: The School was named in honor Kathryn Senor (d. 1993), a beloved teacher at New Castle School, as well as Rifle High School and Riverside School.