

FIRST DRAFT

Prior to road, going to De Beque was a heck of a trek

"Newspapers produce the first rough draft of history."
— Philip Graham

In 1885, Frank Cannon, his wife Christia and daughter, Gladys, moved from their temporary home in Grand Junction to their ranch on Roan Creek north of what is now De Beque.

The trip took seven days. They traveled with two heavily loaded wagons and some saddle horses. Their excursion illustrates how, in the early years of white settlement, Hogback Canyon — today called De Beque Canyon — presented a formidable obstacle to travel.

It would take a toll road, a railroad, and eventually an automobile road to fully open the canyon to travel. And the first of those, the Roan Creek Toll Road, didn't exist until late 1885.

Until it did, there were two routes from the Grand Valley to De Beque. The first began west of Fruita, went northeast near Little Salt Wash and over the Bookcliffs, east to Roan Creek, then down the stream to the Colorado River, then called the Grand.

Maps at the Mesa County Assessor's Office from the mid-1880s show the trail in Mesa County, but not its route through Garfield County. The 1877 Hayden Survey maps show a Ute Indian trail over approximately that route through both counties.

An 1888 document for the De Beque Post Office shows the "Trail to Salt Wash" running northeast from town, near

Roan Creek. According to several sources, that route required a trip of 100 miles to reach a community that was only 35 miles away if one could follow the river. It was probably closer to 75 miles, but it was still a long, treacherous trip.

The second route was the one the Cannons took. Christia Cannon recounted the journey to a Daily Sentinel columnist in 1941. She said they traveled the first day from Grand Junction to the Vinelands east of Palisade. The next day they forded the



BOB SILBERNAGEL

river to the south-east side and spent the second night with a family on Rapid Creek. From there, she said they camped in the open until they reached the Colorado River at Roan Creek.

Based on other accounts of this route, they probably went up Rapid Creek, made a difficult crossing on the flank of Grand Mesa to what's now the community of Mesa, dropped into Plateau Canyon and then followed what is now known as the De Beque Cutoff to the Colorado River.

They forded it there, spent a night with friends, then headed up Roan Creek to the small community of Highmore. Cannon's ranch was there, and he helped get a post office and county road to the settlement.

Because they were using wagons, including one pulled by a team of notoriously slow oxen, the Cannons' trip took longer than a journey made over that route on horseback. Even so, the promoters of



BOB SILBERNAGEL/Special to the Sentinel

The black line on this 1894 Colorado school map shows the approximate route of the trail from Salt Creek to De Beque. While the map has a lot of detail, it is not accurate for scale. The short-lived community of Highmore is shown near the top of the route. The heavy gray lines represent railroads.

Grand Junction found both existing routes to Roan Creek unacceptable.

"How can we bring to Grand Junction the trade of the extensive country lying to the north and east of us?" the Grand Junction News asked in November 1884. "And over what routes can roads from Grand Junction to these sections be built at the least expense?"

A month earlier, the News had already answered the question it posed. "If the road is to be built ... it would appear that the only practicable route is up the canyon," it said.

It's no surprise, then, that the News was an early supporter of Henry Rhone's plan to build a toll road through Hogback Canyon. Rhone, who had arrived in Mesa County in 1882 or 1883, opened a law office in Grand Junction but soon began promoting the idea of a toll road to Roan Creek.

Rhone's initial plan failed to attract investors. But in

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GRAND JUNCTION NEWS

1884, he incorporated the Roan Creek Tool Road Company with two partners. The company operated on a shoestring as it graded the narrow roadway and built bridges.

Still, the road was passable by December 1885, when it was approved by the county commissioners. It was completed in the spring of 1886. Tolls were \$3 for each wagon or stage coach, 75 cents for each saddle horse, and 22 1/2 cents per head for loose horses, mules and cattle.

Rhone continued to operate the toll road until 1890, although in 1889, he sold his

right-of-way to the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, which constructed a rail line through the canyon in partnership with the Colorado Midland Railroad. The standard-gauge line was completed in November 1890.

Finally, an effective transportation system was operating through Hogback Canyon, taking travelers to De Beque, Rifle, Glenwood Springs and beyond. However, with the closing of the toll road, there was once again no wagon road through the canyon.

A version of the earlier, southern route was again

employed. As late as 1926, auto travelers driving between Palisade and De Beque had to go up the southeast side of the Colorado River to Plateau Creek, then up that canyon to the town of Mesa and follow the De Beque cutoff to De Beque.

It wasn't until 1931 that a gravel road on the southeast side of the river was completed all the way through De Beque Canyon.

Information for this article came from "Peaches and Politics in Palisade, Colorado," by Paul H. Bardell Jr.; "The Roan Creek Toll Road," by Donald A. MacKendrick in the Winter 1987 of the Journal of the Western Slope; and various newspaper articles. Assistance was also provided by the Museums of Western Colorado, Palisade Historical Society and the Mesa County Assessor's Office.

Bob Silbernagel can be reached at bob.silbernagel@gmail.com.



PALISADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY/Special to the Sentinel

A horse-drawn wagon fords the Colorado River east of Palisade.

Officials recover body of man from Boulder Reservoir

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOULDER — The body of a man has been recovered from

Boulder Reservoir.

Boulder Police Department Sgt. Tom Dowd said a bicyclist saw the body floating in the

reservoir near the dam around 12:15 p.m. Saturday.

Dowd says police are trying to identify the man.

Police say the man was not associated with any watercraft in the reservoir, and there were no obvious signs of foul play.

BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Ailing cats confiscated

Neighbors in an apartment complex at 494 32 1/8 Road for the past few weeks have alerted deputies to a woman who had several ill cats in her home and they had seen her taking dead cats to the trash, according to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

A deputy arrived at the apartment Tuesday and apartment dweller Peggy Chambliss allowed law enforcement inside.

The deputy said there was a strong odor of cat urine and cat feces in the apartment and he noticed seven kittens and two adult cats who appeared to be in poor health. One of the adult cats was "obviously pregnant," according to the report.

"All of the cats were visibly emaciated with ribs and bony structures showing, including the cat that was pregnant." The deputy noted there was cat food and water for the cats in a couple areas of the house. One kitten had an obvious severe infection in its right eye and was lying on the floor, barely able to breathe or move. Chambliss told the deputy she was waiting on a paycheck to get the cat to a veterinarian.

The deputy had to leave the apartment because of the strong smell. He soon returned to the home with an animal control officer, and the officer determined that all nine animals needed immediate veterinary care.

"It was apparent that most of the ill kittens were probably not going to survive long," the report said.

Officers talked to Chambliss about the severity of the animals' health and Chambliss agreed that she would get them to a vet the next day. The officers told Chambliss the animals needed immediate care and asked if she would relinquish them to the officers so they could get them help sooner.

"I discussed with Peggy that I was trying to avoid charging her with animal cruelty charges but that the cats were very obviously in need of severe and urgent vet care if they were going to survive and that it was apparent she had no means to provide vet care for the cats at this time."

Chambliss eventually allowed the officers to take the cats. They were caught, caged and transported to Mesa County Animal Services, and the case was turned over to that agency, according to the report.

According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

■ Ross Bickford, 57, received a summons Friday on suspicion of disorderly conduct at 412 Main St.

■ Shawn Morrison, 28, and Shawna Titmus, 35, received summonses Tuesday on suspicion of shoplifting items valued at less than \$300 from Walmart, 2881 North Ave.

■ Harold Daum, 57, received a summons

on suspicion of trespassing at 1530 North Ave. on Wednesday.

■ A juvenile was arrested in the 2700 block of C Road on Thursday on suspicion of breaching the peace.

■ Nicholas Haniford, 22, received a summons Thursday on suspicion of shoplifting items at City Market, 200 Rood Ave.

■ Dustin Foraker, 34, received a summons on Thursday on suspicion of disorderly conduct at 2885 North Ave.

■ David Gonzales, 30, received a summons on suspicion of possession of an open container of alcohol in a vehicle at 325 W. Orchard Ave. on Friday.

■ Christopher Montez, 38, received a summons on suspicion of disorderly conduct at 525 S. Sixth St. on Friday.

■ Kevin Ortega, 44, received a summons Friday on suspicion of shoplifting items valued at less than \$50 after being contacted at Walmart, 2545 Rimrock Ave.

■ Heather Capansky, 22, received a summons Friday on suspicion of shoplifting items valued at less than \$50 from Walmart, 2545 Rimrock Ave.

■ Someone broke into several vehicles and stole items from cars in the area of Gunnison Avenue and North 15th Street on Friday.

Mesa County Sheriff's Office on Sunday did not release jail booking or activity reports.

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We're wearing jeans for charity at The Daily Sentinel
Ask me how you can help!
we've got heart!
The employees of *The Daily Sentinel* have joined together to adopt a local non-profit organization/charity of the month. We want to help raise awareness and badly needed funds for these organizations that are dedicated to helping people in our community.
SEPTEMBER JEANS FOR CHARITY ORGANIZATION:
Wreaths Across America
Wreath Across America is a non-profit organization founded to provide Christmas wreaths for veterans' gravesites at Arlington National Cemetery. This 15-year observance has now spread across the country to include local veteran cemeteries. The **Patriot Guard Riders of the Western Slope**, in conjunction with **Wreaths Across America** are starting their fourth annual Christmas wreath drive for the gravesites at Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado. Last year a wreath cost \$15.00. More than 1,100 wreaths will be needed this year.
We invite you to join us by sending your tax-deductible check made out to:
Patriot Guard Riders of the Western Slope
c/o R. Edwards, 616 Lodgepole St., Grand Junction, CO 81504.