

HISTORY COLORADO

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

SECTION I

Name of Property

Historic Name Spear Cabin/Turret Post Office

Other Names _____

Address of Property

[] address not for publication

Street Address 15257 Turret Avenue

City Turret

County Chaffee

Zip 81201

Present Owner of Property

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name Scott A. Gehrke

Address P.O. Box 323

Phone _____

City Rio

State Wisconsin

Zip 53960

Owner Consent for Nomination

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

Preparer of Nomination

Name Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons

Date 1 May 2018 (revised)

Organization Front Range Research Associates, Inc.

Address 3635 West 46th Avenue

Phone 303-477-7597

City Denver

State Colorado

Zip 80211

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5CF.2904

May 1, 2018 Nomination Received

_____ Review Board Recommendation

Approval Denial

_____ HC Board State Register Listing

Approved Denied

Listing Criteria A B C D E

Certification of Listing: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, HISTORY COLORADO

Date _____

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SECTION II

Local Historic Designation

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes --- individually designated designated as part of a historic district

Date designated _____

Designated by _____ (Name of municipality or county)

Use of Property

Historic DOMESTIC/single dwelling; GOVERNMENT/post office

Current DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Original Owner Unknown

Source of Information _____

Year of Construction Pre-1903

Source of Information Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District* (1996),

139, (shown in historic photograph)

Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer Unknown

Source of Information _____

Locational Status

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move _____

SECTION III

Description and Alterations

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

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SECTION IV

Significance of Property

Nomination Criteria

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

Areas of Significance

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –
prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –
historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/
Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/
Settlement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics/
Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/
Community Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community
Planning and
Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Social History |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |

Significance Statement

(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

SECTION V

Locational Information

Lot(s) 11A Block N/A Addition Turret A

USGS Topographic Quad Map Cameron Mountain, Colorado

Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

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SECTION VI

Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

SECTION VII

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION

- Owner Consent Form**
- Black and White Photographs**
- Color Prints or Digital Images**
- Sketch Map(s)**
- Photocopy of USGS Map Section**
- Optional Materials**

Use of Nomination Materials

Upon submission to the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, all nomination forms and supporting materials become public records pursuant to CRS Title 24, and may be accessed, copied, and used for personal or commercial purposes in accordance with state law unless otherwise specifically exempted. History Colorado may reproduce, publish, display, perform, prepare derivative works or otherwise use the nomination materials for History Colorado and/or State Register purposes.

For Office Use Only

Property Type: building(s) district site structure object area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Pioneer Log

Period of Significance: ca. 1934-1939

Level of Significance: Local State National

Multiple Property Submission: N/A

Acreage 0.23

P.M. NM Township 51 N Range 9 E Section 29 Quarter Sections SW SW NE SE

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 413623 Northing 4277312 NAD83

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DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

Setting and Location

The former Spear Cabin/Turret Post Office is located on a 0.23-acre parcel at an elevation of approximately 8,510' on the south side of graveled Turret Avenue in the southwest portion of the unincorporated community of Turret. Cat Gulch borders Turret Avenue on the north and trees line the watercourse. The Post Office building is within a few feet of the road, while two small sheds are to the southwest. The northwest part of the parcel is open and covered with grasses and forbs; the land rises to the south, with pine and aspen trees farther up the hill. A post and pole fence encloses the property east and west of the cabin; access to a driveway immediately west of the cabin is controlled by a chain between posts. A low stone and railroad tie retaining wall is present south and southwest of the cabin; a short flight of log steps with a pole railing leads from the cabin level to the sheds. A well with a square wood deck stands west of the west shed.¹

Description of the Primary Building

Post Office, Resource 1, pre-1903, building, contributing, photographs 1 through 6 and 9

The primary resource is a 632-square-foot, one-story, L-shaped log and board-and-batten building facing north toward Turret Avenue. Both wings of the cabin have uncoursed stone foundations. All windows and doors are wood replacements installed at the time of the 2001-02 rehabilitation; most were obtained from historic buildings elsewhere.

North-South Wing. The north-south wing dates to 1903 or earlier; it is shown in a December 1903 historic photograph (see Figure 1). This portion of the building is rectangular (22' x 16') with log walls, a shallow front gabled roof clad with corrugated metal, widely overhanging eaves, and a tall metal chimney pipe on the east roof slope. The walls are composed of round logs with wide daubing that are stacked atop each other at the corners without notches. On the north (front), the roof projects on log purlins to form a porch with a full-width wood deck. A sign hanging by chains from the center purlin reads: "TURRET, COLO./U.S. POST OFFICE /CLOSED 1939." The front features an off-center three-panel door with a large rectangular light to the east and a tall ten-light window to the west with vertical boards at the bottom.² The east wall displays a narrow, horizontal window toward the front and a tall ten-light wood window near the rear. The south wall abuts the board-and-batten component and is not visible. The west wall features two tall eight-light windows with the lower portion filled with vertical boards.

East-West Wing. The rear east-west wing measures 20' x 14' and has a shallow round-arched roof with overhanging eaves that is clad with corrugated metal. The walls are sided with vertical wood boards and battens. This wing of the cabin is flush with the log part on the east and projects slightly on the west. The west wall contains a full-width shed-roof porch with three log supports and a wood deck. Facing the porch is an off-center four-panel door to the north and paired one-over-one-light windows to the south with a rounded top molding. The south wall has two sets of flat-headed, paired, one-over-one-light windows; a propane tank stands adjacent to the wall. The east wall contains two sets of paired one-over-one-light windows featuring a plain wood surround with a rounded top molding. This section of the cabin

¹ Only real property, not water rights (per 36 CFR 60.6), is the subject of this nomination. The well serves only this property.

² At the time of fieldwork all door and windows were in place but were covered with oriented strand board panels. The descriptions of doors and windows were produced from photographs provided by the previous owner, which are included herein as figures, and interviews with him.

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was probably added ca. 1904-06. At least two other buildings with arched roofs and board-and-batten siding were built in the Turret vicinity in the early 1900s.³ Given the camp's rapid decline after 1906 and a large supply of vacant buildings, it would seem there would be little incentive to build a large addition after that date.

Alterations. The rear east-west wing is a historic addition (ca. 1904-06). By 1975 the building experienced considerable deterioration with all windows and doors missing. A photograph showed the remnant of a shed-roof porch on the west wall of the round-arched wing. Photographs provided by the former owners, Richard and Connie Booth, display the same condition when they purchased it in the fall of 2000. They rehabilitated the cabin and erected the two sheds during the summers of 2001 and 2002. All windows and doors are wood replacements. The tall window openings in the log portion have been shortened at the bottom. The west porch was rebuilt. The roofing has been replaced.

Outbuildings

Two outbuildings erected by the Booths ca. 2001-02 lie southwest of the primary building. They are evaluated as noncontributing since they were built after the end of the period of significance.

East Shed, Resource 2, 2001-02, building, noncontributing, photographs 7 through 9

This one-story shallow front gabled roof shed (12' x 8'), used as a "wash-up room," lies closest to the cabin and faces north. The roof is clad with corrugated metal and has overhanging eaves. The front (north wall) is composed of vertical boards and features a center vertical board door with X bracing flanked by six-light wood awning windows. The door faces a small wood deck. The remaining walls are clad with corrugated metal with corner boards.

West Shed, Resource 3, 2001-02, building, noncontributing, photographs 7 through 9

This one-story shallow front gabled roof shed (14' x 12') lies west of Resource 2 and faces west. The roof is clad with corrugated metal and has overhanging eaves. The front (west wall) has a center bay clad with vertical boards flanked by bays of corrugated metal. Within the center section are double vertical board doors with strap hinges facing a board ramp. The north wall is composed of vertical boards and features a center vertical board non-operable door with X bracing flanked by six-light wood awning windows.⁴ The east and south walls are clad with corrugated metal with corner boards. A vertical board fence with a sawtooth top extends between the two sheds.

Integrity

The cabin possesses moderate historic physical integrity. The building is in its original location and displays its historic massing and overall design. Impacts to its integrity of materials have resulted from its more than a century of use and efforts to preserve and protect the building, including the replacement wood windows and doors and addition of metal roofing. Aside from construction of two nonhistoric outbuildings to the southwest, little change to the immediate setting of the cabin has occurred. A number

³ Booth, email, 26 April 2018; Booth, letter, 2011; Dick Dixon, Salida, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 13 March 2018; Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, Trails Among the Columbine (Denver: Sundance Publications Ltd., 1996), 146; Richard and Connie Booth, Crane, Missouri, emails to Thomas H. Simmons, 26 and 27 April 2018. The building is shown in a 1904 photograph in Dixon's book without the rear section. Dick Dixon believes the rear section was built in the late 1930s or 1940s as a garage; however, former owners Richard and Connie Booth dispute this, noting there was no sign of a garage door and cloth wallpaper was on the walls.

⁴ Connie Booth, Crane, Missouri, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 24 April 2018. This is not an operable door; it was added to balance the appearance of the door on the east shed.

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of historic buildings are no longer present within Turret, and the townsite has seen some recent new construction. The building retains its historic mass, plan, and log walls. The fenestration is essentially intact although some window openings have been shortened. The workmanship of the builders is reflected in the incorporation of thick projecting purlins to shelter the front porch and the arched roof of the rear wing. The log and board-and-batten walls convey the feeling of early mining camp buildings.

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SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The pre-1903 Turret Post Office is significant under Criterion A in the area of Politics and Government, having housed the post office of this mining community from ca. 1934 to its closure in 1939.⁵ The post office represented an important building within the town. As communications historian Richard B. Kielbowicz notes: "Nationwide postal operations symbolized nationhood and manifested the presence of the federal government in people's everyday lives."⁶ The post office served as a critical link between isolated Turret and the outside world and provided a public place for interaction of townspeople gathering at the building for the arrival of the mail (see Figure 3). Once a booming center of mining activity in the late 1890s-early 1900s, Turret largely became a ghost town with abandoned buildings by 1940 and lost many of its historic buildings in later years. This building is the only surviving building associated with government functions in the community.

Settlement and Development of Turret

Timber resources in the vicinity of today's Turret initially attracted the interest of wood harvesters associated with the charcoal and railroad tie industries in the 1880s. The timber was shipped to kilns at Nathrop using a steep track south of Turret built by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway (D&RG) in 1881 to serve the Calumet iron mine. David E.C. Austin came to cut timber in 1884 and became the first person to discover gold ore in the Turret area the following year. He remained and built a home for his family. In recognition of his pioneering role, the settlement was first known as Camp Austin.⁷

Because its mineral wealth was not immediately obvious, Turret's boom happened later than most other mining camps in the county. Gold seekers were drawn to the area in large numbers in the mid-1890s, and about one hundred people lived here, many in tents, by 1897, when Turret was formally platted. There were many mines in the area, including the early Gold Bug, with 300' of tunnels, and the important Vivandiere and Independence. Several granite quarries also operated in the Turret area.⁸ Turret received a post office in 1898, and people continued to arrive with hopes of striking it rich. A stagecoach ran daily between Turret and Salida, and a telephone line connected the two.⁹

The 1900 census reported a total of 112 persons in the Turret precinct, which included an area larger than the town itself. By 1901 the town had two hotels, a drug store, dry goods store, bakery, tin shop, barbershop, and saloons. Most of the commercial buildings, including several false fronts, stood east of the nominated property on both sides of today's Turret Avenue. Peter J. Schlosser, an early town pioneer and promoter, is credited with much of Turret's growth during its boom years. He drew the town plat and worked as a miner, carpenter, mapmaker, notary public, and Chaffee County commissioner.¹⁰ He refused to give up on Turret even after most others had and remained until his death in 1939.¹¹ Turret historian Dick Dixon writes, "Although there may have been several thousand

⁵ The beginning date for the building's use as the post office is an estimate; it could be earlier.

⁶ Richard B. Kielbowicz, "Universal Postal Service: A Policy History, 1790-1970," prepared for the Postal Rate Commission, 15 November 2002.

⁷ *Salida Mail*, 26 March 1897; Benson, *1001 Colorado Place Names*, 213-214; Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas: A Mountain River Valley* (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1990), 145; Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, Trails Among the Columbine (Denver: Sundance Publications Ltd., 1996), 15.

⁸ Dick Dixon, "Quarry Days in the Ute Trail Area." *Colorado Central Magazine*, February 1998.

⁹ Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 164.

¹⁰ Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 163.

¹¹ Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 163.

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miners in Turret and surrounding mining districts, the town never boasted a population of more than 300-350 in spite of the fact that business directories of the day claimed 500.”¹² Donald Smith, author of a 1976 book on Turret, provides a more conservative number, estimating the town itself never exceeded 250 in population.¹³

Mining operations and Turret’s prosperity peaked about 1905-06.¹⁴ The district produced mostly low-grade gold and copper, and area mines failed to produce great wealth. The D&RG branch line to Calumet washed out in 1901 and was not rebuilt, removing a potentially cost-effective method of shipping area ore to smelters. The town began to decline after 1906, and in 1911 Alba Robinson, editor of the *Turret Gold Belt*, moved to Salida and renamed his newspaper the *Colorado Gold Belt*. Local historian Donald Smith states that in succeeding decades “the town fortunes fluctuated back and forth coinciding with the closing and reopening of the mines.”¹⁵ The Turret census precinct reported steadily dropping population during the period: 71 people in 1910, 45 in 1920, and 38 in 1930. When the post office closed in 1939, few residents remained.¹⁶ Writing in 1976 Smith concluded “by the late 30’s or early 40’s, the town could properly have been classified as a ‘ghost town.’ Today, little remains of the business section but many residences still dot the Gulch in various states of deterioration. A few of the buildings have been converted to summer cabins.”¹⁷ The post office is the only building still standing that was used for government functions.

Cabin and Post Office History

Construction and Early Uses

This cabin served as a residence and later as a post office in Turret. The building appears in a December 1903 panorama photograph at the west end of Turret and in a 1905 photograph of a 4th of July footrace (see Figures 1 and 2). The 1903 image shows the building with whitewashed walls, a typical treatment to kill insects and possibly protect the daubing. No signs indicating a commercial use are present on the building in either photograph. Pearle Schlosser Gray, recalling the town during the 1899-1907 period, described “a few scattered houses and a blacksmith shop belonging to Mr. McGinnis” lying west of the commercial core.¹⁸ This fact and the building’s location well west of most commercial uses suggest it initially functioned as a residence, but it is unclear who built it. William “Major” Basham, who grew up in the town, drew a map of Turret and its buildings from memory in 1968, but could not recall a name or use associated with this building.¹⁹

Basham’s 1968 map does show a Spear Gulch west of this property and a Spear cabin beyond. Oliver P. Spear was an early owner of the part of this property holding the cabin (Lot 26). Spear (1866-1937) was born in Indiana and grew up on the family farm. He arrived in the Turret district as early as 1897, when he located the Copper King.²⁰ Spear was selected as the foreman of the town’s volunteer fire

¹² Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 165.

¹³ Donald L. Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch* (Aurora, Colorado (?): Donald L. Smith, 1976), foreword.

¹⁴ Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, 20.

¹⁵ Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, foreword.

¹⁶ Swift, *Heart of the Rockies*, 78-79; *Salida Mail*, 5 June 1900, 1; Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, 1, 7, 20, and 21; Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*.

¹⁷ Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, foreword.

¹⁸ Pearle Schlosser Gray, “Memoirs of Pearle Schlosser Gray,” 31, in Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*.

¹⁹ Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, map.

²⁰ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 268.

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department in 1898.²¹ He was boarding in Whitehorn (nearby in Fremont County) at the time of the 1900 census, when he listed his occupation as stationary engineer.²² Spear is shown as one of “The Turrets” baseball team in 1905.²³ Dick Dixon described Spear as “another of Turret’s long-timers, if not a pioneer.”²⁴

In November 1907 the *Turret Gold Belt* reported that Spear sold “his cabins and contents and lots” to Robert Denham.²⁵ The transaction or transactions included the lot holding this cabin.²⁶ Denham’s house was located immediately east of this property. Spear also disposed of three copper claims along the Calumet Branch in Railroad Gulch and left Turret, returning to Indiana. By 1907 the town’s prospects had dimmed, and Dixon opined that “Spear could see little future in trying to winter in Turret, despite its good climate and fine scenery.”²⁷

It is not known how Denham used the property or how long he owned it. He may have rented it out, although the declining population might have made that difficult. Robert Denham was born in Illinois in 1846. He met Mary A. Bishop in Beaver City, Nebraska, where they married in 1876. The Denhams farmed, but, hit with drought, moved to Romley, Colorado. Denham pursued mining there for nine years, then relocated to Centerville, where they ranched for nine years. They came to Turret in about 1897, where he again engaged in mining. Mary Denham died in 1906. He died in 1924 following a fall from a horse.²⁸

The Turret Post Office and the Town Postmasters

By about 1934 the building was recycled as the town’s last post office, under postmaster David E.C. Austin (see Figure 3). It continued that function until the post office closed in 1939.²⁹ The community had applied for a post office in October 1897, claiming a population of 150 within the settlement and an additional 350 in the vicinity. The Post Office Department approved the request on 28 February 1898. The original town post office was located farther east along Turret Avenue in the cluster of commercial buildings.

In this era in small towns, post office buildings were not owned by the federal government. Instead, postal functions were carried out in a building owned or leased by the postmaster. Postmasters were required to be community residents and post a bond. The position of postmaster carried certain prestige within a town and would-be candidates sought support from party officeholders or local residents. Storekeepers often saw the post office as a useful sideline to their principal business.³⁰

²¹ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 83.

²² U.S. Census, Census of Population, Fremont County, Colorado, manuscript returns, 1900. A stationary engineer operates industrial machinery and equipment.

²³ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 165.

²⁴ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 186.

²⁵ *Turret Gold Belt*, 6 November 1907.

²⁶ Oliver Spear to Robert Denham, 21 November 1907, Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder, Salida, Colorado. Town lot book information, if it exists, could not be located for Turret in the files of the Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder, making more detailed information on ownership difficult to ascertain.

²⁷ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 186.

²⁸ *Salida Record*, 14 September 1906; U.S. Census, Census of Population, manuscript returns, Chaffee County, Colorado, 1920.

²⁹ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 16

³⁰ U.S. Postal Service, About the U.S. Postal service, <https://about.usps.com>, accessed 19 February 2018; U.S. Postal Service, *History of the United States Postal Service* (Washington: U.S. Postal Service, 1993); Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press,

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As political patronage positions, postmasters often changed when a president of a different political party was elected. Postmasters in small communities such as Turret were not well compensated for their work. An 1883 law gave fourth-class postmasters, such as Turret's, all of the rent collected on post office boxes and the first \$50 of postal business transacted each quarter. Postal Service historian Wayne E. Fuller reported that in the early 1900s twenty-thousand fourth-class postmasters made less than \$50 a year.³¹ Postal historian James H. Bruns noted that "The real boon for these fourth-class postmasters was that the post office brought folks into their shops. Most post offices were located in general stores, and persons would, more often than not, do their shopping at the same time and place they picked up their mail."³²

Turret postmasters included: Shelby Hare (1898-99); Alba H. Robinson (1899-1912); David E.C. Austin (1912-13); Lewis P. Briggs (1913-17); Peter J. Schlosser (1917-20); David E.C. Austin (1920-36); and Peter J. Schlosser (1936-39). Mrs. Effie Eoff was briefly postmistress until the post office closed permanently in 1939. Information on Turret's postmasters appears below.

Shelby H. Hare, 1898-99. Shelby H. Hare (1867-1926), the first postmaster of Turret, was born in Iowa and traveled with his family to Nebraska by 1880. By 1897 Hare had interests in the Turret area, including ownership of the Little Harry Lode.³³ Following his brief tenure as postmaster of Turret, he engaged in concrete contracting, first in Buena Vista and then in Colorado Springs.³⁴

Alba H. Robinson, 1899-12. Alba H. Robinson (1847-1914) was born in New York in 1847 (see Figure 4). Robinson came to Colorado in 1889 and taught school in Meeker. He later served as principal of the Buena Vista schools. From 1891 to 1897 he served as postmaster of Nathrop, Colorado, north of Salida. His obituary noted: "As mining had a strange fascination for him, like many other western men, he went to the mountains, locating about two years later in Turret."³⁵

Dixon described Robinson as an "oracle, moralist, town conscience and one-man chamber of commerce."³⁶ Robinson became editor of the *Turret Gold Belt* in 1899 and purchased the newspaper in 1902. He became a tireless promoter of the mining camp, penning numerous editorials extolling the virtues and prospects of the area. During Robinson's tenure, the post office occupied a board-and-batten building farther east on Turret Avenue, which also housed his newspaper office and the Pioneer Store of his brother-in-law, Charles Roberts.³⁷ Robinson eventually gave up on Turret and moved the newspaper (renamed the *Colorado Gold Belt*) to Salida in early 1911. The newspaper lasted only a few months, but Robinson operated a print shop in Salida until his death in 1914.³⁸

David E.C. Austin, 1912-13 and 1920-36. The father of Turret, David E.C. Austin (1867-1936) was Turret's longest serving postmaster, holding the office twice for a total tenure of about seventeen years. A native of Ohio, Austin grew up on farms in that state and Indiana. As noted earlier, Austin came to cut

1995), 121; Wayne E. Fuller, *The American Mail: Enlarger of the Common Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 295.

³¹ Fuller, *The American Mail*, 308. Fourth-class post offices were those located in small towns or at rural crossroads with low mail volume, whose postmasters derived most of their income from commissions.

³² James H. Bruns, *Great American Post Offices* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998), 24.

³³ *Salida Mail*, 23 November 1897.

³⁴ *Salida Record*, 17 April 1903; Colorado Springs city directories, 1903-25.

³⁵ *Salida Record*, 13 March 1914.

³⁶ Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 203.

³⁷ Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 202.

³⁸ Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 209.

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timber for railroad ties and charcoal in the vicinity of present-day Turret in 1884 and discovered the Gold Bug mine the following year. Austin continued to prospect and develop mines in the Turret district, was active in Democratic Party politics, and served as the president of School District Number 18. He died in April 1936, while serving as postmaster.³⁹

Lewis P. Briggs, 1913-17. Lewis P. Briggs was born in Illinois in 1885. In 1907 he was working as a meter inspector in Rockford, Illinois. He came to Colorado that year for his health, most likely due to tuberculosis or another respiratory problem. He recovered sufficiently to operate a bowling alley in Salida, then moved to Golden, where he sought a job as an apprentice in a garage. It is possible he gained the appointment as Turret postmaster through Elmer E. Briggs, a Turret area copper mine superintendent, who was an Illinois native and a possible relative. After service as postmaster, Briggs returned to Illinois before moving to Oregon in the 1930s.⁴⁰

Peter J. Schlosser, 1917-20 and 1936-39. Peter J. Schlosser (1864-1939) served twice as Turret postmaster (see Figure 4). Born in Illinois, Schlosser worked on a farm before coming to Colorado in 1886, where he attended the Colorado School of Mines and became a mining engineer. He moved to Las Animas County, Colorado, where he served as the postmaster of Indianapolis in 1888. In the early 1890s he was employed as a letter carrier in Trinidad. Hearing of gold mining activity near Salida, he came to the Turret vicinity by 1897, where he organized the Turret Mining District that year and served as its first president. He also led a successful 1897 effort to establish the townsite of Turret and received a contract for surveying it.⁴¹

Railroad historian Dick Dixon observed that Schlosser “never struck any mining bonanzas, but he quickly learned the art of ‘mining miners.’”⁴² He operated a general store in the town in 1920 and was active in business and civic affairs. Pearle Schlosser Gray recalled that her father “never made any big money and died poor,” noting he located several placer claims and was a “first-class carpenter,” surveyor, assayer, notary public, real estate agent, road and bridge builder, and county commissioner.⁴³

At the time of the 1930 Census, Schlosser identified himself as a mining engineer. Dick Dixon reports during Schlosser’s second stint as postmaster, he “got his wrist slapped” for using his postal franking privilege “to ship packages of vermiculite through the mail because there was no other way of getting it out of the camp.”⁴⁴ According to a photographic caption included in *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, the Schlosser family did not reside in the nominated building.⁴⁵ Peter Schlosser died in May 1939, while still serving as postmaster.

Effie Eoff, 1939. Mrs. Effie Eoff served as postmaster for less than a year, from Peter Schlosser’s death until the post office’s closure in October 1939.

³⁹ U.S. Census, Census of Population, manuscript returns, 1880-1930; *Salida Record*, 1 November 1912; *Salida Mail*, 26 March 1897 and 18 June 1915.

⁴⁰ U.S. Census, Census of Population, manuscript returns, 1880-1940; *Salida Mail*, 29 October 1907 and 7 August 1908; *Colorado Transcript* (Golden), 28 May 1908; *Morning Star* (Rockford, Illinois), 15 February 1907.

⁴¹ U.S. Post Office Department, *Record of Appointments of Postmasters, 1832-1971*, Colorado: Adams-Kit Carson Counties, www.ancestry.com, accessed 19 February 2018; U.S. Census, Census of Population, manuscript returns, 1880-1930.

⁴² Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*.

⁴³ Gray, “Memoirs,” 28-29, in Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*.

⁴⁴ Dixon, *The D&RG’s Calumet Branch and The Turret Mining Area*, 311. Vermiculite, used as insulation, was mined in the Turret vicinity.

⁴⁵ Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch*, 27.

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Uses in Later Years

Many Turret residents apparently abandoned their properties in the 1930s and 1940s. During the 1950s ownership of town properties was consolidated through tax sales. From about 1965 to 1997 the H. Lee Christiansen family of Polk County, Iowa, owned most of the townsite. According to Dick Dixon, “squatters and hippies” took over many of the properties in the latter part of the twentieth century.⁴⁶ Photographs of the former post office in 1975 and 1981 show the building in greatly deteriorated condition, with missing doors and windows (see Figures 5 and 6). In 1999 L. Omar Richardson and John A. Gauss of Salida organized the Turret Townsite Company and began selling town lots.

Richard D. and Connie R. Booth of Crane, Missouri, who had been looking to purchase a property in a ghost town, acquired the building in 2000. They spent the summers of 2001 and 2002 rehabilitating the cabin and building two new sheds. The work included replacing doors and windows, removing more than three hundred wheelbarrow-loads of dirt from the interior, and super-insulating the building. Richard Booth, who built mostly log houses for a living, researched daubing and chinking methods and found historic wood windows and doors for the project. For the exterior walls and roof they retained existing materials where possible and used like materials where historic fabric was missing or deteriorated. The parcel had no outbuildings; the Booths built a wash-up room and a tool shed to the southwest (see Figures 7 through 9).⁴⁷

The historic building’s purchase and rehabilitation reflects a twentieth century trend of turning former mining camp dwellings in Chaffee County and other mountainous areas of Colorado into summer or second homes. Eventually the round-trip from Missouri became too much for the Booths, and they acquired a vacation cabin in the Ozarks. In 2017 they sold the former post office to Scott A. Gehrke of Rio, Wisconsin, who plans to live in the cabin year-round.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Dixon, interview, 13 March 2018.

⁴⁷ Richard D. Booth, Crane, Missouri, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 26 September 2017.

⁴⁸ Booth, interview, 26 September 2017.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated area consists of all the land historically associated with the property. The Chaffee County Assessor website describes this as Lot 11A, Turret A, also known as Lots 25 through 29, Block 13.

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1 through 9, except as noted:

Name of Property: Spear Cabin/Turret Post Office
Location: Turret
Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons
Date of Photographs: September 2017
Negatives: N/A

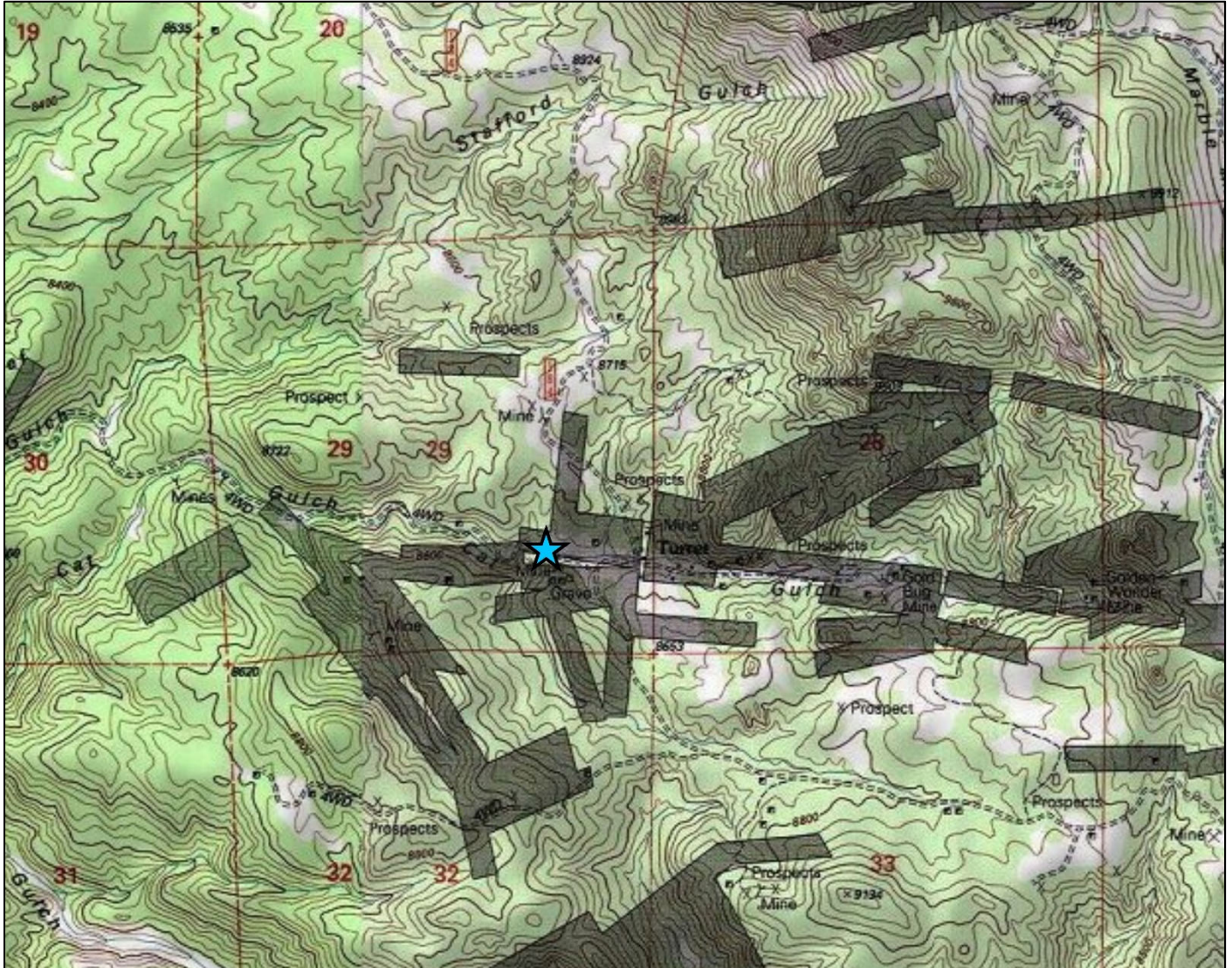
Photo No. Photographic Information

- 1 Front (north) and east wall of post office. View southwest.
- 2 Front of post office, showing porch and purlins. View southeast.
- 3 East wall of post office. View west.
- 4 Rear (south) and east wall of post office. View northwest.
- 5 West wall of post office. View east.
- 6 West porch of post office. View southeast.
- 7 North and west walls of sheds (Resource 2 left and Resource 3 right). View south-southeast.
- 8 West and south walls of sheds (Resource 3 left and Resource 2 right). View northeast.
- 9 Overview of post office (left) and sheds. View east-southeast.

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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

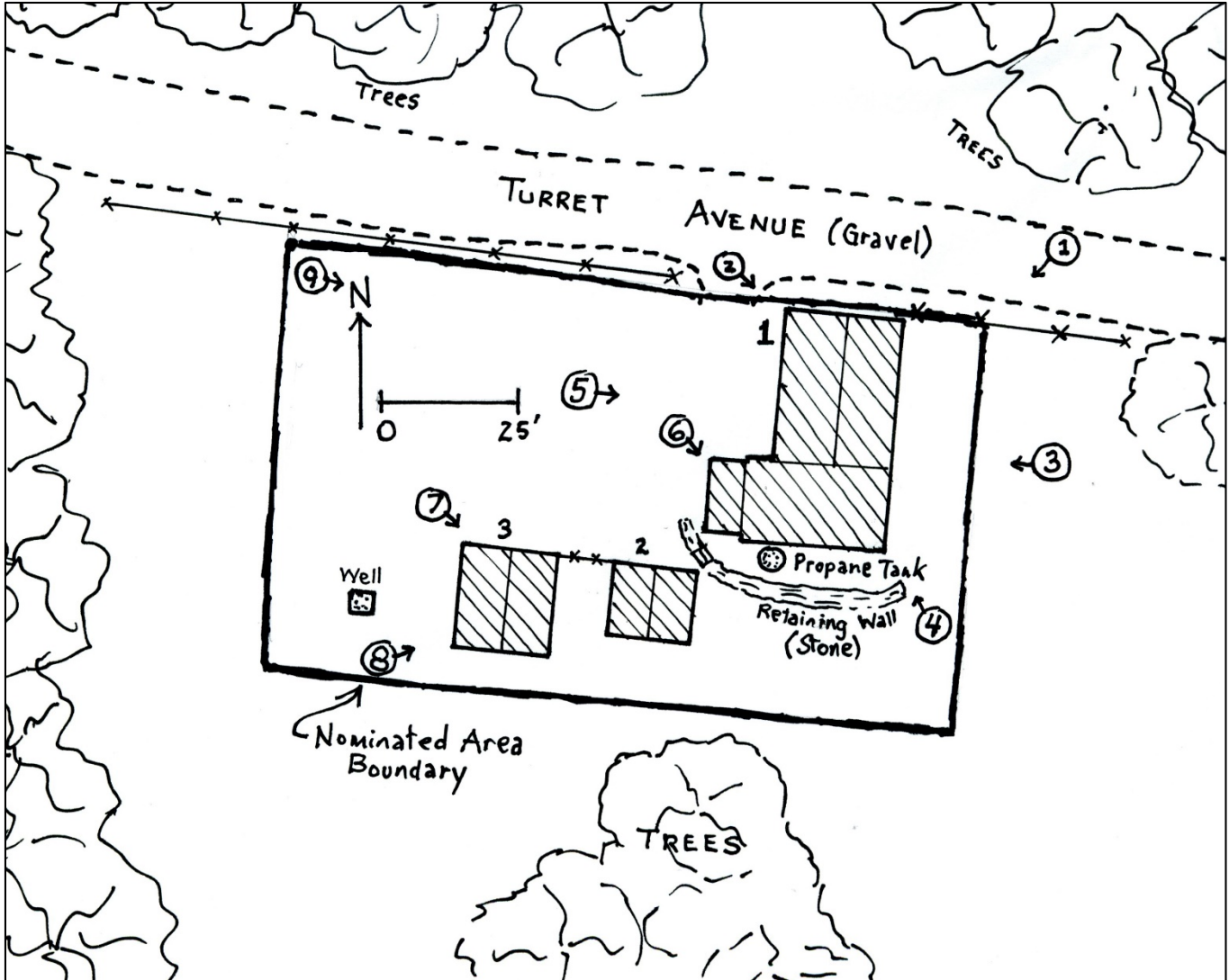
Cameron Mountain, Colorado, 7.5 Minute Series



The star indicates the location of the nominated property. North is to the top. Scale: 1" equals 2,000'.

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Sketch Map



The solid line indicates the nominated area boundary. Numbers beside buildings are resource numbers. Numbers in circles show photograph locations and camera directions.

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HISTORIC FIGURE LOG

Figure Number	Figure Description
1	This December 1903 view southeast of the lower end of Turret shows the building that later housed the post office at the right edge of the photograph with the projecting roof. The logs appear to be whitewashed. Courtesy of Dick Dixon, <i>The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District</i> (1996), 139.
2	Turret residents celebrated the 4 th of July 1905 with a parade, a speech, and a footrace, shown here in front of the nominated building (view southeast). Courtesy of Salida Museum, in Smith, <i>Echoes from Cat Gulch</i> (1976), 19.
3	Mail is being delivered to the Turret Post Office (the roof sign identifies the building) in this ca. 1934-36 photograph (view southwest). Postmaster David E.C. Austin is standing at the left edge of the photograph. Courtesy of Dick Dixon, <i>The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District</i> (1996), 318.
4	Alba Robinson (left) served as Turret postmaster from 1898-1912, while Peter Schlosser handled the community's mail from 1917-20 and 1936-39. Courtesy of Dick Dixon, <i>The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District</i> (1996), 203 and 213.
5	Local historian Dick Dixon took this view of the deteriorated building in 1975 (view southeast). Courtesy of Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado, photograph number X-13917, May 1975.
6	Historian Sandra Dallas noted the cabin (view southwest) in her discussion of Turret in a book on Colorado ghost towns. Courtesy of Kendall Atchison, 1981, in Sandra Dallas, <i>Colorado Ghost Towns and Mining Camps</i> , (1985), 204.
7	Richard and Connie Booth of Crane, Missouri, rehabilitated the building in 2001-02. This image shows the front of the building. Courtesy of Richard and Connie Booth, photograph collection, Crane, Missouri.
8	This view south-southeast in 2001-02 shows the restored front and west wall of the building. Courtesy of Richard and Connie Booth, photograph collection, Crane, Missouri.
9	This view northwest in 2001-02 shows the east wall and rear of the cabin/post office. Courtesy of Richard and Connie Booth, photograph collection, Crane, Missouri.

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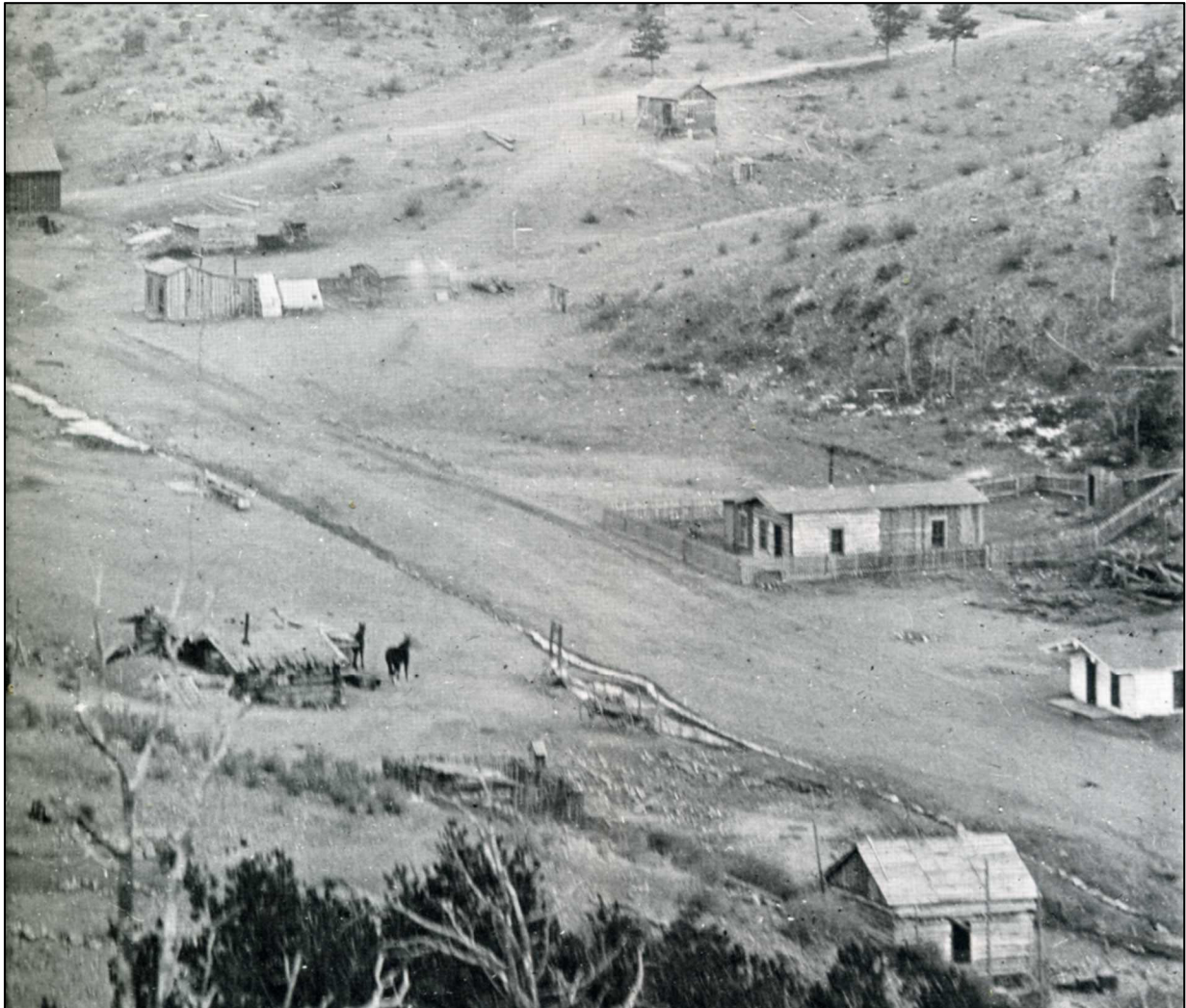


Figure 1. This December 1903 view southeast of the lower end of Turret shows the building that later housed the post office at the right edge of the photograph with the projecting roof. The logs appear to be whitewashed. Courtesy of Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District* (1996), 139.

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Figure 2. Turret residents celebrated the 4th of July 1905 with a parade, a speech, and a footrace, shown here in front of the nominated building (view southeast). Courtesy of Salida Museum, in Smith, *Echoes from Cat Gulch* (1976), 19.



Figure 3. Mail is being delivered to the Turret Post Office (the roof sign identifies the building) in this ca. 1934-36 photograph (view southwest). Postmaster David E.C. Austin is standing at the left edge of the photograph. Courtesy of Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District* (1996), 318.

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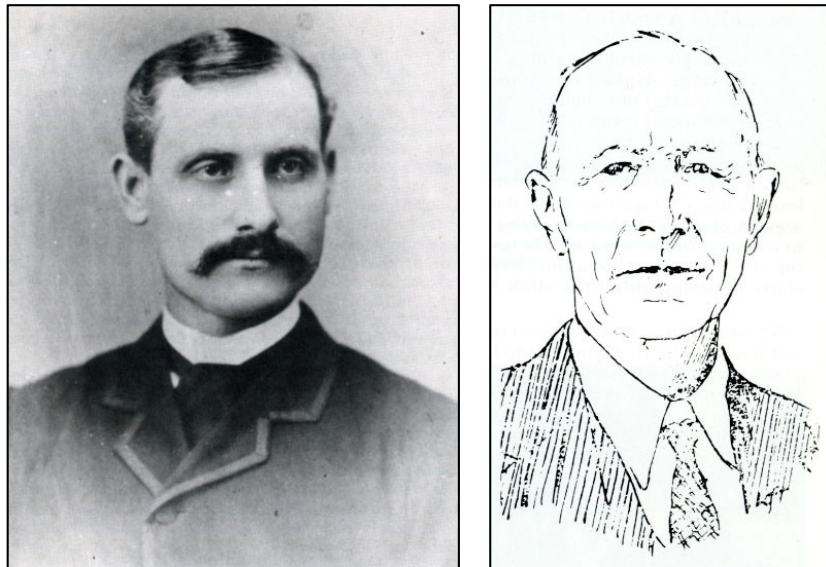


Figure 4. Alba Robinson (left) served as Turret postmaster from 1898-1912, while Peter Schlosser handled the community's mail from 1917-20 and 1936-39. Courtesy of Dick Dixon, *The D&RG's Calumet Branch and the Turret Mining District* (1996), 203 and 213.



Figure 5. Local historian Dick Dixon took this view of the deteriorated building in 1975 (view southeast). Courtesy of Western History and Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado, photograph number X-13917, May 1975.

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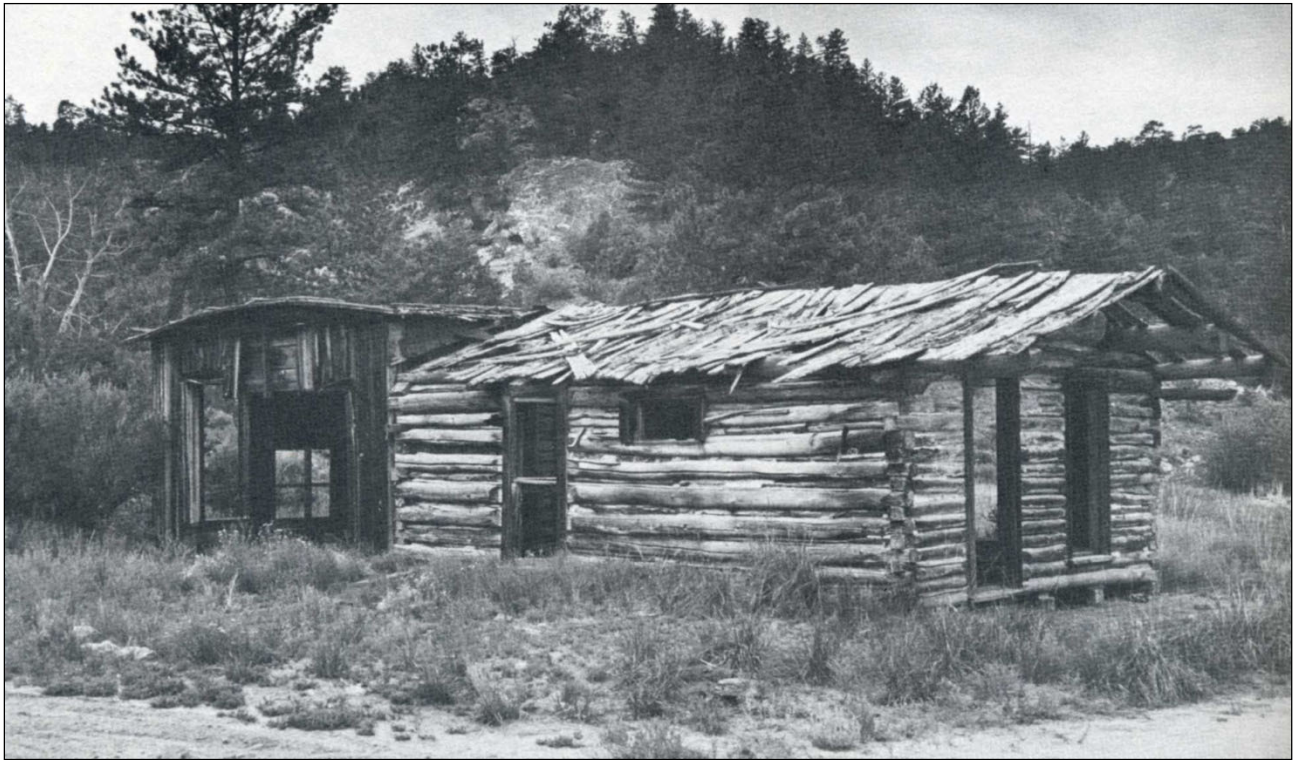


Figure 6. Historian Sandra Dallas noted the cabin (view southwest) in her discussion of Turret in a book on Colorado ghost towns. Courtesy of Kendall Atchison, 1981, in Sandra Dallas, *Colorado Ghost Towns and Mining Camps*, (1985), 204.



Figure 7. Richard and Connie Booth of Crane, Missouri, rehabilitated the building in 2001-02. This image shows the front of the building. Courtesy of Richard and Connie Booth, photograph collection, Crane, Missouri.

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Figure 8. This view south-southeast in 2001-02 shows the restored front and west wall of the building. Courtesy of Richard and Connie Booth, photograph collection, Crane, Missouri.



Figure 9. This view northwest in 2001-02 shows the east wall and rear of the cabin/post office. Courtesy of Richard and Connie Booth, photograph collection, Crane, Missouri.