



**RIMROCKER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Of Western Montrose County

**PROMOTES AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING,
APPRECIATION, and PRESERVATION of our area's
PAST and PRESENT.**

MUSEUM & OFFICE LOCATED ON THE

SCENIC & HISTORIC UNAWEEP-TABEGUACHE BYWAY

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**NUCLA NATURITA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
UNAWEEP-TABEGUACHE HISTORIC & SCENIC BYWAY
INTERPRETIVE VISITOR CENTER**

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*Working together for the betterment and the development
of the West End.*

Thank you for supporting our local businesses.



Photos front and back covers courtesy of Neal Ulevich.

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URAVAN

COLORADO

THE TOWN THAT WAS



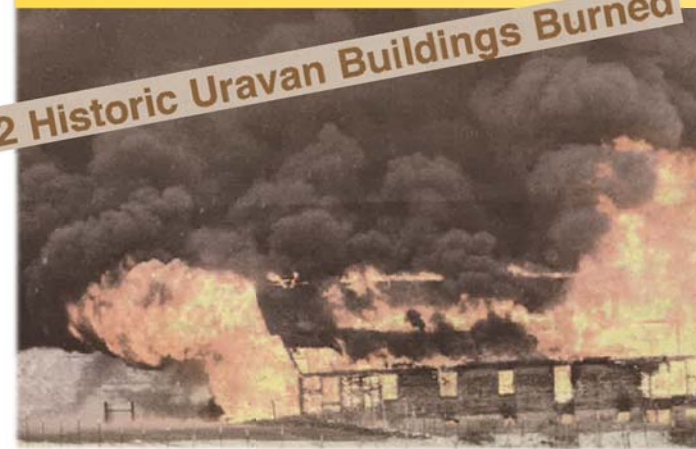
PRESENTED BY:

**RIMROCKER
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF WESTERN MONTROSE COUNTY**

**NUCLA NATURITA AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**UNAWEEP-TABEGUACHE HISTORIC &
SCENIC BYWAY INTERPRETIVE CENTER**

2 Historic Uravan Buildings Burned



SAN MIGUEL BASIN FORUM February 15, 2007

Reported by Marie Templeton

It was a few minutes before 9:30 on Tuesday, February 13, 2007. ...A sense of sadness permeated the air. Umetco and the Historical Society had met numerous times over the last 15 years, making plans for the two historic buildings, and now all had gone for naught...

On June 17, 1994, former residents of Uravan met for a pot luck picnic and responded to this survey question: If a building could be saved for historical purposes at Uravan, which one(s) would you like to see remain and why? The overwhelming response pointed to the Boarding House and the Recreation Hall.

The **RIMROCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY** was on a mission. For the past 10 years they had watched helplessly as this historic town had been declared a Super Fund Reclamation Site; as it was being plowed up, shredded, and buried; and now they had a chance to salvage two structures. They lobbied successfully to have these landmark buildings preserved and added to the *State Register of Historic Places*, winning the *Stephen Hart Award* for their work. Why the turn of events?



Boarding House. C. 1914



Boarding House, 2000. Umetco Photo Files



Uravan showing Boarding House, Joe Jr. Mill. C. 1915



Uravan 2000, Boarding House upper right. Umetco photo files.

URAVAN The Town That Was

Timeline & Contribution to Colorado & World History

Late 1800s: Home of the Club Ranch, one of the largest in the San Miguel River Valley. Gold prospectors discovered a yellow ore in the area, later identified as carnotite containing the minerals radium, vanadium, and uranium.

1910: Standard Chemical Company began acquiring mining claims in the Paradox Valley area. Carnotite ore was shipped by 6-horse freighters to Placerville, then by train to Pennsylvania for radium recovery. Radium was used in painting luminous dials for WWI, also used by Marie Curie in radiological discoveries.

1914: Built the Joe Junior Mill and began to develop the town as a place to house workers and miners. A lab was also added to analyze samples.

1921: Mines and mill shut down due to a depressed radium market. Company had produced 74 grams of radium at \$70,000/gram- half of the U.S. production.

1928: U.S. Vanadium Corp. (USV) acquires the plant and operates 900 local mines. 240 tons of ore processed each day for vanadium, used in hardening steel. 4,000 workers in the total operations.



Joe Jr. Mill crew. C. 1920

The Uranium Years 1937-1984

1942: USV signed contract with Army Corps of Engineers to build and operate another mill for uranium recovery; first shipment sent in July. WSP Mill was fenced and guarded, and used solely for WWII Manhattan Project.

1940s: Uravan grew as a company owned town, and expanded services- clinic, post office, school, general store, rec hall, swimming pool, and blocks of similar houses from bunk houses to three bedroom homes. Occupancy depended on position and time in the company.

1945: Postwar closing and total dismantling of WSP.

1950s: The great boom. 1949- entered into agreement with Atomic Energy Commission to produce uranium concentrates (yellowcake) for defense and domestic use. Miners' Tent Towns sprang up across the plateau. The Uravan school swelled to 200 students in K-8.

1955: USV merged with Union Carbide Nuclear Corp.

1960s: Environmental concerns arose focusing on reducing and eliminating radioactive pollution. Tailings ponds were constructed.

1976: 2nd uranium boom. Mill expanded operations.

1983: Umetco Minerals Corp formed by Union Carbide.

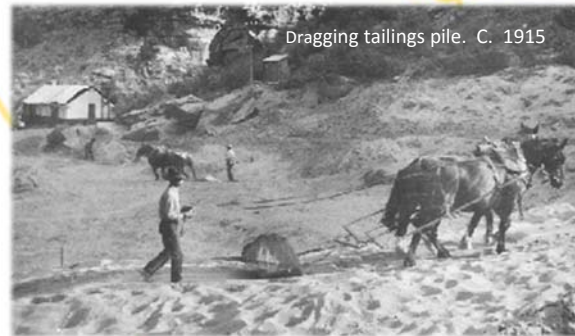
1984: Mill and town closed in November.

1986: December 31, the last Uravan resident leaves. Umetco begins Superfund cleanup due to potential health hazards and liability. Cost exceeds \$80 million.

URAVAN (URAnium+VANadium)



Water Wagon. 1912



Dragging tailings pile. C. 1915



First School. 1936



"B Block. 1984



2012 Uravan 100 Year Celebration.

Early 2000s: DOW Chemical acquires Umetco.

2012: DOW released the Uravan Ball Park to the Rimrocker Historical Society. Every August the Rimrockers host the Uravan Reunion Picnic here, and have converted the field into a memorial site for the town of Uravan. It includes picnic and camping areas, an informative kiosk, and the flag pole from the Uravan Post Office. Future Uravan land and artifact acquisitions are still pending.

Uravan Books, Decals, Tee Shirts for sale online and at the Rimrocker Museum. Self Guided Historical Tour Brochures and Historical Research also available.