Chapter 11
HISTORICAL SUMMARIES OF TEN COLORADO HIGHWAYS

In November 2001, representatives of the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Colorado Historical Society, and Associated Cultural Resources Experts met at CDOT headquarters in Denver to select 10 Colorado highways to study and determine their potential candidacy on the National Register of Historic Places. Selection of the following roads was based on the following qualifications: historic integrity, engineering features, and use and importance of the highway to the citizens of that particular region. During January-February 2002, ACRE staff conducted site surveys of each of the 10 roads. Incorporated into each historical summary is a description of highway features based on those surveys. Each summary also includes a determination of the eligibility of each highway under the National Register of Historic Places and what category (aesthetic, engineered, or cultural) that road falls under according to the National Task Force for Historic Roads (NTFHR).

11.1 Historical Summary of US 550 (5LP6654; 5MN6047; 5OR294; 5SA958)

More than a century after its initial construction, US 550 remains one of the most scenic examples of road engineering in Colorado. The road was originally designated State Highway 13 by the State Highway Commission in 1910. The commission renamed the route State Highway 19 during the1920s. It obtained its current designation as US 550 in 1937. Since the mid-1920s, most travelers know the road by only one designation, “The Million Dollar Highway.”

Today’s US 550 runs from milepost 0.00 at the New Mexico border to milepost 129.95 at the junction of US 50 and State Highway 90 in Montrose. One of the state’s most scenic highways, US 550 follows the Animas River north through Southern Ute Indian Reservation before joining US 160 southwest of Durango. The entire highway takes its nickname from its most storied 12 miles – a stretch of tight, winding road through the Uncompahgre Gorge.

11.1.1 Eligibility of US 550

US 550 is a prime example of highway builders overcoming the dangers of mountain road construction to create a road that generations of subsequent motorists could enjoy. The "Million Dollar Highway" qualifies under Criterion A for its contributions in two different time frames. Out of the more than 300 miles of tolls roads across south and west Colorado, the toll road cleared by Otto Mears symbolizes his greatest legacy to Colorado highway construction. The Colorado Department of Highways improved on Mears' work during the 1920s when they upgraded US 550 for automobile travel. Of particular note is the 200-foot-long, 17-foot-wide Ouray Tunnel. The tunnel remains in use today with original integrity still intact. The road has undergone slight modifications and additions over the years, but Mears' design still serves its original purpose as the primary scenic route through the San Juan Mountains. It is also for this reason that US 550 deserves classification as an aesthetic route under the National Task Force for Historic Roads criteria for historic roads (Figure 10).

The road that eventually became the Million Dollar Highway began as an entrepreneurial effort to profit on the need for a transportation route to mining camps in the rugged region. In the early 1880s, southwestern Colorado's premiere road builder, Otto Mears, blasted a shelf out of the San Juan Mountains for a toll road from Ouray to Silverton. In 1881, Mears finished the first stretch of road between Ouray and the mining supply camp of Ironton. During 1882-83, construction followed along Red Mountain Creek over Red Mountain Pass, down Mineral Creek, and into Silverton.

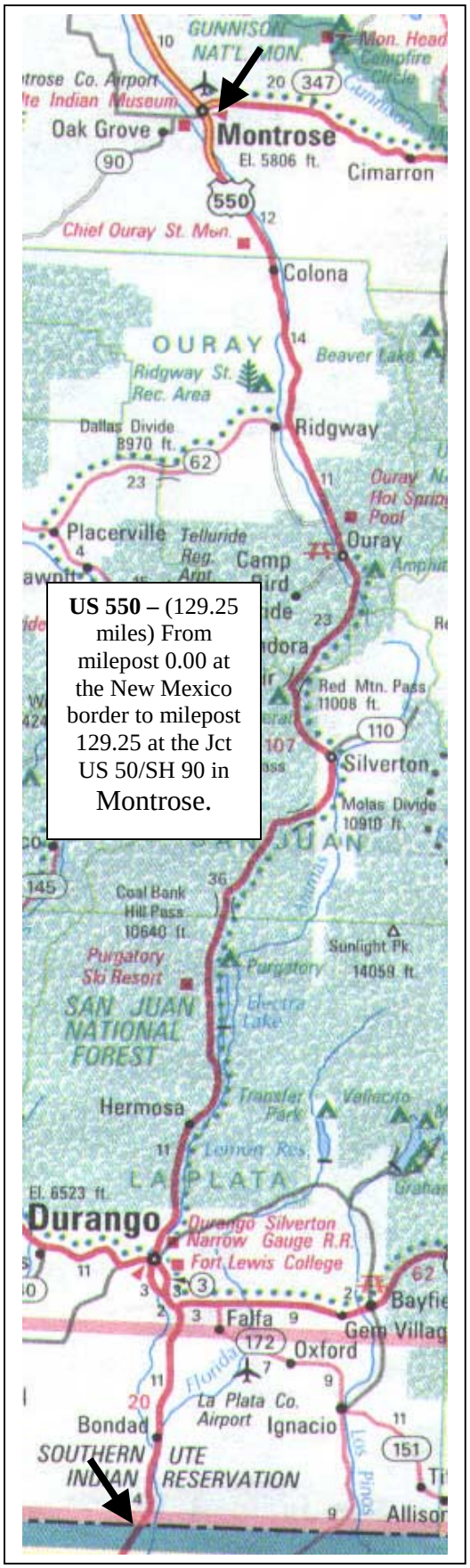

Figure 10. US 550 – 129.95 miles from milepost 0.00 at the New Mexico border to milepost 129.95 at the Junction of US 50/State Highway 90 in Montrose (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

In 1882, crews cleared 8.5 miles at a cost to Mears and his backers of $40,000 per mile. Mears' original course was extremely narrow, and outside the town of Ouray, the original route was located closer to the Uncompahgre River than modern US 550. However, above Bear Creek Falls, US 550 still follows Mears' initial shelf. When the road was completed in 1883, Mears attempted to recoup his costs by charging a $5 toll for a team and wagon, $2.50 for a trail wagon, and $1 for saddle animals. Local merchants and miners who contributed money and labor toward completing the road soon turned on Mears. By 1887, San Juan County and the State overtook maintenance of the road, thus ending one man's dominance of Red Mountain Pass (Clay, 1927: 6).

The first automobile descended the Red Mountain wagon road to Ouray in 1910. However, there is no record indicating whether the car made the return trip. The first ascent of the pass from Ouray came the following year. Ouray doctor L.G. Crosby and some companions made the six-mile journey from Ouray to Ironton on a house call. The group recalled the trip up Red Mountain as especially, but the doctor's new Model T handled the climb with ease. By six o'clock that evening, news of the party's exploits reached Montrose. The following day, the town's newspaper crowned Dr. Crosby and his passengers as heroes:

> "It was a trip that few believed could ever be accomplished. It was one of the most exhilarating, thrilling, unusual, and stirring automobile trips that could be taken or imagined" (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2000(b): 6-7).

Interest in automobile tourism was spreading across Colorado. As a result, both state and local interests sought to improve the scenic road. In 1916, the state and Ouray County spent $8,000 to improve the first two miles of road north of the town of Ouray. In 1920, with $50,000 in Federal Aid Project money, the state began work on 1.15 miles of road below Bear Creek Falls, including the 200-foot-long, 17-foot-wide . Workers bored a straight tunnel through the hard quartzite rock as they clung to the mountain to avoid the sheer drop of 223-feet to the canyon below. A crew of Navajo Indians contributed to the completion of the road and tunnel (Author Unknown, n.d. (b): 2; Colorado State Highway Commission, 1920: 6).

In 1924 the Colorado Highway Department updated the Mears toll road for automobile travel. State engineers redesigned a 12-mile section between Ouray and Red Mountain Pass on a higher grade, and crews widened and graveled the improved road. On July 4, 1924, state officials dedicated the Durango-Silverton-Ouray (DSO) Road, but most Coloradoans already called the engineering accomplishment the "Million Dollar Highway." The most reliable story surrounding the name has its origins from the bid opening, where one contractor spoke of the "million-dollar highway we're building" in reference to estimates of the cost of the work. Another fanciful story had the Highway Department using a million dollars worth of silver and gold mine tailings to pave the road (Colorado Historical Society: 1996). Over time, the Million Dollar Highway name came into use to describe the entire 130-mile route between Ouray and Durango. The 1930 State Highways map showed US 550 as a patchwork of a graded and surfaced road. (Colorado Department of Highways, 1930(a)). In 1935, the state extended the road south about 15 miles from Durango to the New Mexico state line (Colorado Department of Highways, 1938(b)).

High-country winters took their toll on drivers and the road over the years. Since the 1930s at Riverside Slide alone, 1.5-miles south of the Ouray tunnel, snow slides claimed the lives of five people. Armed with improved snow-clearing machinery, the state kept the road open year round for the first time in 1935. However, intense, bad weather can still close the highway (Author Unknown, n.d. (b): 2).

In the early 1940s, the state rebuilt eight miles of US 550 on Coal Bank Hill between Durango and Silverton. The new alignment replaced a segment of original road that ran over an overhanging shelf of the mountains. The redesign also shortened the distance between Cascade Creek and Coal Creek by four miles. The improved US 550 still reaches a maximum elevation of 10,600 feet on a grade of 6 to 7 percent (Rocky Mountain Contractor, September 10, 1941(a): 6-7).

The highway over Red Mountain Pass played a vital part in the war effort. As part of the Manhattan Project to develop atomic weapons, the raw elements of uranium ores were found in large deposits in southwestern Colorado. The U.S. Army maintained a refinery outside of Grand Junction. From 1943 to 1945, the success of the project depended on clear roads to transport

materials in and out of southwest Colorado. State maintenance crews kept the highway over Red Mountain Pass open year round so the U.S. Army could haul sulfuric acid and other supplies from Grand Junction to support facilities at Uravan and Durango. From the winter of 1943 to the later spring of 1945, a fleet of 60 trucks kept the road clear of snow between the mines and the Manhattan Project facility at Grand Junction (Schweigert, 2002: 7).

Traffic increased after World War II, and in 1955 the state made additional improvements to the road. Three years later, the highway department widened the Ouray Tunnel to 27 feet. By the mid-1990s moisture and freezing had destabilized rock in the tunnel, posing a risk of falling rock to motorists. Rather than cutting the tunnel open or realigning the road, the state repaired and stabilized the tunnel, preserving its historical appearance. The project included cleaning and grouting the portal voids with shotcrete and reinforcing the interior rock walls with bolts and lining with shotcrete. Repairs to the rock portals maintained the tunnel's original character (Author Unknown, n.d.(b), 2). [Plates 9 & 10].

In the late 1970s, the Colorado Division of Highways completed two important highway-relocation projects. The most complex of these projects involved completing a bypass of US 550/160 south of Durango. The original 2.18-mile alignment hugs the canyon south of Durango to the Main Street downtown. The division upgraded this portion of the highway to four lanes from Durango to the junction of US 550/160, approximately five miles south of the city. In December 1979, the division completed a 5.5-mile relocation of US 550 around the Dallas Reservoir site, north of Ridgeway in Ouray County (Colorado Division of Highways, Colorado Annual Highway & Transportation Report, 1981: 55).

Plate 9. Northwest of Ouray Tunnel.

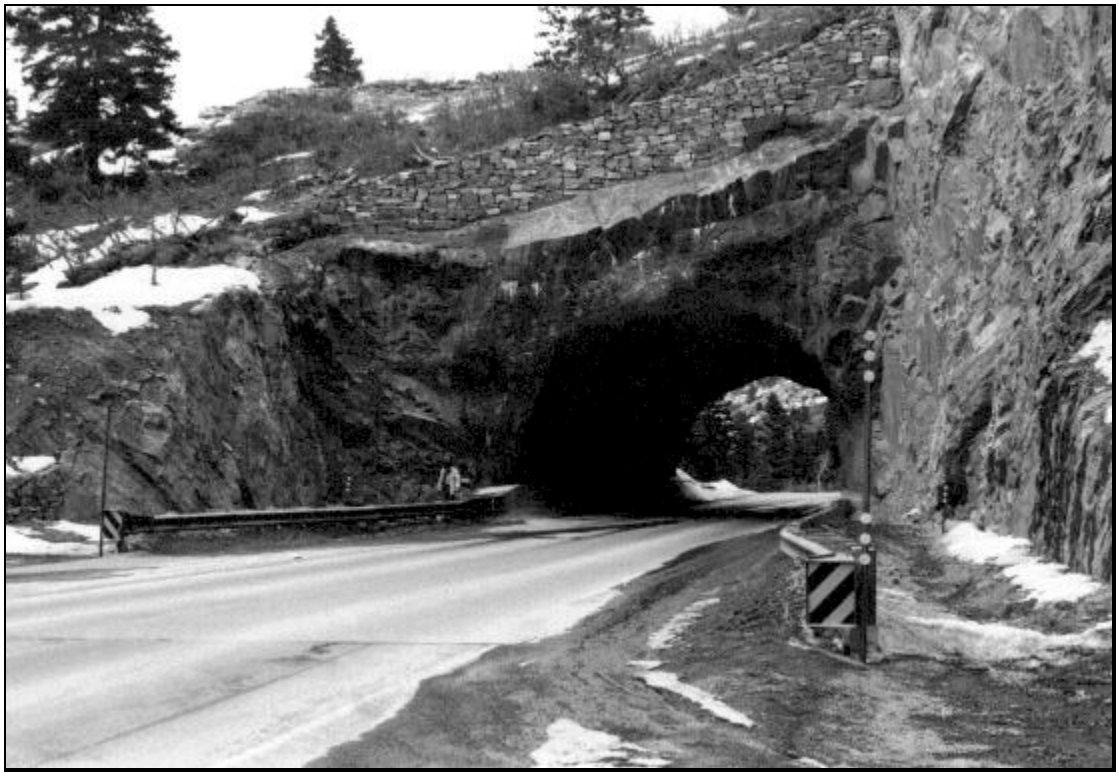

Plate 10. Rockwork above Ouray Tunnel.

Work began in June 1999 to widen shoulders and add safety improvements to 3.6 miles of the highway near the New Mexico State Line. In November of that year, Colorado voters passed the Transportation Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANs) initiative. With funding from this source, expansion of the highway to four lanes began in 2001 on 13 miles of the highway in La Plata County from the New Mexico State Line to Durango. At a cost of $48.8 million, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) estimated completion by 2006 (Colorado Department of Transportation: 2000(a): 8; Colorado Department of Transportation, http://www.TREXProject.com/about.asp).

11.1.2 Site Survey Synopsis of US 550 – 129.25 miles from milepost 0.00 at the New Mexico border to milepost 129.25 at the junction of US 50 and SH 90 in Montrose (surveyed February 8, 2002).

Starting at the border of New Mexico and Colorado in La Plata County, this section of US 550 is a two-lane highway with wide shoulders and no drainage ditches. Heading north to Bondad Hill, the road has a steep grade of 6 percent. There are no shoulders and the road has been cut through the rock. Past Bondad Hill, drainage ditches become evident, as there is farmland and pasture. The crown of the road appears to be higher for approximately two miles. It also at this point near the Sunnyside School where the road has undergone numerous patches.

US 550 connects to US 160 south of Durango. At this intersection the road has a traffic light and widens to a four-lane highway. Prior to entering the Carbon Canyon Junction, US 550 splits with a new road crossing the Animas River to the west. This new section is a divided four-lane highway and extends to the junction of US 160. The original roadbed (known as State Highway 3 since 1981) of US 550 continues along the east side of the Animas River and is cut into the side of the hill. The two-lane road has no shoulders and worn, older asphalt. This road turns west onto 6th Street, a busy two-lane commercial street. The road is seamed concrete. The road continues west, connects to US 550 at the intersection of US 160, and continues on the west side of Durango.

Heading north outside of Durango, the highway measures four-lanes wide with a passing lane. The road is covered with asphalt with ample shoulders. The road from Durango to the hamlet of

Trimble has deep embankments and large, modern drainage pipes (some are approximately 36 inches in diameter). The road is allocated approximately 50 to 100 feet from the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. Immediately west of Shalona Lake, the road crosses the railroad track via an overhead bridge. The bridge has 10 feet of protective fence embedded in the Johnson Wall concrete barriers. After crossing the bridge, the road has an exceptionally steep incline as it passes the Hermosa Cliffs. The road is cut out of the cliffs on the west side and there are guardrails on the east side of the road.

Entering into the Purgatory area, US 550 opens into four-lane highway with wide shoulders. After leaving Purgatory, the road begins its steep climb to Red Mountain. Because the road was cut from rock in several areas, and there are no embankments or shoulders, it is very narrow. Portions along the highway have flat "turn off" areas that have been created to handle the avalanche and rock slides that occur in the springtime. The road is winding and hugs the mountains in several areas. Switchbacks lead the road through Coal Bank Pass and Molas Pass prior to its descent into the town of Silverton.

The road travels northwest out of Silverton and continues a gradual incline to the Red Mountain Pass. The road has several switchbacks and sharp hairpin turns, and lacks embankments and shoulders. Again, the highway has flat "turn-off" areas that have been created to handle the avalanche and rock slides which occur in the springtime. North of Red Mountain Pass, the road gradually declines 2,000 feet and enters Ironton Park. This area of the road is flat and surrounded by marshes. An old stone building, which appears to be a garage, is located at the northern end of the park. The road continues to switchback until it approaches the East Riverside Slide. This modern tunnel has a slide roof to prevent the closing of the road when a rockslide occurs (Plate 11). The road continues to descend 1,000 feet to the town of Ouray. Prior to entering Ouray, there is a rock tunnel constructed during the early 1920s. The tunnel has dry laid rock retaining walls. The tunnel has been blasted out of the mountain and displays a smooth finish (Plate 12).

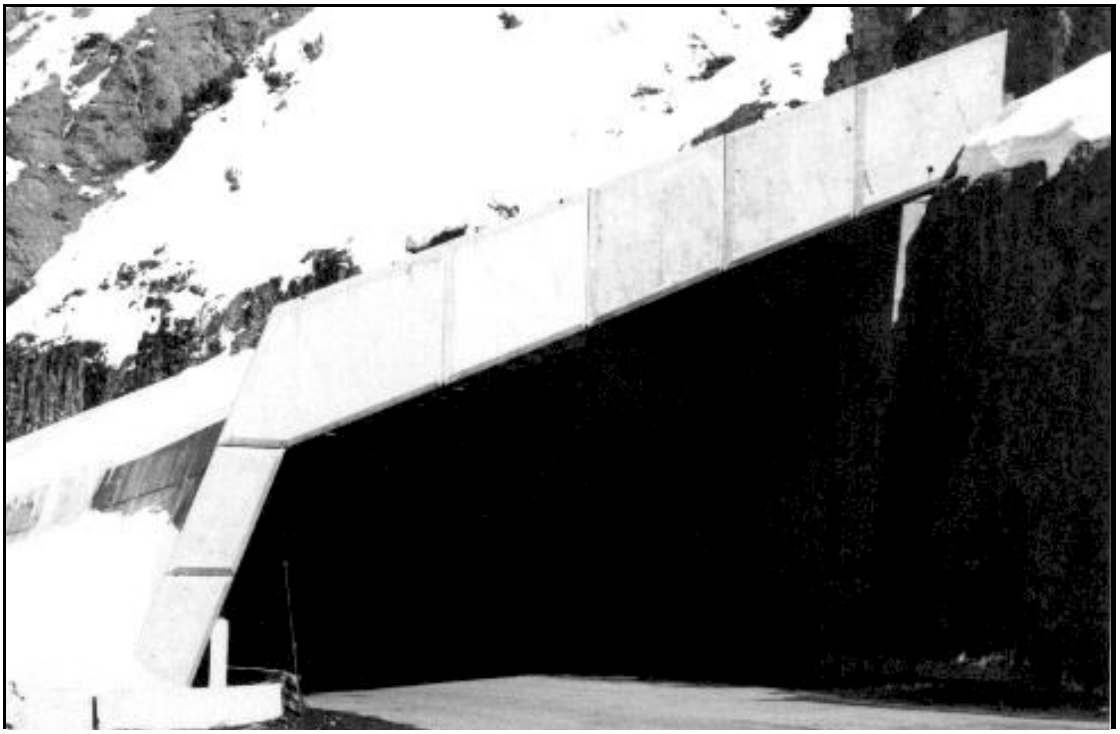

Plate 11. Northeast view of Riverside Slide, a block and concrete tunnel.

Plate 12. Dry-laid stone wall south of Ouray Tunnel on US 550.

Heading north out of Ouray, the road flattens out and remains narrow. There are no shoulders on the road and a shallow drainage ditch becomes apparent. The road continues like this until it reaches the town of Portland, where the ditches become deeper. The road remains unchanged through Ouray County and into Montrose County. Passing through the hamlet of Uncompahgre, the road becomes slightly wider, the result of new asphalt laid in 2001. Two miles south of Montrose, the road widens to a five-lane divided highway until it reaches the incorporated boundary of Montrose. At that point, the road narrows to a four-lane, undivided road with concrete curbs and sidewalks to the terminus of US 550 at Main Street.

11.2 Historical Summary of State Highway 112 (5AL674; 5RN753; 5SH1963)

State Highway 112 appears to be a cohesive linear route, but it originated is a patchwork quilt of pavement that came together during the decade after the introduction of the Model T in 1914. State Highway 112 is a prime example of a "farm-to-market" road that rural Coloradoans demanded once the price of an automobile came within reach of the average American.

SH 112 runs through the irrigated farmland of the San Luis Valley. The Valley is a fertile high alpine basin in south-central Colorado placed between the mountains of the San Juan range. Potatoes are the primary crop for most local farmers. The San Luis Valley consistently ranks among the top five potato producing regions in the United States.

The Colorado State Highway Commission published its first road map in 1916. The document indicates 12 miles of gravel-surfaced road, identified as State Highway 10-S, between the towns of Center and Hooper. South of Hooper, an unsurfaced portion of 10-S continued through the San Luis Valley before reaching the town of Alamosa (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1916) [Figure 11].

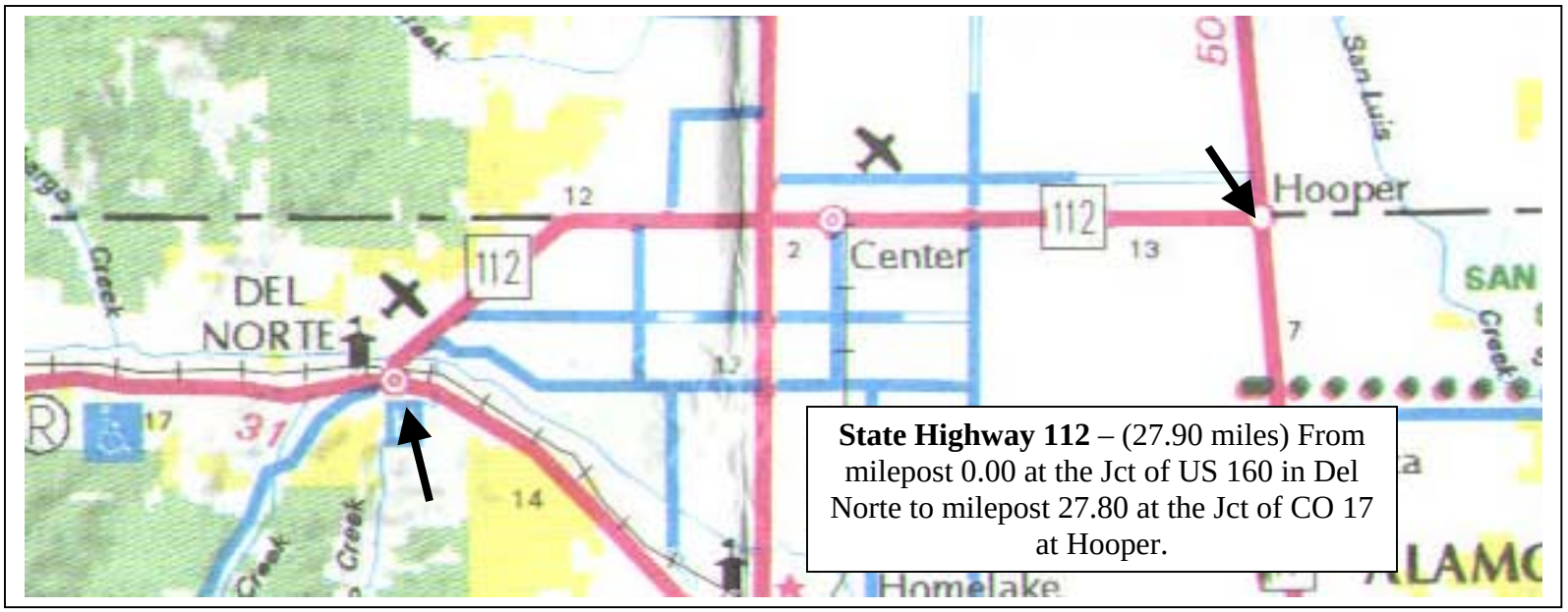

Figure 11. State Highway 112 – 27.80 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of US 160 in Del Norte to milepost 27.80 at the junction of CO 17 at Hooper (1999 Colorado State Map, Colorado Department of Transportation).

In the late 1910s, the Highway Department built State Highway 68 on a diagonal path north from Del Norte and connecting with SH 36 in Saguache County. On a map, today's SH 112 resembles a rifle. The original SH 68 is the butt-end of the modern road. However, by the late 1910s, there remained a five-mile gap along the Rio Grande-Saguache county line to Center (Colorado Highways Bulletin, April 1918: back cover). Work on that gap progressed during the early 1920s. In 1922, the State Highway Department issued a new map displaying 8,800 miles of Colorado's primary highway system. For the first time, the state designated an 18-mile stretch of between Del Norte and Hooper as SH 112. For more than eight decades, the State Highway Department has realigned the road's original configuration (Colorado Highways, August 1922: 13).

One of the earliest appropriations for improvements on this route was included in the 1926 Annual Highway Budget. In 1926, the state authorized $3,000 to upgrade Road 112 north from the town of Del Norte to the Rio Grande county line (Colorado Department of Highways, 1926). However, it took another 20 years of work by county politicians and residents to blacktop the highway.

According to the 1930 State Highway map, the state had surfaced SH 112 from the town of Del Norte to the Rio Grande county line and graded the remainder from that point to Hooper (Colorado Department of Highways, 1930(a)). The Annual Meetings of the Highway Advisory Board during the late 1930s and 1940s usually made time for a presentation from San Luis Valley residents asking for better roads. The minutes of the board's meetings during the late 1930s and early 1940s record a delegation from Rio Grande County asking for improvements to SH 112 between Del Norte and its junction with SH 15 (Colorado Department of Highways, 1940(b): 129).

The commissioners and concerned citizens got their wish after World War II. In 1946, the state placed six inches of gravel or crushed rock surface from Del Norte northeast to the Rio Grande-Saguache county line (Colorado Department of Highways, 1946). In 1948, the commission agreed to pay $45,000 in cost overruns on the completed SH 112 project. It was the largest

amount of money among nine projects the board agreed to support in that fiscal year (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1948: 310).

The following year, Rio Grande and Saguache Counties and the federal government split a bill of $140,000 to oil-surface the rest of SH 112. Following Department of Highways standards, the state placed 26 feet of the surfacing known as Asphaltic Road Material MC-0 over the road (Colorado Department of Highways, 1949(a): 70-4; 1949(b): 12).

11.2.1 Eligibility of SH 112

Scant traffic and few changes characterize the service history of SH 112. The road remains an important thoroughfare for the agricultural economy of the San Luis Valley. State Highway 112 is a rare example in the Colorado highway system of a road still serving the same purpose from its original design. SH 112's significance rests on the agricultural economy of San Luis Valley. This linear "farm-to-market" has cut through three farming counties since the 1920s. Despite a lack of unique facilities like bridges and surfacing, SH 112's original and continued purpose as a farm-to-market road and unchanged alignment, make it a candidate for eligibility under National Register Criterion A. State Highway 112 is an example of functional roadway with a long, unbroken history. Under the NTFHR, SH 112 is best categorized as an engineered route because it was originally designed to move people and goods.

11.2.2 Synopsis of Site Survey SH112 – 27.90 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of US 160 in Del Norte to milepost 27.80 at the junction of CO 17 in Hooper (survey conducted January 29, 2002).

State Highway 112 runs a little over 27 miles through one of the world's largest high-desert valleys. SH 112 begins on Oak Street in central Del Norte, crosses the Rio Grande River, bends to the northeast, and straddles the Rio Grande-Saguache County line. Twelve miles east of Del Norte, SH 112 crosses US Highway 285. East of US 285, SH 112 skirts the south side of the town of Center along 8th Street. State Highway 112 continues due east until it concludes at an intersection with State Highway 17 on the north side of the town of Hooper. Under the National Task Force for Historic Roads (NTFHR) system of classifying roads, SH 112 should be identified as an engineered route. According to the NTFHR, an engineered route, like an

aesthetic route, will have a documented origin or authorization and construction date, but "the aesthetic experience was often secondary" to motorists (Marriott, 1998: 13). Developed to improve traffic in a relatively isolated portion of the state, the Colorado Department of Highways built SH 112 to aid the movement of people, goods and services through the San Luis Valley.

Overall, the road is flat for the entire stretch of the survey. State Highway 112 begins in a northerly direction from Del Norte. Approximately one mile outside of town, the road crosses the Rio Grande Canal over the Rio Grande Overflow Bridge (CDOT Structure ID# N-11-E). Built in 1947, the bridge has steel supports, concrete rails, and abutments. The road is asphalt covered and lacks shoulders or embankments. The road then turns eastward, serving as the dividing line between Rio Grande and Saguache Counties [Plate 13]. The road has a gradual embankment and no shoulders. Located approximately two miles from the eastward bend is a deep drainage ditch. This ditch – identified as Twelve Mile Lateral No. 5 -- runs parallel along the southern side of the road. Intermittently there are wood diversion gates built by farmers to aid in farmland irrigation. Wherever diversion gates are present, corrugated metal drainage pipes run below the roadbed.

The Farmers Union Canal crosses the road just west of US 285. Built in 1948, the concrete Farmers Union Canal Bridge features a 66-foot span over the canal. West of US 285, the road has newer asphalt, three-foot-wide shoulders and deep berms. Entering the town of Center, the road changes. There are no shoulders on the north side of the road. Gravel shoulders and drainage ditches are located on the south side alone. Extending outside of the town, the ditch is shallow as compared to the ditch located west of town. Entering into Alamosa County, the drainage ditch again becomes deeper. The road also has a very narrow shoulder and the asphalt looks new. Six miles east of the Alamosa County line, the drainage switches from the south side to the north side of the road. One and a half miles west of the town of Hooper, the asphalt looks new and there are no drainage ditches on either side of the road. The road is flat with narrow shoulders.

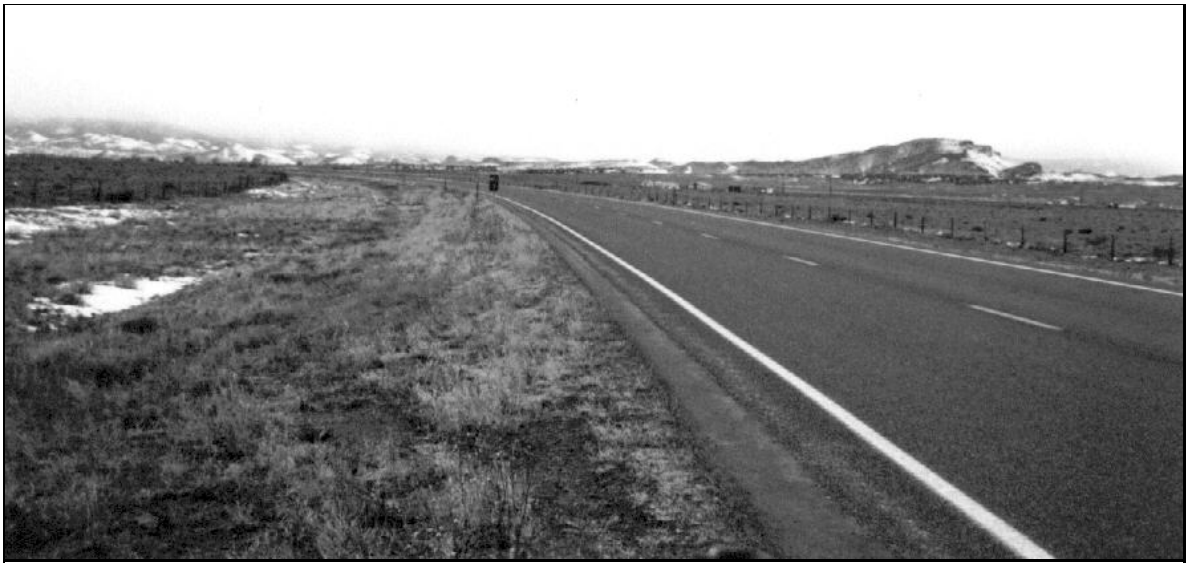

Plate 13. View south of SH 112 along the Saguache and Rio Grande County line.

11.3 Historical Summary of State Highway 141 (5DL2414; 5ME13044; 5MN6048; 5SM3670)

When Grand Junction's city fathers first considered an automobile road during the 1920s, little did they know how their civic pride would later contribute to world events.

In 1921, the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce decided to stimulate the local economy through construction of two automobile roads leading out of the city. The Chamber of Commerce convinced the community to raise $30,000 to build two highways – one running from Grand Junction north to Rangeley and the other heading south into the Paradox Valley. The Paradox Valley road would traverse one of the world's richest deposits of uranium, vanadium and radium (Colorado State Highway Commission 1922(a): 6).

The 161.99-mile highway begins at the junction of US 666, west of the town of Dove Creek. From the 1920s to 1955, the first 70 miles of the highway were known as State Highway 80. SH 141 then turns and curves east to the town of Slick Rock. Going up and over 6,100-foot Gypsum Pass, the highway crosses State Highway 145 east of Naturita at the confluence of the Naturita and Maverick Creeks. State Highway 141 follows a westerly course through the towns of Naturita and Vancorum before traveling down the San Miguel River northwest to Uravan. West of Uravan, the road mirrors the twists and turns of the Dolores River to Gateway. The road turns northeast up the West Creek, winds its way over a ridge, and traces the path of the East Creek before going northeast to US 50 at Whitewater. Finally, State Highway 141 shares US 50's route for two miles, then turns north, toward I-70, stopping at the junction of I-70 west of Clifton (Figure 12).

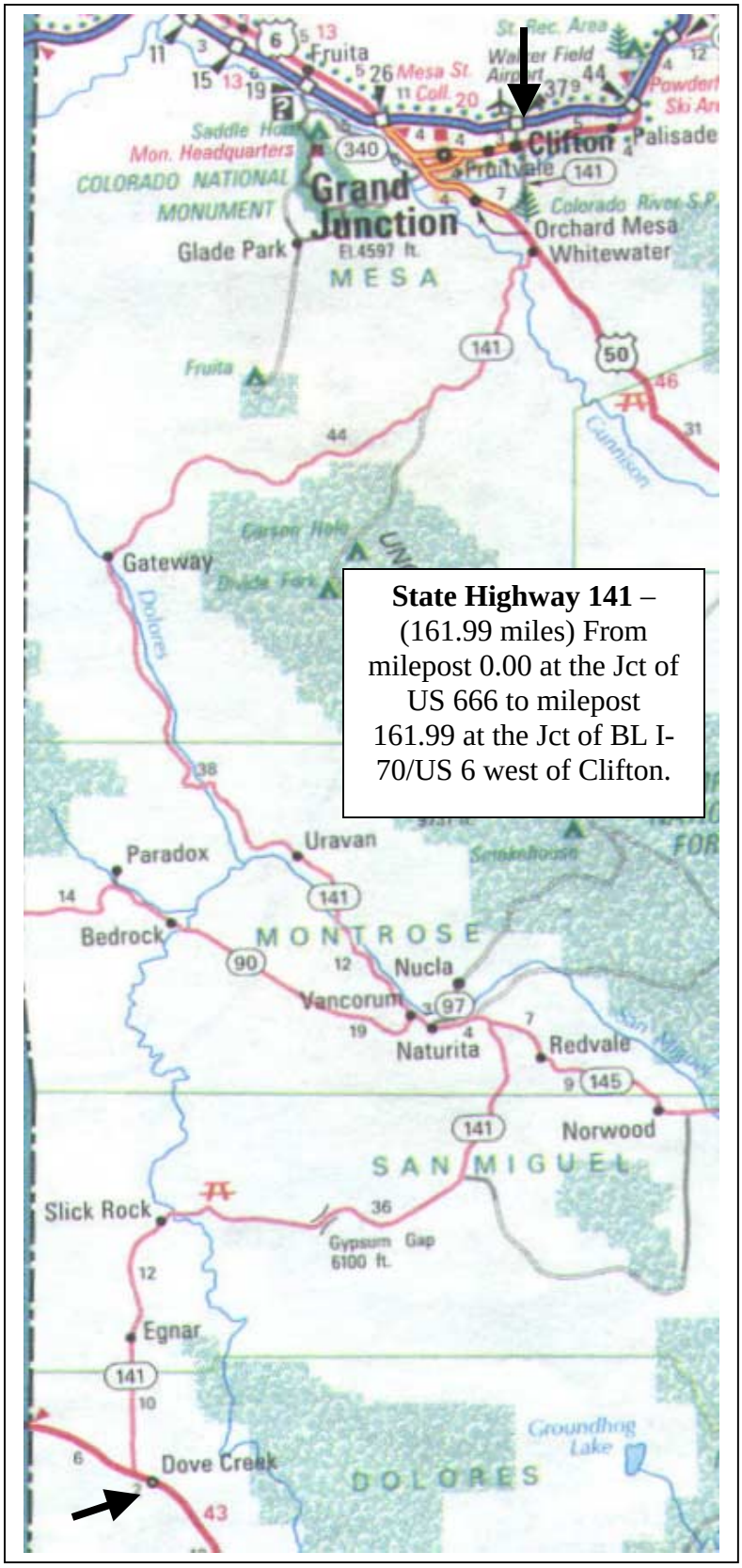

Figure 12. State Highway 141 – 161.99 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of US 666 to milepost 161.99 at the junction of Interstate 70/US 6 west of Clifton (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

SH 141 has kept its original designation for nearly 80 years, but the path of the original 1920s highway does not resemble today's highway. The highway first traveled from Colorado 90 at Naturita north to US 50 at Whitewater. Missing the first five miles north of US 50 and a winding 50 miles between Naturita and Dove Creek. The state built a 62-mile road from Naturita to Dove Creek during the 1920s, with work on this winding road continuing throughout the decade. In 1929, the state, Mesa County and Whitewater Granite Company cooperated to straighten the approaches to the bridges, adjust the road's alignment, and eliminate heavy grades over 16 miles of highway through Mesa County. The $5,000 project began on June 1 and concluded the first week of November (Colorado Department of Highways, 1929). The 1930 State Highway map shows SH 141 graded throughout its 62 miles (Colorado Department of Highways, 1930(a)). In the 1940s, the highway department added an eight-mile spur south of Dove Creek, increasing the road's length to 70 miles. From the 1920s to the mid-1950s, the section from US 50 north to current Interstate 70 was known as State Highway 146. In 1986, the Highway Department renumbered SH 146 as an extension of CO 141 (Colorado Division of Highways, 1987: 14).

Much of the nation's uranium ore supply is located in southwest Colorado. Beginning in 1947, the Bureau of Public Roads and the Atomic Energy Commission supported a program to improve access between mines, mills, and a refining laboratory in Grand Junction. By 1955, the Highway Department turned back the central portion of SH 141 into a spur from Whitewater to nine miles southeast and 15 miles northwest of Naturita. In 1971, the state added 50 winding miles from Naturita to Dove Creek and filled the five-mile gap from US 50 to Clifton. The Highway Department re-designated State Highway 146 as State Highway 141 in 1986 (Colorado Division of Highways, 1987: 14).

Montrose County asked the State Highway Advisory Board for a $30,000 appropriation to improve SH 141 between Naturita and Uravan on December 10, 1940. With war looming, many regional residents recognized the potential need for uranium and vanadium as steel alloys (not as fuel for atomic weapons) (Colorado Department of Highways, 1940(a): 125). When the board met the following December, Governor Ralph Carr attended the meeting and reminded the Highway Advisory Board of the "necessity of constructing an adequate road from Naturita to

Uravan to serve the uranium and vanadium mines" (Colorado Department of Highways, 1941: 152).

During World War II, a secret facility outside of Grand Junction processed uranium and vanadium for the production of atomic weapons. Keeping State Highway 141's access from mills at Uravan to the refining facility was a priority for state maintenance crews from 1942 to 1945. The road's military importance continued into the Cold War era. In 1951, the Highway Advisory Board and Mesa County matched a quarter of the $130,000 in federal money required to put on base and blacktop on the highway (Colorado Department of Highways, 1951: 126).

On July 6, 1955, the State Department of Highways opened bids for improving and paving about eight miles of a narrow shelf north of Uravan. The estimated cost of the job was $616,873, with most of the money coming from the Atomic Energy Commission's access-road program. The Department of Highways expected to expend $120,800 of its own funds for the project (Denver Post, June 18, 1955: 16).

For Fiscal Year 1960, the Highway Department split $500,000 for improvements on SH 141. During that year, the state authorized $400,000 for right-of-way and construction from the town of Gateway south to the Mesa county line; and $100,000 for paving SH 141 from Whitewater south to the Montrose county line (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 15,1959: N-18). In 1963, the state authorized $400,000 for construction of nearly 40 miles of SH 141 from Gateway northeast to the connection with US 50 at Whitewater (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 11, 1963: N-8). The last substantial upgrade on SH 141 concluded in 2000 when the state resurfaced 12.5 miles of asphalt north of Naturita (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2000(a): 14).

11.3.1 Eligibility of SH 141

SH 141 symbolized a signpost that lead to the conclusion of the Second World War II against Japan. The top secret Manhattan Project used the road between the uranium mines at Naturita and the processing facility in Grand Junction. State officials and the Department of Highways knew only that the project was important enough to keep the road open year round. Uranium and

vanadium mining in this region of Colorado helped in the United States Army's development of the Atomic Bomb from 1943 to 1945. During the 1950s, SH 141 was the primary path leading to one of the nation's largest uranium deposits, touching off one of the West's last mineral rushes. For it's significance during the war, and the post-war mineral boom, SH 141 qualifies under National Register Criterion A – a highway important in a certain period in the nation's history.

The stark rust-colored mesas framing SH 141 through in uranium country between Gateway and Naturita could classify the highway as an aesthetic route under the NTFHR system. However, the highway is best categorized as an engineered route because of the role it played in keeping the nation's uranium industry running in war and peace.

11.3.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of State Highway 141 – 161.99 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of US 666 to milepost 161.99 at the junction of I-70/ US 6 west of Clifton (survey conducted February 7, 2002).

SH 141 begins in Clifton as a wide, six-lane, paved highway. The road narrows to four lanes and then down to a two-lane highway approximately one mile south of the SH141 and SH 50 junction in Clifton. Proceeding south, where SH 141 and SH 50 meet again, the road becomes a divided highway with two lanes on either side. SH 141 splits again from SH 50 and proceeds west. At this point, the road is two-laned with very narrow, dirt shoulders (Plate 14).

The road winds through Unaweep Canyon next to East Creek. There are no shoulders but several pull-off areas to view the canyon. Several areas have guardrails to protect against the steep canyon grade (Plate 15). The road through this canyon is flat with several curves. There were no drainage ditches or embankments viewed along this portion of the road. The road passes over several washes and gulches that feature wooden retaining supports, frequently rotted or collapsed (Plate 16). Further west and adjacent to West Creek, the road is cut through rock and there are no shoulders. Entering into the town of Gateway, newer asphalt is evident as are modern culverts for drainage. The road is narrow and has a slight embankment – again without shoulders. Crossing the Dolores River, the road flattens and the embankments range from flat to steep depending on the topography. The stretch along the river has no drainage ditches.

Crossing into Montrose County, the road has been cut close to the rock on the west side of the road. The road is narrow between mile markers 91 and 92.

The road widens to four lanes in the town of Naturita. There are some asphalt curbs on the west end of town and one block of newer concrete curbs with sidewalks on the east end. The road then travels southeast through Naturita Canyon. The road is winding with sloped embankments and no shoulders. Some of the road has been patched. This continues into San Miguel County. Through the Gypsum Valley, the road is steep with guardrails along the side. There are also modern, metal supports over the washes in the valley. Entering Disappointment Valley, the asphalt is older and the road offers narrow shoulders and a sloped embankment. The road grade increases rapidly entering the Joe Davis Canyon. The grade is very steep and the rocks hug the road, offering no shoulder or embankment. Leaving the canyon, the road flattens out and is surrounded by open field. The embankments are steep entering Dolores County. Once the road enters Dove Creek, the road widens into a five-lane highway with wide shoulders.

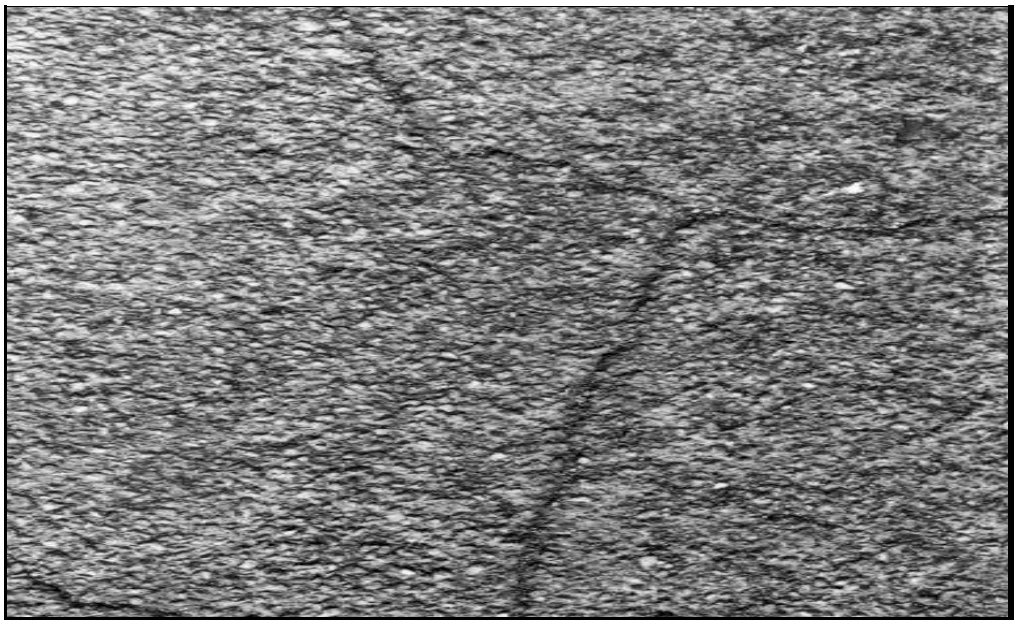

Plate 14. State Highway 141's weathered asphalt between Gateway and Uravan.

Plate 15. Eroded metal retaining wall above East Creek on SH 141.

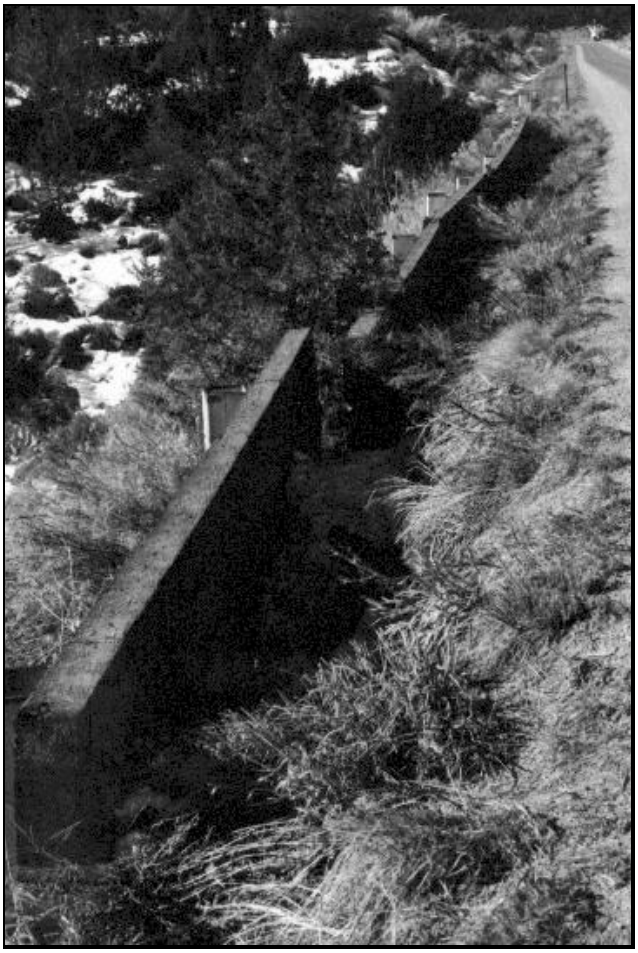

Plate 16. View west of wood retaining wall over wash on State Highway 141 in Mesa County.

11.4 Historical Summary of State Highway 74 (5JF2733)

Following the curve of Bear Creek, State Highway 74 is Denver's well-worn path to the beauty of the high country. Native Americans used this route for access between the plains and mountain parks of the Eastern Slope, and municipal and federal funding enabled the construction of automobile access to these recreation and tourism areas.

State Highway 74 begins at a junction with State Highway 8 in Morrison and runs for 17.99 miles to Exit 252 (also known as the El Rancho exit) on Interstate 70. Some of the historic highlights along the 18-mile road include Red Rocks Park; the first home of the Denver Motor Club adjacent to Starbuck Park near Idledale; the town of Kittredge; and the town of Evergreen (Denver Public Library, n.d.)[Figure13].

In 1873, former Territorial Governor John Evans built a toll road running from Morrison along the Bear Creek Canyon. Evans' road offered an entrance into the mining camps of Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties and the hay meadows and immense pine-timber resources on the upper Bear Creek and its tributaries. The primitive road crossed Bear Creek 22 times in the 11 miles between Morrison and Evergreen. The road's bridges were of rough timber set on log cribs with stringers of round timber cut from the hillsides adjacent to the structures. An old tollgate was located about two miles west of Morrison in a bend of the canyon (Cowden, 1934: 45).

During the 1870s, early settlers followed an old native trail along Turkey Creek Canyon about three miles south of Bear Creek at Morrison. Miners and other speculators followed the trail in their rush to the silver camps of Leadville. After toll roads fell out of fashion, Jefferson County maintained the passage as a county road. Increased traffic encouraged Jefferson County to improve the road, but for most travelers it remained a "rough and rocky path" along the foothills until the advent of the first automobile (Johnson, 1918: 9).

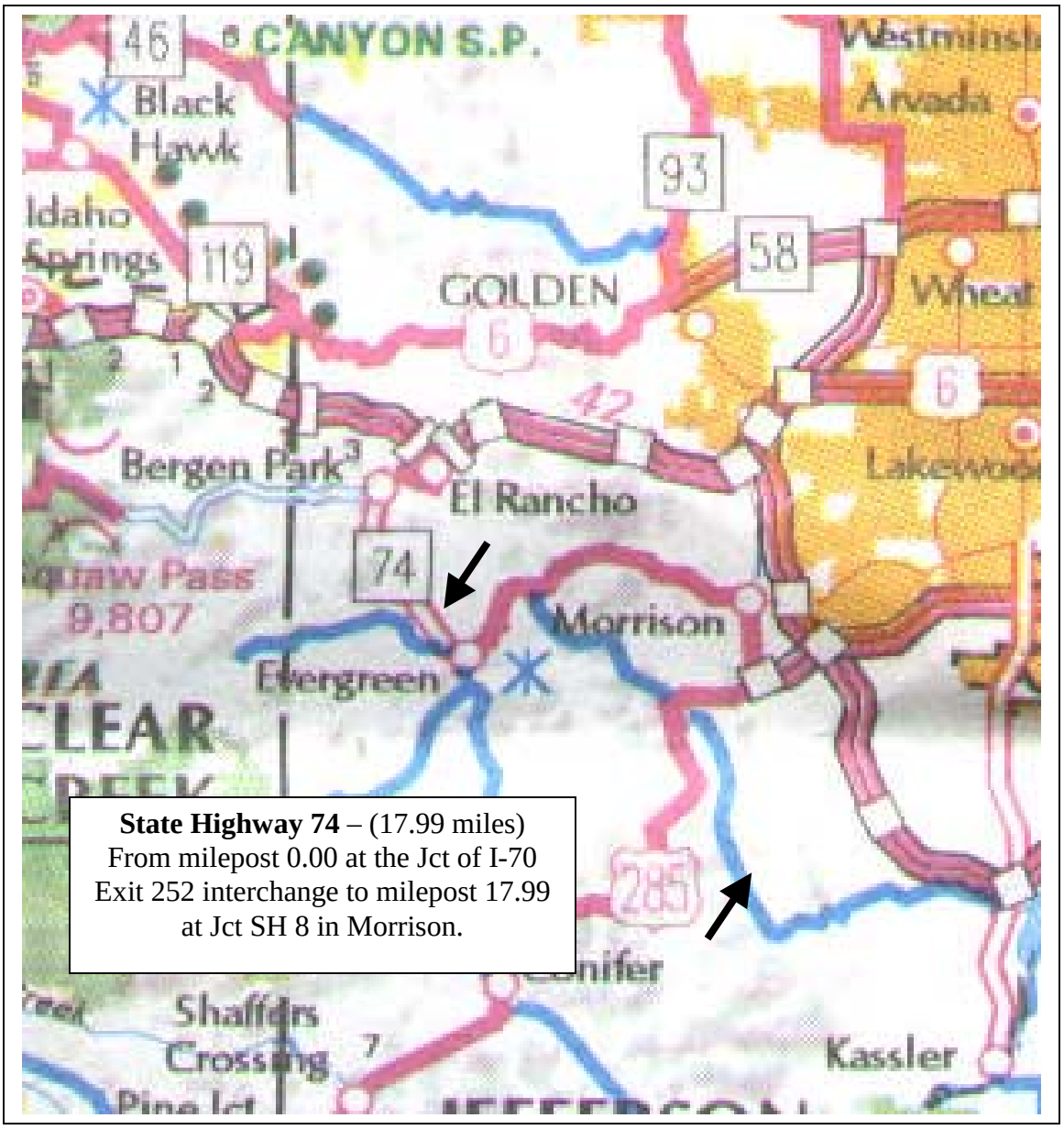

Figure 13. State Highway 74 – 17.99 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of the I-70 Exit 252 interchange to milepost 17.99 at junction of State Highway 8 in Morrison (1999 Colorado State Map, Colorado Department of Transportation).

Flooding plagued this road on a number of occasions, notably in July 1896 when Bear Creek topped its banks and nearly wiped out the town of Morrison. Another devastating flood in 1925 threatened picnickers and carried several cars into the creek. Attempting to corral the creek's tempestuous nature, Charles D. Vail, Denver's manager of improvements and parks (and later chief engineer of the State Highway Department) proposed to control Bear Creek with a dam upstream at Dedisse Mountain Park in Evergreen. Completed in 1928, the 65-acre Evergreen Lake provided the impetus for the town to bloom as a tourist destination (Litvak, 1999: 4).

The automobile encouraged a new concept in urban design, and the road winding around Bear Creek Canyon was the start for an unusual proposal. In 1909, Denver Mayor Robert Speer sought to create a chain of parks in the mountains west of the city. After the state legislature passed a charter amendment in 1913 authorizing the city to purchase land in other counties, Denver's city planners went about designing the world's first municipally operated mountain park system. Through the park system, the city sought to showcase a wide variety of trees and 300 types of wildflowers. The city also stocked Bear and Turkey creeks with rainbow and black-spotted trout (Author Unknown, n.d.(a): 2). Today, the Denver Mountain Park System along SH 74 includes Red Rocks, Starbuck, Little, Corwina, Dedisse, and Bergen Parks.

The influence of wealthy car owners brought city planners and local landowners together. Local developer John Starbuck donated 11 acres to Denver Mountain Parks in 1911, and he sold 65 adjacent acres to the Denver Motor Club in 1916. The parcel became the club's "country home," complete with clubhouse, dance pavilion, and water rights dating back to 1870 that controlled one-fifth of Bear Creek water. Remnants of the clubhouse and the original alignment of State Highway 27 (as the Highway Commission designated State Highway 74 until 1923) still exist along the creek. In 1917, the state constructed a number of concrete bridges and rebuilt the road along Bear Creek high enough above the stream to be safe during any ordinary high water. In building the modern auto highway, state engineers were unable to compensate for a number of sharp curves along the canyon. Unfortunately, budget limitations prevented engineers and crews from cutting through the numerous sharp points in the canyon to reduce curvature (Cowden, 1934: 45). The Colorado Highway Department raised and realigned SH 74 away from Bear Creek during the 1950s. Since that time, private landholders along the creek have used the

abandoned road as a footpath or driveway to their homes (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995: sec. 8, page 2; Lomond, 1996: 2-5).

As more people drove the mountain road during the 1910s, the State Legislature granted the city of Denver the authority to police mountain parks and mountain-park roadways. According to a 1919 law, the city could fine motorists traveling in excess of 20 miles per hour up Bear Creek Canyon and over 15 miles per hour going downhill (City and County of Denver, 1919: 15). Park police also cited motorists caught removing or destroying trees, picking flowers, building fires in undesignated areas or fording Bear Creek in their automobiles (Author Unknown n.d.: 4(a)).

In the fall of 1928, the city of Denver supervised the first oiling of State Highway 74 from Morrison to Evergreen. Supervised by City Highway Commissioner F.J. Altvater, crews used a process known as "mat treatment" that required working an asphalt-based oil into the gravel. Once the oil set, it formed a surface resembling asphalt (Colorado Highways, October 1928: 14). The city oiled the road to a depth of one to 1½ to two-inches. The stabilizing qualities of the oil surfacing were evident after a July 7, 1933 flood. Three miles of roadway remained almost entirely underwater during the flood, but in only a few instances did the surface erode. Where any portion of the road remained, the oil surfacing stayed intact (Cowden, 1934: 45).

Due to the steep slopes of the canyon walls there was little possibility for escape if anyone was caught on the road. A state engineer later commented that five people died from the flood, but added, "Had it occurred on a Sunday or a holiday, when the canyon is usually crowded with cars and picnic parties, the loss of life might have been appalling" (Cowden, 1934: 47).

During the 1920s and into the early 1930s, SH 74 started at current State Highway 103-5 at Echo Lake, and took current State Highway 103 east, through Bergen Park and Evergreen, to US 285 at Morrison. The 1938 State Highway Map shows State Highway 68 replacing SH 74 from Echo Lake to Bergen Park, and SH74 was turned northward to US 40 as in its current configuration (Colorado Department of Highways, 1938(b)).

The City of Denver sustained State Highway 74 during its first two-and-a-half decades as an auto road, but it took nature's capriciousness and federal New Deal money to create the modern highway. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp SP-13-C was established on June 30, 1935, just west of Morrison, below a bend in the highway. The young men stationed at the camp were primarily engaged in building a huge amphitheater in the Park of the Red Rocks. It took five years and 120 enlistees to shape the open-air theatre out of the surrounding rock and create a centerpiece of the Mountain Parks system. The only remaining CCC camp in Colorado, the barracks received a listing on the National Register of Historic Places on May 8, 1990 (Gleyre and Alleger, 1936: 79-80; Marriott, 1998: 182-3).

By the late 1930s, another federal work program, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), took charge of a reconstruction project in the wake of a September 1938 flood. Funded by $486,588 in federal money, WPA enlistees blasted a 40-foot-wide shelf for the highway and built retaining walls along Bear Creek Canyon from Morrison to Starbuck during the spring of 1939. Crews raised nearly 4,600 feet of masonry rubble walls to protect the highway at points where the floodwaters struck the previous year. The walls measured seven to 34 feet in height and from 3.5 to 17 feet wide at the base (Rocky Mountain News, May 28, 1939: 2).

In 1956, the State Highway Department adopted a resolution to realign SH 74 according to Federal Aid Secondary Project No. S 0098 (1) and abandon certain portions of the highway along Bear Creek (Colorado Department of Highways, 1956: 282). The following year, the Highway Department widened and resurfaced three miles of the road between Evergreen and Kittredge with $365,000 in allocated funds (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 15, 1957: N-2).

During the 1990s, CDOT expanded the highway between Evergreen and the interstate into an expressway. Work began in the summer of 1993, when CDOT spent $8 million to widen a mile of SH 74 and improve the El Rancho Interchange at I-70 (Rocky Mountain News, May 16, 1993: 34-A). Since 1996, this portion of SH 74 has been a four-lane divided highway from I-70 south to the south end of Bergen Park. From Bergen Park, the highway grows to a five-lane undivided expressway to west Evergreen. The most recent additions to SH 74 came in 2000,

when the state replaced bridges over Saw Mill Gulch near Idledale and Cold Springs Gulch north of Evergreen (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2000(a): 13).

11.4.1 Eligibility of SH 74

SH 74 is the primary road through the Denver Mountain Parks system. First dreamed of and built during the early 1910s, the Denver Mountain Parks system remains a unique example of a municipality preserving a variety of natural resources beyond its city limits. SH 74 also showcases PWA-era rock walls and retains a handful of structures left by the Denver Motor Club in the early 20th century and the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. In 1990, Bear Creek Canyon Road (SH 74) from Morrison to Evergreen was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Marriott, 1998: 183) It is included in this historic highway context to identify the changes to the highway since placement and to encourage preservations to follow the examples set by the submission.

According to the National Task Force for Historic Roads (NTFHR), aesthetic routes such as parkways and park roads were designed and developed for leisure, recreation and commemoration. These roads "typically follow the natural topography of the region and are most often associated with a designed landscape or park space" (Marriott, 1998: 11). Following these principles, SH 74 from Morrison to Evergreen is a prime example of an aesthetic route.

11.4.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of SH 74 – 17.99 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of I-70 Exit 252 interchange to milepost 17.99 at junction of SH 8 in Morrison (survey conducted February 13, 2002)

SH 74 at the I-70 junction is a modern six-lane road completed in the early 1990s. The road narrows to four lanes and is divided by a concrete Johnson Wall guardrail. The road continues as six-lanes until it reaches Bergen Park. At this point the road narrows to four lanes. At mile five, there is a steep rise in the road wherein the road narrows again to a two-lane highway. The road then curves around Bear Creek Lake and enters the town of Evergreen. The road in Evergreen is narrow and has broken curbs. The asphalt is old and crumbling.

Exiting the town of Evergreen, the road remains a two lane and begins to broaden, following the curve of Bear Creek. A curve in the original road was straightened. A new bridge has been built to span Bear Creek. The original concrete bridge is located approximately 75 feet east of the new bridge. The original bridge has a concrete platform, but new steel guardrails have been installed. This portion of the road is dirt and tree-lined.

Driving east, the road curves as it traces Bear Creek. The road is narrow, with limited areas for turn-offs. The north side of the road is cut from the side of the hills. Immediately past Cole Springs (where there is a bridge) exists a stone embankment wall on private property. The wall is dry-laid and consistent with CCC construction methods.

Immediately east of the town of Idledale is a section of old SH 74. The road is on the south side of the current SH 74. Currently, the road is dirt and serves as a private drive to several private homes. Situated along the north side of this road is the old spring pavilion. The pavilion has a pyramid roof. The supports and walls are stone (Plate 17).

Traveling further east the road winds through Bear Creek Canyon for three miles. It is here that the road is cut from the side of the mountain with no turn-off areas. The CCC had built a large stone embankment located at mile 17. The stone embankment is approximately 200 feet in length. The embankment is very steep. Photography of the embankment is difficult as there is no shoulder at this point of the road and the guardrails run alongside the road.

Plate 17. Spring shelter along Shady Lane – the old alignment of SH 74 near Idledale. Note the current alignment above the shelter.

11.5 Historical Summary of US Highway 6 From Brush To Sterling (5LO479.1; 5MR743.1; 5WN171.1)

The advent of automobiles on the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver motor trail through northeastern Colorado brought significant change to the region. Similar to the rest of rural America, the farming communities of this region realized the need for decent "farm-to-market" roads.

Funded by civic and commercial groups, auto trails like the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Highway was an early component of today's US Highway 6. Colorado's portion of US Highway 6 crosses 467 miles of the state, but this summary examines the development of 35 miles from milepost 371.69 at the junction of I-76/Spur US 34 Exit 92 interchange east of Brush to milepost 406.56 at the Junction I-76 at the Exit 125 interchange east of Sterling (Figure 14).

The state's involvement in automobile road construction through northeast Colorado began on June 15, 1910, when the State Highway Commission classified 112 miles of the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver route from Fort Morgan to the Colorado-Nebraska state line as State Primary Road No. 9 (Denver Chamber of Commerce, c. 1912: 35)[Figure 15].

Published in the 1910s, the state's first tourism guide, Highways of Colorado, found that the 42.3-mile drive from Brush to Sterling featured "good graded roads partly dragged, somewhat slippery after rains," but "dried out quickly." However, the road demanded a motorist's complete attention, because there were 20 "tortuous twists and right angles" from Merino to Brush and frequent railroad crossings (Denver Chamber of Commerce, c. 1912: 49).

Northeastern Colorado's small farming towns welcomed automobile highway construction. One commented: "As more miles of highway became paved and attracted more cars and trucks, there was a need for garages to sell them, mechanics to repair the vehicles, filling stations to provide gas and hotels and cafes where travelers could stop for the night or eat meals" (Fort Sedgwick Historical Society, 1982: C-34). Most rural Coloradoans saw the car as a way out rather than a

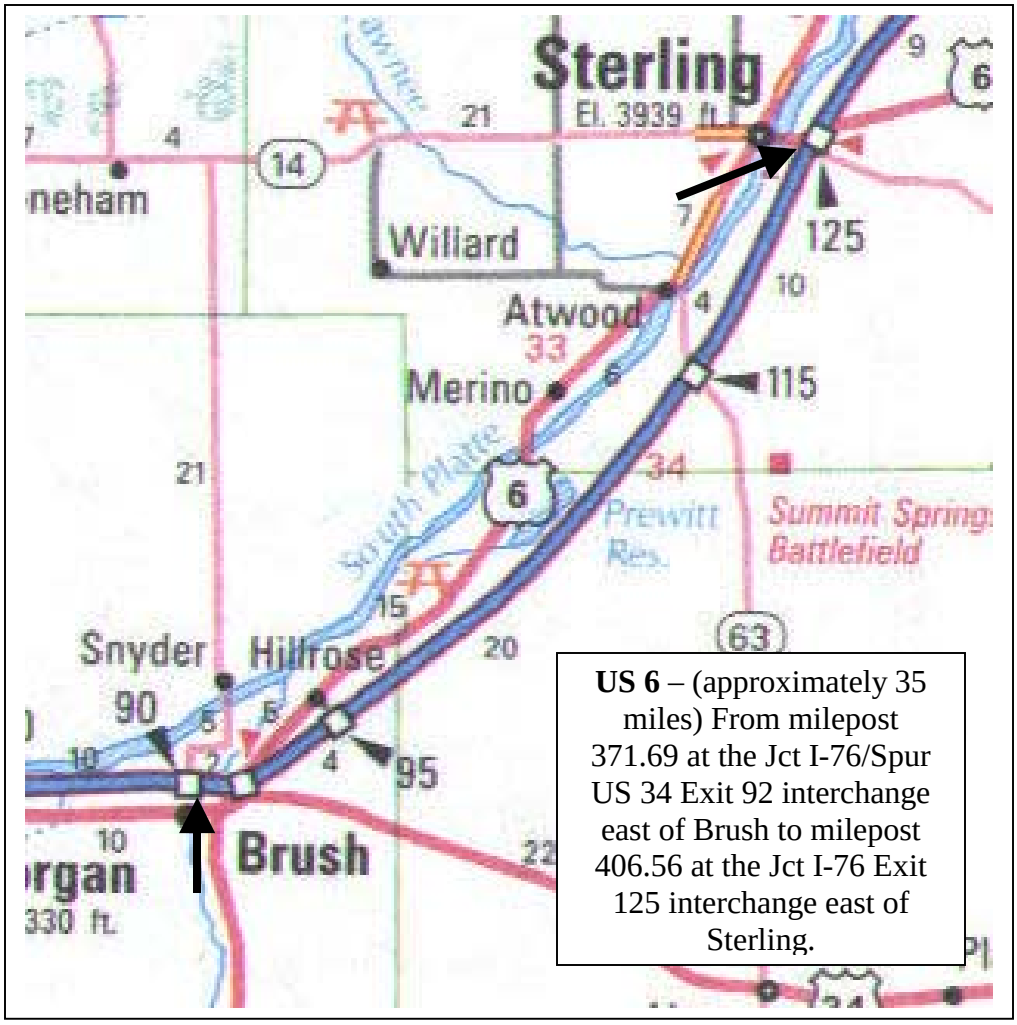

Figure 14. US 6 – Approximately 35 miles from milepost 371.69 at the Junction of Interstate 76/Spur US 34 Exit 92 interchange east of Brush to milepost 406.56 at the Jct I-76 Ext 125 interchange east of Sterling (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

medium bringing in tourist dollars. Similar to other agricultural regions nationwide, residents of northeastern Colorado wanted better roads to take their products to market and to shop in the state's cities. Early in its existence, the State Highway Commission realized the importance of this road. In a 1911 letter from Commissioner Thomas Tully to the Nebraska State Road Association, Tully explained the importance of this link between both states and the rest of the nation:

"Colorado has during the past year expended considerable money extending her roads through Morgan, Logan and Sedgwick Counties to meet the road following along the Union Pacific." (Colorado Department of Highways, 1911 (c)).

In 1919, a Federal Aid appropriation of $11,000 (of which the state provided $5,500) paid for the first half mile of concrete on State Road No. 9, south of Sterling (Colorado Highway Bulletin, January 1919: 13).

In May 1923, the State Highway Department renamed State Road No. 9 to State Highway 2 (SH 2) from Sterling to Wiggins. The Highway Department planned to take the kinks out of SH 2 and provide a direct route from Nebraska to Denver. In the early 1920s, department engineers designed a through, trunk highway from Sterling to Fort Morgan. The project included concreting the the last gap between Brush and Merino. An improved SH 2 failed to happen, due to a battle between the participating counties of Morgan, Washington, and Logan over the right-of-way between Brush and Merino. In 1924, the state intended to spend $93,000 on a highway west of Fort Morgan. Fort Morgan's city fathers also found themselves in a fight over a separate right-of-way issue. Fort Morgan's troubles presented an opportunity to complete the road from Brush to Merino. The state publication Colorado Highways commented:

> "The securing of the right-of-way from Brush to Merino has been the result of conferences between the county commissioners of Morgan, Washington and Logan counties and the state highway officials. The $93,000 was to have been expended for a road west from Fort Morgan, but inability to secure an acceptable right-of-way at the present time led to the money being switched to the Brush-Merino projects. It is thought that the $93,000 will be sufficient to put the roadbed in shape thru the three counties" (MacDonald, 1924: 18).

Figure 15. Stair stepping across the Eastern High Plains, the Omaha-Lincoln Denver Road in 1910 was the primary route from Nebraska to Denver. Source: Denver Chamber of Commerce, 1910: 48.

On April 16, 1925, the State Highway Department opened bids for construction of 19 miles of grading and sand-clay surfacing between Merino and Brush. This road was an entirely new line through parts of Logan, Washington, and Morgan counties, and the new route eliminated the stair-step stretch of road between Merino and Brush. Road crews routed cars along the old SH 2 while work on the new road progressed. Crews used a light coating of sand and gravel for surfacing, preparatory to paving the road during the summer of 1926. It was the largest grading project contracted by the state at the time. The contracting firm of Scott & Curlee completed the grade in late summer of 1925 at a cost of $102,627 (Colorado Highways, April 1925, 16: June-July 1925: 5).

On August 15, 1927, the Highway Department awarded a contract to Fort Morgan's Edward Selander to lay 10 miles of standard 18-foot concrete pavement between Merino and Brush on State Highway 2. Construction lasted 200 working days and cost $245,043. The project included laying 102,750 square yards of concrete at a cost of $2.07 per square yard. The State Highway Department wanted the job done quickly because State Highway 2 had grown in importance as a feeder road for traffic coming off the Lincoln Highway at Julesburg into Colorado (Taylor, August 1927: 5).

In 1927, the Highway Department modified its road numbering system and re-identified State Highway 2 from Greeley to Sterling as US Highway 38. This designation lasted until 1932, when the Roosevelt Coast-to-Coast Highway extended into Denver. During the late 1920s and 1930s, the federal numerical designation for the Roosevelt Highway was US 6. According to the state road map, the Roosevelt Highway was paved from Sterling to west of Hillrose and surfaced from Hillrose to Brush (Colorado Department of Highways, 1930(a)).
In July 1959, the state began an asphalt-surfacing overlay project of 45.3 miles on US 6 between Brush and Julesburg. (Colorado Department of Highways, 1959(a)). A department examination from that year reported a mixture of surfaces over a 25-mile stretch between Brush and Atwood, from oiled mat to concrete to a combination of concrete and oil. The longest expanse, 8.2 miles of concrete, survived decades of high-plains weather in "good condition" according to the district construction engineer. Covering all the old surfaces with asphalt paving began in August 1959 (Colorado Department of Highways, 1959(b)).

In the 1960 Fiscal Year highway budget, the state granted $200,000 for right-of-way to construct two additional lanes of traffic southwest of Sterling. Additionally, the various mixtures of pavement through Morgan, Logan and Sedgwick Counties would be covered with asphalt from a $300,000 appropriation for resurfacing (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 15, 1959: N-18).

After completion of I-76 through northeastern Colorado during the 1970s, US Highway 6 existed autonomously from I-76 at exit 92 northeast of Brush, then following the South Platte River parallel to I-76 northwest. US Highway 6 is a four-lane divided highway from Atwood to Sterling. Despite an array of number designations and highway realignments, the original US 6 remains the main street of three northeastern farming communities–Hillrose, Merino and Atwood. In these small towns, the importance of good roads, first expressed by rural Coloradoans nearly a century ago, remains evident.

11.5.1 Eligibility of US 6 from Brush to Sterling

Since the gold rush, US 6 has served as Colorado's link to Nebraska and other points further east. During the automobile era, US 6 began life as the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver (OLD) road. During the 1920s, both state and federal governments spent a great deal of money hard-surfacing and realigning the highway. For most of the 20th century, it was rural Northeastern Colorado's lifeline to ship goods and to shop in the larger cities along the highway. US 6 is worthy of submission under Criterion A (associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history). US 6 reflects the agricultural nature of the region it traverses. The bridges, ditches, and the individual designs of culverts underscore the historic importance of this highway.

US 6 retained much of its original character as an engineered route. As an engineered route, US 6 continues as one of the primary "farm-to-market" roads for northeastern Colorado's agricultural communities and survives as an important link between Denver, northeastern Colorado and Nebraska.

11.5.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of US 6 – approximately 35 miles from milepost 371.69 at the junction of Interstate 76/Spur US 34, Exit 92 interchange east of Brush to milepost 406.56 at the junction I-76, Exit 125 interchange east of Sterling (survey conducted February 1, 2002)

US 6 is a two-lane highway with broad shoulders. The road appears to have new asphalt and a sloped embankment on the east side of the road. The road is approximately 24 feet wide. The embankment on the west side of the road is steep with no shoulders. There are several wooden bridges along this highway; all are identical and constructed according to State Highway Department design standards. The bridges consist of wood planks, wood piers, and abutments (Plate 18). Scattered along US 6 were five concrete bridges – similar in design, period of construction (early 1940s), and materials. These bridges feature flat rails with arches and flared approaches. They were also coated with a reflective paint (Plate 19).

The road retains its two-lane passing width through the towns of Hillrose, Merino and Atwood. Along this stretch of the highway, large, concrete, gated irrigation ditches are located on both the west and east side of the roads. Large concrete culverts are also situated along this stretch. The irrigation ditches link to the highway culverts to assist in the irrigation of the nearby farmlands. One culvert, in particular, has an elevated, concrete-flared abutment standing two feet high. The drainage pipe is positioned at a severe downward angle running underneath the road (Plates 20 & 21).

Two large, modern (c. 1966) bridges (both identified by CDOT as the South Platte River Bridges) have been constructed over the South Platte River. The South Platte River Bridges have new concrete platforms, steel rails, and approaches. Evidence of the old highway curbing was found on the east side of the bridges and in the structure of drainage culverts (Plates 22 & 23).

Immediately south of the town of Sterling, the road is divided and the asphalt is new on the southbound lanes. The two lanes heading north appear to be the original highway, judging by an older wooden bridge (Structure ID No. B-23-A, built 1941), over Pawnee Creek on this side of

the road. The bridge includes original wooden curbing on its east side. The bridge on the southbound lanes has modern metal guardrails and no curbing. According to the Colorado Department of Transportation, the state completed this portion (Structure ID No. B-23-AG) over Pawnee Creek in 1961 (Colorado Department of Transportation, 1999: 8(b))

Due north of Pawnee Creek is another raised culvert. Again, the culvert is over two feet in height and the drainage pipe is positioned at a sharp angle to run under the roadway. Entering the town of Sterling, US 6 becomes South 3rd Street and the road's surface changes from asphalt to concrete. This portion of concrete is seamed and grooved. The survey concluded at the crossroads of US 6 and US Highway 138 in downtown Sterling.

11.6 Historical Summary of US Highway 85 From Trinidad To Walsenburg (5HF1925.1; 5LA9132.2)

The completion of Interstate 25 in 1967 ended one era and launched another. Since the mid-1960s, I-25 has served as the main highway along Colorado's Front Range. Houses, hotels, and businesses hug the I-25 corridor from Fort Collins to Colorado Springs. On highway maps and some old road signs, Interstate 25 co-exists with its earlier incarnations as US 85 or US 87. This summary focuses on the approximately 37 miles of US Highway 85 in the Purgatoire Valley from Trinidad to Walsenburg (Figure 16).

US Highway 85 is another Colorado highway known by many different names and numbers. The Highways of Colorado auto tourist guide from the early 1910s first identified the automobile road from Cheyenne through Colorado to Raton, New Mexico as the Great North and South Highway (Denver Chamber of Commerce, c. 1912: 176-7). The first state highway map (1916) shows the unimproved state highway between Walsenburg and Trinidad as State Highway 26. That year, crews started pouring concrete along SH 26 from Pueblo to the Huerfano county line (Colorado State Highway Commission, Map of the State Highways of Colorado, 1916). In May 1922, the Colorado Highway Advisory Board renumbered the state's roads. The first road map after renumbering labeled the highway from Fort Collins to the New Mexico State Line as State

Plate 18. Timber curbing along bridge over Pawnee Creek, Logan County. View south down US 6.

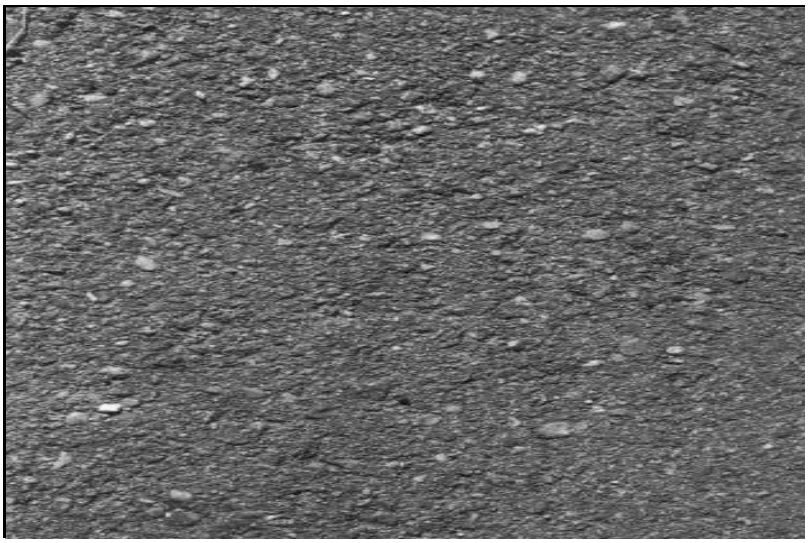

Plate 19. Close-up of asphalt on US 6.

Plate 20. Raised culvert on north side of US 6 (c. 1925). Culvert stands 2’8” high.

Plate 21. Concrete culvert with grate. North of Merino on US 6.

Plate 22. Asphalt mountable curbing inside guardrail on US 6.

Plate 23. View east of curbing leading to drainpipe near South Platte River on US 6.

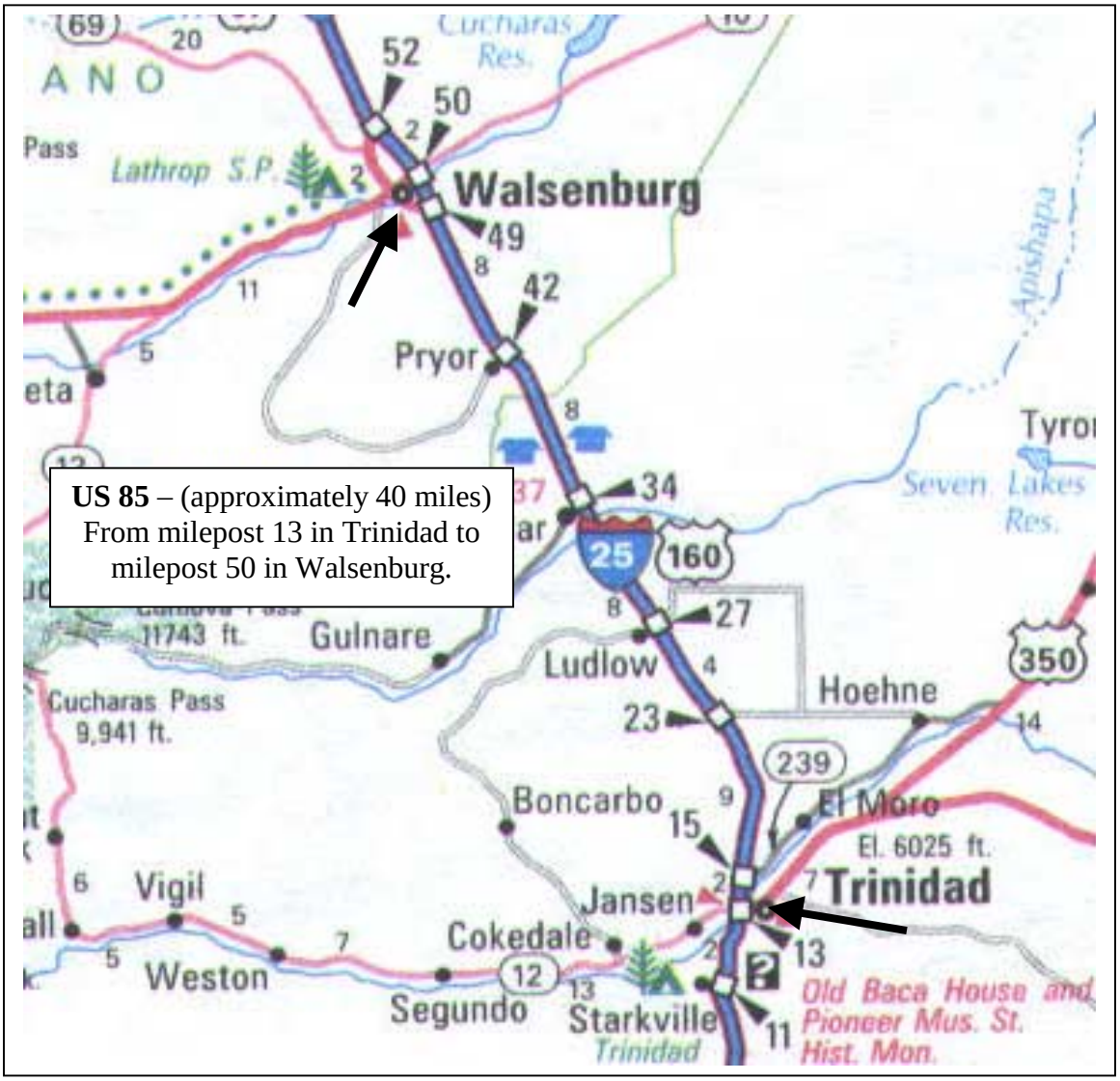

Figure 16. US 85 – Approximately 40 miles from milepost 13 in Trinidad to milepost 50 in Walsenburg (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

Highway 1 (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1922(b)). The establishment of the national highway numbering system in 1927 added another set of numbers, due to the state's unusual policy of keeping the old state highway numbers along with the new US highway designations on maps and signage. Since the late 1920s, the portion of highway between Trinidad and Walsenburg was a part of US Highway 85.

In 1917, Colorado received its first highway funds from the federal government. The largest sum, $267,191.91, went toward grading and graveling Federal Aid Project No. 2 between Pueblo and Trinidad (Wiley, 1976: 16). The auto road's original alignment ran along the eastern base of the mountains through a number of small, coal-mining towns. The highway symbolized a divide between the two great economies of the region. Most of the land east of the road was dry-land farms, while the mines and mining towns sat west of the highway.

The Highway Commission graded four sections of State Highway 1 between Walsenburg and Trinidad during the summer of 1919 (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1919: 1). The infusion of federal funding had state engineers estimating would it cost to further improve the road. According to the State Highway Commission's Annual Budget for 1920, the cost of concreting the highway through Huerfano and Las Animas counties would total $549,294.22. Both the federal and state government faced an additional financial burden of $282,102.31 each to complete this portion of the highway (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1920: 4). Progress to surface this 40-mile section crept along for the remainder of the 1920s. The 1930 State Highway map showed US 85 from Walsenburg to Aguilar remained graveled while the Highway Department had paved 15-mile stretch from Aguilar to Trinidad (Colorado Department of Highways: 1930(a)).

Federal New Deal programs like the WPA and the Public Works Administration eventually asphalted US 85 during the late 1930s. A 1941 progress map published by the Highway Department showed all of US 85–including Walsenburg to Trinidad–covered in asphalt (Rocky Mountain Contractor, September 10, 1941(a): 6). Pre-war drivers showed their appreciation by making the Trinidad port of entry on US 85-87 the third-most-popular route into Colorado, as 9,948 vehicles passed through that location from August 9-17, 1941. During those nine days,

only the Limon entry into Colorado (US 24 and US 40) and the Holly port (US 50) welcomed more visitors (Rocky Mountain Contractor, September 10, 1941(b): 8).

Everyone involved with the state's highways knew that traffic would only increase after World War II. To address the anticipated traffic increase, Interstate 25 was planned as the primary north-south route through eastern Colorado. I-25 was built along much of the alignment of US 85 and 87. In the study area, there remains much of the old road west of I-25 between exits 34 to 42. The largest town in the vicinity of the old US 85 is the mining community of Aguilar. A map in the 1957 Annual Report of the Colorado Department of Highways shows the realigned I-25/US 85-87 for the first time. Actual construction, however, continued into the mid-1960s (Colorado Department of Highways, 1957: 5).

In the Department of Highways budget for Fiscal Year 1960, federal dollars changed the alignment of US85/US87/SH 1 in Las Animas and Huerfano counties. That year, the state allotted $1.5 million to grade a portion of the new interstate known as the Aguilar bypass in Huerfano and Las Animas Counties and another $800,000 for the realigned interstate south of Walsenburg in Huerfano County (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 15, 1959: 16-N). The following year, the state apportioned $1.5 million to pave the Aguilar bypass and another $180,000 for grading and structures from Walsenburg south to the Huerfano County Line (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 20, 1960: N-12). According to October 1961 Bureau of Public Roads Construction Inspection Report, 74 men worked on a 14-mile stretch of the new Interstate 25 near Aguilar (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1961).

During the 1960s, the State Highway Department began the work of building a new Interstate 25 over the remnants of US 85-87. The work included banking (known in the highway engineers' lexicon as superelevation) and widening of curves on crowned and divided highways. Superelevation of the interstate allowed cars to maintain a speed consistent with the roadway's posted speed. Crews also had to place traffic and identification signs, and dig and install culverts, concrete pipe, barriers, and snow fences (Colorado Department of Highways, 1964).

In 1966, the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce petitioned the Department of Highways to four-lane U.S. 85-87 from Pueblo to the New Mexico border. The chamber's request went to the Pueblo's city and county officials before submission to the State Highway Commission for their 1967 budget (Rocky Mountain News, October 3, 1966: 37). In the summer of 2000, the state opened the El Moro/Trinidad rest area, replacing the two existing tourist facilities (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2000(a): 15).

11.6.1 Eligibility of US 85 from Trinidad to Walsenburg

Following a path that was in place before the first Europeans, US 85 served as the state's primary transportation artery east of the Front Range for more than 150 years. Despite its proximity to modern I-25, US 85 between Trinidad and Walsenburg remains in excellent condition and leads to a number of old coal mining towns forgotten by the designers of the interstate route. Between those two points are numerous well-preserved examples of surface types, bridges, culverts and signage. It is for these reasons, the 40 miles of road between Trinidad and Walsenburg qualifies under National Register Criterion A, as it made a significant contribution to Colorado's highway history. This stretch of US 85 is one of the best candidates for submission to the National Register among the ten surveyed for the integrity of the existing features and materials.

For the role it played in moving people along the Front Range during the first decades of automobile travel in Colorado, this portion of US 85 should be classified as a cultural route under National Task Force for Historic Roads standards. The integrity of the road, and the well-maintained towns along its route, provide the preservationist with a true sense of what it was like to travel this route during the early 20th century.

11.6.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of US 85 – approximately 40 miles from milepost 13 in Trinidad to milepost 50 in Walsenburg (survey conducted January 29, 2002)

Exit 13 in Trinidad is a multiple-exit area of the highway. Overhead bridges constructed out of concrete conform to highway design standards. The highway has asphalt shoulders on the right-hand side of the road and is wider than the shoulder on the left side of the road. The original US 85 begins north of Trinidad and is currently known as North Linden Avenue. North Linden Avenue is also known as County Road 71.1 north of the Trinidad city limits. This portion of US

85 north of Trinidad was at one time paved. Now, only small patches of pavement remain and in most places consist of hard-packed dirt (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, 2000). The old highway continues as a narrow two-lane, paved road and extends for five miles north out of the city where it dead ends on the west side of I-25. Old US 85 picks up on the east side of I-25 at Exit 23. It is currently used as the frontage road for the highway. The road consists of the original asphalt and is approximately 24 feet wide. The road continues for two miles before it crosses underneath I-25 to the west side of the highway. US 85 dead ends approximately half of a mile later into a field of hay (Plates 24 & 25).

The road picks up again on the west side of I-25 at Exit 27. It is currently known as CR 63. It extends north for four miles prior to turning westward into the town of Aguilar. These four miles are flat, narrow and have no embankments. Portions of the old, seamed concrete is visible under the asphalt. A lone bridge over the Del Agua Arroyo has concrete rails, platforms and supports. The bridge is a victim of neglect. Numerous old reflector posts, which are approximately three feet high, are painted yellow with yellow reflectors (Plate 26).

Old US 85 through Aguilar is concrete with an asphalt covering. A concrete road bridge is located at the northern edge of town. As the road travels north, there are several portions of the seamed concrete in good condition. Other parts of the road are covered with dirt and old, broken asphalt. Several bridges are also located on this portion of the road. They are wood rail with wood supports and asphalt platforms. North of Aguilar, this road is also referred to as County Road 53.7. This portion continues north for seven miles before crossing beneath I-25. The road then follows north on the eastern side of the Interstate (Plate 27).

Plate 24. Large chunks of aggregate on old US 85; approximately 500 feet west of I-25.

Plate 25. Old asphalt gives way to concrete. Southwest view of US 85.

Plate 26. Battered wooden reflector poles looking north, Huerfano County, US 85.

Plate 27. West view of wooden culvert on old US 85, Las Animas County.

The road on the east side of I-25 has several rises and dips. It appears that this road floods easily in heavy rains. The road is made of asphalt, has no shoulders and is approximately 24-feet wide. Old US 85 ends at Exit 49 in Walsenburg.

11.7 Historical Summary Of US Highway 385 From Springfield To Cheyenne Wells (5BA879.1; 5CH198.1; 5KW121.1; 5PW171.1)

Visited by generations of travelers, southeastern Colorado has been a destination point for only a few. Traders, soldiers and farmers have left their mark on the region's historical and economic character, but this corner of Colorado remains sparsely populated. The automobile's arrival ushered in the most drastic change over the past hundred years. Supported by federal funding, the State Highway Department built State Highway 51 (SH 51) during the 1920s. The hard-packed road connected agricultural communities like Cheyenne Wells and Springfield as they sought to survive economic isolation from the rest of Colorado. SH 51 was re-designated US Highway 385 in 1957, but the road remains Colorado's most isolated thoroughfare. A 1996 traffic census conducted by CDOT confirmed that US 385 is the state's least traveled US Highway. That year saw the largest number of vehicles, 16,500, pass just south of US 50 at Lamar, while CDOT counted only 520 vehicles near the town of Sheridan Lake (Salek, The Highways of Colorado, http://www.mesalek.com.highways).

The complete US 385 runs 317.63 miles northward from the Oklahoma State Line to the Wyoming State Line northwest of Julesburg. The portion of the road addressed here is about one-third of the total length of the highway in Colorado. From the Oklahoma border to Lamar, US 385 is co-located for 77 miles with US 287. From the intersection of Main and Olive streets in Lamar, US 287 follows US 50 west toward Pueblo, while US 385 follows US 50 east on Olive. US 50 and US 385 continue east to the town of Carlton before heading into Granada via Goff Avenue. US 385 diverges from US 50 north on Granada's Main Street and heads north to Bristol. The road crosses State Highway 96 just west of Sheridan Lake before turning north to Cheyenne Wells (Figure 17).

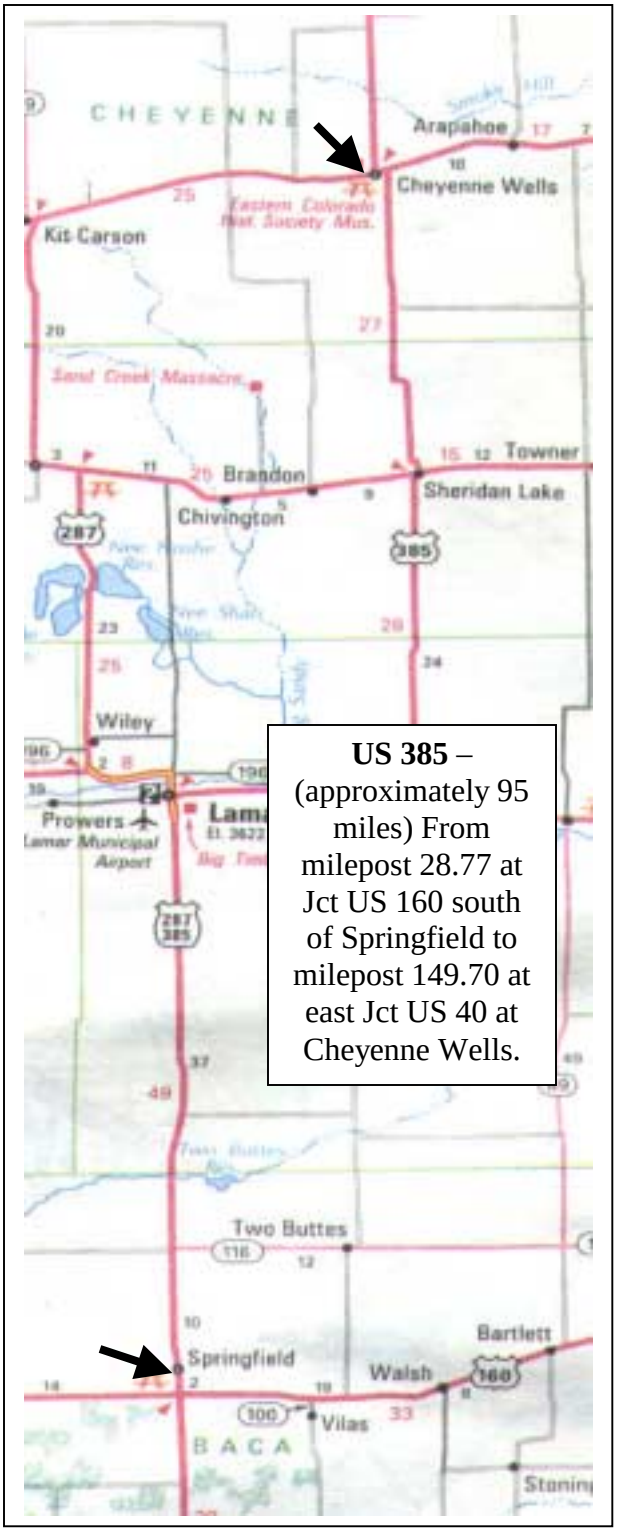

Figure 17. US 385 – Approximately 95 miles from milepost 28.77 at the junction of US 160 south of Springfield to milepost 149.70 east of junction with US 40 at Cheyenne Wells (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

The 15 miles US 385 shares with US 50 between Lamar and Granada boasts a distinguished travel history. During the 1850s, the U.S. Army opened the Fort Union Military Road, which was alternately known as the Granada-Fort Union Wagon Road and the Fort Leavenworth Road. Freighters moving military goods and arms from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to Fort Union, New Mexico primarily used this road. This portion was part of the Santa Fe Trail that went southwest from the Mountain Branch at Old Granada, Colorado to Emry Gap to Fort Union. Between Lamar and Springfield, US 385 can trace the path of a wagon road used heavily during the latter 19th century (Norgren, 1998: 5).

The State Highway Commission began designating (numbering) highways in the early 1910s. On March 2, 1912, the commission created State Primary Road No. 34 "starting at the limits of the city of Lamar, thence in a southerly direction to the town of Springfield" (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1912: 267). Teams of scrapers graded SH 34 south of Lamar the following year (Norgren, 1998: 5).

Concurrently, the State Highway Commission numbered and graded roads in Kiowa and Cheyenne counties. During the first years of automobile use in Colorado, the only way to drive from Cheyenne Wells to Springfield was to head west along the elbow-jointed State Highway 32 to Highway 17-S at the town of Kit Carson. Highway 17-S coursed southward, bent around the Neeso Pah and Nee Grande Reservoirs, and ended at Lamar. At Lamar, the road became State Highway 34. South of Lamar, SH 34 continued on to Springfield and to the Oklahoma border (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1916).

Each year during the 1910s, rural counties received a stipend from the state and/or the federal government to build automobile roads. Highway Commission minutes from the 1910s and 1920s illustrate the slow growth of the region's roads. The portion of SH 34 between Lamar and Springfield received much initial attention from the commission. In 1914, the commissioners approved a contract for grading and placement of cross drains and surfacing between Lamar and Granada. In 1919, Colorado graded and drained 30 miles of SH 34 from Lamar South, at a cost to the state of $6,000. A subsequent project graded and drained 15 miles from Springfield north at a total of $3,000 (Colorado Highways Bulletin, January 1919: 13).

In 1920, counties on the eastern plains counties obtained their first federal funding for roads. Prowers County received $24,689.71 in Federal Aid Project (FAP) money to grade the road from Lamar south to Springfield. Kiowa County received $25,000 in FAP funding to improve State Highway 17-S from Eads to Kit Carson and $30,000 for improvements to State Highway 32 from Cheyenne Wells west to Kit Carson (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1920: 5-6). In 1922, the state spent $5,000 on a bridge across Rush Creek between Kit Carson and Eads (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1922(a): 16).

Federal money and state initiative built State Highway 5l from Granada to Cheyenne Wells during the early 1920s. By 1930, portions of the road from Springfield to Lamar and Lamar to Granada were oil processed. From Granada north to the Cheyenne County border, the state graded SH 51. From the Cheyenne County border to Cheyenne Wells, the road was surfaced (Colorado Department of Highways, Map of the State Highways of Colorado, 1930). The highway's original design connected with Kansas State Highway 51 east of Granada. In 1955, the state abandoned that connection to make way for the redesigned US 385. In 1957, SH 51 was re-designated US 385. Today's US 385 is the same route first designed and built by the state in the 1920s. (Norgren, 1998: 5).

US 385 was improved to modern standards in the early 1960s, with funding provided under the Federal Aid Highways Act of 1956. Much of the construction occurred during the summers of 1960 and 1961. In 1960, crews laid 15 miles of asphalt paving south of Lamar at a cost of $104,417 (Colorado Department of Highways, 1960: 5-6, 9). In September 1961, contractors laid 11.581 miles of asphalt surfacing from the town of Cheyenne Wells south to the Cheyenne County Line under a $200,000 Highway Department appropriation (Rocky Mountain Construction, September 4, 1961: 8). In 1961, the state authorized $90,000 in paving from Sheridan Lake south to the Kiowa County Line (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 12, 1961, N-4). In the 1964 fiscal year, the state authorized $400,000 for 10 miles of asphalt paving north from Sheridan Lake to the Kiowa County border (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 11, 1963: N-5).

Since its modernization in the early 1960s, US 385 has attracted little attention beyond the Arkansas Valley and the Eastern Plains. That changed on the morning of September 27, 1977, when a tractor-trailer carrying 21 tons of yellowcake, or uranium oxide, overturned on US 385 approximately 15 miles north of Springfield. It was the largest spill of yellowcake in the nation's history. Fortunately, wind failed to carry the uranium oxide beyond the accident site. The Environmental Protection Agency subsequently claimed the spill did not endanger public health. The incident heightened public awareness to the dangers of transporting hazardous materials over the nation's highways (Denver Post, 1977: 2).

The entire length of US 287 underwent an upgrade during the late 1990s, including completion of a 12-mile concrete reconstruction of US 385/US287 north of Springfield in 2000 (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2000(a): 6).

11.7.1 Eligibility of US 385 from Cheyenne Wells to Springfield

Since the 1910s, US 385 has served as the primary north-south road though rural Southeastern Colorado. As funding became available, the state and federal governments improved the highway sporadically beginning in the 1910s and on through the interstate age of the 1950s. From a socio-economic viewpoint, US 385 symbolizes attempts by governmental authorities to sustain the economy and people of a certain region through highway construction. From a preservation perspective, other than the fact that is the main thoroughfare for southwestern Colorado, there is not much left that makes US 385 worthy of eligibility for the National Register. The highway surface has been reconditioned over the years and there are few historic examples of culverts, asphalt, and other elements of design.

Under definitions established by the National Task Force for Historic Roads, US 385 is best described as an engineered route. The highway is an important element in maintaining the agricultural economy of southwestern Colorado.

11.7.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of US 385 – approximately 95 miles from milepost 149.70 at junction US 40 in Cheyenne Wells to milepost 28.77 at junction US 160 in Springfield (survey conducted January 28, 2002).

US 385 at the US 40 junction is a two-lane highway covered with asphalt. The road has narrow shoulders and drainage ditches. The road is flat and straight and crosses washes. A wide shoulder is situated on the west side of the road and the embankment is sloped. There are several wooden bridges situated along the highway, all of which appear to have been built during the early construction period of the road. The bridges are wood timber.

The road passes through the towns of Granada and Carlton. West of Carlton the road widens to approximately five lanes (central turn lane). The road changes to a divided highway in Lamar and consists of two lanes on either side of the highway. Exiting from the town, the road again is flat and straight. A wide shoulder is situated on the west side of the road and the embankment is sloped. New concrete has been poured on the highway approximately 10 miles south of Lamar. The remaining road is asphalt overtly in good condition. The road is virtually unchanged throughout the entire 95 miles of inspection (Plate 28).

11.8 Historical Summary of State Highway 13 (5GF2949; 5MF5138; 5RM4486)

From Indian massacres to oil-shale exploration to tourism, the trail that became State Highway 13 is the corridor through northwestern Colorado history. State Highway 13 begins at the Wyoming border south of the town of Baggs and courses 127 miles southward to Rifle. Since the 1880s, it has been the route connecting the region's three oldest and largest communities: Craig, Meeker and Rifle (Figure 18).

Plate 28. Steep embankments on both sides of US 385 southwest of Lamar near the local airport.

The U.S. Army established the original route of State Highway 13, then known as the Government Road, between 1880 and 1884. The Government Road ran from Ft. Steele in Wyoming to the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado (Colorado Historical Society, 1995). Settlers later referred to the northwest Colorado portion of the road as the Meeker Trail. Before transformation into an automobile road, stagecoach and horse were the fastest forms of transportation over the trail. One passenger recalled that it took eight to 10 hours in 1892 to carry the mail approximately 30 miles from Rifle to Meeker, including three changes for new mounts. The Meeker Trail stagecoach run for passengers and mail lasted until 1918 (Bury, 1972: 8-9).

The first recorded mention of an automobile trip in Northwest Colorado was a Stanley Steamer chugging along Rifle's dirt streets in 1906. Other automobiles followed quickly in the wake of the initial horseless carriage. The Highways of Colorado tourism guide commented that the Meeker Trail was slippery when wet for automobiles, but kept in fair condition for stagecoaches (Denver Chamber of Commerce, c. 1912: 149). Driving was especially treacherous during the spring runoff. Melting snows turned the trail to mud, forcing many travelers to abandon automobiles and return to their horses for transportation. Rio Blanco and Garfield counties left the maintenance of Meeker Trail to local farmers. The counties required each farmer living near the trail to keep a certain section passable, using a team of four horses and a road drag (Bury, 1972: 8).

The State Highway Commission designated the Craig-to-Rifle portion of the Meeker Trail a primary state road (No. 42) on March 2, 1912. Passage from Craig to the Wyoming State Line, and Meeker to the Utah border received the same distinction on December 16 -- the state identified all three sections as State Highway 42 (the Meeker to Utah portion of SH 42 later became State Highway 64). In 1916, underscoring the importance of this road, the State Highway Advisory Board selected 42-miles of State Primary No. 42 from Rifle to Craig as one of the first recipients of federal aid money. The federal government and the state split the estimated construction cost of $79,082.85 of Federal Aid Project No. 4 (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1917(a): 214).

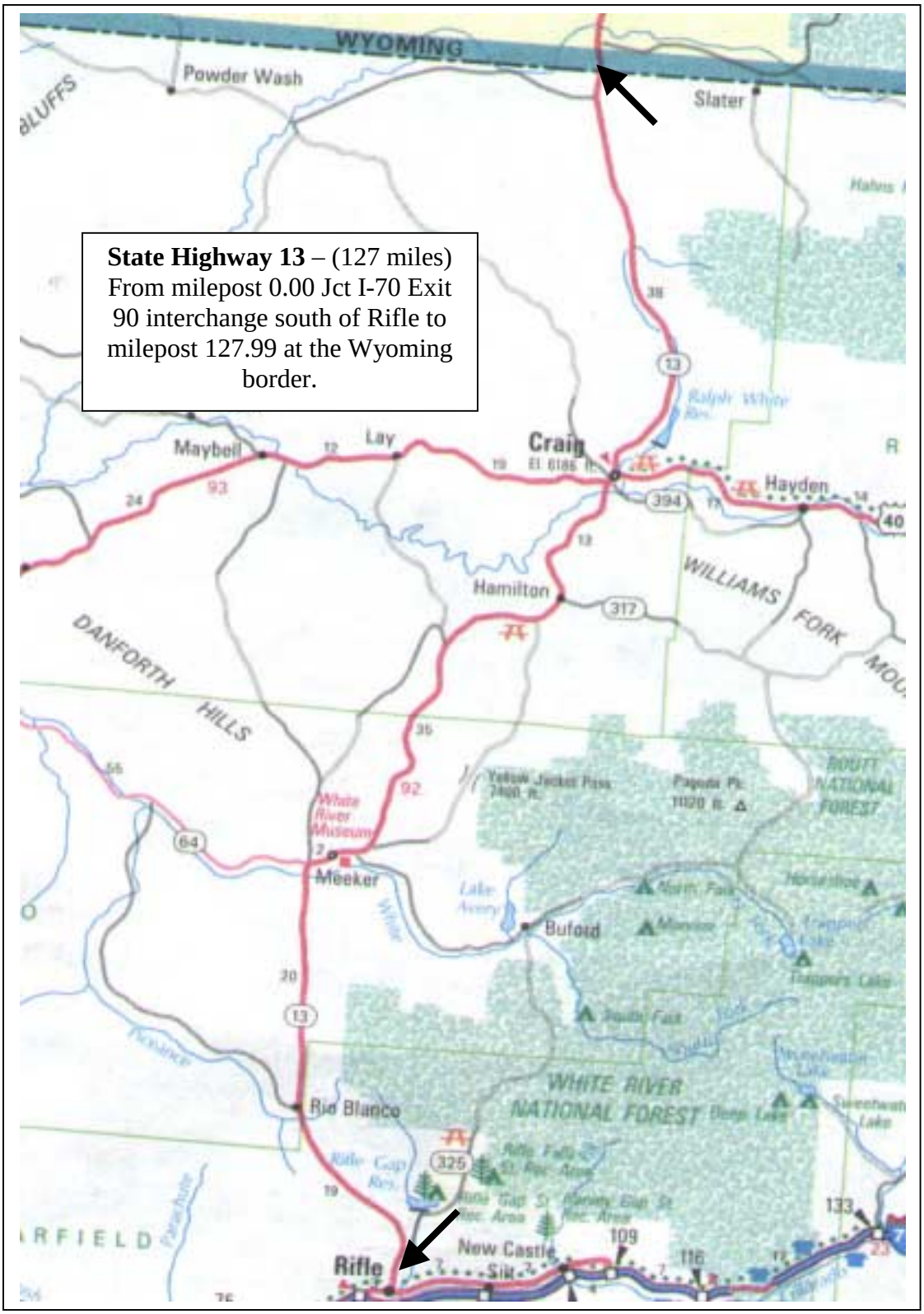

Figure 18. State Highway 13 – 127.99 miles from milepost 0.00 at the junction of I-70 Exit 90 interchange south of Rifle to milepost 127.99 at the Colorado-Wyoming border (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

New highway construction on SH 42 continued throughout the decade. In December 1917, the state and federal government agreed to construct 17.5 miles of road from the town limits of Meeker north to the Rio Blanco County Line (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1917(b): 226). In July 1918, the Department of Highways reported upon "a few rough spots" from Meeker to the town of Axle, but stated that the highway from Axle to Craig was in first-class condition. The same year, the department reduced the grade and widened the road on Wise Hill, outside of Craig. At a cost of $5,000, the road was widened from eight to 20 feet, and the grade was lessened to 5.8 percent. From the Rio Blanco County Line to Meeker, the Highway Department listed the road in excellent condition over Nine-Mile Hill. In 1919, the state received more funding from the federal government to widen other dangerous narrow stretches (Colorado Highways Bulletin, October 1919: 22). Also that year, Meeker petitioned the commission to run SH 42 through the main street of town – a distance of 5,570 linear feet. The commission unanimously voted to make Meeker's main street a part of SH 42 (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1919: 302).

The next round of construction came nearly a decade later. In 1929, the state appropriated $75,000 to gravel-surface six miles of road south of Craig. In August of that year, the state awarded a $47,125 contract to Steamboat Transportation & Storage Company of Steamboat Springs to gravel-surface 19 miles of road between Rifle and Meeker. South of Meeker, the firm paved the road with crushed rock to upgrade the improvements made a decade previous (Colorado Highways, August 1929: 14). Modern alignment between Meeker and Rifle eliminated many of the curves, minor rises and dips left by the earlier grade. The enhanced road featured a 20-foot-wide crown with ditches along either side (Colorado Historical Society, 1995). During 1930, another contract for three miles of grading and gravel surfacing on the Meeker-Craig highway was awarded to Utah Construction Company. Completion of the project established a standard gravel road beginning at Craig and running 14 miles south to the Moffat County oil town of Hamilton (Colorado Highways, July 1931: 20). At the dawn of the 1930s, SH 13 was graded from the Wyoming state line to Craig, surfaced from Craig to the town of Hamilton, graded from Hamilton to 10 miles north of Meeker, and again surfaced 10 miles north of Meeker to Rifle (Colorado Department of Highways, 1930(a)).

In 1937, the State Highway Department abandoned much of the old SH 13 to realign and build a new highway. From the days of the Meeker Trail to the mid-1930s, the highway's original alignment between Meeker and Rifle closely followed the base of the Grand Hogback, placing it high above the Government Creek Valley bottom. The new alignment ran closer to Government Creek. For the new alignment, crews placed two inches of gravel surfacing at a rate of 27 tons per 100 linear feet of roadway, and at a rate of 58 tons per 100 linear feet of roadway for the 4-inch bottom course (Colorado Department of Highways, 1937). Two segments of abandoned road near Rifle remain in use as major local access roads (Colorado Historical Society, 1995).

In 1949, the state and federal government agreed to oil surface SH 13 from Craig to Meeker at a cost of $306,800 (Colorado Department of Highways, 1949(c)). During July of 1950, crews laid on top of the existing road approximately two inches of gravel placed at a rate of 30 tons per 100 linear feet of roadway. Standard specifications required that on top of the bottom layer, another two inches of compacted gravel would be placed at a rate of 25 tons per 100 linear feet of roadway. Road workers spread a medium-cure asphaltic road material as a prime coat over a 26-foot-wide area before placing oil-processed material. After placement, a flat-wheeled roller equipped with rubber tires compacted the mat to a smooth, firm surface (Colorado Department of Highways, 1950(a)).

Once the asphalt cooled, State Highway 13 became part of the multi-state, Canada-to-Mexico highway (US789). State maps identified SH 13 as US 789 from 1954 to the mid-1980s (Colorado Division of Highways, 1987: 3).

In 1975, the state extended the southern end of SH 13 from U.S. Highway 6 south to Exit 90 of Interstate 70, south of Rifle. Originally, the department built a half-mile spur from SH 13 south of Rifle, later redesigned into the existing highway. The department also realigned SH 13 through Craig during the mid-70s, going from Ranney Street north of Craig west along its current configuration. The state completed two major restructuring projects on SH 13 during 2000. First, it replaced a 1936 bridge over the White River; second, it leveled and resurfaced approximately eight miles of highway from Meeker's Airport Road to the foot of Nine Mile Gap (Colorado Department of Transportation, 2000(a): 14, 16).

11.8.1 Eligibility of SH 13

State Highway 13 is known by two other names – Garfield County Road 296 north of Rifle and Main Street in Meeker – for part of its alignment. There is a minimum amount of traffic on both sections and the integrity of the curbing, drainage, asphalt, and bituminous concrete is readily visible. Unfortunately, much of SH 13's original 1880s-to-1930s alignment hugging the mesas north of Rifle is on private land. Much of the remaining 127 miles has been improved and realigned over the years.

Because of the high degree of integrity remaining on Garfield County Road 296 and Meeker's Main Street, the National Register should consider State Highway 13 under Criterion A (associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history). The culverts along County Road 296 and bituminous concrete surface retain a great deal of their integrity while Main Street is notable for its general alignment and asphalt curbing.

In accordance with definitions established by the National Task Force for Historic Roads, SH 13 is an engineered route based on the importance it holds in the lives of the region's residents and its foundation for northwestern Colorado's mining and ranching economies.

11.8.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of State Highway 13 – 127 miles from milepost 0.00 Jct I-70 Exit 90 Interchange south of Rifle to milepost 127.90 at the Wyoming border (survey conducted February 6, 2002)

SH 13 at the I-70 interchange begins under the overpass of I-70. The road is four-lanes wide with turn lanes for entrance onto the freeway. The road material is new asphalt. Entering into the town of Rifle, the road turns into a two lane with a center turn lane. Approximately 1-¼ mile north of town, the original SH 13 veers off to the east. This road is now known as County Road 296, and continues for approximately three quarters of a mile before reentering the current SH 13. The road is made of bituminous concrete and is 28 feet wide (Plate 29). Driving north on SH 13, the road's shoulders are approximately one car-length wide. The asphalt road has received repair work over the years. Various portions of the road feature guardrails along steep embankments. These rails are modern steel with wood-beam supports. Starting at mile marker six, the asphalt is newer than the previous five miles extending south into Rifle (Plate 30).

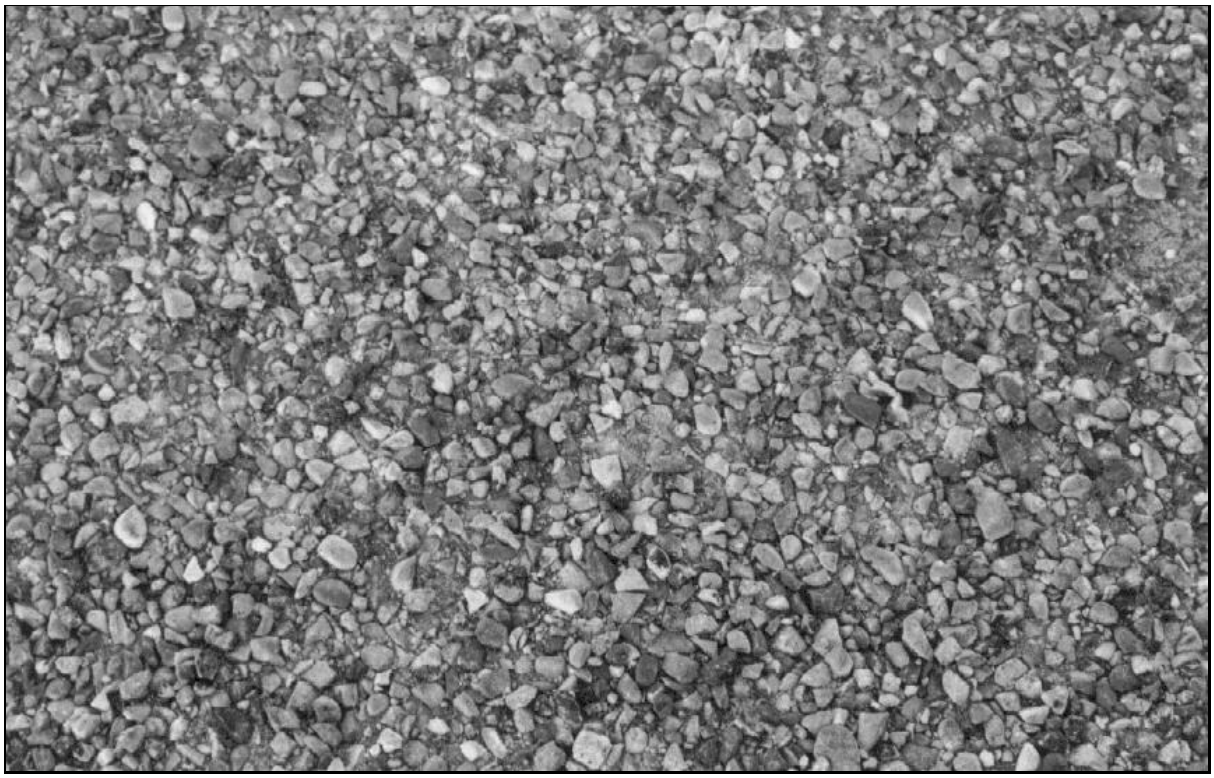

Plate 29. Bituminous concrete on old alignment of SH 13 in Rifle.

Plate 30. West view of concrete culvert beneath old alignment of SH 13.

As the road winds through the hogback, the shoulders become smaller, and the embankments slope. Several washes pass underneath the road and guard rails have been placed in these locations. Road reflectors were noted approximately every one tenth of a mile. Also situated along this portion of the highway are large, flat areas on the east side to accommodate heavy snow removal. No drainage ditches were identified along this highway due to rock and steep embankments.

In the town of Meeker, old SH 13 veers off to the north of present-day SH 13, becoming Main Street. The road is two lanes, widening to four once it reaches incorporated Meeker. The road is old asphalt with asphalt curbs. There are no sidewalks along this portion of the road until Main Street crosses 8th Street. New curbing and sidewalks are visible until 15th Street, when the road turns south and connects to the present SH 13. (Plate 31)

The road continues with wide shoulders and shallow embankments. Entering into the town of Hamilton, the road has steep embankments and no shoulders. Few culverts are identified from this point of the highway north. The culverts are large, modern steel-corrugated pipes, approximately 36 inches in diameter. Entering into Craig, the road is wide with shoulders and no embankments (Plate 32).

Plate 31. Worn asphalt. State Highway 13 (Main Street) in Meeker.

Plate 32. Corrugated metal culvert viewed from the west side of SH 13.

11.9 Historical Summary of I-70 From Vail Pass to Georgetown (5EA1826.1; 5CC1189.1; 5ST892.1)

Everything was big surrounding the construction of Interstate 70 across Colorado. Endless vistas, daunting engineering challenges, and substantial political and economic conflicts -- driven by tourism and environmental issues – influenced the progress of an unbroken strip of concrete from border to border.

Not yet 50 years old, and subsequently not eligible for submission to the National Register of Historic Places, Interstate 70, however, remains significant for its engineering feats and the changes it brought to Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region. This examination of a 36-mile stretch of I-70 is a tale of two cities kept alive by tourist dollars. One old community – Georgetown -- sought to benefit from construction of the nation's primary east-west interstate on their front step. The new community -- Vail -- grew on the promise of a mountain interstate bolstered by a rapidly expanding ski industry.

When the federal government first considered the original 40,000-mile interstate system in 1956, I-70 would begin in Washington, D.C. and terminate in Denver without facing up to the engineering migraines presented by construction over the Continental Divide. Bowing to concerns from western congressional delegations, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) extended the plan for I-70 by an additional 547 miles, so that I-70 would connect with Interstate 15 near Cove Fort, Utah. The Colorado Division of Highways subsequently contracted a study on how to build an interstate through the Rockies. In April 1960, the division issued the Pavlo Report (named for New York engineering firm E. Lionel Pavlo). The study recommended that I-70 should follow the existing U.S. 6 west from Denver, pass through a tunnel beneath the Continental Divide, and follow the Eagle River Valley down to the town of Dotsero (U.S. Department of Transportation, 1971: 2). Once construction began, the highway's surface would contain one inch or more of mixed bituminous material. Federal Highway Administration guidelines required I-70 measure 24-feet wide with 10-foot-wide shoulders of gravel or bituminous surfacing (Colorado Division of Highways, 1972)(Figure 19).

More than any other highway project in state history, environmental concerns weighed greatly on I-70's design and construction. These concerns reflected America's increased environmental awareness during the 1960s and 1970s. At Clear Creek outside of Georgetown, state and federal authorities designed a four-lane, divided highway. Construction required altering the flow of Clear Creek in certain spots so work could continue. Contractors working for the Highway Division, in cooperation with the State Division of Game, Fish and Wildlife, placed blasted gravel and rock on the old mine tailings along the stream and built concrete aprons at heavy runoff areas so that erosion from fills and cuts would not contaminate the creek (Colorado Department of Highways, n.d.: 11).

Construction next passed the old mining camp of Georgetown. Before work began, residents and town officials protested the I-70 preliminary design, fearing the new interstate would turn Georgetown into a ghost town. Initially, plans for an eastbound-traffic access road off the interstate, into the west side of Georgetown, simply did not exist. During 1962 and 1963, the Colorado Department of Highways signed an important agreement with Clear Creek County and the city of Georgetown. It addressed public ingress and egress from the arterial lanes onto the freeway, and from county highways affected by construction. (Colorado Department of Highways, 1962). Georgetown Mayor Ernest R. Baker said the town's more than 300 residents needed the access road or "we are dead" (Rocky Mountain News, July 16, 1966: 30). Since the 1960s, Exit 228 to Guanella Pass Road is the entryway into Georgetown.

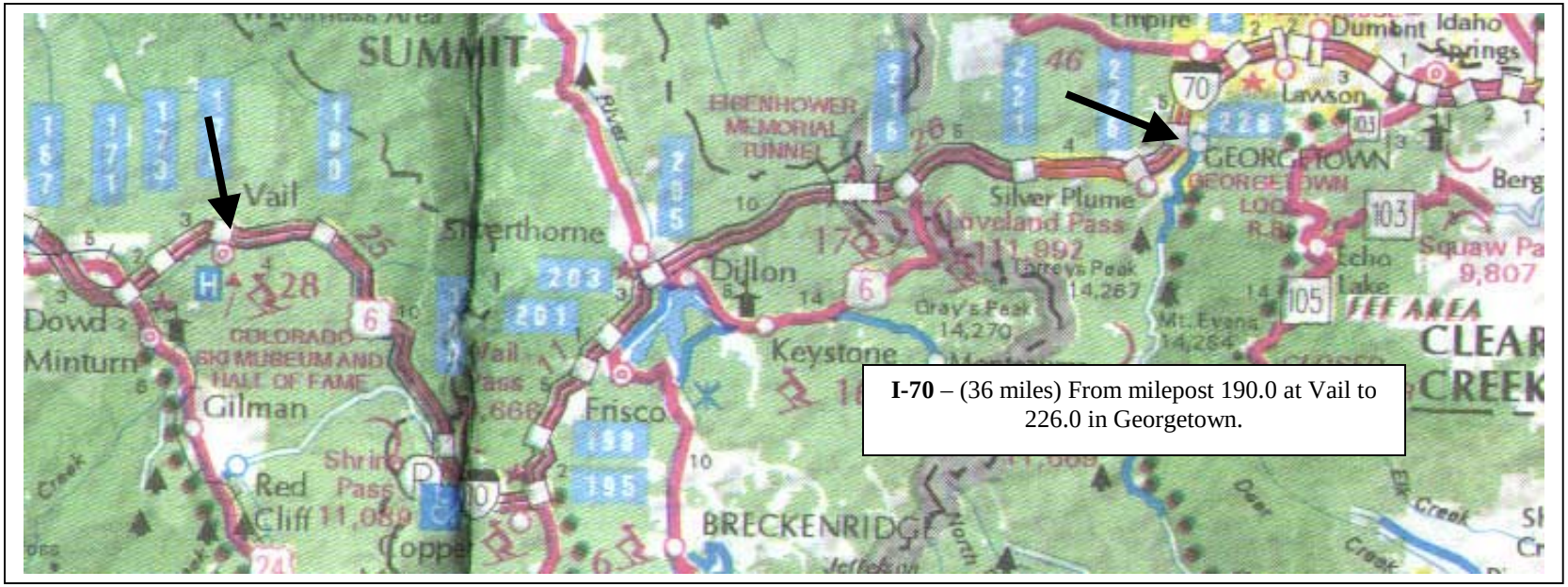

Figure 19. I-70 – Approximately 36 miles from milepost 190.0 at Vail to milepost 226.0 in Georgetown (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

West of Georgetown is the crowning achievement of highway engineering in the state: the Eisenhower-Johnson Memorial Tunnel. Preliminary work began in the early 1960s; actual boring of what became the westbound tunnel started in 1968. As they made their way under the Continental Divide, engineers and construction crews encountered weak rock and shifting load pressures inside the mountain. Some believed the mountain tried to close its wounds, as holes bored through the rock contracted overnight. Consultation between the contractor and state and federal authorities led to an agreement to use multiple drifts in soft-rock areas. Multiple-drift tunneling requires drilling a succession of small diameter tunnels rather than a single large one. Workers filled the drifts with concrete around the periphery of the main bore to protect the tunnel's sides and crown. Of the 7,789 feet of tunnel, approximately 1,900 feet required multiple drifts. Crews ensured the safety of the tunnel by installing supporting steel and concrete along the length of the bore (Colorado Division of Highways, 1985:1) [Plate 33].

Originally scheduled for completion in three years, working in the high country posted a series of roadblocks. Throughout construction, men and machines labored at lowered efficiency at 11,000 feet while winter weather kept the working season short. Federal aid accounted for nearly 92 percent of the $108 million needed, administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The remaining 8 percent came from state funding. At the height of construction in the early 1970s, as many 1,140 people worked three shift, 24-hour days, six days a week. One veteran engineer declared: "We were going by the book, but the damned mountain couldn't read" (Colorado Division of Highways, 1973).

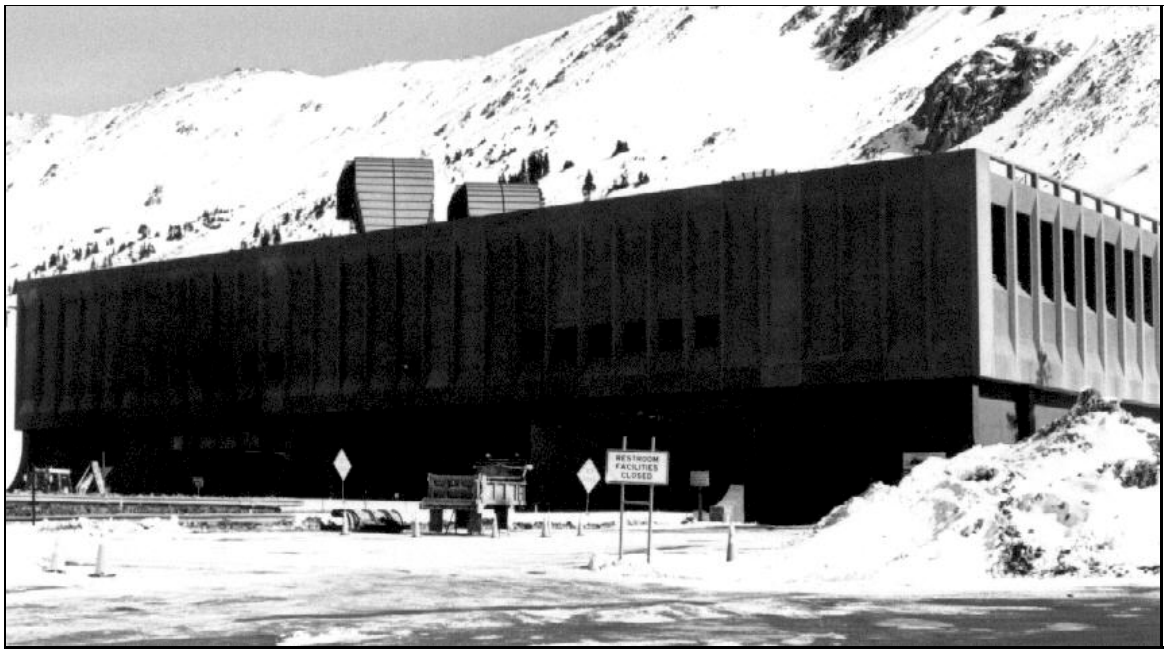

Plate 33. Eastbound bore (named for Colorado Governor Edwin C. Johnson) of the Eisenhower Tunnel.

Five years of hard work, “bad rock” and budget overruns culminated in the completion of the first bore by early 1973. Beyond the engineering achievement, the bottom line for most motorists was the tunnel saved 30 minutes to an hour of drive time compared to traveling U.S. 6 over Loveland Pass. However, the tunnel was a bottleneck where four lanes of traffic were squeezed down to one lane in either direction. In July 1972, Highway Department engineers designed an eastbound tunnel. After three years of preparation, excavation of the second bore began in August 1975. More than 800 workers were employed on the project, including some 480 employees who participated in drilling operations. After four years of boring and construction, the Johnson Bore was opened to eastbound traffic in 1979 (Colorado Division of Highways, 1985:1). The second bore was a temporary measure as tunnel congestion grew. At the start of a new century, the Colorado Department of Transportation is considering a number of options -- including another tunnel -- for traffic relief.

West of the tunnel, Colorado highway engineers and the U.S. Forest Service designed and built an interchange near the Dillon Reservoir west of the Arapaho National Forest. The exit off I-70 onto State Highway 9 leads to motels and campsites along the reservoir. By 1973, the state opened I-70 from Dillon through the completed Eisenhower Tunnel.

Immediately west of Dillon, engineers and politicians faced an ethical fork in the road. In 1967, the Colorado Division of Highways supported a plan to build a portion of Interstate 70 through the Gore Creek Valley along what was known as the Red Buffalo Tunnel route. Engineers designed the interstate to ascend the west side up Gore Creek, pass under the summit by way of tunnel, and descend on the east side along a direct route to the west portals of the yet uncompleted Straight Creek (now Eisenhower) tunnel. The Red Buffalo route would have been 10 miles shorter, but three times more expensive than staying along the existing path of U.S. 6 over Vail Pass. The debate took on national proportions as newspapers and the public argued over the merits of each option.

The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman settled the argument in 1968 when he denied the Division of Highways an easement through the Gore Range-Eagles Nest Primitive Area. The reserve was within the Arapaho and White River National Forests and under the

secretary's jurisdiction (Colorado Department of Highways, n.d.: 18). Later that year, the Division of Highways reexamined the location of I-70 over Vail Pass along the general route of US 6 (Colorado Division of Highways, 1971(a): 1).

Before the arrival of the interstate, the only road leading through the Vail Valley was U.S. 6. The two-lane highway ran down the middle of the valley. A meadow covered most of the valley floor, which was broken only by Gore Creek. One observer recalled: "There just wasn't much reason to stop there . . . No picturesque little mining town, not even a grimy little gas station or roadside cafe, graced the glen; in fact, the landscape evinced very little human presence at all" (Philpott, 1994: 1).

State highway planners met with residents and utility-company officials to devise the location of the interstate and allow for the expansion of a new resort community named Vail. In exchange for excavating gravel from private lands, the division shaped the highway to conform to the future development plans of the resort town's ownership (Colorado Department of Highways, n.d: 19).

From the first discussion of the interstate's alignment in the early 1960s, Vail's developers sought construction of a high-speed highway through their vacation community. The town's corporate founders, Vail Associates, felt the interstate would bring added value to their resort. However, as construction crept closer, some of the associates saw the highway as a "mixed blessing" that would "destroy scenic values and otherwise reduce the desirability of the Vail resort location" (Philpott, 1994: 86). As one commentator put it: "Beneath its faux Swiss chalet architecture . . . lay what the highway had created: a mountain suburb" (Thomas, 1996: 279).

In the wake of I-70, strips of stores and condominiums replaced mountain meadows, and ski trails cut through the aspen and pine along the slopes. In 1973, the Denver Post commented that the "smog in the Upper Eagle Valley matches Denver's eye-stinging quality when temperature inversions clamp an atmospheric lid over the valley" (Denver Post, July 15, 1973: 1). Growth continued for the rest of the 1970s, spurred by the completion of the Eisenhower Tunnel. In time

for the nation's bicentennial, I-70 crossed a portion of Vail Pass and by the following year, the interstate conquered the entire pass.

In 1984, the I-70 corridor west of Denver constituted the greatest concentration of ski resorts in the nation, as eight of the top-20 ski resorts in the United States were in Colorado (Thomas, 1996: 280). At the century's close, building projects in Vail have sprawled along the entire length of the valley floor, all crowed around the four-lane I-70 (Philpott, 1994: 4).

Interstate 70 is a rare example of a construction project whose impact is felt when it is still on the drawing board. In 1988, Governor Roy Romer observed: "Because of I-70, tourism guides decision-making in Colorado" (Thomas, 1996: 300). One environmental advocate lamented that I-70 "changed rural Colorado into non-rural Colorado" (Thomas, 1996: 300).

Interstate 70 brought late 20th-century automobile culture and resulting sprawl to the tranquility of the mountains, but I-70 serves as a reminder of how engineering can capture the beliefs and ambitions of a certain period in history.

11.9.1 Eligibility of I-70 from Vail Pass to Georgetown

The Eisenhower Tunnel, and the introduction of suburban design in the Rockies represented by the town of Vail, are the two most notable features in this 36-mile portion of Interstate 70. The completion of the superhighway did more than any previous event to increase the population and alter the character of the Rocky Mountains. Following the National Register guidelines, completion of I-70 is too close in recent memory to make a balanced determination regarding the highway's integrity. With time, the Eisenhower Tunnel, the interstate's features and design, and other highway facilities will be ready for further study regarding their eligibility. It is determined that this portion of I-70 is ineligible for submission to the National Register at this time.

The entire length of Interstate 70, including the 36-mile stretch between Georgetown and Vail Pass, was built to Federal Highway Administration and Colorado Division of Highways standards. In accordance with the National Task Force for Historic Roads definitions of road

types, I-70 is an engineered route. Interstate 70 brought new businesses and people to the mountains and greatly benefited Colorado's ski industry. It also reduced the amount of time drivers could safely travel from the Front Range to the Western Slope.

11.9.2 Synopsis of Site Survey of I-70 from Vail Pass to Georgetown (survey conducted February 13, 2002)

The selected 36-mile portion of I-70 begins at the Vail Pass as a divided highway. There is a large median dividing the eastbound and westbound lanes. The two sets of lanes are split; the westbound lanes are elevated from the eastbound. The highway has wide shoulders and concrete Johnson Wall guardrails where turns are steep and sharp. A biking/hiking path is located within this median and follows the West Ten-Mile Creek. The path is concrete and tree lined. Between exits 195 and 201, the highway is cut through the Ten-Mile Range Canyon. It is here that the highway is level with regard to topography, but the wide median is still retained. Past Exit 201 through Exit 205, the highway passes through the towns of Frisco, Dillon and Silverthorne. The road -- which starts as two lanes -- widens to three lanes with wide shoulders in either direction. A modern concrete-and-steel beam bridge crosses the Blue River in Silverthorne. Heading eastward, the highway begins a gradual incline of capping at 7% near the Eisenhower Tunnel. The eastbound lanes are again situated lower than the westbound lanes. The westbound lanes have been cut close to the mountainside.

The Eisenhower Tunnel is 1.75 miles long. The tunnel divides the eastbound from the westbound lanes and each direction is two lanes wide. The central core of the tunnel houses road equipment and exhaust machinery. The highway begins its descent upon exiting the tunnel. Again, the highway has wide shoulders and a grass median.

11.10 Historical Summary of US 24 From Manitou Springs To Antero Junction (5EP5118.1; 5PA2004.1; 5TL301.)

US Highway 24 crosses 314 miles of Colorado from the eastern plains to the central Rockies. The highway links most of the state and, at certain points, connects modern Colorado with the various people who have inhabited this region over the centuries. This summary focuses on a

70-mile section of that highway from Antero Junction on the eastern edge of the Pike National Forest to the town of Manitou Springs.

At Antero Junction, US 285 and US 24 diverge; US 285 heads toward Denver, while US 24 courses northeast to Hartsel. US 24 then heads east, then southeast to Lake George, Florrisant, Divide and finally northeast to Woodland Park. This mountain tour features three passes: Wilkerson, with an elevation of 9,507 feet and a 5.8% grade, Ute Pass (elev. 9,165 feet, 5.6% grade), and Trout Creek Pass (elev. 9,364 feet, 5.2% grade). US 24 passes Woodland Park on Midland Avenue. Leaving Woodland Park, US 24 turns into a divided highway (the Midland Expressway) going through Crystola and Cascade. Upon reaching Manitou Springs, US 24 becomes a business route for 4.3 miles (Colorado Department of Transportation, 1999(a)) [Figure 20].

Generations before white settlement, the Ute Indians made their way over the Continental Divide to hunt or fish via a pass later to bear their name. In the mid-19th century, gold seekers, stagecoaches and settlers followed, culminating in the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande and the Denver, South Park and Pacific railroads during the 1880s. The arrival of the railroads established tourism as an important industry in southern Colorado (Held, 2000: 2-3).

This route also has a long history with the automobile. On July 21,1899, E.J. Cabler, his wife, their friend Robert Temple – and 1,000 pounds of luggage -- left Denver for Colorado Springs and Victor. The automobile-wagon built by Temple ran out of gas six miles north of Palmer Lake. An emergency telegram to Colorado Springs requesting a refill of “oil that provides motive power” got the party back on the road. Days later, it was the first machine to travel a Colorado mountain road when it climbed Ute Pass through Woodland Park (elevation 8,437 feet) before stopping in Cripple Creek and Victor on the southwest slope of Pikes Peak (Miller, 1999: 26).

The succeeding decade saw increasing standardization in the wake of the Cablers and Temple. The South Park Highway followed this route from Manitou Springs to Buena Vista. The first state-tourism publication, Highways of Colorado (c. 1912), remarked that the Ute Pass Route

over the South Park Highway contained “some sharp curves and steep grades, but good road.” The road forked at a point 17.8 miles outside of Manitou Springs, with the right bend leading to Woodland Park. Unusual in the days of graveled roads, the guide listed the South Park Highway as “fast” and a “very good wet-weather road” despite some sharp curves and fairly steep pitches (Denver Chamber of Commerce, c. 1912: 124-5).

According to the first road map issued by the Colorado Highway Commission in August 1916, State Highway 8 ran from northern Colorado Springs along the South Park Highway to the town of Crystola (Colorado State Highway Commission, 1916). By the early 1920s, the Highway Commission re-designated SH 8 into State Highway 4. SH 4 followed the route of today’s State Highway 24 across Colorado, and its designation as State Highway 4 remained on state highway maps until the 1950s.

Increased auto travel during the 1910s added another chapter to this road’s history. As early as 1912, the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean (PP-OO) Highway spanned the continent from New York City to Los Angeles. Unlike other named motor trails in Colorado (like the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver route and the Victory Highway), the PP-OO followed the back roads of the nation. Civic and commercial groups raised money for building, paving and promoting the highway.

In Colorado, the PP-OO came off the eastern plains and turned south to avoid Denver before reaching its namesake mountain and continuing along the route of today’s US 24 west to Utah. Named motor trails fell out of favor when the U.S. government increased their authority over the nation’s roads in 1926. From 1927 to 1936, State Highway 4 was re-designated US 40-N and US 40-S, with US 40-S running from Limon to Grand Junction. In 1936, the federal government decided on US 24 -- the name has stuck ever since (Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, http://www.prairienet.org/us36).

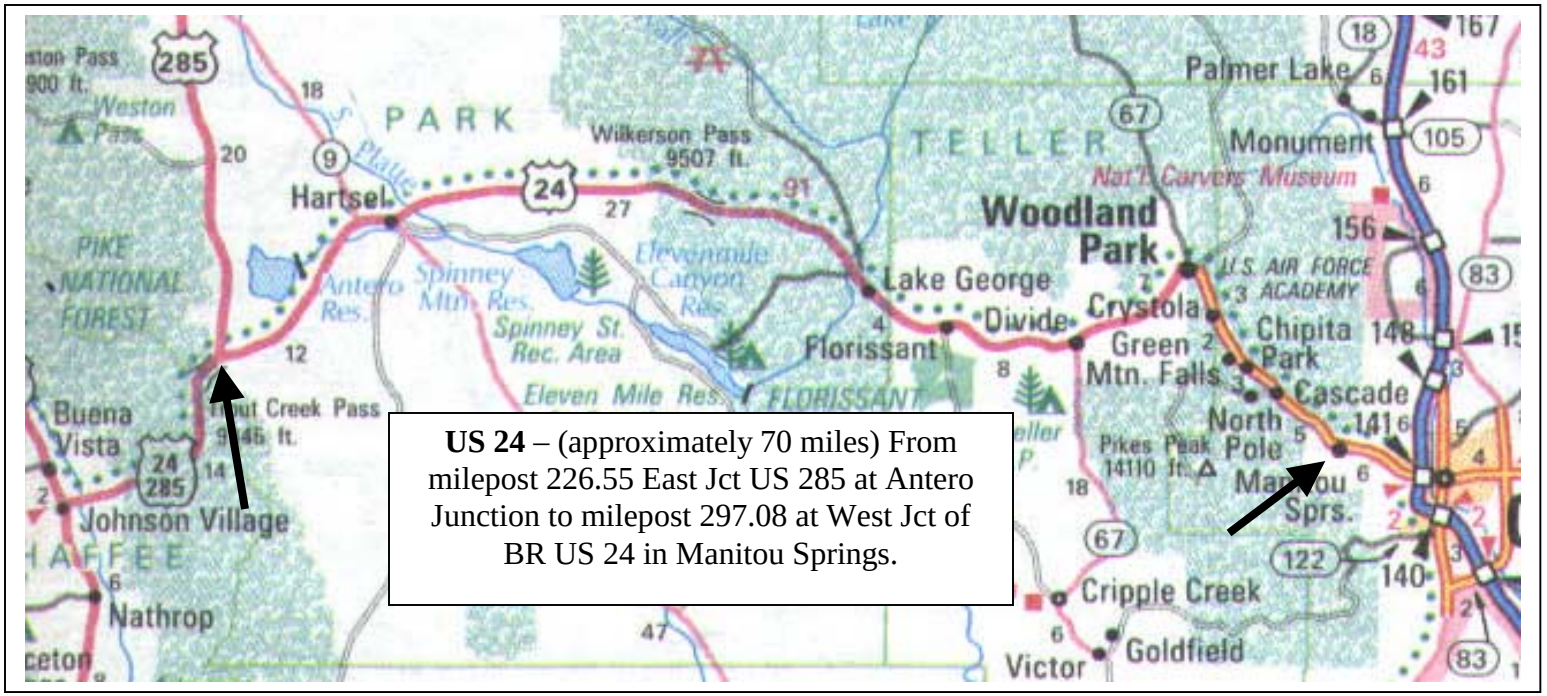

Figure 20. US 24 – Approximately 70 miles from milepost 226.55 east of junction US 285 at Antero Junction to milepost 297.08 at West junction of US 24 in Manitou Springs (1994 Rand McNally Road Atlas).

State Highway Engineer Charles Vail blacktopped the majority of Colorado's roads during the 1930s and 1940s. As one of the state primary tourist routes, Vail's Highway Department lavished a great deal of attention and funding during the Depression years. From 1919 to 1930, the state spent only $4,342,926 to improve this artery through Colorado (Rocky Mountain Contractor, September 4, 1941: 8). The road needed modernizing: Only 21 miles of the 474 miles then in existence were hard surfaced. In 1930, the highway was surfaced from Manitou Springs to Lake George, graded from Lake George to 10 miles east of Hartsel, and again surfaced from 10 miles east of Hartsel to Antero Reservoir (Rocky Mountain Contractor, September 4, 1941: 8(a); Colorado Department of Highways: 1930(a)).

From 1931 to July 1941, the state and federal government spent over $11.5 million to modernize the entire highway. In the early 1930s, the state completed improvements to Wilkerson Pass and planned a new highway over Ute Pass in what was designated Federal Aid Project 158-A. Engineers boasted the new highway between Manitou Springs and Cascade would "conquer tremendous natural obstacles." In preparation for construction, Colorado negotiated to obtain the necessary right-of-way at the site of a nationally famous mineral springs. The springs flowed through a honeycomb of rock, and many feared blasting the granite walls and cliffs of Ute Pass would forever ruin the waters. In addition, engineers were required to lay a grade that would meet state and federal requirements while providing space around the springs and buildings on the property (Farley, November 1931: 7). District Five Division Engineer Ernest Montgomery reached a compromise with property owners and redesigned the road to a new location on the opposite side of the canyon below Rainbow Falls (Height, April 1932: 4).

Grading operations began simultaneously from both ends of the four-mile road in the fall of 1931. Culvert crews kept ahead of graders while a crew of stonemasons and helpers built retaining walls. Contractors built long booms of suitably braced telephone poles mounted on truck beds. These improvised derricks picked up and carried boulders by cable. Men lowered the stones off the derrick line to permanent place in the retaining walls. The fills also required special treatment. Their height – in some cases 60 feet – and proximity to the stream, would have caused slopes to fill the creek and create an impossible condition for drainage. Retaining walls made of cement rubble masonry provided the solution. A total of 3,500 cubic yards of

rock wall lined the highway west of Manitou Springs. They remain protected by metal guardrails (Height, April 1932: 5).

Starting in the fall of 1931 and through the spring of 1932, highway rerouting and bridge construction over Rainbow Falls forced residents of Cascade, Chipita Park, Green Mountain Falls, and Woodland Park to compromise. They could either ride the Midland Railway trains to Colorado Springs or drive Mount Herman Road to Monument and then travel south to Colorado Springs -- a round trip of about 100 miles (Breckenridge, 1985: 187). Dynamite crews blasted more than 200,000 cubic yards of rock from the canyon walls. Contractors estimated that they drilled over nine miles of drill holes and used 50 tons of high explosives. The improved road measured 36-feet wide, had a steepest grade reaching 7%, and cost nearly $300,000 to complete (Height, April 1932: 4-5, 14) [Figure 21].

In February 1937, Works Progress Administration labor forces widened, graveled, and graded four miles of US 24 through Manitou Springs. These improvements to the road cost $15,048 (Rocky Mountain Contractor, February 24, 1937). In 1941, the state modernized US 24 over Tennessee Pass (Rocky Mountain Contractor, September 4, 1941: 8(a)).

Daily traffic through Manitou Springs increased during the 1960s. In 1967, traffic in and west of Manitou Springs totaled 11,800 vehicles on an average weekday. During 1968 and 1969, the state began the Manitou By-Pass Project to relieve traffic. Under the initial allocation of $1,414,541, the Colorado Division of Highways designed and modernized the highway west of Rainbow Bridge to the Cave of the Winds Road. Concurrently, the state built the Midland Expressway west from Manitou Springs to Cascade. An extension to Woodland Park was completed by the mid-1970s (Rocky Mountain Construction, June 4, 1968: 26).

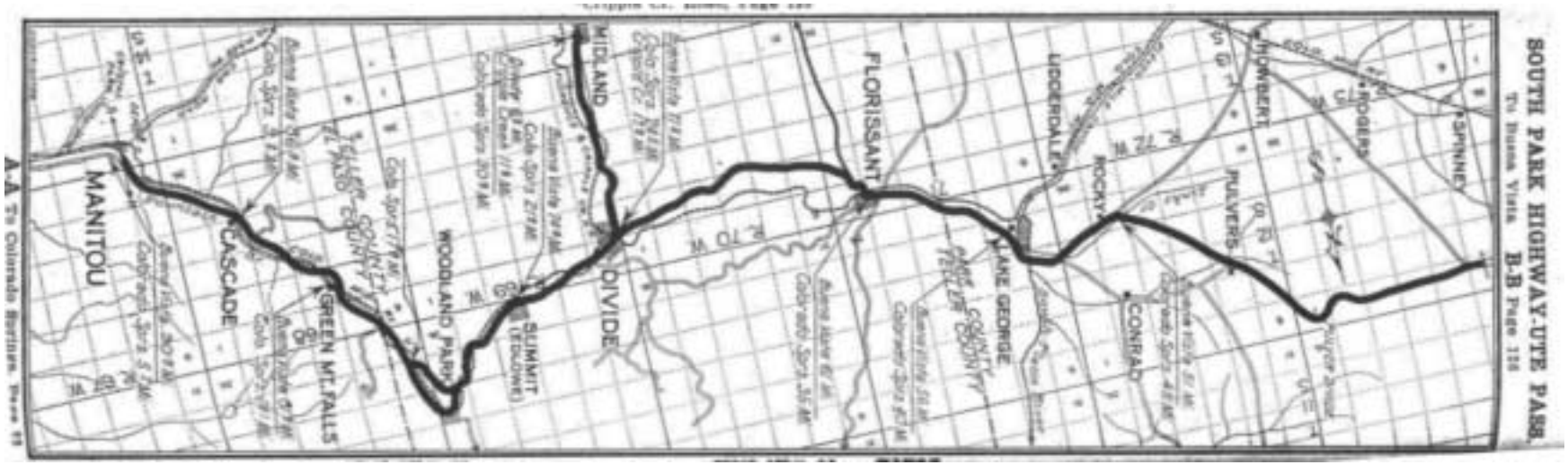

Figure 21. The State Highway Commission's first travel guide, Highways of Colorado, predicted in 1910 that Ute Pass west of Manitou Springs would be "improved almost constantly" in the future resulting from increased auto traffic. Source: Denver Chamber of Commerce: 124-5.

11.10.1 Eligibility of US 24 from Antero Junction to Manitou Springs

The path now known as US 24 began as an Indian trail through the mountains. Today, portions of that trail serve as an expressway west of Manitou Springs. Since the early 20th century, tourism has been the primary industry of the survey area. Generations of travelers followed this section of US 24 to visit the Broadmoor Hotel, Pikes Peak, Manitou Spring, or continue further into the mountains. During the early years of the automobile in Colorado, US 24 was known as the Pikes-to-Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway. The highway's role as one of Colorado's most important tourism routes continued into the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1930s, both the state and federal government added a number of safety features notable for their aesthetic qualities. These include the rest stop at Wilkerson Pass, to the Twin Creek Bridge, to the cement rubble masonry retaining walls along Fountain Creek.

Because of US 24's long history as a native, commercial and automobile trail, and the remaining integrity of the bridges and walls built in the 1930s, the highway is best eligible for placement on the National Register under Criterion A (associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history).

According to the guidelines established by the National Task Force for Historic Roads, US 24 from Manitou Springs to Antero Junction best exemplifies a cultural route. A cultural route represents a road "that evolved through necessity or tradition." Much of Ute Pass developed without the "intensive engineering and design practices associated with aesthetic and engineered routes." Ute Pass, like El Camino Real in California and the Boston Post Road from New York to Boston, underwent significant changes in the wake of the automobile. Continual improvements in the name of motor travel resulted in multiple layers of development. These improvements (walls and curbing along Fountain Creek and the Wilkerson Pass rest stop) offer preservationists a chance to study different periods and types of historic highway resources within close proximity (Marriott, 1998: 16).

11.10.2 US 24 – approximately 70 miles from milepost 226.55 east of junction US 285 at Antero Junction to milepost 297.08 at west junction of US 24 in Manitou Springs (survey conducted January 31, 2002)

US 24 is a two-lane highway with narrow shoulders and sloped embankments. Heading east, the road has a gradual rise and is surrounded by open plains. The asphalt shows signs of repair and appears to be a new mix of materials (without as much rock in the mix). Modern metal reflectors are situated roadside. Passing through the town of Hartsel, the road widens to four lanes with a parking lane. There are no visible curbs or sidewalks through town. The road narrows at the town limits.

Wood bridges are located along the western portion of the highway. These appear to be highway-standard bridges, all constructed from wood planks, with wood piers and abutments.

At Wilkerson Pass, the road curves and there is a rest area. The walls and stone steps are dry laid and appear to have been constructed by the CCC. Construction work is being done on the public facilities and no inspection was made. Heading east from the rest area, the road begins a gradual downward grade with slight-sloping embankments. A concrete and rock culvert is situated on the south side of the highway near mile-marker 261. The north side of the highway shows a culvert with modern, flared concrete abutments surrounding a metal pipe. The asphalt along this stretch appears to have more rock in it than the stretch west of the pass.

The Twin Creek Bridge has concrete rails with arches. A metal date plaque stating the name, engineer and date of construction (1937) is situated on the north rail, east end of the bridge. The concrete abutments, rails and piers show deterioration. The bridge approaches are coated with reflective paint.

The road widens to five lanes entering the city of Woodland Park. The road passing through town has newer asphalt with curbs and sidewalks. A roadside park, located in town on the south side of the road, includes a picnic pavilion, stone steps, walls, band shell and an interpretive sign with stone pillars. The park appears new but materials and construction methods mimic CCC

design. The park brings continuity to the CCC construction located east on the road entering Manitou Springs.

Leaving the town of Woodland Park, the road splits and becomes a divided highway. The westbound lanes are elevated, with a steep embankment leading downward to eastbound lanes. The shoulders are wide, with several modern, metal guardrails. The highway remains split all the way into Manitou Springs.

Approximately five miles west of Manitou Springs, the CCC built retaining walls on the south side of the westbound lanes. At this point of the highway, the road runs parallel to Fountain Creek. The median is heavily wooded and retaining walls support the roadway from erosion. The embankment is steep and retaining walls are visible from the eastbound lanes alone. A concrete culvert surrounded by stone is situated in the median, within the portion of the CCC retention wall. The wall extends for approximately 500 feet (Plates 34, 35, 36 & 37).

Prior to milepost 297, a stone footbridge and culvert are located near a parking area along the south side of the road. The footbridge appears to have been constructed by the CCC and is collapsed in its center. The culvert has stone and concrete, but was unable to be examined as the steep embankment and broken bridge prohibited closer examination. Next to this walkway, remnants of old asphalt curbing were found. The curbing materials consisted of red stone and an asphalt mix (Plate 38).

The last bridge before the exit, the Fountain Creek Bridge, is a single-span, open-spandrel arch bridge constructed in 1932. Fountain was formed of concrete and identical in design to the Twin Creek Bridge. It is slated for demolition in 2002.

Plate 34. Concrete culvert inside rock work. View from east side of US 24.

Plate 35. Cement rubble masonry wall along Fountain Creek on US 24.

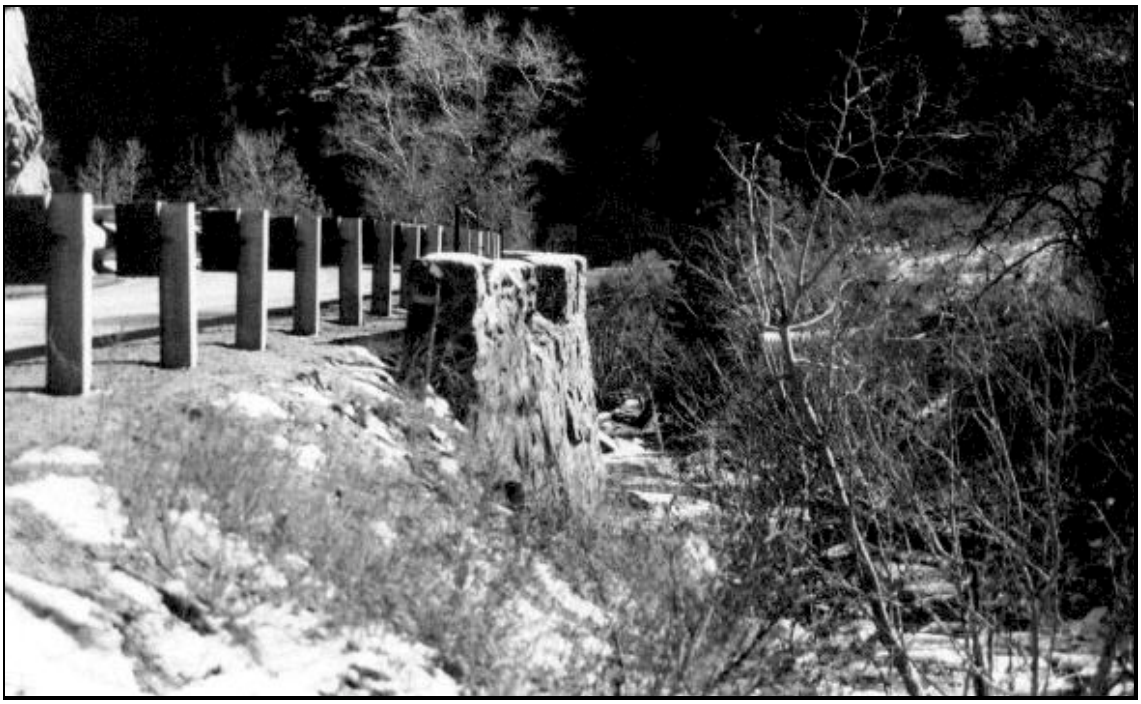

Plate 36. Cement and masonry wall from inside the guardrail above Fountain Creek.

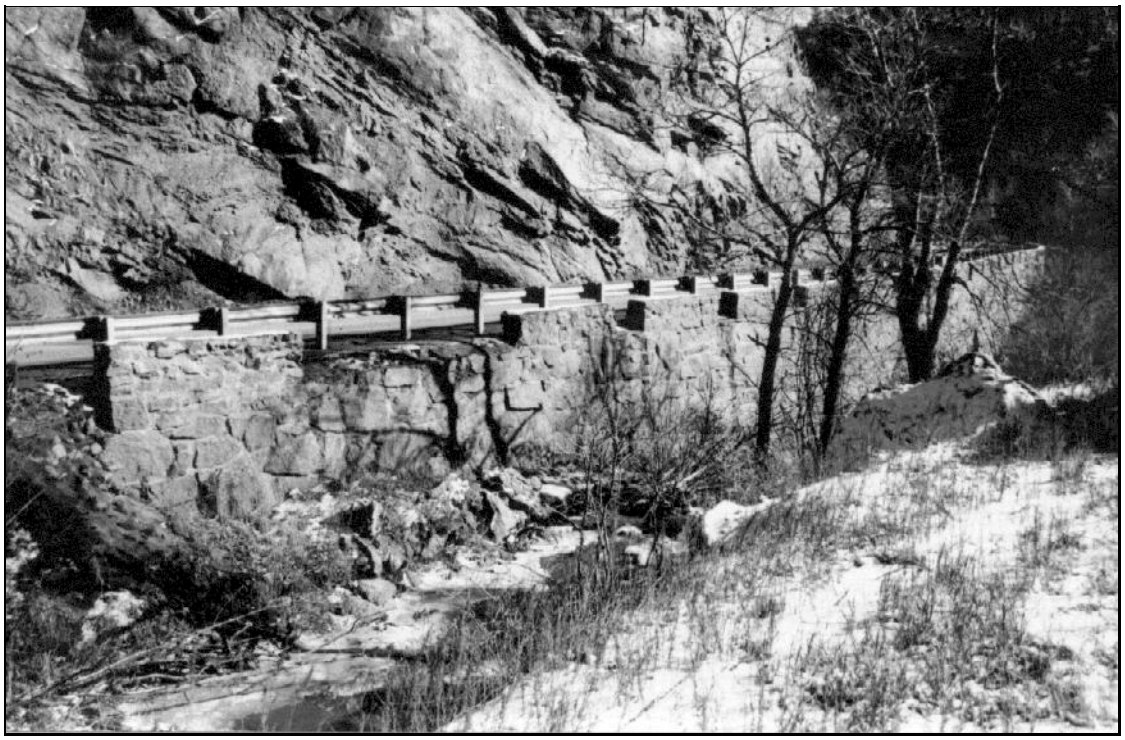

Plate 37. Stonework along Fountain Creek. View from eastside of US 24.

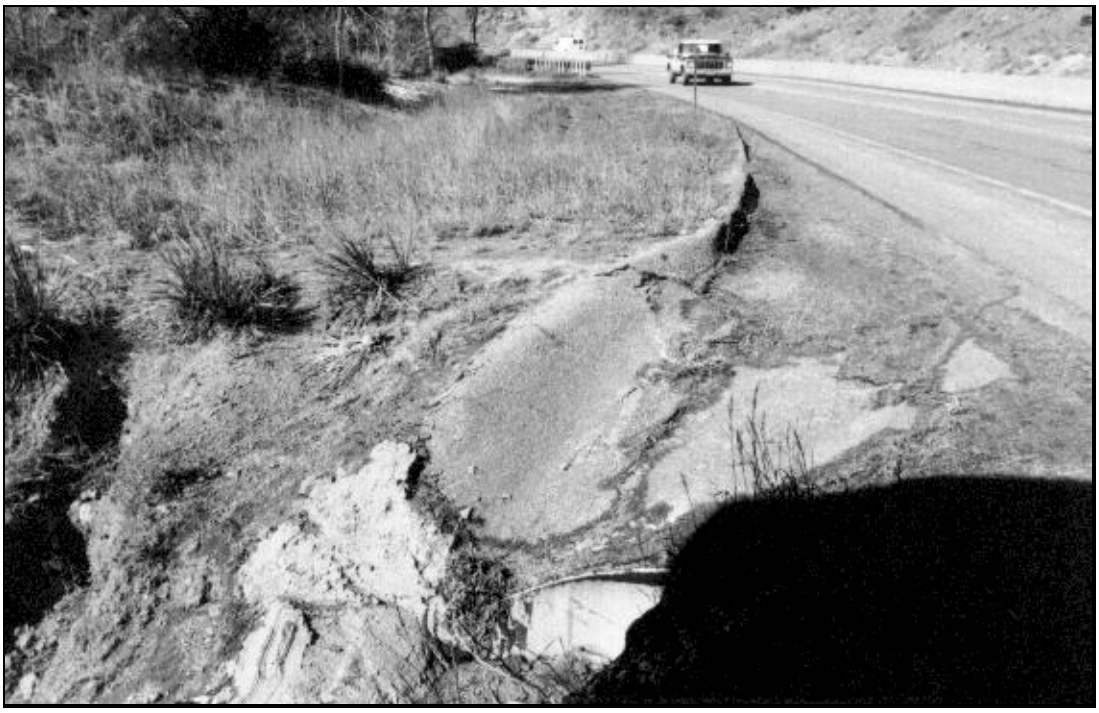

Plate 38. Curbing placed by PWA crews during the 1930s on US 24 west of Manitou Springs. Materials included a mixture of red rock and asphalt.

11.11 Colfax Avenue through Denver

On November 13, 2001, representatives of CDOT, CHS and ACRE drove a 20-mile stretch of Colfax Avenue from I-225 in Aurora west to Exit 262 in Golden. As part of US Highway 40, Colfax has represented Denver's auto and tourist culture for nearly 80 years. However, as one of the city's most traveled thoroughfares, Colfax is in constant flux. Examining the road for historical integrity, the group mutually agreed that little of the original character of Colfax Avenue remains for further study.