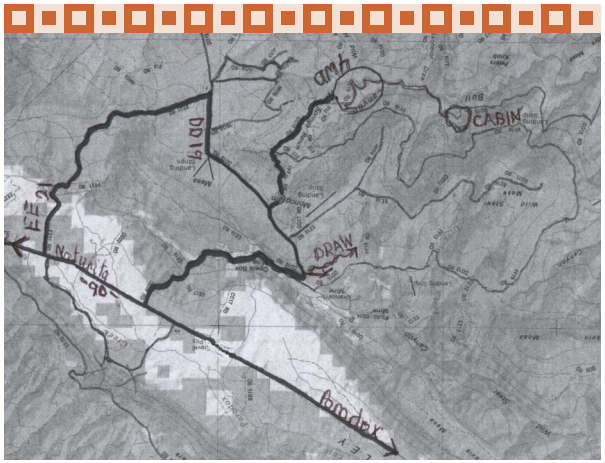
TOUR DIRECTIONS

Leaving Naturita, west on Highway 141, turn onto Highway 90 heading west for about 6 1/4 miles, past Mile Marker 28, to county road EE21; turn left. You will be headed up to Monogram Mesa, a scenic staging area for much of the carnotite ore mining that occurred in the West End from the early 1900s to the late 1980s. Side roads lead to abandoned mines; mining equipment is scattered across the mesa. Six miles up this road you will come to a "T", turn right onto DD19. In 2.5 miles you will reach FF16, left. This is the turn off for the **Bull Canyon Tour.** You can drive 2 miles further down FF16 to a flat spot, *Springs Bench*, but from there on it is strictly Jeep, ATV, or a short wheel base 4WD with high clearance. For the **Bull Canyon Tour** stay to the right on GG15 road. From this parking area you can hike into the canyon, but it is a steep trek about 3 miles.

To continue on **Monogram Mesa-** 1/2 mile west of FF16 you will reach EE16 the *Monogram Stock Driveway*– the old route for driving cattle into the lower benches. You also have a view of Utah and the La Sal Mts. Ahead, and the Blue Mts. further south. 3 miles further, park just before crossing the cattle guard and hike along the rocky ridge 1/4 mile south to the rim for a great view of Bull Canyon. With binoculars, you can pick out the cabin in the distance. Continue down DD 19 toward Highway 90. There will be many turnouts where you can view the valley and the open pit mine dug for the Cotter Corp. in the '80s. No ore was ever mined here, as the industry went bust. A right turn at the bottom will lead you to Highway 141 and Naturita.



RIMROCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Of Western Montrose County

Promoting Awareness, Understanding, Appreciation, and Preservation of our area's Past & Present.

Rimrocker Historical Society Museum & Office
470 Main Street Nucla, CO 970.864.7438
rimrockerhs@gmail.com www.rimrocker.org

UNAWEEP-TABEGUACHE
HISTORIC & SCENIC BYWAY
INTERPRETIVE CENTER
230 W. Main Street Naturita, CO
UTBywayCO@gmail.com
www.UTBywayCO.com

NUCLA NATURITA
Area Chamber of Commerce

West End Visitors Center & the
Nucla Naturita Area
Chamber of Commerce
NNACCDirector1@gmail.com
www.nucla-naturita.com

www.westendcolorado.com

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SELF GUIDED TOURS

Monogram Mesa Loop

Monogram Mesa Loop: Allow two hours. Well maintained gravel/dirt road for any vehicle.

Bull Canyon Tour

Bull Canyon Tour: Jeep or ATV, or rugged hiking only from 4WD parking area (on map); steep and narrow road, about six miles round trip. Allow all day.

"The Life and Death of Indian Henry"

Indian Henry's Cabin. Bull Canyon

RIMROCKER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF WESTERN MONTROSE COUNTY

As stories often go, there are a few versions of this popular legend. The first is taken with permission from *In The Company of Cowboys,* by Howard Greager. He probably heard the story through his father and others who cowboyed that country. The next two come from the books of Al Look, who interviewed a miner of that era, "Peg-leg" Foster", and his wife, Laura Foster.

Greager describes Indian Henry as a Digger Indian from a tribe in the southwest Utah and southeastern Nevada areas. The term 'Digger' evolved from the habit these Indians had for digging in the ground for most of their food. When he was about seventeen years old, Henry was either abandoned by his parents or else told to get out on his own, and was picked up along a wagon trail by a couple of families on their way to settle in Paradox., Colorado in 1879. James Huff adopted the Indian boy and he was known after that as Henry Huff. To the majority of people, however, he was called Indian Henry.

The Indian received a little schooling while he finished growing up in Paradox. Well known and well liked in Paradox and San Miguel County, he later did cowboy work for some of the area cattle outfits, and eventually owned a small herd of his own. He registered a stock brand on April 15,1885, in Montrose County.

After the turn of the century the mining industry boomed in the West End of Montrose County. Indian Henry staked quite a few claims in the Bull Canyon area; he worked some claims; and prospected others and then held them for sale. Some people believed that Indian Henry had quite a bit of money from his dealings.

The Standard Chemical Corporation had some mines in this same part of the Bull Canyon Mining District, and the men who worked them lived in a boarding house built in the bottom of Bull Canyon.

The boarding house was managed by John Keske, whose wife took in all the miners' washing and did the cooking. There was also a shelter under the overhanging rims for pack burros and horses.

Indian Henry used to spend quite a bit of time around the boarding house as it gave him a chance to visit with people.

John Keske believed very strongly that Indian Henry did have a lot of money, and that he either hid it around his cabin, which was not far from the boarding house, or had it stashed with some of his personal belongings in the room he used while staying with the Keskes.

On the afternoon of May 11, 1917, in the Keske boarding house, three men sat down at the dining room table to play some hearts. The men were Clark Akers, an old time cowboy, John Keske and Indian Henry. John Keske had concealed a six shooter in his boot top.

During the course of the play, Keske led an ace and Indian Henry trumped it. Outraged at this turn of events, Keske brought up his six-shooter and shot Indian Henry square in the mouth, killing him instantly. Later inspection of the hand held by Indian Henry showed a void in the suit of the ace lead. His trump was valid and proper.

The Montrose County Sheriff was notified of the killing and Keske was lodged in the county jail for about six months while awaiting trial. For some reason Clark Akers seemed to be afraid of Keske and did whatever Keske told him to.

During the trial, Akers and Keske both testified under oath that Indian Henry was molesting Mrs. Keske and that her husband had killed the Indian in defense of her honor. With no testimony to refute this, the judge had no recourse than to let Keske go free. Keske left the country and was never heard from again.

Indian Henry was buried under a huge sandstone cliff at the junction of Picket Corral Draw and Bull Canyon Wash. A friend carved out a headstone from hard red sandstone. He fenced off the grave area to protect it from livestock. Still there today for anyone to see, it is marked with this simple epitaph:

HENRY
HUFF
MAY 11, 1917
AGE 55

Photos: Mike Mortensen

In his 1956 book *U BOOM,* Mr. Look wrote that Indian Henry had been orphaned, and raised by two cattlemen, who later willed him their spread. Henry came to town once a year to sell his steers and buy goods. Some locals thought he had a buried treasure. One day he was found murdered; he had been beaten and tortured.

The story changes again in his 1966 book *Unforgettable Characters of Western Colorado.* Mr. Look gives this account through Mrs. Foster, who was then married to John Keski, and cooked at the boardinghouse.

Look tells us that Henry was a Ute Indian, found and adopted when he was an infant. He was jealously considered a "rich Indian" because of his inheritance and his mining claims.

Henry and Keski came back one afternoon from assessing claims, and started guzzling hooch. Laura Foster says that they were arguing over who owed whom some money, and as the alcohol worked on them she could tell that they were headed for a shooting. Keski retrieved a gun from the back room and started swinging it around. Laura grabbed the gun arm and bit him on the wrist. The gun fell to the floor, but Keski grabbed it and then it discharged. This stopped the ruckus, and Henry staggered drunkenly out the door.

Then Laura noticed the blood. Henry had collapsed outside and she dragged him back in. He was shot just above the collarbone, and she didn't believe the wound was too serious, but Henry had other ideas. He whispered to Laura about some treasures he had hidden in a cave, and he told her where he wanted to be buried.

Henry was still alive the next morning when the doctor came, but wanted nothing to do with his medicine, he even jumped up and ran, With men holding Henry down, the doctor plunged in a hypo, and the Indian died with a jerk. Later, the coroner said that the wound was not fatal.

A judge tried Keski in the Naturita Hotel, and gave him eight months in jail for having liquor in the house.

Which account rings true?