








To GUNNISON 56 miles

To MONTROSE 37 mile

To PLACERVILLE 13 mile

LEGEND

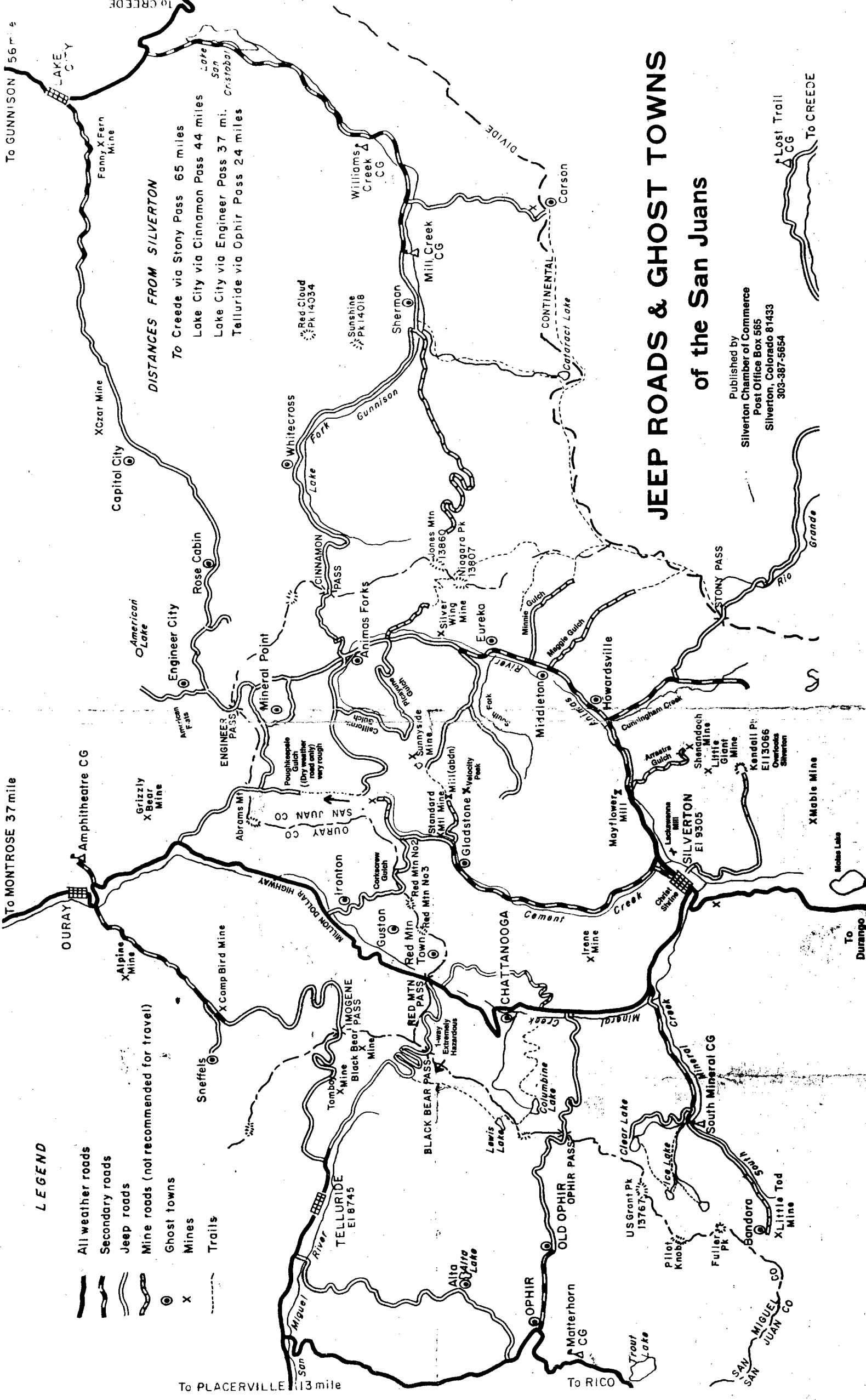
-  All weather roads
-  Secondary roads
-  Jeep roads
-  Mine roads (not recommended for travel)
-  Ghost towns
-  Mines
-  Trails

DISTANCES FROM SILVERTON

- To Creede via Stony Pass 65 miles
- Lake City via Cinnamon Pass 44 miles
- Lake City via Engineer Pass 37 mi.
- Telluride via Ophir Pass 24 miles

JEEP ROADS & GHOST TOWNS of the San Juans

Published by
 Silverton Chamber of Commerce
 Post Office Box 565
 Silverton, Colorado 81433
 303-387-5654



To Durango

To CREEDE

To Durango

To Durango

A CIRCLE JEEP TOUR

Prepared by

THE SILVERTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Post Office Box 565

Silverton, Colorado 81433

(303) 387-5654

To use this guide, check your mileage at point 1 and by adding the mileage figures given for each point to this figure the odometer reading for each point of interest may be found. As you drive the routes check your odometer.

When you stop at these areas of historical interest, the description in this guide will give some interesting history of this area.

Off Road Regulations

1. Not off the trail or road with either bike or vehicle.
2. Be prepared, back country breakdowns are common. Carry basic camping and survival equipment.
3. Don't drive passenger vehicles on jeep trails.
4. Two tracks don't make a road.
5. Right of way on hills—uphill traffic has right-of-way.
6. Violators subject to penalty.

Number	Mileage	Point of Interest
1) 0 miles		Silverton

In 1860 an expedition led by Captain Charles Baker arrived in the high mountain park that carries his name. Reports of seemingly inexhaustible placers brought a stampede of miners to the area in the same year. After many years of prospecting and exploring the townsite of Silverton was selected in 1873. At the general election in 1874 the county seat of La Plata County, which included Ouray, San Juan, Dolores and part of San Miguel counties, was moved from Howardsville to Silverton.

The census of 1910 showed 2,153 people living in Silverton. That was the highest: the lowest was in 1980 with a population of almost 800.

2) 2.1 miles

Arrastra Gulch

North of the road at that point is the old Shenandoah Mill or Mayflower Mill, now operated by Standard Metals Corporation in connection with the largest producer of gold in Colorado which is the American Tunnel at Gladstone. The tram line overhead served to transport men and supplies to and ore from the Mayflower Mine which is visible on the eastern side of the gulch.

It was farther east around the point in Little Giant Basin that the first claim in the San Juans was staked in 1871—the Little Giant. There is evidence in the main gulch itself of the use of arrastras, a stone grinding or milling device, used in early day prospecting and mining activities suggesting either Spanish presence or influence which has not been satisfactorily documented at this time.

To the west are the ruins of the Silver Lake Mill. At one time, other tram lines ran up the gulch to connect this mill and one other with the sources of ore higher up.

The saddle at the end of the gulch is the gateway to a large upper basin consisting of Silver Lake, a once bustling area surrounded by three mines—the Silver Lake, the Iowa and the Royal Tiger. This upper area of the gulch contained a four-story boarding house and even its own post office.

3) 3.8 miles

Stony Pass

Turn right at Howardsville

The pass was opened in 1878 over a 12,000 foot pass in the Continental Divide and provided Silverton with regular passenger and freight service. Originally a wagon road, Stony Pass gets its fame for the ruggedness of the road and surrounding country. Stony Pass was continually used until 1882 when the railroad reached Silverton through the Animas Canyon from Durango.

(A short side trip to the top of Stony Pass at this point in the tour would give the traveler a beautiful panorama view of the southern San Juans.)

4) 4 miles

Howardsville

The oldest of the camps in the San Juans, Howardsville is located at the junction of Cunningham Gulch. Howardsville was predicated by a promotional settlement named Bullion City, but around 1873, the name was changed to Howardsville after either Lieutenant Howard from Capt. Charles Baker's party or George Howard who reportedly built the first cabin at the site, in 1872. Having become a supply center, Howardsville, while it was never legally platted or incorporated, became the county seat of La Plata County in 1874—Colorado's Western Slope first county seat. It also claimed the first post office in Western Colorado and maintained that post office until 1939.

The major improvement at the site today is the expanded Pride of the West Mill to the northeast, variously owned and sporadically operated over the past several years by Dixilyn Corporation, Yukon Mining and Milling, San Juan Milling and presently Baker's Park Mining and Milling.

Major mines of the Howardsville area during years past included the Pride of the West, the Green Mountain, the Highland Mary, the Little Nation and the Old Hundred, which is directly below its portal boarding house, clinging to the side of Galena Mountain at an elevation of 12,300 feet. The elevation at Howardsville is 9,644 feet.

5) 7.5 miles

Eureka

Go straight at Howardsville

A settlement was started in earnest in the early 1870s with the location of the Sunnyside to the north. When the Sunnyside shut down in 1931 for the first time, Eureka faltered, and when the operation was last worked in 1938, it was the end of Eureka.

Eureka was incorporated in 1893 making it the only town in San Juan County outside of Silverton that was ever incorporated. It had its own post office, churches, a school and a sizeable residential and commercial area. Eureka is dominated by the ruins of the Sunnyside Mill which was dismantled for salvage several years after it closed down. Eureka also served the Toltec, the Golden Fleece, the Tom Moore, the Silver Wing, the Sound Democrat and other mines.

6) 10.5 miles

Animas Forks

Animas Forks was transformed from a tent city into a town of structures and substance in 1877 and although it was never incorporated, it had its own post office, newspaper, and grade school. It is located where the wagon roads now known as Engineer Pass and Cinnamon Pass converged on the routes between Ouray, Silverton and Lake City.

Animas Forks provided supplies for numerous strikes in the San Juans, including the Early Bird, the Columbus, the Bagley Tunnel and the Gold Prince. The ruins of the mammoth mill built by the Gold Prince Mines Company are evident at the lower end of the townsite. The community was the northern terminus of the Silverton Northern Railroad of Otto Mears. The railroad once ran trains including dining cars between Silverton and Animas, but it

never licked the problem of snowslides between Eureka and Animas. Cribbing on the north side of the road a little over a mile north of Eureka remains from the first and only of Mears' snowsheds.

The impressive house at the north end of the main street with bay window, classic lines and exterior trim is believed to be, although no proof exists, the home of Thomas F. Walsh, famed as the discoverer of the Camp Bird Mine and as the father of Evalyn Walsh McLean, an owner of the ill-fated Hope Diamond.

7) 13.5 miles

Mineral Point

The high Mineral Point Valley at the base of Engineer Pass was once (late 1870s and 1880s) one of the busiest areas of activity in the area. Reached mainly from Silverton, the valley contains many prospects and a few mines that were once quite productive. By the 1890s however, it was on its way toward becoming a ghost camp.

8) 18 miles

Million Dollar Highway

Turn left at asphalt

Hundreds of men blasted a passage out of sheer cliffs from 1881 to 1883. The grade was too steep for a railroad. Early day tolls were \$5 for a team and wagon, \$1 for a horse and rider.

Otto Mears' charter expired in 1900 and the county took charge. In 1920 the state spent \$1,200,000 widening the road. Mears built many toll roads and later, several railroads. The granite marker on the highway is in his memory and is not a grave. His ashes were scattered from the top of Engineer Mountain.

9) 21.7 miles

Ironton

Tour proceeds to Ironton, a ghost town with several buildings, which once claimed 1,000 persons as a major transportation junction between Ouray and Silverton. Coaches and freighters from Ouray met the Silverton Railroad at Ironton. One report claimed 300 tents in 1883, and 10 saloons and many branch stores later. Farther east, in Corkscrew Gulch, is the site of a railroad turntable. The Corkscrew Gulch turntable was constructed to enable trains to make a turn that was too sharp for the trains to manage. It was a unique solution to one of the many problems Otto Mears encountered trying to build a railroad in these rugged mountains.

10) 23.7 miles

Idarado Mine

This mine is a vast complex of once rich mines including Liberty Bell, Smuggler Union, Tombooy, Black Bear and others and has more than 90 miles of tunnels going through the mountain to Pandora at Telluride. The Idarado closed in November, 1978. It had almost 500 employees as recently as 1975 and was a major producer of lead, zinc, copper, silver and gold.

11) 24.5 miles

Red Mountain

The first community, just east of Red Mountain Pass, was called Congress, with 300 year 'round inhabitants. A flurry of silver mining began in 1879, but two big mines, Yankee Girl and Guston, were discovered August 12, 1881. The Genesee-Vanderbilt followed in 1882, and the National Bell, in 1883, where miners discovered lead carbonate crystals in a cavern and staked claims in 10 feet of ore. The working in this area produced over 12 million dollars in several log buildings, the site of Red Mountain Town. The city once had three newspapers, a municipal waterworks, depot, school, stores and a jail and 60 buildings in all. Much of the town burned in 1882. The 11.2 mile Silverton Railroad passed through the town, hauling coal up from Silverton and ore back beginning in 1889. Population was about 300 in winter, 1,000 in summer, although early writers claimed twice this many.

12) 34.5 miles

Silverton