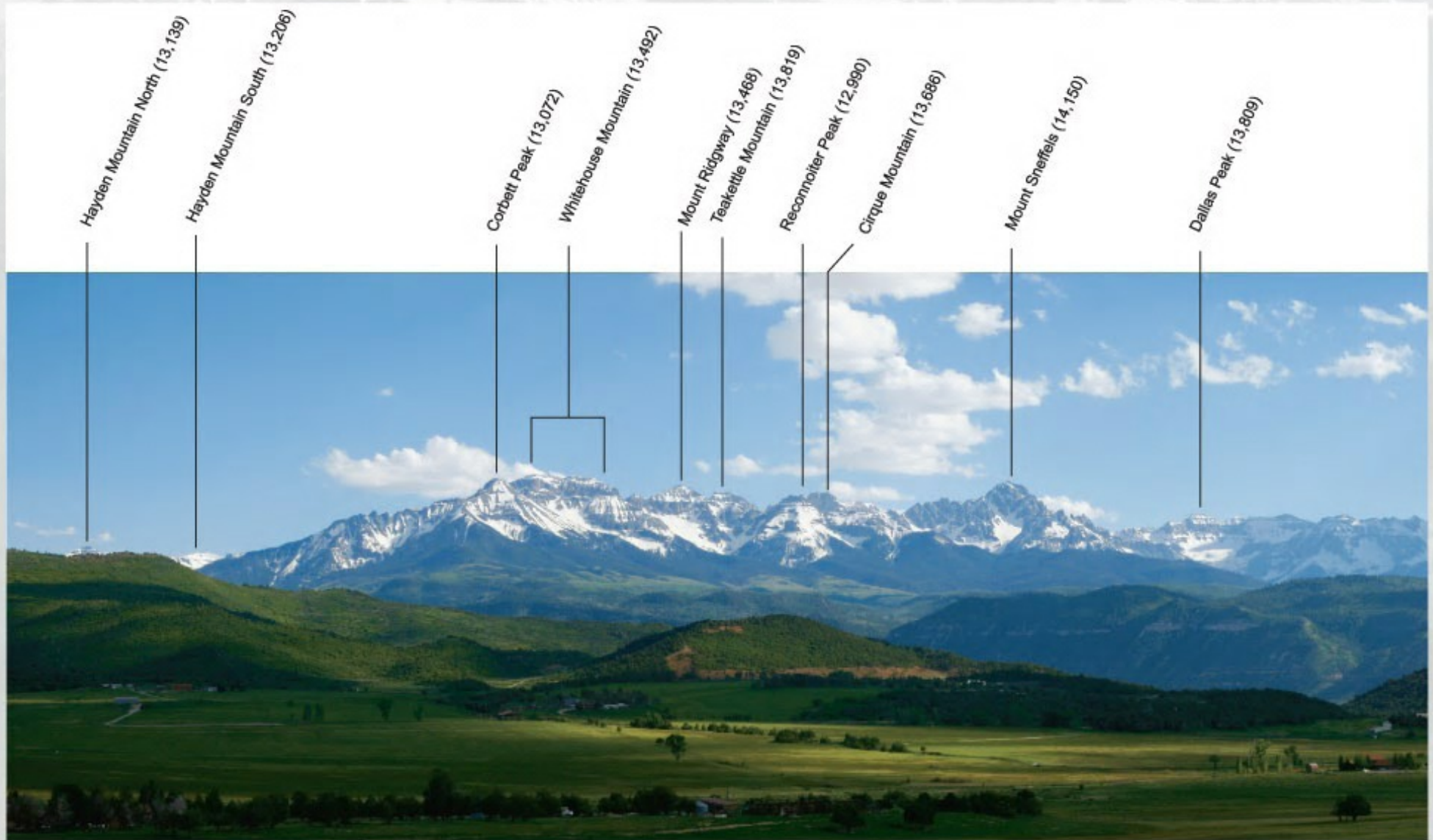


# PEAKS OF THE UNCOMPAHGRE

LABELLED IMAGES AND STORIES BEHIND THE NAMES OF  
THE MOUNTAINS SURROUNDING OURAY, COLORADO



BY JEFF BURCH AND DON PAULSON

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#### **NOTES ON THE LABELS ASSIGNED TO SOME OF THE PEAKS IN THIS BOOK**

\* These peaks were numbered by the Colorado Mountaineers in an attempt to catalog all thirteeners, even those with no names assigned by U.S. Board on Geographic Names, the official authority for naming geographic places in the United States.

\*\* These peaks have no name or number assigned but appear as peaks with specific elevations on USGS topographic maps.

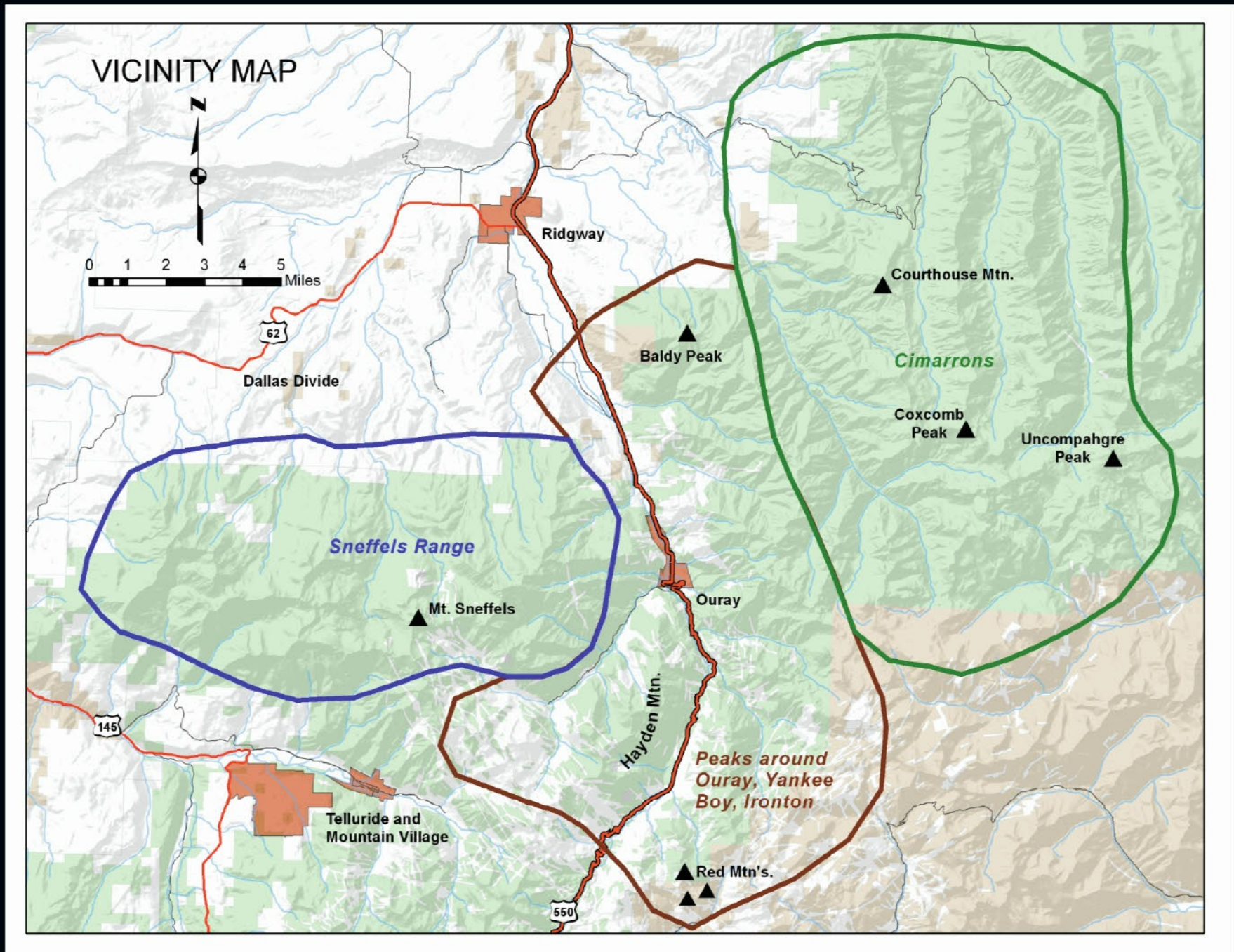
\*\*\* These peaks appear as peaks on USGS topographic maps but have no specific elevations labeled.



- Turret Ridge
- Unnamed (13,195) \*\*
- Unnamed - on ridge between Middle and East forks of Cimarron (13,222) \*\*
- Unnamed - above Porphyry Basin (13,315)
- Uncompahgre Peak (14,309)
- Unnamed - South rim of Porphyry Basin (13,320)\*\*\*
- Dunshane Mountain (12,742)
- Chimney Rock (13,144)
- U 3 - locally known as Fortress or Montrose Peak (13,241)\*
- Courthouse Mountain (12,152)
- Redcliff Peak - also known as Pershing Peak (13,642)
- Chinese Lady (in snow on front face of Coxcomb)
- Coxcomb Peak (13,656)
- Unnamed (12,725)\*\*\*
- U 4 (12,986)\*
- Unnamed - to the south of Henson Creek (13,550) \*\*
- Sleeping Indian
- Blackwall Mountain (13,073)
- Widhorse Peak (13,266)
- Unnamed - locally known as Dexter Peak (12,757)\*\*
- Unnamed (12,714)\*\*
- Unnamed (12,739)\*\*

East Half of Montrose View

# MAP SHOWING THE AREAS COVERED IN THIS BOOK



Geologist Fred Endlich of the Hayden Geological Survey named Mt. Sneffels (14,150') in 1874. There have been a number of other published suggestions for the naming of Mount Sneffels including one involving a miner who had a head cold, a mysterious professor Sneffels and a corruption of the Icelandic word for snowfields. However, in 1890 Endlich published an account of the naming. While crossing Blue Lakes Basin a member of the survey party compared the basin with the great hole in the earth described in Jules Verne's novel *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Endlich agreed and pointed to the highest peak around and said, "There's Snaefell," referring to the Icelandic mountain near the hole. In fact, Verne had already changed the name to "Sneffels" and Verne's version of the name was adopted by the survey.

That same year the Wheeler War Department Survey also named the same mountain Blaine's Peak for James G. Blaine, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. presidential candidate. The Hayden Survey and the Wheeler Survey were both vying for control of the four western surveys. The War Department lost the battle when the four surveys were consolidated under civilian control in 1879, and the name Mount Sneffels was officially adopted by the US Interior Department. However, the name Blaine lives on in the beautiful Blaine Basin on the north slope of Mount Sneffels. Locals also refer to the 12,910-foot promontory on the west side of Blaine Basin as Blaine Peak.

Dallas Peak (13,809') was probably named for George Mifflin Dallas, U.S. Vice-President from 1845-1849. The former town of Dallas, two miles north of Ridgway, Dallas Divide and Dallas Creek

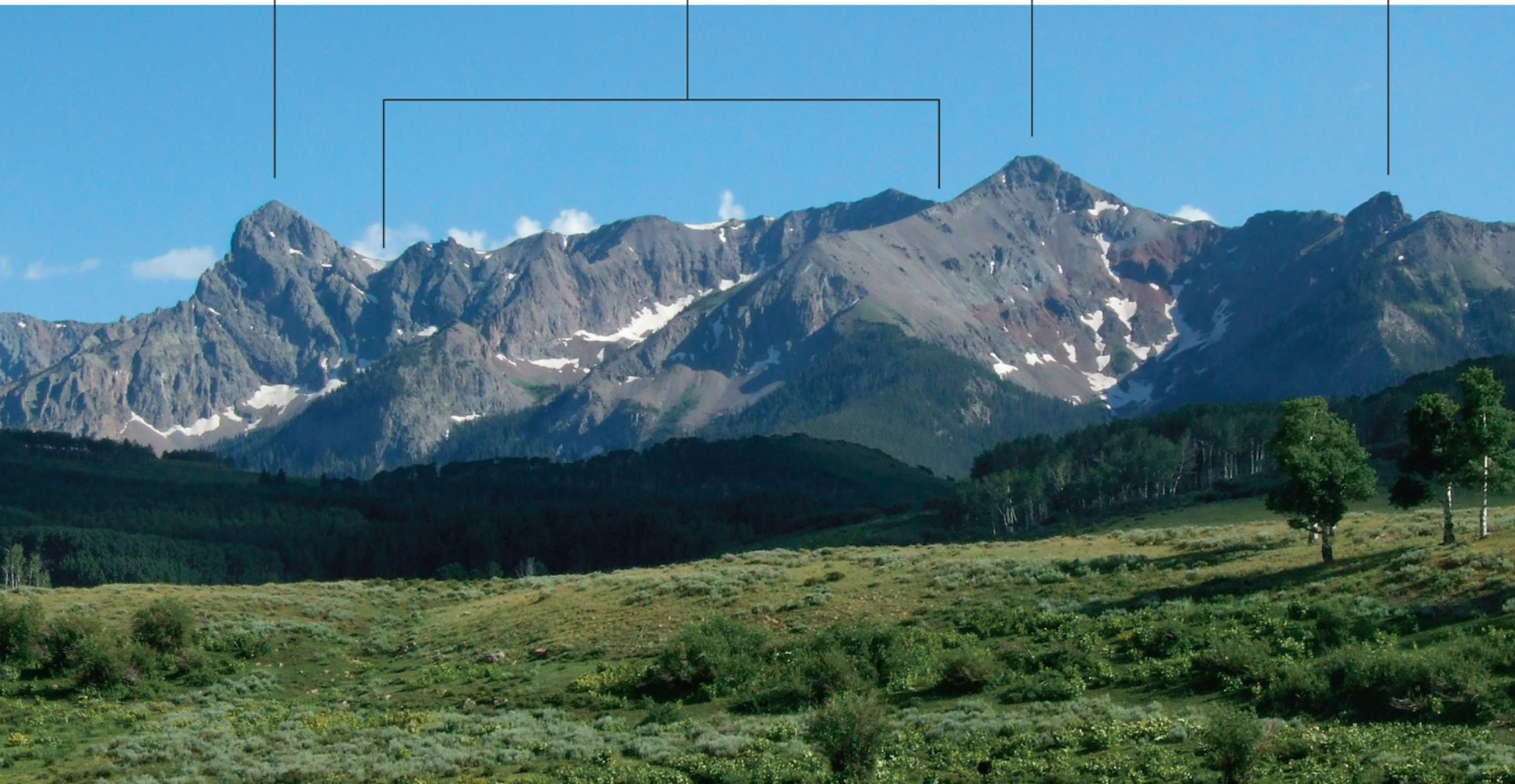
are all named for George Dallas who may also have given his name to the Texas city. Alexander Dallas Bache, physicist and first president of the National Academy of Sciences, was the nephew of Vice President Dallas and also a friend of Hayden's. Perhaps this is how the Hayden Survey introduced the name Dallas. To confuse the issue somewhat, there was a camp man named Dallas in the Hayden Survey party. However, it seems unlikely that Hayden would have named a peak after such a low ranking member of the survey.

Wolcott Mountain (13,041') is named for Edward O. Wolcott, U.S. Senator from Colorado from 1879 to 1883 and long-time corporate lawyer for the D&RG Railroad. He was also one of the investors in David Day's ill-fated attempt to lure the D&RG to terminate their Ouray Branch at Portland five miles north of Ouray.

Mears Peak (13,496') is named for Otto Mears, the Pathfinder of the San Juans, who built numerous toll roads and three railroads in the San Juan Mountains.

Ruffner Mountain (13,003') is named for Lt. E. H. Ruffner who led an 1873 reconnaissance party into the San Juans to determine how many prospectors were violating the treaty of 1863 that gave the entire San Juan Mountain region to the Utes. Ruffner also named San Cristobal Lake south of Lake City after a fictional lake in a Tennyson poem.

Hayden Peak (12,987'), not to be confused with Hayden Mountain southwest of Ouray, was named for Ferdinand V. Hayden who led geological surveys of the Rocky Mountains from



S-9 (13,134)\*

Locally known as "The Corpse"

Hayden Peak (12,987)

North Pole Peak (12,208)

Red Mountains 1, 2 and 3 reflected in  
Crystal Lake at the north end of  
Ironton Park, Hwy 550



United States Mountain as seen  
from Fellin Park in Ouray





Cimarron Ridge

Turret Ridge

Chimney Rock (11,781)

Courthouse Mountain (12,152)

Precipice Peak (13,144)

U 3 - locally known as Fortress or  
Montrose Peak (13,241)\*

Redcliff Peak (in back) - also known  
as Pershing Peak (13,642)

U 4 (12,986)\*

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