



PRESERVATION MATTERS

Park County Department of Heritage, Tourism & Community Development

Behind the Façade: Garo Store and Post Office

Construction of the Denver, South Park & Pacific (DSP&P) railroad in the late 1870s and early 1880s caused a number of new towns to spring up across the ranchlands of South Park. In 1879, the railroad built the Garos depot on the south bank of the Platte River near the Adolph Guiraud ranch (est. 1862). The misspelled name “Garos” was intended to honor Guiraud, one of South Park’s earliest ranchers. The following year a post office and express offices were established at Garos. The station soon became a popular destination for sportsmen looking to take advantage of the fine hunting and fishing in the area and an important connection point for travelers headed west from Colorado Springs and Cañon City.

Garo, a modest town of a dozen homes, a school, store, and saloon, quickly grew up around the railroad station buildings.

In 1885, Robert “Chubb” Newitt loaded his Chubb’s Ranch store onto two flatbed railroad cars and moved the building from the west side of Trout Creek Pass to Garo where he reopened his store. For the next twelve years, Newitt served as Garo’s postmaster and storekeeper.

A tragic accident at the store led to Chubb Newitt’s death in 1891. The Garos station agent dropped by the store to

pass the time with Newitt and the other locals who often gathered at the store. While they chatted, the agent aimlessly picked up one of the rifles Newitt had on sale and accidentally shot the storekeeper, reportedly in the rear. Newitt died weeks later from blood poisoning contracted as a result of his wound. Newitt’s widow Ellen advertised the Garo store for sale in 1897 and the Alfred Smith Turner family took over operations the following year.

Alfred’s father, Hiram, came to the Breckenridge area with the first wave of miners in 1859. Alfred was 12 years old when he moved to Colorado with his stepmother and half-siblings in 1860. According to a biography published in 1899, Alfred worked the mines as a teenager and later made his living as a mason and freighter. In 1882, he moved to a ranch on Tarryall Creek east of Como where he raised cattle for a short time before returning to the mining business.

In 1885, Alfred wed Mary Bunce and the couple moved to a 900-acre ranch outside Garo where they raised cattle and grew hay before acquiring the Newitt’s grocery and mercantile business in 1898. Mary helped manage the store while raising four children to adulthood. The A. S. Turner Grocery &

General Store offered a wide variety of household goods as well as foodstuffs. By 1917, the Turners constructed a small wooden gas station near the store to



**Alfred S. Turner and wife Mary took over
operation of the store in the late 1890s.
(Park County Local History Archives)**

service the growing number of automobiles in the area.

The Turner family continued to own and operate the store and post office after Mary and Alfred's deaths in 1934 and 1939, respectively. Daughters Clara and Anne each served as postmaster for a time.

Garro remained an active town longer than many of the small railroad towns established in Park County during the late 1800s, but after the last of the Park County railroad lines shut down in 1937, the town slowly began to fade. The store remained active throughout the 1940s and 50s, adapting to serve the automobile traffic passing by on Highway 9. But by 1955, the population of Garro

had dwindled and the post office was closed.

In 1957, the development of the South Park City museum began. The Garro school building and a small log cabin from the town were moved to Fairplay, becoming part of the 1800s-era mining town created on the museum grounds.

Today, the 126-year-old Garro Store and Post Office stands alone as one of the few visible reminders of the once lively town of Garro. This meaningful piece of Park County history is just one of the many homes, buildings, structures, and objects eligible for landmark designation as significant reminders of the people, businesses, and towns that shaped the historical and cultural development of Park County.



The Garo Store and Post Office in 1917 (left) and today (right). The familiar landmark retains much of its original material and appearance. After the railroad ceased operations in 1937, the town of Garo slowly faded away. The store is one of the few surviving reminders of the once lively town. (Park County Local History Archives; Park County Office of Historic Preservation)



Interior of the A. S. Turner Grocery & General Store circa 1900. (Park County Local History Archives)