



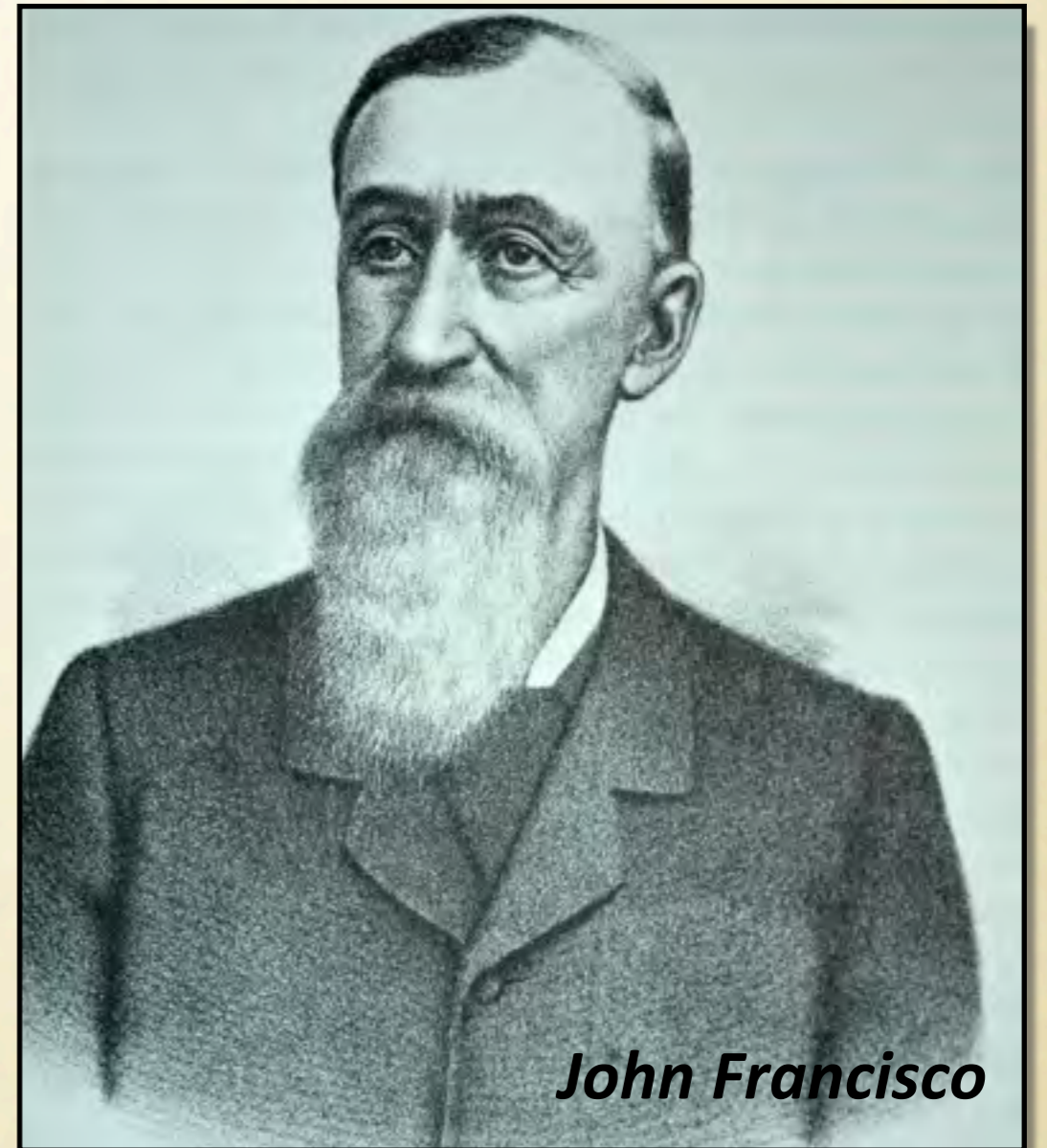
## HISTORY AND GHOSTS OF THE PAST



**The town is at the base of the twin mountains known as the Spanish Peaks. The peaks were originally called the “Wahatoya” (double mountains) by the Comanche. They believed that the mountains were the home of the rain gods. Until the formation of Colorado Territory on Feb 28, 1861 Huerfano County was a part of Mora County, New Mexico Territory.**



**On December 8, 1843 Cornelio Vigil and Ceran St. Vrain petitioned Governor Armijo to develop a 4 million acre area. They were granted the land until the early 1860's when the courts decided that they had not developed the land as required and claimed that the original land agreement had been broken. The original amount of land was taken and they were given 97,000 acres by the US Congress.**



*John Francisco*

**Francisco said**

**"This is paradise enough for me."**

Native Americans were hired by Spanish explorer Juan De La Cruz to mine for gold in the peaks, because he was afraid to due to the “Demons” of the Peaks.

The Native Americans were attacked and killed by “Demons” when they tried to bring the gold from the Peaks.

De La Cruz and his party collected the gold and continued to Mexico. They were attacked by the “Demons” and killed. The gold was returned to the Peaks.

Legend says that only a small part of the gold was ever found.

**Colonel (Honorary title) John Francisco (1820-1902) and Judge Henry Diagre (1832-1902) formed a partnership to purchase the land under the Vigil-St. Vrain Land grant (48,00 acres) in 1860 for \$37,710. They built the Francisco Fort in 1861-1862 to supply mining camps with products for farming and ranching. The design of the building offered protection from Indian attack. There were rumors that the Fort was actually just a Spanish Fort that they had rebuilt.**

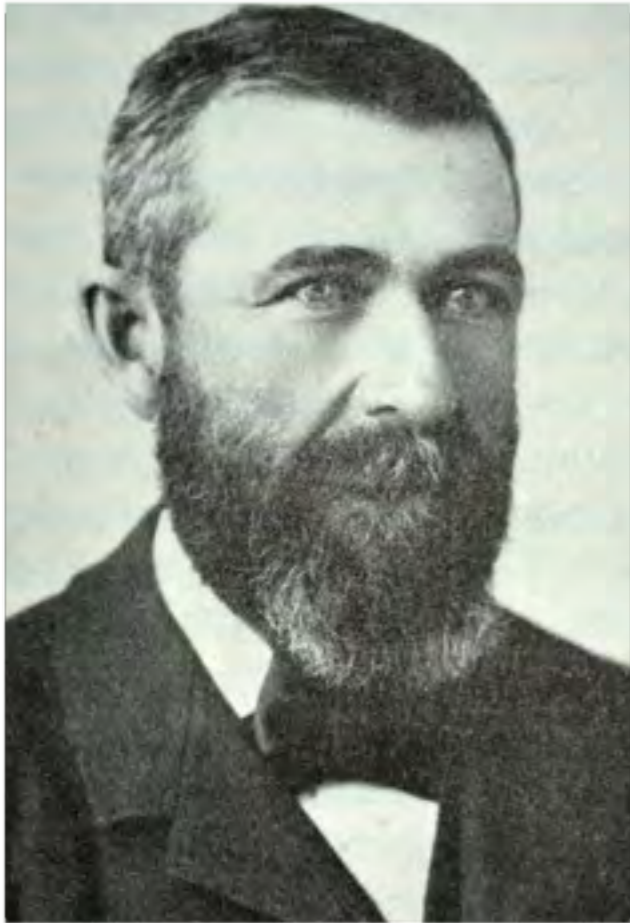
**The first Spanish fort was rumored to have been built by Lt. Pedro Villasur in 1720, but no records because his group was killed (at site?)**



**Lt. Pedro Villasur**

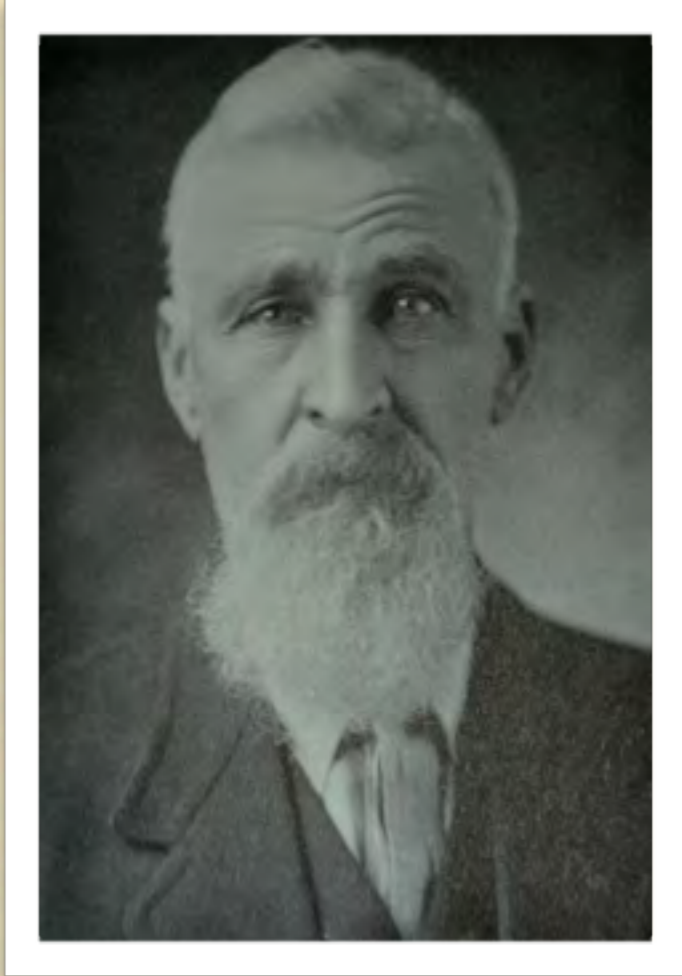


**Henry Diagre served one term as county treasurer in 1873 – 1877 / County Judge and Deputy Sheriff / Deputy assessor -1886 / County Judge for 2 terms – Mayor of La Veta 2 times**



***Col. Henry Diagre***  
***1832 – 3/22/1902***





***Hiram Vasquez***

***9/23/1843 – 6/7/1939***



**In 1870 Henry Diagre hired Hiram Vasquez and his crew to improve the road across Cuchara pass for wagon use. They believe that it was a toll road until it was paid for.**

The first Post Office was opened in 1871 and they named it “Spanish Peaks”, J.J. Hanley was the first Postmaster.





## Attack at the Fort

In 1863 under the employment of Francisco and Daigre Hiram Vasquez rode from Fort Lyon in the Arkansas valley with troop reinforcements to save 18 men under attack at Fort Francisco



**La Veta was laid out in July 1876, when the only building on the town site was the well known Plaza of Colonel J. M. Francisco, who had resided here about eighteen years.**

**The principal business are as follows:**

- 7- General dealers**
- 2- Forwarding and commission**
- 1- Drug stores**
- 2- Groceries, fruits, etc..**
- 2- Stationary, books, etc..**
- 1- Baker**
- 1- Hardware and tin shop**
- 2- Hotels**
- 3- Restaurants**
- 4- Corrals and feed stables**
- 3- Blacksmiths shops and wagon shops**
- 2- Barber shops**
- 10- Saloons and billiard rooms**
- 2- Doctors**
- 2- Lawyers**



**A School house is just completed and the Baptist Society are building a Church.**

***02-04-1877 Denver Daily Tribune***

## **Local Miner Issues**

### **Sixth Man Confesses**

**The coal miners strikers member and officers who were directly implicated have made full confessions of the ambush and killing near that town of three mine guards and automobile driver and the wounding on a non-union miner. ... The six men are being held incognito by the military authorities.**

***11-13-1913 Colorado Transcript***

### **Seven Miners Freed**

**Pueblo, CO – Eighteen minutes from the time the case had been given to the jury in the District Court here acquitted seven La Veta Miners charged with the Murder of Luke Terry, a chauffeur. It is said to be the quickest verdict ever returned in a case of equal importance in Colorado. Four men were slain in the battle that led up to the trial, but the trial was for the death of Terry alone.... The defendants were Marcus Martinolich, Pete Rich, Charles, Ed and Dan Richards, Frank Kroupa and Charley Sheppard.. All live at La Veta. Upon their return to their homes they will be arrested immediately on indictments returned recently by the Huerfano grand jury and charging them with slaying R.G. Adams another member of the automobile party.**

***04-04-1915 Colorado Transcript Golden***

# The Railroad Comes To Town

## Notice to Railroad Contractors

Proposals will be received until Friday, October 27, at noon, at the office of the Secretary and Treasurer of the Union Contract Company, Colorado Springs, for grading the road-bed of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway, from La Veta to the summit of Sangre de Cristo Range, about fifteen (15) miles, thence down the Sangre de Cristo Creek, to the mouth of Wagon Creek, about ten (10) miles, thence to a point near Fort Garland, about ten (10) miles...

R.F. Weitbrec, Secretary and Treasurer, Union Contract Company, Colorado Springs, Colo.

*10-14-1874 Colorado Springs Gazette*

A contract has been concluded between the Denver & Rio Grande Railway Company and the firm of Carlson, Orman & McMurtrie of the grading on the extension of the railway from La Veta to Fort Garland, work will be commenced immediately.

*11/18/1876 Colorado Springs Gazette*

## Notice to Contractors

Wanted

260,000 feet lumber

*12-4-1876 Denver Daily Times*



**In 1877 the Denver and Rio Grande Railway Company completed the narrow gauge railroad through a right-of-way to the plaza for a town site that was donated by Francisco & Diagre.**



**In Mar 1882 it was discovered that the town had not been incorporated properly by Colorado law, they held a special election to fix the problems.**

## A Troubled Past

### “Judge Lynch” Holds Court At La Veta

... (John) Leonard is a coal contractor, dividing his time between La Veta and Denver. It appears that his success of operating coal mines near LaVeta is the cause of his now being close to death as the result of beating and hanging. He worked for the Great Western Coal company and no doubt was modern in thought and deed in developing the great veins of coal that La Veta is noted for. This, reports state, bred jealous among local men and mob law was dealt out in unlimited quantity for Leonard. He was beaten terribly and hung by the neck, but was taken down before dead by a few who possibly remembered that Our Savior was crucified through jealousy. Huerfano county justice will now have an opportunity to redeem itself from any errors of the past.



*12-15-1905 Alamosa Journal*



## The Ritter Schoolhouse

The original site of the 1876 schoolhouse (now located at the museum) was three miles east of La Veta. Hiram Baker, John Denton and neighbors cut logs from the nearby forest and hauled them to the site to build the one-room Ritter Schoolhouse.

In 1897, the schoolhouse was deemed too small-was sold to the landowner, John Ritter, for \$4.25 and a larger school was built. The Ritter Ranch used the schoolhouse for storage and a bunkhouse. It was completely abandoned in 1960 and fell into disrepair before the family donated it to the museum.



Ritter district 16 schoolhouse was built about 1876 and was originally known as Grandview and then changed to Kincaid until 1890 when the property was sold to the Ritters.

# The Saloon



Using artifacts from the 1800's  
The Saloon is a recreation of a classic  
American tradition



LaVela, Colo.

9-14-85



# Mining Museum



The Mining Museum features a collection of Mining and Medical antiques



# Blacksmith Shop



This is a recreation of a late 1800's Blacksmith Shop



## **Suicide at the Saloon**

**La Veta, December 21**

**A man named John Rogers, a Scotchman by birth committed suicide here to-day, by poison, and died at 12:00 pm. ... went to Bowman's Saloon, where he drank considerable, but, appeared to be jovial and pleasant to everybody. At about ten o'clock P.M. he went to Dr. Washington's drug store , and procured a vial of Laudanum, after which he returned to the saloon and sat down, placing his head on a table, and was apparently in a drunken sleep. When time came to close up, his friend and the bar-keeper tried to rouse him from his stupor, but their efforts were ineffectual, and they made him a bed on the floor, where his friend also laid down beside him. Early this morning Night Watchman Disney, going into the saloon, noticed his condition, and not being able to rouse him, proclaimed him dead. Medical aid being called restoratives were applied which revived him, but all efforts to resuscitate him and save his life were in vain. He never regained consciousness and died a stranger in a strange land, shortly after noon. His friend says he attempted to take his life in the same manner last summer at Dodge City. The supposition is that financial embarrassment was the cause of the rash act.**

***12-28-1876 Colorado Chieftan Pueblo***

## Starting A Graveyard

George Huno , a Frenchman ... told he had been engaged to a young lady over in the San Juan country and on the evening before they were to be married his sweetheart went out and stayed all night in another mans cabin. "After that," said he, "of course I didn't like to marry her" ... The proprietor of the hotel retired to his apartments for the night, he call into Huno's room and found him very comfortable... when he was about ready to leave, Juno asked him very abruptly if the citizens had yet started a graveyard in La Veta, and being informed that they had not, Juno told him that he had walked all the way from Silverton to start one for the, and that his would be the first corpse, and that he would be ready before long. At the about five o'clock, he went to Huno's room to see how he was getting along, and found him dead in his bed.



*10-19-1876 Colorado Chieftain*

Francisco Plaza, La Veta, Colo.

## Lynching at La Veta

The jail guard at this place was overpowered last night by a vigilance committee, and Marcus Gonzales, the murderer of the Browns, taken from custody and lynched to a telegraph pole in the public square. The murder, which occurred near this place in November last, was one of the most brutal recorded in the annals of crime, and aged couple being the victim and money the incentive. Gonzales went to the house of the unfortunate family and asked to stay over night, and killed Mr. Brown while he was caring for his horse. Returning to the house the wretch killed Mrs. Brown and left their daughter, Mrs. Rice, for dead, obtaining the paltry sum of four dollars for his butchery. The murderer escaped to New Mexico, but was hunted down by Detectives and brought back here for trial, and upon a preliminary examination was positively identified by Mrs. Rice, who, pointing to Gonzales, said: "you are the man who murdered my father and mother and nearly killed me." He was also suspected of several other murders. The lynching took place at 11 p.m. About seventy-five men participated. They were quiet and orderly but determined.



*7-28-1877 Colorado Springs Gazette*

**Jailed on Charge of Baby's Murder.**

**La Veta – Robert Baldwin, who was recently released from the Colorado State penitentiary on a pardon a year ago, was arrested charged with choking his baby daughter to death with a handkerchief. He was taken to Walsenburg and placed in the county Jail.**

***5-13-1915 Howell Herald***



La Veta, Colo.  
9-14-95

OT Day's Photo. 189

Over the years the Fort has had many different faces, It has been: The Plaza Hotel of Andrew Francisco, General Store, Telegraph Office, The headquarters of Field & Hill Outfitters, A Grainery, Town Hall, Private Residence, Museum, Practice room for the La Veta Brass Band, A Bakery, A Dr.'s Office and even apartments in the 1940's

FORWARDING AND COMMISSION

THOM M. FIELD ISAAC W. HILL

**FIELD & HILL**  
*Forwarding and Commission*

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL

**General Merchandise**

DEALERS IN

<i>La Veta,</i>	HEADQUARTERS :	<i>Colorado</i>
<i>South Pueblo,</i>	BRANCH HOUSE: :	<i>Colorado</i>

Would respectfully inform their patrons of the removal of their branch outfitting and forwarding house from Churcharas, Colorado, to La Veta, Colorado, the present terminals of the Denver and Rio Grande railway.

La Veta, being the most accessible point to all parts of Southern Colorado, especially the San Juan mining districts, would advise goods marked: "Care of F. & H. , La Veta, Colorado, via D.& R. G. R'y."

Sept 1 1876

Because of the many uses that the building has gone through the original walls and doors have been changed.

**"Seven families and several bachelors are living in the plaza"**  
**- Huerfano herald Nov, 25 1880**

**The Museum opened in 1957 when two rooms in the east wing were opened to the public, followed by two more later that year. The Museum was officially dedicated in 1958 with seven open rooms.**

**In the 1980's the mining museum opened.**





**In 2000-2001 the Colorado Historical Society provided a grant of \$160,000 that was used to renovate the museum. The project included stripping the tin roof of the adobe building. The west wing had its wiring updated. Other funding came from the local Rotary club.**



## **Fun Facts:**

**The fort is the only complete adobe fort left in the state of Colorado**

**La Veta means “The vein” in Spanish.**

**In 1919 there were sulphur springs owned by a Dr. Acker.**

**The USGS states that there is a 20.452% chance of a major earthquake within 50 miles of La Veta in the next 50 years.**

**The largest on record was a magnitude 5.3 in 2011.**

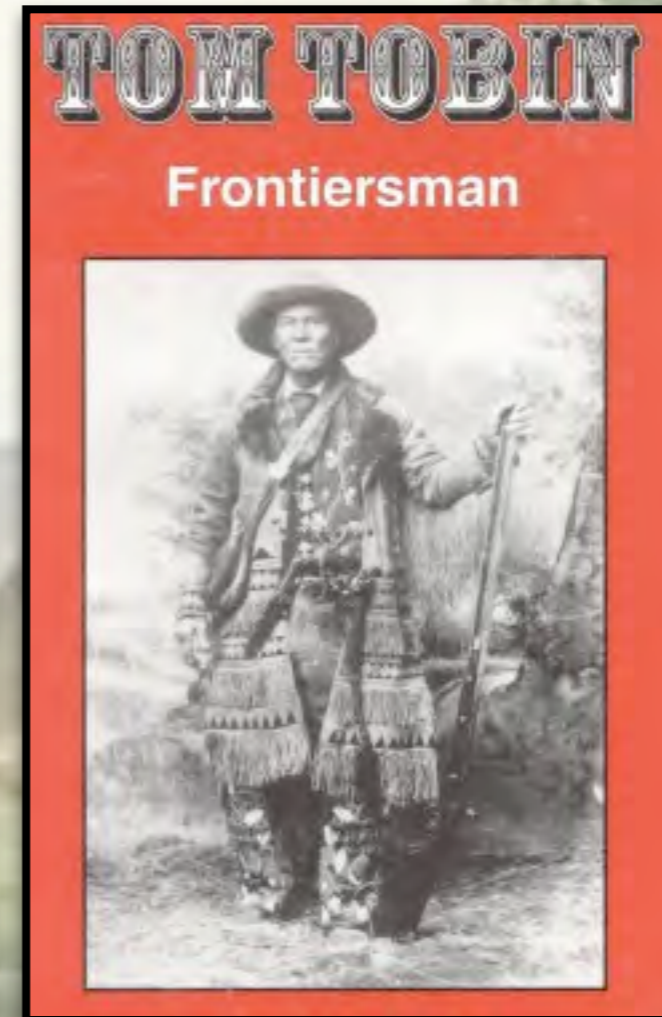
**During renovation in 2001 when new adobe bricks were being dried overnight a bear walked over the bricks leaving its footprints on the bricks. They are now displayed outside the fort.**

**In 1986 the Plaza was listed with the National Register of Historic Places**



## Fun Facts:

In 1864 Col. Francisco wrote about Tom Tobin who had just helped kill two men who were considered to be the first American serial killers.



He wrote: “ His only fault was his recklessness in an Indian fight. While the enemy was in view he seemed to regard the battle as individually his own.”

# Reports of Ghosts

People have reported seeing a “floating lady” in the west wing of the building.

This has become a very popular story being told by Ghost Hunters and on-line.



# Reports of Ghosts

A piano in the west wing of the Fort has been reported to play when people are walking by it.



# Reports of Ghosts

**A ghost carrying candles has been reported by staff members and guests.**



# Reports of Ghosts

An antique rocking chair  
has been seen rocking  
without anyone in it



# Reports of Ghosts

Unusual EMF readings in  
West wing where the  
Phantom woman has  
been seen





# Reports of Ghosts



**Reports of flickering lights have been reported throughout the building.**

# Ghost Hunters Visit The Museum

**In this video, the team is in the saloon. Jessie has the camera and is heading back into the main room of the saloon. Above Brandon's right shoulder, you can see a light randomly flickering then disappearing. As Jessie gets farther into the room, you can see that where the light was appearing is a wall with nothing of a reflective nature on it.**



## Lets Take A Closer Look

**As the camera person passes the person they turn to the left and aim at a different wall. Not the one that the reflection was coming from.**



## What other evidence did they get?



### **P-SB7 PSB7 Paranormal Spirit Ghost Hunting EVP Box**

1- This unexplained voice was captured in the saloon. There was no one in the saloon at the time and you can hear something banging around. Then you can hear a male voice say what sounds like...

**"get the horses"**

2- This e.v.p. was captured in the mining room. Joe had just walked in and you can hear him close the door. During which, it sounds like a little girl saying...

**"daddy said no"**

3- This interaction was also captured in the saloon. XXXXX had asked if whatever was there could say his name. The group heard something but not discernible. So, Joe asks again if it knew XXXXXs' name and two different voices respond with one saying XXXXX and the other saying XXX.

**Tom and then Thomas.**

# One More Time...

**In this video Joe and Thomas are in the mining room. This is near the end of the investigation and Joe and Thomas had the lights on gathering up all the equipment that was left in that building. Joe has the camera and as he leaves the medical room and enters the mining room, an anomaly shoots across the screen from left to right.**



**No... We didn't see anything either**

# Our Investigation

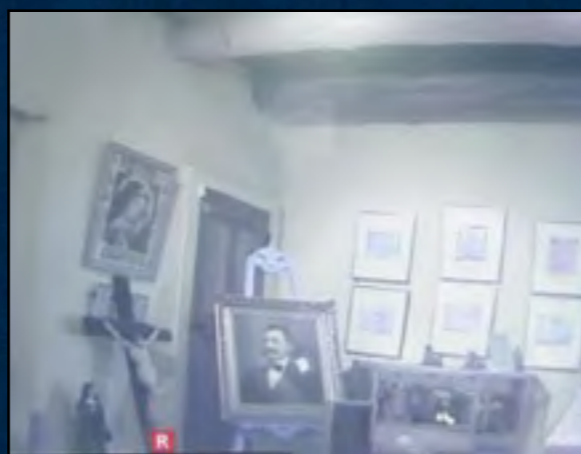
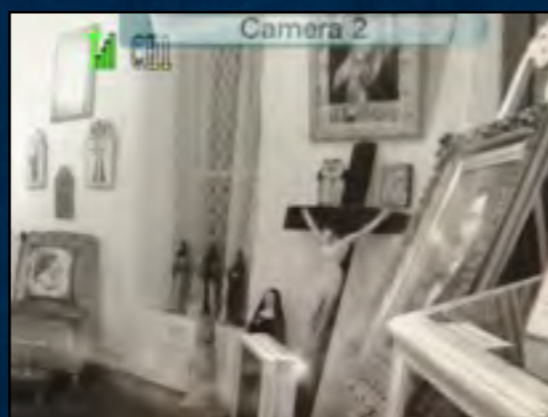
Conducted July 6, 2013

4:30 pm - 9:00 am

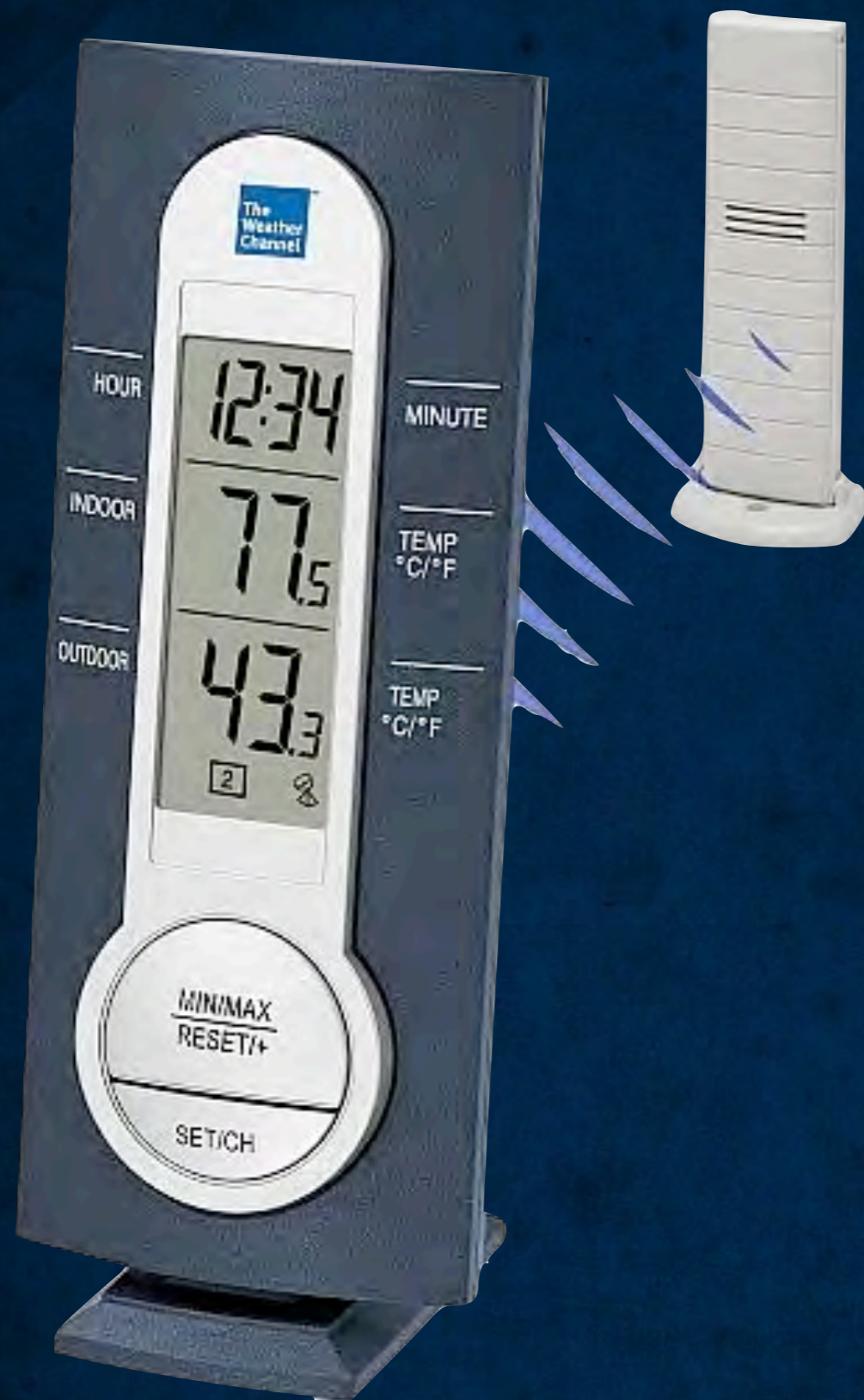


# Using 8 Video Cameras we monitored the entire West wing

There was nothing unusual for  
the 16.5 hours recorded



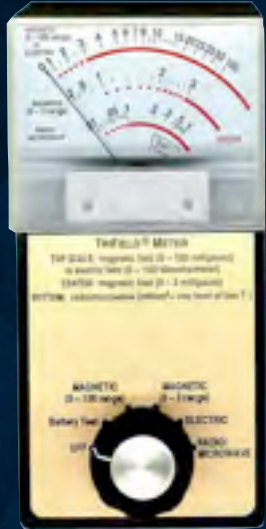
# Temperature Readings



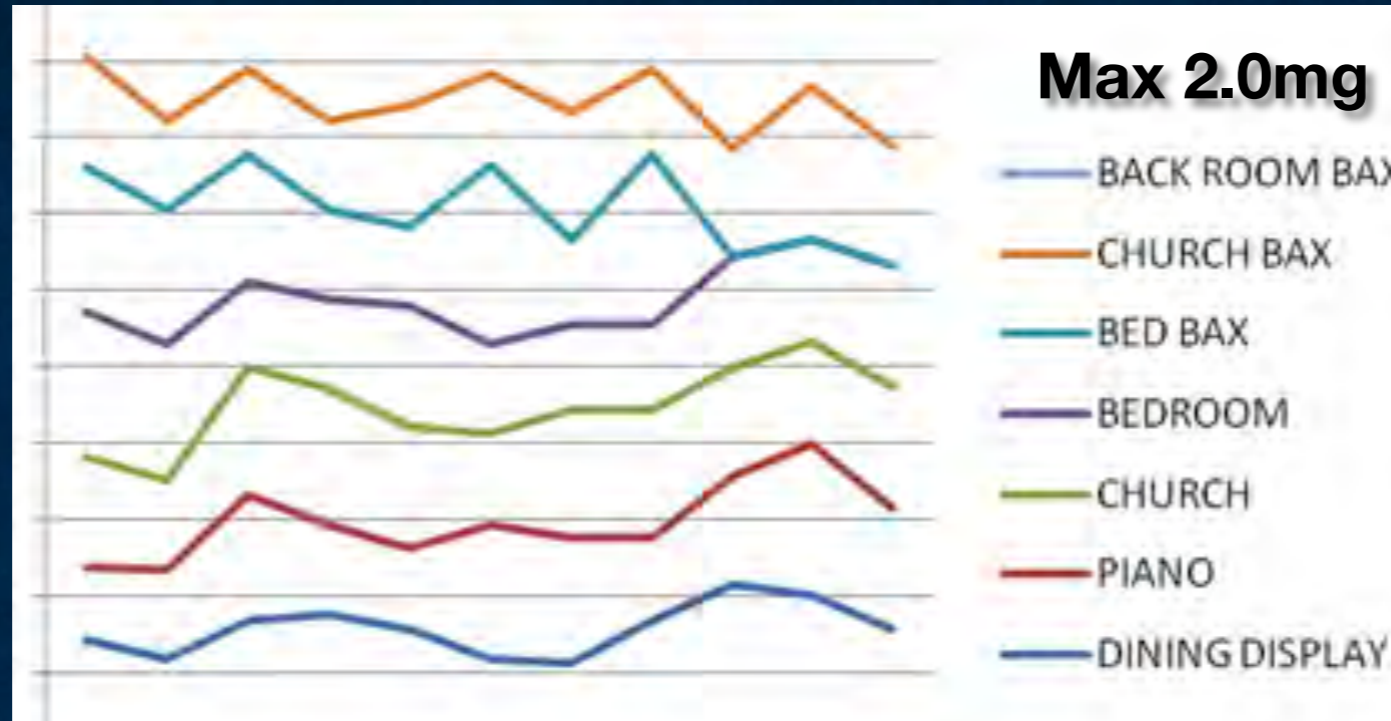
Over the entire monitoring period the temperature changed from 79 degrees at the start to 76 degrees at the end, with no unusual changes



# EMF Readings



D/C



In an area near the religious display there was an area that readings would fluctuate from 1-4 mg. This was caused by the Libraries wifi signal



Natural



This signal accounts for the "unusual" readings found by past Ghost hunters

# The Haunted Piano



**Footsteps cause the floor to vibrate and shake the piano**

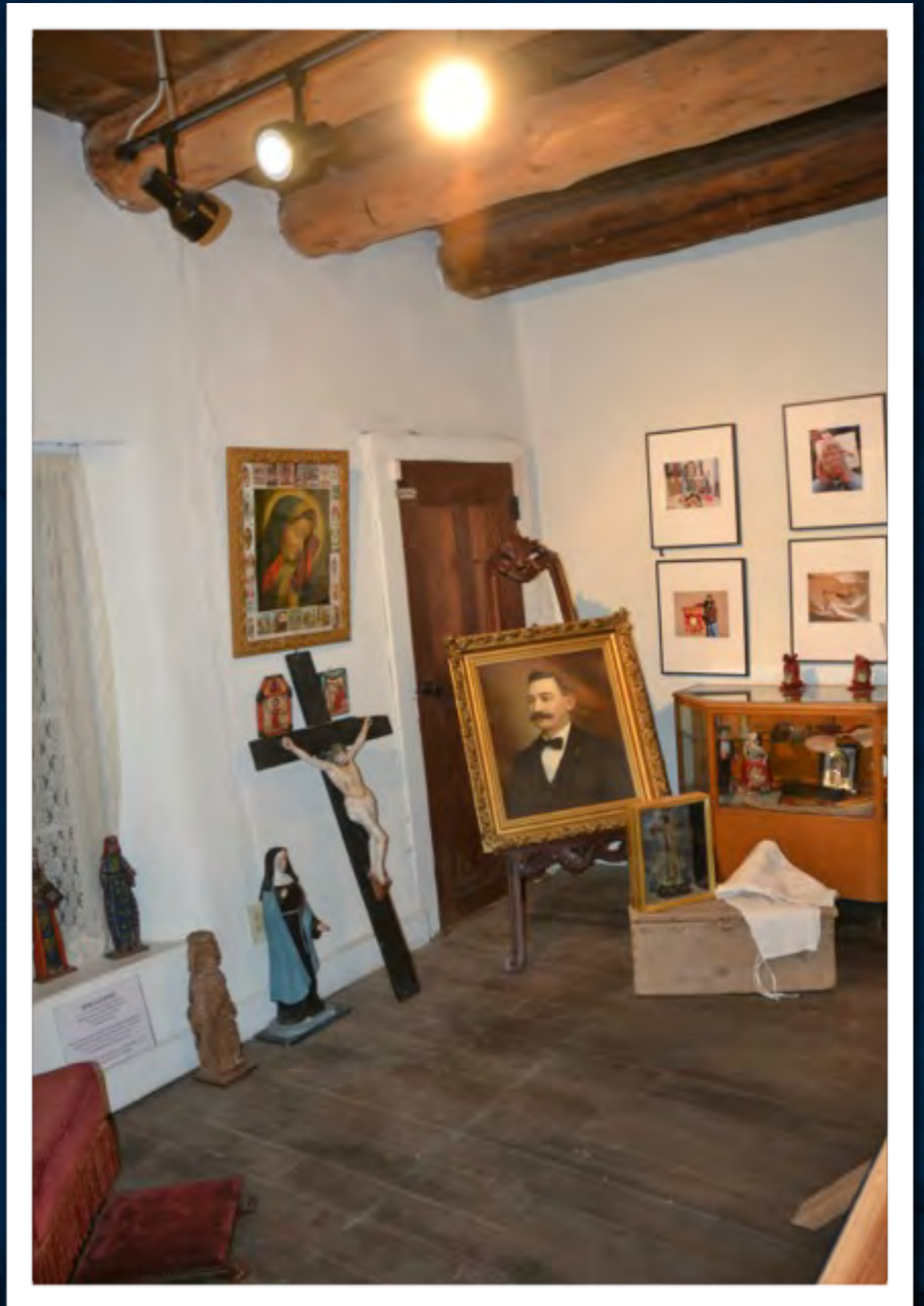
# Phantom Rocking Chair



Vibration from a person walking through cause the floorboards to rock the chair

# Flickering Lights?

100 year old wiring



# Audio

Other than normal city noise and the fact that there are people living in the end of the West wing of the Fort there were no unusual sounds.

The alarm system does make an occasional beep which could be misinterpreted as something else.

