

GRAND JUNCTION GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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JANUARY MEETING

Joint meeting with the Colorado Mesa U Geology Club

Wednesday January 16, 2013

7:30 P.M.—Saccomanno Lecture Hall

Bill Chenoweth

Will Speak on

**“Grand Junction and the Manhattan Project,
Secret Uranium Procurement During World War II”**

The carnotite deposits in the Salt Wash Member of the Morrison Formation in southwestern Colorado and in southeastern Utah had been mined for radium, vanadium and minor uranium since the 1910's. During vanadium mining, the uranium in the ores was discarded in the mill tailings. The Manhattan Project was the code name of a project to develop an atomic bomb during World War II. It was under the direction of the Army's Manhattan Engineer District (MED). After making a survey of nine vanadium mills in December 1942, the MED concluded that the tailings were the best source of domestic uranium. Grand Junction became the center of this secret operation. By 1946, 2,698,000 pounds of uranium oxide had been produced from Colorado Plateau material. This represented 14 percent of the total uranium acquired by the entire project. A civilian geological contractor, based in Grand Junction, evaluated the uranium resources of the Salt Wash Member of the Morrison Formation for the MED. On January 1, 1947, all functions and facilities of the MED became the new U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, with domestic uranium procurement headquarters in Grand Junction.

Guests Are Always Welcome

CMU Students: The GJGS Council has decided that there will be no dues for 2013 and in the future. Just send your e-mail address to Bill Chenoweth at cheno@bresnan.net to receive the newsletter.