

The "Shady" Side of Southwest Colorado

Total Number of Days/Nights: 5

Southwest Colorado has a "shady" side and the shade doesn't come from its spectacular aspen trees. Stories of the Old West abound with adventure, intrigue, cowboys, outlaws, miners, and ladies of the evening. The miners on their days off needed the "entertainment" provided by the saloons and brothels, and the richness of the region was an invitation to the unscrupulous few who found ways to take their money rather than work for it.

Destinations include:

Farmer's Bank Building, Delta
Historic Blair Street
San Juan County Museum
Silverton

Saloons and Bordellos
Butch Cassidy Bank Robbery
Ouray
Telluride

Day One: Delta. From 1892-1893, the McCarty Gang called Delta home. The gang was run by Tom McCarty, who would introduce Butch Cassidy to a life of robbing banks. The McCarty brothers, along with their nephew, Fred McCarty, robbed the Farmer's Bank in Delta. In 1906, the bank building was moved to Howard Street, where it remains in use today as a private residence.



Day Two: Telluride. Telluride's "shady" side includes the rough western culture of brothels and bordellos, and the notorious location of Butch Cassidy's first bank robbery. The San Miguel Valley Bank was robbed at gunpoint on June 24, 1889 by a gang that included Robert Leroy Parker, alias Butch Cassidy. A plaque marks the bank's original location.

The bank vault still exists in another building located on Colorado Avenue.

Telluride also had a substantial "sporting" district. Many of the historic buildings along East Pacific and South Spruce Streets have been restored. On Pacific Street is a row of small dwellings known as the "Cribs," where the ladies of the evening entertained. This district was known as Popcorn Alley due to the popping sound of doors opening and slamming throughout the night as miners



Day Three: Ouray. Ouray had two red light districts that flourished in the 1880s and 1890s and into the early decades of the 20th century. The earliest district was located along Main Street north of 8th Street where the Gold Belt Theater and several other "female boarding houses" provided first class entertainment in addition to the second floor cribs. The second red light district in Ouray stretched along Second Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. By 1908 there were 16 houses of ill repute where liquor, gambling, prostitution and loud music continued far into the night.



Day Four: Silverton. Explore Silverton's National Historic Landmark District, including a stop at the San Juan County Historical Society Museum, formerly the San Juan County Jail, complete with the original cell block and ball and chain. Inside the museum, be sure to visit the "women's cell," where many a madam spent the night and paid a fine to enrich the city's coffers. Walk along notorious Blair Street, where during mining days, the "ladies of the evening" entertained the miners. The street was named for Thomas Blair, a saloon owner. His Assembly Rooms saw men like Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp playing faro within its confines.

Day Five: Durango. The mining history of Durango had its shady side too. Liquor, gambling, prostitution and boxing matches provided miners with first class entertainment. Explore Durango's shady side of town just west of the historic Railroad Depot, where the area was lined with houses of ill repute and saloons on every corner. Many of the buildings with a shady past are still standing today but the area has now been converted into a lively tourist shopping district with a colorful past around every corner."

