

Building the Future

“I think of the now prosperous towns, of the many happy homes, the beautiful orchards, the schools filled with bright children, and I am content, knowing that out of trial good cometh.”

Abraham Lincoln Fellows

Free land from the government, under the 1862 Homestead Act, combined with water from the Gunnison Tunnel gave farmers a chance to earn a living. Opportunities like these added people to the growing middle class. Lessons learned from this project were applied elsewhere in the west to bring mountain water to growing towns.



Led by the Ashenfelter Orchard, apples dominated local fruit growing. Grapes, beets, wheat, cabbage and oats were among other crops harvested from the land.

Photographs courtesy of the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association.