

Perry Malaby, safekeeper in many ways

Perry Malaby was responsible for getting things rolling in early Glenwood Springs.

One of the area's first permanent white settlers, Malaby and his friend, John Manning, came to Glenwood Springs in 1885, when it was a town called Defiance.

They brought with them the first wagon to reach the small town, and began one of the first cattle ranches in the area. They owned a small parcel of land where 84 Lumber now stands south of the Colorado River across from West Glenwood.

Malaby was concerned with more than just ranching, though. He also was worried about the future of county government.

At the time — around 1883 — the county seat was located in Carbonate, about 15 miles northeast of Defiance. Malaby and a man named Charles Brown believed the seat should be located in the largest town, which was Defiance. So they rode up to Carbonate and, when no one else was present, loaded the county papers on a horse and brought them to Judge Nims Ferguson's log cabin in town.

"There just wasn't anything legal about any of this," says Ora Sloss, laughing. Sloss, a Glenwood Springs native, is Perry Malaby's granddaughter.

Later, in the early 1900s, Malaby sold the ranch and moved to town when he was named town

marshal.

In fact, Glenwood Springs' first attempted bank robbery took place while Malaby was wearing his star.

Sloss said two bandits, their faces covered by handkerchiefs, were just about to climb in a back window of the First National Bank at Eighth and Grand when Malaby happened to walk through the alley on his evening rounds.

Startled by the marshal, one of the would-be-bandits took a shot at the lawman. But his aim was errant — the bullet only hit Malaby's gun, which he carried in a shoulder holster.

Uninjured, the pioneer marshal promptly drew his weapon and arrested the desperados.