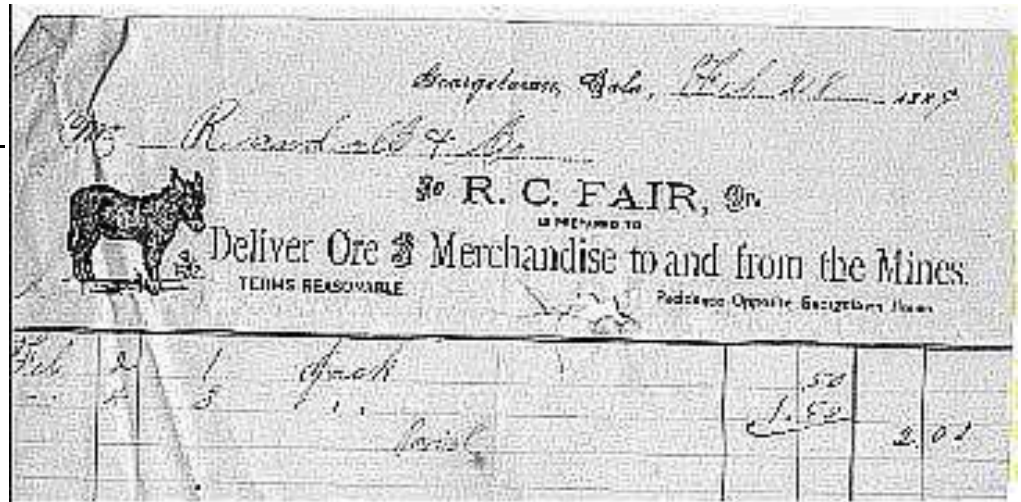


Animal Assistants in Mining

by Ted Bobrink and Leo Stambaugh

This invoice above, from 1889 shows how most of the early mines were supplied here in the CO mountains. you could rent a small burro called a Jack and load it with a pack-saddle. It climbed the narrow trails to the upper silver mines which were mainly above 9000 ft up to 12000 ft. elevation. The mines were small operations while exploration was taking place and even the larger mines didn't build wagon roads until there were quite a few of them in the area to share the high cost of road building. I have seen a lot of receipts but most just mention freight hauling, this one is unusual in that it was strictly for the mining trade and shows the Jack. The price was 50 cents per day



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Shown left, is an original 1883 cabinet card photo of a very famous dog named "Dorsey" You see Dorsey lived in the famous silver mining town of Calico, and he was the only dog ever to be an official mail carrier. He carried the rural mail on foot (paws) over a long rough trail from Calico to Bismark, a distance of seven miles. He wore a pair of specially made saddle bags and also wore special made booties to protect his paws from the sharp rocks. Dorsey became so far as ever heard the one and only mail carrying dog in the whole world. It attracted such widespread attention that he was photographed with his load of mail, and hundreds of people bought his picture. (Ted Bobrink)