The Ute Indians hunted and camped along the banks of the Colorado (Grand) River and were possibly the first seasonal inhabitants of what would become New Castle. In 1775 the Escalante and Dominguez expedition also passed through this beautiful country. But not until Jasper Ward did a permanent community begin. Jasper, his wife Annie, and daughter Nettie, homesteaded 160 acres to the west of Elk Creek, and from then on, little by little our community took hold.

Jasper the farmer became Jasper the storekeeper, postmaster, and founder of present day New Castle. Unfortunately Jasper died just a few years later on August 25, 1887, attempting to be peacemaker in a dispute between the Ute Indian Chief "Colorow" and Jim Kendall, Garfield County Sheriff. At the time of Jasper Ward’s death, New Castle did not have a dedicated cemetery, so Jasper was the first person buried in the Linwood Cemetery in Glenwood Springs.

Highland Cemetery was dedicated in 1888, the same year New Castle incorporated. Highland Cemetery has a very impressive “Old Soldiers Circle” where memorial programs are presented. Every Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Easter early morning services are presented in this stunning high country park.

Among those residing in our Highland Cemetery are Marshall Rennix who was killed in a shoot out on Main Street in 1910 by Billy Griffith. Ironically, they are buried only 75 feet apart. We have numerous Civil War Veterans, Pioneers, and approximately 177 victims of the three early mine explosions and the people who stayed here in spite of the hardships. The people who stayed built banks, stores, lumber yards, brick yards, hotels, and newspapers. More importantly they put down roots and raised their families, many of whom are still here in New Castle.