Coal Camps of Fremont County Colorado

FREMONT COUNTY HERITAGE GUIDE

Coal Camps of Fremont County, Colorado
Fremont County Heritage Guide

Coal from outcrops on or near agricultural fields in the Florence area was used by early Fremont County settlers. The occurrence of coal in the area was first noted by Major Stephen H. Long's 1820 expedition and wagon loads sold in Denver established its high quality. The post-Civil War economic growth and industrialization of Colorado and Fremont County, driven by the advance of railroads, led to the rapid development of the Cañon City Coal Field. The Coal Camps where miners lived that were owned and operated by the coal mining companies, such as Chandler and Radiant, no longer exist; but the towns of Coal Creek, Rockvale, Williamsburg and Brookside remain active today. While the coal mines are now closed, this Fremont County Heritage Guide is intended to preserve the memory of this important economic era. It is dedicated to the miners and their families, many who immigrated to the United States, and established deep roots and a lasting legacy in Fremont County.

This Heritage Guide was researched and prepared by the members of the Fremont County Historical Society and the County's Heritage Commission. Contributors are all volunteers and deep appreciation is due them for the effort involved in preparing and reviewing this Guide, which was published with the assistance of a grant from the Colorado Tourism office in cooperation with the Fremont County Tourism Council. This all volunteer project was based on the research of Beverly Kissell Harris and Margaret Stiles Storm with major assistance from Carol McNew, of the Historical Society. The Florence Historical Archive and the Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center provided photographs and research assistance and are sources of further information. Millie Wintz provided the graphics and Jim Nelson coordinated production for the Heritage Commission. Larry Hill of the Tourism Council did the layout.
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Fremont County Heritage Commission

COLORADO COME TO LIFE

ROYAL GORGE REGION

FREMONT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Overview

The earliest known commercial use of Fremont County coal was by George Lewis, a former fur trapper who was a trader from the Hardscrabble area south of Florence. He removed small amounts from a coal outcropping in 1847 and is credited with operating the first coal-pit in Fremont County during that fall and winter. Those at Hardscrabble would have seen coal used at Bent's Old Fort as early as the 1830s, and knew coal's desirability for blacksmiths and for heating. Lewis was likely working what railroad and real estate promoter General William Jackson Palmer would later name the ***Musser Coal Banks***, just north of what was soon to be the *Town of Coal Creek.*

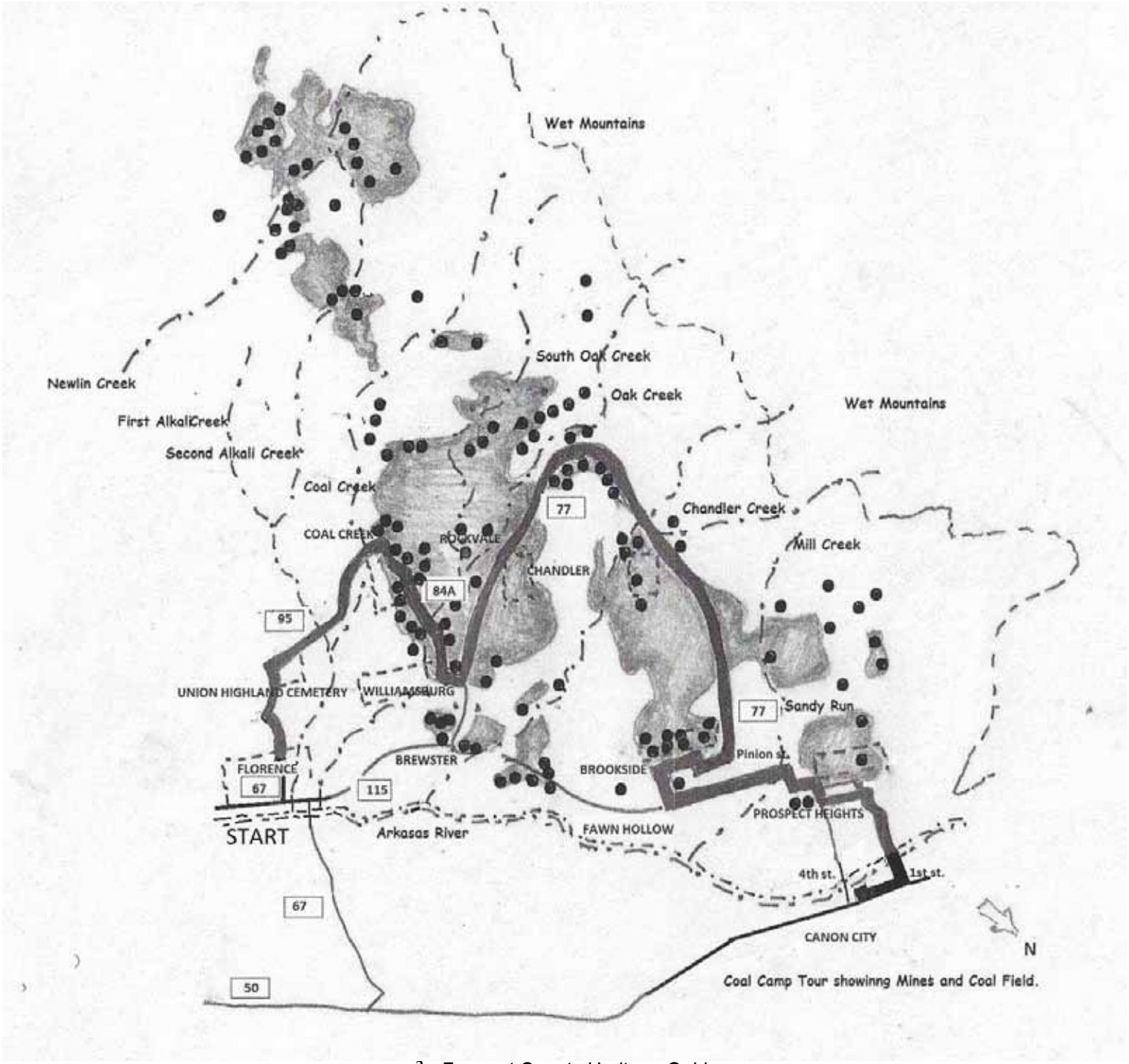
This coal outcropping was first claimed by Jesse Frazer, Hosea Hoopingarner, Clark Harrington and John W. Leland in April 1860. "Uncle Jesse," as he was known, mined the outcroppings and sold the coal to Anson Rudd and Briner & Larley, Cañon City blacksmiths. By 1867 Frazer was busy tending his large orchard and sold the claim to Joseph T. Musser, a disenchanted gold seeker, who expanded the mine. He hauled wagon-loads of the coal to Pueblo and Denver where he sold it for twice as much as competing coal, about $40 a ton at the time. Musser also entered his coal in Colorado Territorial Fairs and won several silver medals, helping build the reputation of Cañon City coal. With the end of the Civil War (1861-1865) Cañon City and Fremont County, which had seen most residents drawn away for the war, were revived with the arrival of the *Resurrectionists* and economic activity increased significantly.

Musser's coal claim was purchased in 1871 on behalf of the new Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) for a reported $4,500 and work began on the Coal Creek mine, setting the stage for development of the Cañon City Coal Field. Growth of coal-hungry railroads after 1870, coupled with transformation of the U. S. economy during the post-Civil War *Gilded Age*, added to the general increase in area economic activity and became a major factor in the rapid growth of the Cañon City Coal Field.

General William Jackson Palmer, who founded Colorado Springs as a tourism destination in conjunction with building the D&RG Railroad, was the initial developer of the Steelworks in Pueblo. He needed good quality coal for his steam locomotives, steel furnaces and freight customers. The Coal Creek mine gave Palmer an early advantage in his battle with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railroad, which was also bringing railroad service to the area. While other tycoons of the era, including John C. Osgood, Jay Gould and John D. Rockefeller, would follow Palmer, it was his vision that established the initial momentum and direction for the Cañon City Coal Field.

This *Fremont County Heritage Guide* attempts to recount the development of the coal mines and mining camps over an approximately 50-square-mile area, the height of which occurred over roughly 50-years. The story includes immigration of European miners, settlement of Civil War veterans, evolving labor-management relations, changing safety and regulatory policies as well as the economic growth of the region. It serves as an example of the industrialization of the West and of the economic trends of the times.

The Guide presents the Coal Mining Camps and Towns sequentially, with an overview illustration and detailed maps of individual areas intended to orient the reader and allow the adventurous to follow a driving tour of the area. If taking the driving tour, allow about two hours to complete the 25-mile route. Parts of the route follow well maintained gravel roads, but paved alternatives are available. There are public restrooms and parks available along the route, but few gas stations and restaurants; so start with plenty of gasoline and bring water and snacks. Most of the land along the route is private. Please respect private property. All the mine and mill sites are now closed and many have been reclaimed – do not attempt to enter these


Wet Mountains
Newlin Creek
First AlkaliCreek
Second Alkali Creek
Coal Creek
South Oak Creek
Oak Creek
Wet Mountains
Chandler Creek
Mill Creek
COAL CREEK
ROCKVALE
CHANDLER
77
84A
95
UNION HIGHLAND CEMETERY
WILLIAMSBURG
Sandy Run
77
Pinion st.
BREWSTER
BROOKSIDE
FLORENCE
67
115
START
Arkasas River
FAWN HOLLOW
PROSPECT HEIGHTS
4th st.
1st st.
67
CANON CITY
N
50
Coal Camp Tour showinng Mines and Coal Field.

areas, they are unsafe and may contain hazardous materials (not to mention bats, snakes and other critters).

The description and tour route begins at the Railroad Depot and the Museum in Florence and ends at the Railroad Depot and the Museum in Cañon City. This seems fitting, given how closely railroads are linked to the area's coal mining history and the development of the Coal Camps. The description and tour meanders through Florence's Union Highland Cemetery, past a scenic overlook and on to Coal Creek, Williamsburg and Rockvale; mining towns that remain active today. The route then goes along Oak Creek for a short distance, crosses Chandler Creek and passes by the Mining Camp of Chandler, where only foundations remain as reminders of this once vibrant community, and continues to Brookside with its nice park on a reclaimed mine site. After turning left on Highway 115, the tour goes on to pass by several houses moved from former mining camps, through Prospect Heights with its historic jail and concludes at the Cañon City railroad station and the museum. See the ***Overview Map*** and ***Mining Camp (MC) Index*** on the following pages**.**

COAL CAMPS OF FREMONT COUNTY -- INDEX

R-14 Hose Cart House
R-15 A.T. & S.F. Railroad Yard
R-16 Mesa Town Park
R-17 Stone Reservoir Walls
R-18 Town Commons

MC-Overlook #2. Oak Creek and the South Field

MC-Ch (Chandler)
Ch-01 Chandler Creek cuts through exposed layer
Ch-02 County Road 80 uses same cut through ridge
CH-03 Mine Powder House
Ch-04 Mine Water Tower Supports
Ch-05 School Steps Ruins
Ch-06 Building Foundations

MC-Br (Brookside)
Br-01 Stone House Ruin
Br-02 Spring Creek Park
Br-03 Mine Trails
Br-04 St. Anthony's Church

MC-Overlook #3. Arkansas Valley, Castle Rock, Prisons, Embayment
Br-05 Brookside Town Hall
Br-06 Hell's Half Acre
Br-07 Fawn Hollow

MC-P (Prospect Heights)
P-01 Mine tunnel collapse
P-02 Mine tunnel repurposing
P-03 House moved from Chandler
P-04 Mercantile Building
P-05 Prospect Heights Building
P-06 Prospect Heights Jail
P-07 AT&SF Tracks
P-08 South Cañon Ditch
P-09 Robison Mansion
P-10 Demolished Power Plant

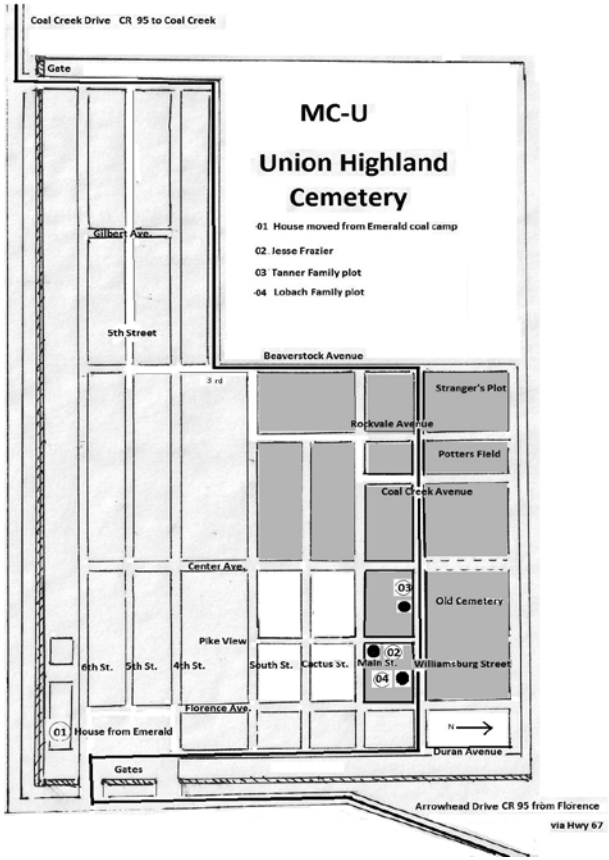
MC-Cc (Cañon City)
Cc-01 City Hall Mill Site
Cc-02 Veterans Park
Cc-03 Railroad Station
Cc-04 Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center

MC-F: Florence was the hub of much coal mining activity. Indeed, it's booming 1920's economy included 25 oil companies, seven gold ore processing mills, three railroads and support for nearby cement production operations. Extensive farming and ranching activity also contributed.

MC-F-01: **Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Station**. (*From the stoplight at Pikes Peak Avenue {CO-67} and Main Street {CO-115} go South two blocks to 100 Railroad Avenue, Florence, CO 81226*). Palmer's narrow-gauge D&RG (also known as the *Little Road* or *Baby Road*) was first to serve the coal field in 1872 followed by a subsidiary of the AT&SF in 1880. The coal fields not only met the railroads' urgent need for locomotive fuel, coal also was an important commodity that railroads delivered to eastern markets and source of freight revenue. While tracks for the AT&SF no longer run through Florence, the D&RG depot in Florence, built in 1918, serves as a reminder of this era. The three-mile spur leaving the mainline behind this station served the mine at Coal Creek and was the railroad's southern tip until it became a branch line in 1874 when the mainline was extended to serve Cañon City. While most of the rails were removed in 1924, portions of the railroad bed can still be seen today.

MC-F-02: **Florence Pioneer Museum and Research Center**. (*100 Pikes Peak Avenue in Florence, CO 81226*). The Florence Museum, just up the street from the Railroad Depot, has information and displays on area coal mining and other interesting history on the area. Check https://www.florencepioneermuseum.org/ for hours.

MC-U: Union Highland Cemetery. (*541 Arrowhead Drive; Return to Main Street {CO-115} and turn right, following it to the stoplight at Robinson Ave {CO-67}. Turn right and follow Highway-67 about one-mile to Arrowhead Drive and turn right. The cemetery will be about 3/4 mile on the right)*. Mining is incredibly hard, inherently dangerous work and mine accidents frequently resulted in death. Coal Creek was the first Coal Camp in Fremont County and attracted miners from other countries including Wales and Scotland. Its *Thistle Lodge*, a Scottish fraternal society, acquired and expanded a nearby family cemetery and renamed it the Highland Cemetery as a place where miners killed in mine accidents could be laid to rest. When the coal camps of Williamsburg and Rockvale joined Coal Creek in using the site as a place to bury their dead, the name "Union" was added to its title. Now operated by the City of Florence, it is the final resting place for over 200 Fremont County coal miners along with other pioneers including Jesse Frazer. The Union Highland's map shows streets with the name of each Coal Camp.



MC-U-01: House from Emerald. (*Turn right into the cemetery at the stone house and immediately go right on Duran Avenue back to the north and the older portion of the cemetery; turn left on Williamsburg Street*). The stone building at the entrance was moved here from the Coal Camp of Emerald, which no longer exists.

Societies and time leave poster marks on their historic buildings and cemeteries. Their thoughts, way of viewing the world and historic events are encoded in the shapes, symbols and carvings upon their artifacts. With a key in hand, great stories and profiles in history can be read by the informed that might otherwise be overlooked. For one with such a key, entire societal profiles shift from fundamental religious beliefs, through traditional forms, through legalistic, then paternalistic, then governmental forms, through secularism into individualism that can be traced through the stories on the markers.

Such is so with the Union Highland Cemetery in Florence, Colorado. The misreading of an ancient paternalistic symbol masked a long history that went back to 1676 with the creation of a Lodge of the Ancient Order of Free Gardeners in Haddington, Scotland. The Order shares a parallel history with the Masonic Order which sprang from similar roots and needs. Only three lodges of the Scotch Order managed to emigrate to the United States – New Jersey, New York and Maryland - with the *Thistle Lodge of the Free Gardeners* appearing in the booming town of Coal Creek in the 1880s. During the 1880s, in its Fraternal benevolent form, the Order purchased

numerous acres from Stephen Tanner, which included the original Tanner family graveyard. The *Thistle Lodge #1* (an ancient traditional name) laid out roads named for the local coal towns, established plots and fenced in their Highland Cemetery.

The U.S. Financial Panic of 1907 created economic problems for the mining companies that, coupled with the great Coal Creek fire of 1907, put economic stress on the Town and its residents. The Great Depression of 1929 further damaged economic conditions and reshaped U.S. economic assistance and governmental support of social services, which caused the withering of need and support for the *Thistle Lodge*. The care of the cemetery was transferred to the Town of Florence through a Civil Ordinance on July 7th, 1930. At that time, *Florence* was added to the name indicating a regional profile.

In the early years, before the cemetery was platted, the family usually selected a space and friends opened the grave. Mostly wooden markers or a wooden cross was placed at the head of the grave. After a few years, the markers disappeared and the prairie grass grew over the grave. On many occasions when a new opening was made in the old section, the remains of a former burial were found.

Of about 8,800 burials, there are approximately 214 Fremont County coal miners who were killed accidently while working. There are 85 of those who are listed as being buried in Union Highland Cemetery.

MC-U-02: Jesse Frazer Grave. Born 12 April 1819 in St. Charles County, Missouri, he arrived in Colorado in 1859. Jesse helped write the code of laws, called Claim Club Laws, for Cañon City. He was a County Commissioner and staked the first coal claim. He planted vegetables,

had an orchard with apples, pears and plums, grew berries, raised bees for their honey and grew grains. His wife was Elizabeth Ash and they had one son. Both are buried in the Old Cemetery. Jesse died 9 May 1895 and his widow 3 August 1909. Block 7 – SW corner.

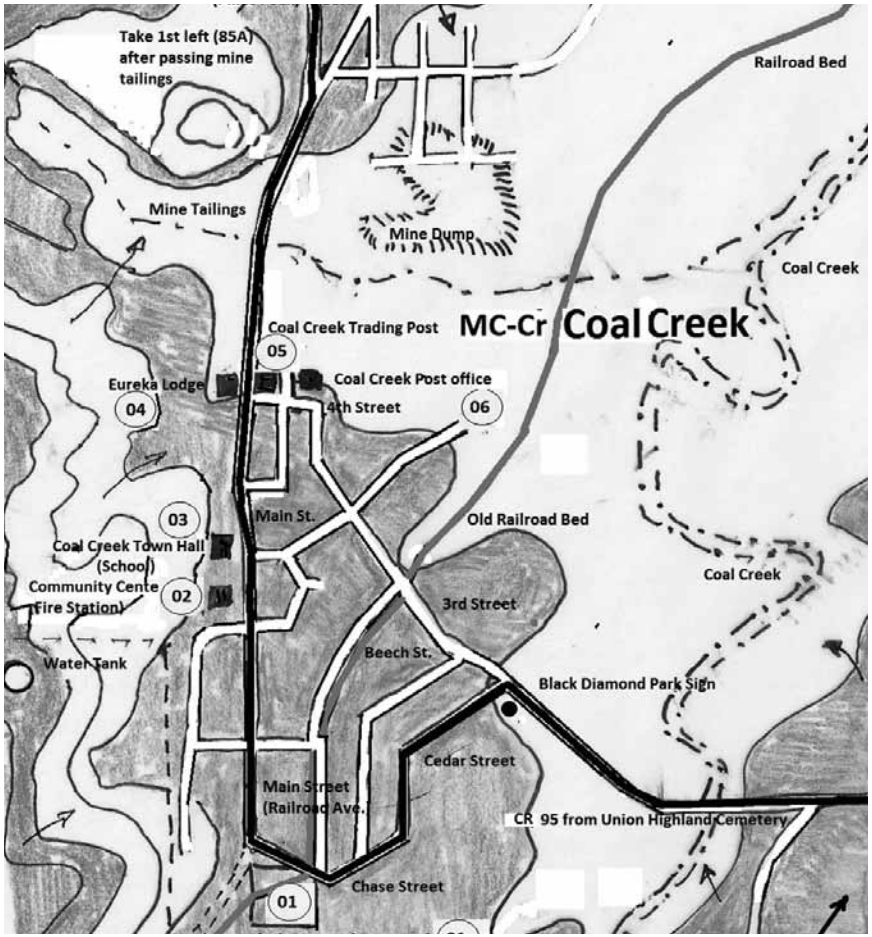
MC-U-03: Stephen Jennings Tanner Grave. A Confederate soldier and deeply religious man, he was born in 1837 in McLean County, Kentucky; traveled to Texas and then to Florence in 1871. He and his father bought 400 acres of land for general farming. He raised hogs, cattle and dairy cows and helped with the Union Ditch Company before selling much of his land to the oil interests. He was a County Commissioner, served many years on the school board and was a Mason. In 1865 he married Charlotte Hushaw, daughter of Peter and Mary Roland Hushaw, who died in 1873 leaving him with three children. Stephen then married Mary Harris Smith, daughter of Rev. William Smith, in 1874 and they had nine children. Charlotte was the first to be buried in Tanner Cemetery. Stephen died in 1908 and Mary in 1937. Block 9 – NE corner.

MC-U-04: Edwin Biel Lobach Grave. Born 1 August 1834 in Berks County, Pennsylvania, he had many adventures prior to settling in Colorado in 1870 on Hardscrabble Creek. He purchased a homestead from Stephen Frasier, a Civil War veteran, in Florence and married Nancy Ann Crouch in 1871. Nancy came to the Hardscrabble in 1863 by ox wagon from Illinois along with the rest of the Joseph Elira Crouch family. They moved into their two-story home in 1872 and together they had 14 children (not all survived to adulthood) who had a home tutor. One of the founders of Florence, he was a horse, dairy and hog raiser as well as grains. He had orchards and was instrumental in the oil industry. He was an astute businessman who also built a two-story, double bricked mercantile on East Main Street. He served two terms as County Commissioner. Ed died in 1921 at the age of 86 while Nancy

died at age 56 in 1908. They are buried in the family plot in the Old Cemetery. Block 7 – iron enclosure, NE corner.
(*Turn left and follow the streets to the right, out of the west cemetery gate. Turn right and drive west on Fremont County Road (CR) 95 and continue to the Town of Coal Creek*).

Panorama #1: Overlook View of Coal Camps: About ¼ mile down the road toward Coal Creek a rise in the road provides an overlook that gives a helpful orientation to the area (See Panorama #1).

MAP #3 -TOUR MAP OF COAL CREEK FROM THE NORTHEAST ON COUNTY ROAD 95



MC-Cr: Town of Coal Creek. (*1/2 mile past the* Town Limits *sign, turn left on Cedar Street at the Black Diamond Park sign and follow the good gravel road around to Chase Street. Stop at the park and baseball diamond. Restrooms are located here.*)
MC-Cr-01: Black Diamond Town Park. In 1860 Jesse Frazer first discovered and claimed an outcropping of coal on the hillside north of Coal Creek near his farm, irrigated by Coal Creek which lies to the southeast. Frazer sold his claim to J.T. Musser in 1867, who later sold the mine to a company affiliated with Palmer's D&RG railroad. The Coal Creek mine was the first mine the D&RG served in 1872 because the high quality of the coal allowed the train locomotives to get twice the mileage of other sources of coal available at the time. It produced 13,000 tons of coal that year, fueling the D&RG's competitiveness with arch rival AT&SF, which also served portions of the coal field.

In 1872 the D&RG tracks approached the Coal Banks from the northeast with the railroad grade following what is now Beech Street. D&RG's original narrow-gauge line ran south from Denver and Colorado Springs via Pueblo. In 1872 this was the southern tip of rail service – literally the end of the line. In 1874, when D&RG's mainline was extended west to Cañon City, this became the Coal Banks Branch Line. A third-rail was added in 1887 to allow both narrow gauge and standard gauge service, and the line was totally converted to standard gauge about 1911.

The first plat maps for the Town were filed by Henry and Willard Teller in November of 1878. Sixty-Five Coal Creek citizens petitioned for incorporation in October 1881 and the Town was incorporated on February 27, 1882. By 1890 an estimated 5,000 residents supported 16 saloons, two drug stores, two hotels, a variety of retail shops, a macaroni factory, ball park, D&RG train depot and

a weekly newspaper published on Saturdays called the *Hawkeye*.

In 1871 another mine was opened in the southern end of Coal Creek, near this park, by Allen and Canfield. When that mine played out the Nushaft mine opened. Miners could go underground from the Coal Creek mine, Canfield mine, Nushaft mine and Rockvale mine by a tunnel. Mines operating in this area over the years, included Coal Creek #1, #2, Coal Creek Cañon, Diamond, Falgien #2, Jack O'Lantern (Beer Coal Co.), Peacock, Pine Gulch #1, #3, and #4, Rocchio and the Rockafellow.

Coal was loaded onto rail cars with a ***Tipple*** (a building where coal that was hauled from a mine in a mine car was 'tipped' into bins where, using gravity, it was cleaned, sorted by size and loaded onto railroad cars or freight wagons at a lower level (see *How Coal is Mined* later in this guide).

COAL TIPPLE AT COAL CREEK

MC-Cr-02: Community Center (Fire Station). (*Turn right onto Main Street)* The Coal Creek Fire Station and the Coal Creek Town Hall are on the left as you travel north on Main Street.

MC-Cr-03: Coal Creek Town Hall (School). A school was built and was soon over populated. A larger two-story building was built on the same property. It had grades one through eight. Students went to school there until 1964, after the 1959 district consolidation forming RE-2 with Florence and other communities. The old school building was then used as a club meeting room and Post Office for many years. Now the building has been remodeled to include the new Town Hall and club meeting rooms. The Town Hall has a small collection of historic artifacts related to mining and is a good location for local inquiry.

FIRE! IN 1907 BEFORE AND AFTER PICTURES

The school building was the last structure left standing for two blocks when, on June 29, 1907, a devastating fire broke out at the Alf Salmon Bottling Works, half a block north of the IOOF Lodge #32 building. The fire consumed over 100 buildings and was a real set-back to the town, burning most of the business district, many homes and leaving 300 people homeless. The IOOF lodge was in the middle of the fire; its roof burned off, the inside damaged and only the walls, built of local sandstone, remained standing. The fire destroyed the post office, town hall (including all documents), three churches, two hotels, 16 saloons, the macaroni factory, homes of 102 families, grocery stores, livery stables and many other buildings. The school was saved, by the fire department using dynamite to destroy the house to the north, which stopped the fire from continuing up the main street and saved about half the town.

MC-Cr-04: Eureka Hall. *(Turn left at 4th Ave into the Eureka Hall parking lot.)* In 1908 the International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Hall was rebuilt and in 2006 it was put on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties and a grant was received to repair and replace needed items; such as foundation repairs, floors, kitchen, dining area and fire escape. It is still an active Lodge. The original building

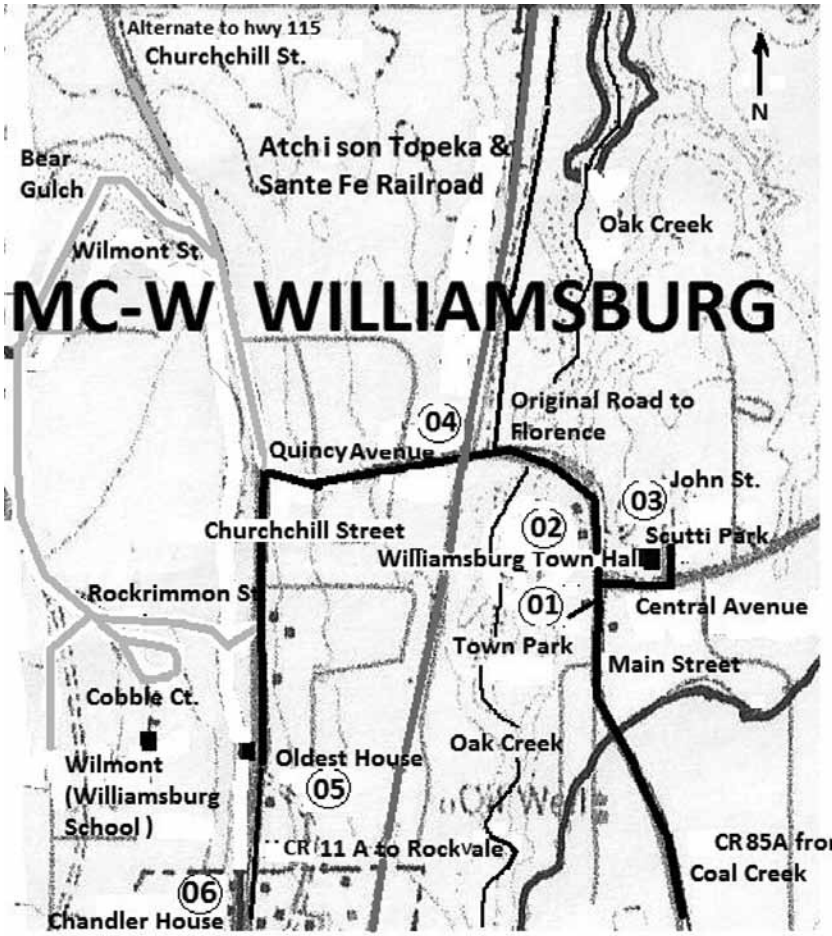
was built in 120 days in 1879 of native sandstone at a cost of $5,629. The first floor has a dining room, kitchen, stage area and restroom. The stage has an original Harv Roberts Westerfield hand-painted Florence merchants advertising canvas, with the Cañon City IOOF Hall in the center, done in August 1923. The school's eight-grade graduations were held there. The wood and coal burning stoves are original. The hanging wool rug was made in the rug shop at the prison in 1956 and donated by IOOF PM Henry Burton. On the second floor, the original lodge room is housed. IOOF, Rebekah, Order of Eastern Star, The Redmen's Lodge, Scottish Thistle Lodge No. 1, Masonic Lodge PEVE, Knights of Pythias and Coal Miners Union also met there. It is now available to rent for parties, receptions, meetings, etc. Bill Worthen and his wife spent many hours, weeks and months to see the restoration done.

MC-Cr-05: Coal Creek Trading Post. Across the street from the Lodge, Florence businessman Tom Orecchio built the store to house his Walters Beer distributorship in 1908. From 1916 to 1931 it was a candy store and ice cream parlor, and finally a grocery store run by the Falgien family, Jean Wates and the Knisley family, closing in the 1980s.

During the day, the miners all worked together, but at the end of the day, that ended. There was Scotch Town, Little Italy, and others. There was a ball park, race track and a railroad depot. Now only the Lodge, Orecchio store and

school house are the original buildings as well as houses south of the school, in Scotch Town and toward the east part of town.

MC-Cr-06: Post Office. For many years the Post Office was housed in the old school, which is now the Town Hall. A new and much improved Post Office was built in 1982. Other improvements have been made including a new fire station and many new homes. The new Black Diamond Park at the south end of town has been added with restrooms, a ballfield and playground.



MC-W: Town of Williamsburg. (*Turn left onto Main Street and then keep left on CR 85A at the next junction past the mine tailings.*)

Williamsburg was named for John Silas Williams who came to Colorado in 1885 and was a mine manager at Coal Creek. John Williams was born in 1825 at Penthely, near Llanbrymair, Montgomeryshire, Wales. He immigrated to the United States with his parents, brother and sister-in-law, when he was 17 years old. The family first settled in Ohio, arriving at Pomeroy on Christmas Day, 1841. John worked as a dry goods clerk for his brother during the 1870s and moved to Colorado with his daughter Emma in 1885. When he died on March 17, 1900 his obituary in *The Florence Citizen* read:

> *Mr. Williams has been a prominent man at the camps & has the honor of founding the village of Williamsburg named after him.*

Williamsburg existed as a village before being platted by Henry & Willard Teller in 1881 at the end of the line for the D&RG Railroad's Oak Creek narrow gauge rail branch. Three additions were made to the town in 1882, 1909 and 1917 by different coal related companies. The population was comprised of Welsh, Irish, English, Scotts, German and Italians who worked the dozen or so mines. Williamsburg was incorporated August 12, 1888.

MC-W-01: Williamsburg Town Park. As you drive toward Williamsburg Town Hall, the Town Park is on the left, down the hill.

MC-W-02 & 03: Williamsburg Town Hall and Scutti Park. (*At the Stop sign, turn right on Central, then take the first left on John Street into the parking lot for Williamsburg Town Hall and Scutti Park)* Williamsburg had a 1910 census population of 556 and was home to miners from several area mines including Ocean Wave and Bear Gulch. (*From Town Hall turn right on Central, then right again on Quincy Avenue and follow the road as it crosses the railroad tracks and ends at Churchill avenue. Turn left on Churchhill.*)

MC-W-04: Railroad Tracks. Two railroads came through Williamsburg along Oak Creek. **AT&SF** built a standard gauge line in 1878-80 through Williamsburg to Rockvale which remains today, used for railcar storage. The **D&RG** Oak Creek Branch was originally built in 1881 as narrow gauge from Oak Creek Junction to the mines here. By 1890 it was converted to standard gauge. By 1905 it was abandoned and sold for scrap. The D&RG tracks were to the east of the AT&SF rails and stopped at what is now Quincy Ave. The AT&SF line served mines at Rockvale in 1880 and was extended by 1887 to serve Radiant, also known as Pyrolite and later Kenwood, as well as the Corley Mine in 1937.

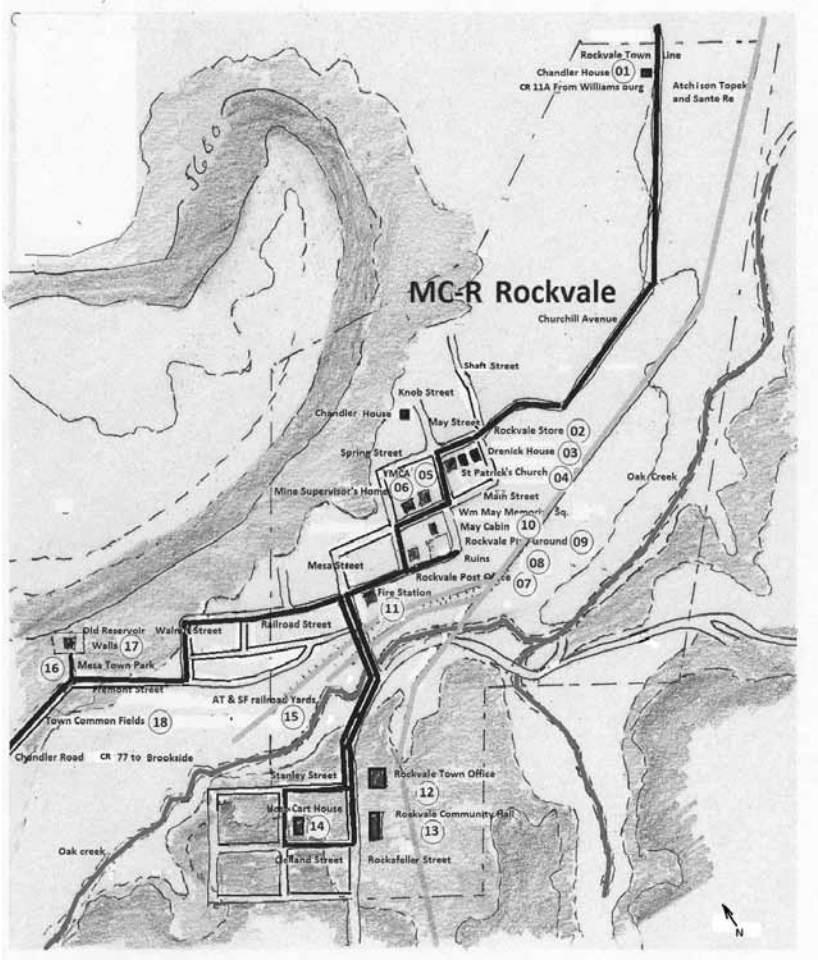
This area was a crossroads for area coal camps, a railroad shipping point and a residential area for miners. "Stringtown" was used to denote this stretch of road between Rockvale and Williamsburg. Because of the quarrying of the stone, only one side of the street was used for residences.

MC-W-05: Oldest House in Williamsburg. The Francisco House is on the right. In 1890 the first stone house was built for Louis Francisco, a saloon owner. His family members were Venetian mosaic artisans and, having done so well in business, Francisco installed a mosaic floor in the house.

The **Chesterfield Club** was located nearby. It was a nightclub owned

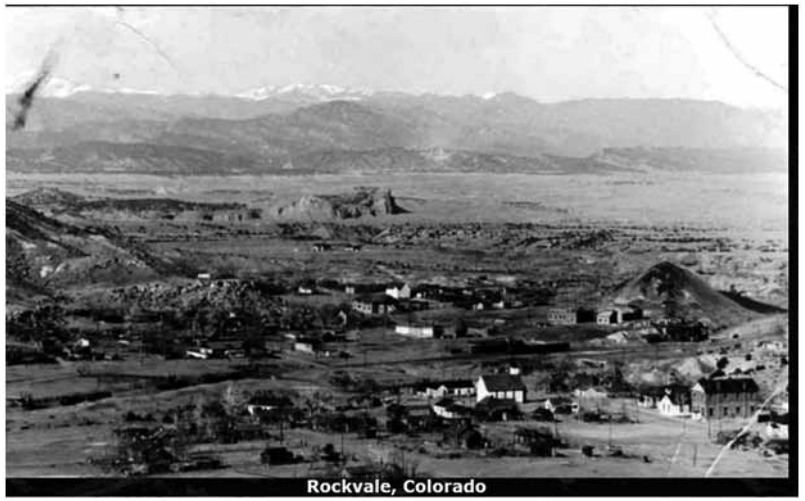
and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Giambalvo from 1947 to 1949 that also served fried chicken and spaghetti. After the club closed, the handsome back bar was moved to the second-floor ballroom of The Annex Building in Cañon City.

MC-W-06: Chandler House. This is one of many houses that were moved from Chandler after the mine closed there. Just beyond this, notice the sign as you enter Rockvale. *(Continue on Churchhill, CR 11A.)*



MC-R: Town of Rockvale *(Continue on Churchhill Street, CR 11A, which becomes May Street in Rockvale.)*

MC-R-01: Chandler House. Entering Rockvale, note on the right another house moved from Chandler.



The Town of Rockvale was homesteaded by Col. William Horace May in 1863. He arrived in Fremont County from Vermont and first farmed in the Beaver Creek area. After getting flooded out twice, he moved to higher ground and settled in what is now Rockvale. Colonel May built a cabin by the banks of Oak Creek where he used his land for grazing. He dug a ditch southwest of town from the Oak Creek to water his crops, not realizing there were millions of tons of coal underneath. Coal outcroppings were found and mined on a small scale until 1880 when the property was leased to the Cañon City Coal Company. The company platted the Town of Rockvale in 1880 and on July 10, 1882 May and W.D. Thatcher filed for incorporation, which took place on September 11, 1886. May had built a cabin from cottonwood logs for his homestead, which has been moved to the town's Park.

He also constructed the Post Office, which remains in use today, and became the Postmaster.

Area businessman Capt. Benjamin F. Rockafellow joined with May, Thatcher and others to organize the Cañon City Coal Company and, in 1880, began construction of the Rockvale No. 1 shaft, which reached coal on September 1, 1881 at a depth of 322 feet. In 1880, the Pueblo & Arkansas Valley Railroad, a subsidiary of the AT&SF, built a broad-gauge connection between the coal fields and Pueblo. The mine was leased to Colorado Fuel & Iron Company (CF&I) in August 1896 and operated until 1927.

MC-R-02, 03, 04: Vezzetti's Store, Drenick House, St. Patrick's Church: As May Street begins, note the buildings that were once a Store, the Drenick Home and Catholic Church, which was built in 1891 with distinctive wood trim. Miss Drenick was a life-long Rockvale resident and long-time teacher who wrote an area history, found later in this guide.

Rockvale was never a ***closed camp***; it had privately owned stores and houses (some mining camps only had company-owned stores and houses, and miners were paid in *scrip* that could only be used in company-owned businesses as a way of controlling the men). There was the CF&I store and butcher shop in Rockvale, but miners and their families could shop at any store. The mine did have buildings built for single men to rent and a bath house for the miners. The mine employed 300 men producing 1,200 tons a day, requiring the AT&SF to pull two trainloads per day. Rockvale at its peak had 1500 residents.

MC-R-05: YMCA. (*Turn left on Knob Street, then right on Main Street.*)

The large two-story building on the right was built as a YMCA in 1917 as part of a larger effort to improve the quality of life in the coal camps after the 1914 Ludlow Massacre. It is now a private residence. The YMCA had a bowling alley in the basement (ground floor). The second floor had a spacious lobby that could hold 300 people. There was a stage for plays, bands and movies. The top floor was used as a living area for the secretary or assistant. Residents of the coal camps were made up of many nationalities. The teachers also taught the men and women how to speak English in the evenings at the YMCA.

In 1918 the YMCA was used as a hospital. Dr. Williamson took it over and used the women of the town as nursing assistants, with help from a nurse who came to help from a Pueblo hospital. The ladies of the town also cooked and fed meals to the ill. Of all the coal camps, Rockvale had the fewest number of deaths from the flu. Dr Williamson lost only 40 of the 900 cases.

MC-R-06: Mine Superintendent's House. The smaller building next to the YMCA was the Mine Superintendent's house.

MC-R-07,08,09,10: Post Office, Playground, Mine Depot Ruins and May Cabin (*Turn left on Spring Street, then left again on Railroad Street and park at May Memorial Square*.) The May Cabin has been moved to this memorial site. The railroad, mill ruins and Oak Creek lie across the street to the south.

MC-R-11: Fire Station. (*Return west on Railroad Street and turn left on Mesa Ave*) As in most towns of that era, Rockvale had a major fire in 1919. Records of the town were also lost in the conflagration that started when a projector showing movies upstairs in the Rockvale Town Hall caught fire and the startled projectionist threw the film causing a fire that destroyed the building. No one got seriously injured, but the fire not only burned the two-story Town Hall building but two-blocks of business; including blacksmith shops, barber shop, several small notion and candy stores, several saloons and the Colorado Meat Market that was across the street from the CF&I store. It also charred the Doran's Hotel and the Amos Boarding House. The fire burned the roof and interior of the Fire House, the walls of which had been built of stone when the building was constructed in 1913 and included a jail in the basement. It is now the office for the Fire Department.

MC-R-12, 13: Old School, Town Hall, Community Hall. (*When Mesa Ave ends at Oak Creek Avenue follow to the right up the hill on Rockafellow Street to Clelland Street*.) Up on the "hill" the school house was built. It first consisted of a log cabin, then a four-room frame building and several small cottages that served as classrooms. Soon they were crowded with 350 students and, in 1910, a brick two-story building was built. For two years they had a kindergarten class but, needing more space, the kindergarten was dropped. Rockvale had a 9th grade for one year, but then 9 – 12th grades went on a bus to Florence High School. Now one of the cottages is used as a Community Room, the other two cottages were moved to Penrose and another to Elm Avenue in Cañon City. The brick building was torn down when the schools consolidated with RE-2 in Florence. The frame building was remodeled into a Town Hall and meeting room.

MC-R-14: Hose Cart House. *(Continue on Rockafellow Street, turn right on Clelland Street, then right again on Bowie Street.)* Rockvale's fire protection from 1886 through 1913 was provided by three hand drawn Hose Carts used for transporting a fire hose, nozzles and other tools to the site of a fire, with 18 people assigned to each cart. The hose carts all had a bell that rang at each turn of the wheel. If a fire broke out while the men were in the mine, it was up to the women and business people to get the hose cart and fight the fire until the men could arrive from the mine and take over. This Hose Cart House remains as a reminder of the town's fire protection system.

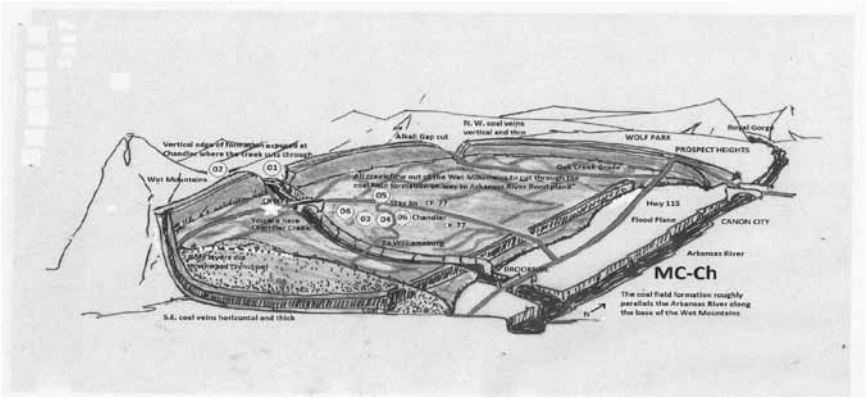
Rockvale's Fire Protection
This hose cart remains as a quaint reminder of the early day volunteer hose companies. *Photo by the author.*

MC-R-15: AT&SF Railroad Yard. (*Turn right on Stanley Street, then left on Rockafellow Street, left on Mesa Avenue to cross Oak Creek and return to Railroad Street; Turn left and continue to Walnut Street, then right on Fremont Street*) Notice the AT&SF rail yard on the left as you return to Railroad Street. This siding branched-off from the line that continued south up a trestle to serve Radiant and other mines in the south-field.

MC-R-16 and 17: Mesa Town Park and Old Reservoir Walls. Arriving at Mesa Town Park at the west end of Fremont Street, note the old reservoir wall above the park. There is also a trailhead for the Bighorn Trail, dedicated to the memory of Rockvale resident Marylynn Maher.

MC-R-18: Rockvale Town Commons Fields. Across Fremont Street from the park, note the Town Commons. This open area was once available to Rockvale residents for their gardens. At the west end of this field under the Cottonwoods was the ballpark and picnic area. Baseball was important in the Coal Camps and Rockvale had the top team for many years. Teams would travel to other Coal Camps by train. The Italians built their own park, known as the Barbed Wire Park. *(Leaving Mesa Town Park, turn right and continue on Fremont Street {County Roads 77 and 78})*

Panorama #2: Southern Coal Field. This is a good location to view Panorama, #2, the Southern Coal Field.



MC-Ch. (*Drivers wishing to avoid gravel roads or poor weather may return on Churchill Street {CR-11A} to its junction with CO-115 and turn left toward Brookside.*) This section of the guide follows a six-mile well maintained gravel road (County Roads 78 & 77) from Rockvale, along Oak Creek through the former Coal Camp of Chandler, to Brookside on Colorado Highway 115. This is a beautiful drive with several scenic vistas and interesting views of mine tailings The road bends to the right around the mesa and heads northwesterly to a crossing with Chandler Creek at a location near County Road 80.

MC-Ch-01: Chandler Creek. (*About 4 miles from Mesa Town Park)* Chandler Creek flows out of the Wet Mountains, across a cut in the hogback that is also followed by CR-80, (**MC-Ch-02**) then on through Brookside and into the Arkansas River. The property on both sides of the road is privately owned and should not be entered.

MC-Ch-03: Mine Powder House. (*Just beyond intersection with 80 to the right)* This is all that remains of an old Chandler Mine powder house with a tailings pile in the background. The D&RG Chandler Branch ran through this area until it was abandoned in 1944, after the mines had closed.

MC-Ch-04: Water Tower Supports. The concrete structures on the hill to the right once supported a water tower for the mine.

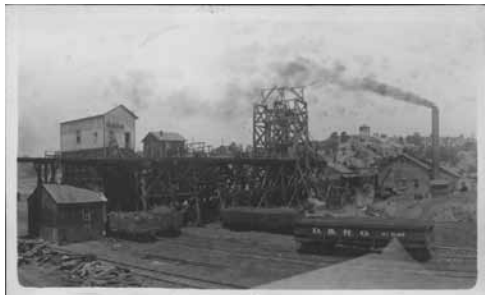
MC-Ch-05: School Steps Ruins. (*To the left where CR-79 intersects)* All that remains of the Chandler School are the steps and part of the foundation.

MC-Ch-06: Building Foundations. The Chandler houses were all sold and moved to new locations when the company closed the mine. Many of those homes remain lived-in today, even though Chandler itself is now a ghost town.

MC-Ch: Chandler Town Site. Chandler was platted by the Western Fuel Company of Pueblo in 1890 after the site was acquired from Asa C. Chandler who had homesteaded here and was a Confederate

Veteran of the Civil War. The property was briefly held by the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company and then became the property of John C. Osgood's Victor-American Fuel Company.

Chandler was a company-owned Coal Camp which provided housing and company stores for the miners and their families. There were 11-blocks of homes and buildings platted as part of the community. Chandler was incorporated as a statutory Colorado Town in 1902 but, even though there was an elected Town Council, Osgood made sure that company officials held key positions in the local government and exerted even more control over miners' lives. When the mine was closed in 1942, many of the company-owned houses were sold and moved to other coal camps as well as Cañon City and Florence. Today, evidence remains of foundations, but all the buildings are gone.



During its 52 years of productive life, the mine produced over 5-million tons of high quality bituminous coal for use in nearby smelters, the CF&I Steel Works and home furnaces. 600 men worked the 36-miles of tunnels each day, gaining access to the mine by a 550-foot deep shaft. About 100 homes occupied the 11-block community, which was often called the prettiest of the Coal Camps. Chandler had a school, also used as a community building, a church, boarding house, saloon, recreation leagues and a doctor. Miners paid $1 per month, matched by the company, for health care.

Bitter wars between the mine owners and workers erupted in the early 1900s because of working conditions. Complaints ranged from "short pay", when the pay master would not weigh the coal right, or count the cars coming from the mine correctly, to being prevented from joining a union. The Company Store was often the only place the "Scrip" with which miners were paid was accepted and there were frequent complaints of high prices. Rents were also high in company-owned houses and the company owned the entire town including stores, houses and school.

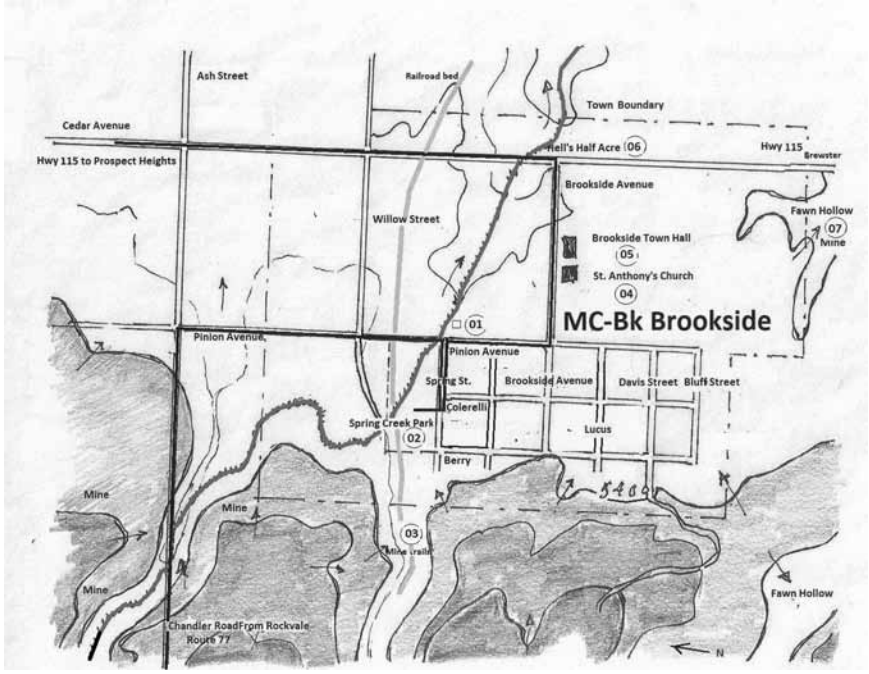
The workers were from 9-years old to 60-years old and the conditions in the mines were always dangerous. The work was hard, the pay scanty and living conditions included the "outhouse" at the back of the lot, wood shed, coal bins and clothes lines. Water was piped from a storage tank on the hill with gravity feed, into faucets that were available in back yards, for the foremen, or on the street for the workers' homes.

Entertainment consisted of community meetings and dances at the schoolhouse and the typical summer occupation of baseball. The mining camps all had baseball teams, with Rockvale being named the champions most years. The crowds at the ball games were enthusiastic and numerous; with games between Cañon City, Chandler, Rockvale, Florence and the other towns throughout Eastern Fremont County. The Western end of the County also had teams, and they would likely ride the train to try their skill against the miners.

In 1943, the mining company started selling all the structures (estimated at 100 residential homes) in the Company Town. The

Victor-American Fuel Company sold the houses for $25 to $100 per room, according to Harry Johnson who was the last Superintendent of the Mine. The more elaborate homes were sold for $100 a room, with bathroom fixtures charged over and above the base price. The houses were moved to various sites, most to Cañon City. The community structures were demolished and the materials used in various buildings, such as the school house materials that were used in Cañon City for the vocational buildings at the present Middle School.

The moving company hauled these homes throughout Eastern Fremont County. An incomplete record of 37 locations is available at the History Center with some addresses. The buyers of the homes had to pay for moving, and preparing the lots where the homes would be placed. According to the *Cañon City Daily Record* in 1943: "Biggest buyer thus far is Mrs. Mary Starika, operator of a West Elm Avenue dance hall and tavern. She has purchased four of the four room units, is moving them to Prospect Heights and nearby Capitol Hill." (Carol McNew)



MC-Bk: BROOKSIDE (*Traveling north on CR-77, turn right onto Pinion Avenue; if driving on paved Colorado Highway 115, turn left on Ash Street, then left on Pinion Avenue*)

MC-Bk-01: Stone House Ruin. The ruins of a stone house are located on the left just past the turn onto Spring Street to visit Spring Creek Park. Many miners bunked here, near the mine, over the years. (*Turn right on Spring Street)*

MC-Bk-02: Spring Creek Park. (*Turn right into Spring Creek Park; Restrooms are here.*) Spring Creek Park is the result of a restoration project on the former CF&I Brookside Coal Mine. The 18-acre park includes 1.3 miles of trails and other recreation facilities.

MC-Bk-03: Mine Trails at Spring Creek Park. There are several trails here from easy to difficult.

MC-Bk-04: St. Anthony's Church. (*Return to Pinon Avenue and turn right, drive to Brookside Avenue and turn left; turn right into the St. Anthony's Church and Brookside Town Hall parking area)*. St. Anthony's Catholic Church in the Town of Brookside is an unadorned, Carpenter Gothic building with a steeply-pitched roof and square bell-tower that served from the late 1870s or 1880s as the Brewster Schoolhouse. In 1920, it was purchased and moved to Brookside by horse teams and rededicated as St. Anthony's Catholic Church. From 1920 to 1988, it was a vital part of this largely Italian-American community and hosted numerous community events

such as St. Anthony's Day celebrations. Vacant since 1988, it was acquired by the Town in 2013 for future use serving the community and named a Fremont County Landmark in 2015.

Panorama #3: Brookside Overlook. This is a good place to view the Brookside Overlook (see Panorama #3)

MC-Bk-05: Brookside Town Hall. Today Brookside is a statutory town with over 200 residents located south of Cañon City. Historically, it was an active, important and colorful Coal Camp.

MC-Bk-06: Hell's Half Acre. Immediately below on the other side of Highway 115 is where Hell's Half Acre was located. Originally incorporated as the two-block by two-block Town of Springfield in 1887, the seven taverns that operated there were beyond the reach of authorities in Cañon City, which had banned alcohol at the time. Coal miners wanted a drink or a beer after their shift and the area also attracted Silent Movie Stars of the era, including leading man Tom Mix.

MC-Bk-07: Fawn Hollow. Fawn Hollow lies along Highway 115 around the curve to the east from Hells Half Acre. It shared *The Acre's* wild reputation. Behind the building ruins is the only Coal Mine Tipple that is left standing in the County.

MC-Bk: BROOKSIDE. For its Centennial, Fremont County Historian Sue Cochran celebrated and summarized Brookside's history. Her account follows (used by permission):

Overview of the Town's History by Sue Cochran

"In May of 1913, there was an air of excitement in our little community of Brookside. Fifty men and women who were residents at the time voted to cause the Town of Brookside to become an incorporated place. All fifty votes were cast in favor of incorporation. Not one vote was cast against the measure. Newspapers reported that the election was held "at the one story, brick store building, known as the Colorado Supply Company's Store, at or near the corner of Main and Second Streets." That's the corner of Brookside and Colarelli today, and the building is now a residence.

Within a month, the community had elected Louis Fleming as their first mayor. Trustees were George Johnson, Stephan Coughlin, Peter Tonso, Antonio Moschetti, John Fontecchio, and Joe Volpe.

Although newly incorporated in 1913, the village of Brookside had already been a thriving coal community for about 25 years. Early pioneers in the area had found coal outcroppings along a little creek coming down out of the hills to the south of the Arkansas River. They started burning some coal for their own personal use. It burned pretty well, and word soon spread about their find.

Coal was in demand at the time. Railroaders looking for fuel to power their trains heard about the coal, bought up the land, and opened a mine. They ran a spur from the main line to the mine, following that same little creek, which the pioneers had eventually named Spring Creek. Early maps show the spur to be owned by the Pueblo & Arkansas Valley Railway, which later sold to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. A community soon sprang up around the mine so that the coal miners had a place to live. They called the mine and the collection of homes Brookside because it was beside Spring Creek.

But the town always belonged to somebody else. The Cañon City Coal Company filed a plat in 1888, stating that they were both owner and proprietor of the 48.74 acres making up the town of Brookside. Mahlon Thatcher of Pueblo was one of the officers of the company, and a book titled *The Thatchers: Hard Work Won the West*, written by Joanne Dodds in 2001, explains it pretty well. Talking about Rockvale and Brookside, Dodds says, "First, the coal from a series of mines . . . provided fuel for the railroad. Second, the coal was a cash crop to ship on the railroad. And, third, the coal was the fuel that ran Mahlon's smelter business in Pueblo."

This was a pretty typical arrangement. Investors owned an interest in several inter-related businesses. Cañon City businessmen George

A. Baker and B.F. Rockafellow opened a general store in Rockvale and several years later added a branch store at Brookside. Both stores became the property of Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) of Pueblo in 1896 when they took possession of the mine at Brookside. CF&I also owned mines at Coal Creek, Rockvale, and Williamsburg.

During the time that Brookside was a CF&I company-owned camp, they were provided with educational opportunities and many other services by the company. *Camp and Plant*, a weekly newspaper published by the Sociological Department of CF&I that was "devoted to news from the mines and mills," tells us that company instructors offered night classes in English and Italian on alternating evenings, as well as contracting with doctors to provide health care to the community. They also provided a lending library in a corner of the company store.

Unlike some of CF&I's coal camps, many of Brookside's houses were privately owned. In 1902, *Camp and Plant* reported that only about ten houses in town were company-owned and that contractors were at work painting and making repairs to them as part of a camp clean-up.

Brookside had its own Post Office from May 1888 to Oct 1905 and again from Dec 1908 to Mar 1909. Mail was delivered and picked up from the post office as part of a regular daily route from Cañon City to Chandler.

A two-room public school offered classes to children of the community until about 1921 when a new brick school containing four rooms was built. Local residents remember that brick building as an early home of Fremont County Head Start and as City Hall for a time. Today, Brookside is a part of the Cañon City School District.

The community's water system had for years pumped water up the hill from the Arkansas River. CF&I changed that around 1900, putting water mains in every street, fire plugs on every corner, and pulling water from the mine. This was thought to be a huge improvement in water quality. Later, the Brookside Domestic Water Company was formed to purchase water from Lincoln Park, but many households still pumped water from a well. Finally, in the 1990s, Cañon City's water system began to supply the community's water needs.

Brookside has struggled to stay alive at times; for years, Mayor Tony Beltramo and Clerk Martin Vezzetti met once a year to pay the light bill for the town's two street lights. They said if they ran out of money, they'd have to raise taxes or turn out the lights. But we're thriving again today, and want to share some of our stories of the past and thoughts for the future.

The Mines

Coal, simply stated, is a rock that will burn. As it burns, it releases energy in the form of heat. This was known from ancient times. Coal replaced water, wind, and wood as the primary source of energy in America when the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s demanded huge amounts of heat/energy to fuel the nation's factories and railroads. By World War I, coal supplied 75% of the nation's energy, but oil and gas were soon to become the most-used fuels. After another spike in demand during World War II, the coal industry saw decades of decline and depressed markets.

Declines in the market weren't always the fault of competing fuels. Sometimes labor conflicts were at least partly to blame. Underground coal mining was one of the most dangerous industries a man could work in. Any efforts to protect the miners cost the mine owners more money. It was sometimes cheaper to mechanize, as power-driven equipment could produce more product faster. The use of machines cut down on the number of men needed at each mine, lessening liability as well as labor costs. In early days, accidents in the mines were almost always found to be the fault of the workers themselves, regardless of actual circumstances. True liability of the owner or company is a fairly modern concept.

Coal was discovered in Fremont County almost as soon as the earliest settlers arrived. They picked it up where it was visible on the surface of the ground in the 1860s and used it locally or hauled it to Denver by the wagonload to sell it there. Fremont County coal

soon earned a favorable reputation as a clean-burning, efficient fuel.

When the railroad boom of the 1870s and '80s came along, the coal of Fremont County was in demand. Our Brookside coal attracted the attention of the Pueblo and Arkansas Valley Railroad, a subsidiary of the larger Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. They ran a spur up the hill from the river and opened a mine. Much of the coal produced was used as fuel to power their trains.
The Cañon City Coal Company laid out a town in 1888 and named it Brookside. Miners needed to live within walking distance of their jobs, so mining camps typically appeared very near the mines themselves. Workers at the Brookside mine were fortunate that a fairly level, attractive location existed for their homes and families this close to the mine.

Underground it was a different story. Some men were already miners when they left their homes to come to America, but many of the later European immigrants were used to working outdoors. Although they were used to hard work, adapting to the long hours underground in dark, damp surroundings was hard. Many early miners worked twelve hour shifts with few tools beyond shovels, picks, and augers. (Joe Burnetto says that his grandfather never saw the light of day in the winter months—it was dark when he went in and dark when he came out.)

Colorado Fuel & Iron of Pueblo acquired the Brookside mine in 1896. The Cañon City *Daily Record* on June 29, 1899, reported that Brookside Mine No. 7 had adopted the eight-hour shift system and was running full time producing 45 to 50 train carloads (about 1000 tons) a day. There was concern whether they could keep up this production rate with only 8-hour work shifts.

Names and numbers of the mines sometimes changed with a change of ownership or with the opening of a new entrance to an existing mine. Maps of the Brookside mine made in 1897 by owner Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) show that the workings stretched far to the west and south of the main entrance here in Brookside.

Mines in the Brookside vein were listed as drift mines or slope mines, which meant that the entrances, called adits, were sloped rather than going straight down like a shaft mine. They could be quite steep, but were probably not vertical. The Brookside coal bed is usually listed as measuring from three to six feet thick in horizontal bands.

By 1901, David Griffiths was the mine superintendent of CF&I No. 23, John Pattison was clerk, Edward Redmond ran the store, and Dr. Sanborn was the camp surgeon. Camp & Plant, the weekly CF&I newsletter, tells us that "Mac, our skillful machinist" could not fix the blower engine at the boiler house so they ordered a "brand new Chandler & Taylor 22-horsepower" replacement. A telephone had been installed to connect the bottom of the mine to the engine room, the newsletter said.

As early as 1902, another coal outcropping to the west along the south side of Pinion Avenue was being explored by company representatives. Pearl Myers recalls that her grandfather John Stultz died in a rockfall in that area. News reports from 1904 show that the accident occurred 3000 feet from the mouth of the tunnel when the roof fell. Coroner Logan, undertaker Phipps, and Supt. Ball inspected the mine and determined that almost a ton of rock had fallen on Stultz. A verdict of "killed in a mine" was brought in without an inquest. This lack of an inquest was not unusual. This would have been under CF&I management since they ran the Brookside mine until about 1910 or 1912, depending on which source you are reading.

The mine strikes of 1914 were especially violent. The "Ludlow Massacre" occurred during that strike and there was fear and unrest throughout the Colorado coal fields. In March of 1914, gunfire

tore through the normal peace of a Sunday morning in Brookside. Reports of how many shots were fired varied greatly, but most estimates fell between 50 and 100. Homes and offices occupied by mine owner John Lippis and associates Harry Satterfield and Rocco Moschetti were fired upon, with only luck preventing a tragedy. State militiamen were dispatched to Brookside to help keep the peace.

In July of 1915, the Florence *Citizen-Democrat* reported a disastrous fire at the Brookside mine. Most of the buildings were completely destroyed with an estimated loss of $10,000. Lippis, Moschetti, and the Vezzetti brothers held interests in the mine at the time of the fire. Orecchios, Scavardas, Crestos, and Bertas came later. Other names and owners listed for various portions of the Brookside mine over time include Dutch Oven (Joe Balone), Big Three (Silengo & Bosco), Brook Cañon, Grand Prize, Cañon Red Star (Joe Balone), Boulder Cañon, Spring Cañon, Cañon City Coal (Harold May), Carson Coal & Oil, Strainer Cañon, Brook Coal, and L and C (Clem Lovisone & Ted Colarelli).

H. Lee Scamehorn's history of CF&I, *Mill and Mine: The CF&I in the Twentieth Century*, says the Brookside mine produced about 1.5 million tons of coal between 1896 and 1910. Some of the small, local operators worked the mine until 1960, when it was sealed because of an underground fire. Some areas of the mine had been flooded for years."

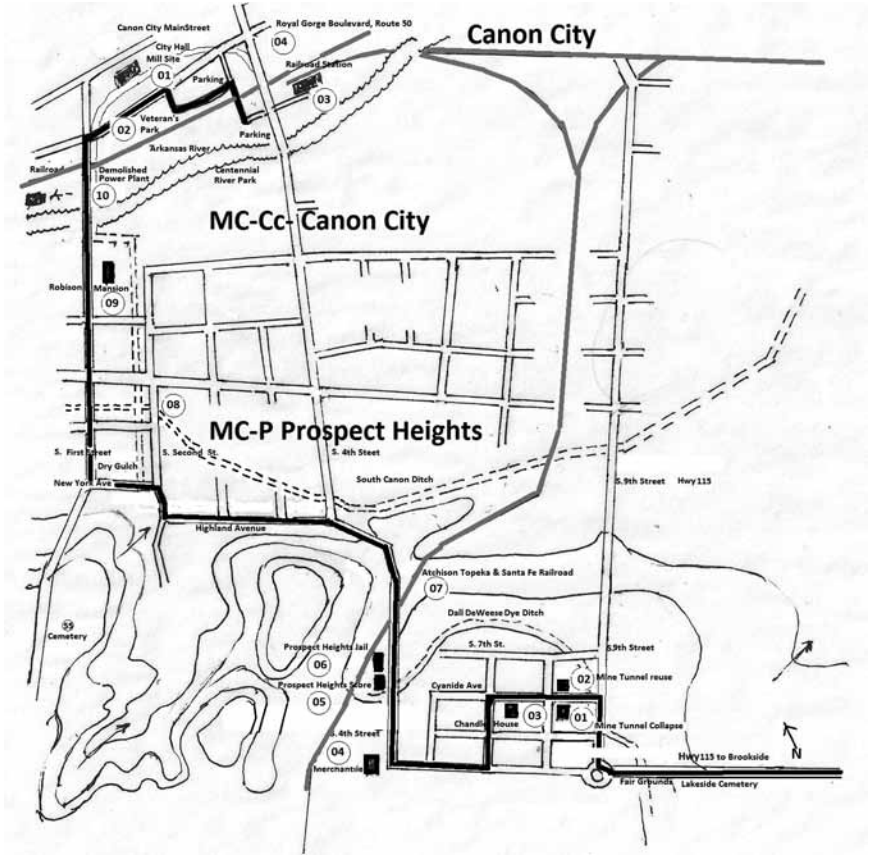
MOSCHETTI'S STORE. *(From St. Anthony's Overlook, return to Brookside Avenue and turn right. Turn left on Highway 115 {Cedar Avenue} and continue west for about one mile. Just past where 115 turns right and becomes Chestnut Street, on the left, is Moschetti's Store.)*

The Moschetti store on Chestnut Street was moved from the Mining Camp of Radiant and a front porch entrance was added.

Radiant was another Victor-American Fuel Company coal mine, like Chandler. Later known as Pyrolite and Kenwood, it was the last of the company camps in Fremont County. John C. Osgood opened the Radiant mine in 1903, three miles south of Coal Creek. At its peak, there were 125 miners employed and it produced an average of 800 tons of coal daily. The Santa Fe Railroad made daily trips to Radiant and Rockvale to load out the coal which was then shipped to various states. Due to the relative remoteness of the mine, Osgood developed a company town to support the mine.

While the Radiant Mine closed at the beginning of the Depression in 1929, the U.S. government was in the process of finding housing for the large number of transients roaming the country. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) leased the camp, then called Kenwood, in 1930 to house indigent men and boys, provide health care and food. Residents were free to leave but, if they stayed, they were required to go to school, fight forest fires, build roads and fences or whatever work was needed. Kenwood

served its purpose until economic conditions improved and in 1937 it was closed and all buildings were sold at auction. The buildings were moved to other Fremont County towns and the company store was donated to the American Legion and is now the Eagles' Hall in Florence. Today nothing remains of the mine or town site; the land is in private ownership and not near any public road.



MC-P: Prospect Heights. (*Continue on Highway 115 about 1½ miles, bear right at the traffic circle onto 9th Street and take the second left onto Cyanide Avenue.)*

MC-P-01: Mine Tunnel Collapse. A tunnel of the Nonac (Cañon spelled backwards) Coal Mine collapsed at this location in 1948 dropping the liquor store and home above more than one foot into the ground. The cave-in covered a 200-foot by 300-foot area and damaged other area buildings and electrical lines.

MC-P-02: Mine Tunnel Repurposing. Sali's Paradise Restaurant. From the 1930s to the late 70s, Gus and Doris Salardino operated a nightclub and restaurant on this site and reportedly made creative use of the abandoned coal mine tunnel beneath for activities that were best not carried out above ground.

MC-P-03: Chandler House. (*Continue west one block)* The house at 720 was moved from Chandler when the mine closed. (*Turn left on 7th Street and drive two blocks; turn right where the street ends on Elm, drive two blocks and bear right on 4th Street)*

MC-P-04: Prospect Heights Mercantile. The building at 1345 S. Fourth Street was built in 1906 by Anton Adamic and his brother, Florijan. During Prospect Heights' heyday, a bar operated downstairs connected by phone to upstairs rooms where other activity took place. Later their sister, Mildred Adamic Pierce, operated a grocery store here. *(Continue north on 4th Street past 1315 S 4th St, Cañon City, CO 81212)*

MC-P-05: Adamic Construction

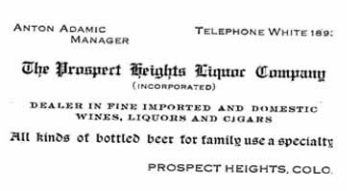
MC-P-06: The Prospect Heights Jail. Constructed in 1906, this was the only municipal building for the town of Prospect Heights. Previously a Slavic enclave of mine workers near the Nonac Coal Mine, the enterprising residents incorporated in 1905 to take

advantage of the neighboring "dry" communities of Cañon City and South Cañon. The jail was built to incarcerate the disorderly drunks who frequented the seven or eight saloons and other establishments operating twenty-four hours a day. Its size, construction of native stone from an outcrop of yellow ochre concretionary sandstone from nearby *Eagle Wing*, and setting make it a visual landmark in this small community. Today, the Jail is owned by the Fremont County Historical Society, which periodically opens the building to the public and conducts tours.

In 1901 Cañon City repealed the ordinances granting liquor licenses in the city; effectively closing its six saloons. The back-and-forth battle over the temperance movement went on for several years, strengthened by 1905 with support from the City's 14 churches, four hospitals, several active women's groups including the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), two newspapers and a month-long revival by evangelist Billy Sunday. Another ordinance was enacted prohibiting the sale of alcohol in June 1905.

In 1907 the Colorado General Assembly gave cities the local option to prohibit sales of alcoholic beverages; an option that the citizens of Cañon City favored in a 1908 election when residents voted 960 to 143 to become "anti-saloon territory." Coal miners and mill workers from the nearby U.S. Smelter Company, the Nonac Mine, the Royal Gorge mine and the Wolf Park mine did not favor the idea of a dry town. They wanted to be able to wet their whistles after a twelve-hour shift working deep underground.

Brothers Anton and Florijan Adamic and friend John Musick took action to form their own city that allowed the sale and consumption of such beverages. A town plat was filed on April 10, 1905 consisting of 52 lots on 9½ acres; followed by a May 8th election with 57 votes for incorporation and none against. The **Town of *Prospect Heights*** was declared incorporated on May 10, 1905. Soon rail-car loads of beer, wine and whisky began arriving on the railroad tracks bordering the town and Anton Adamic began wholesaling them to the seven or eight saloons that sprang up almost overnight. Each business flourished, along with crime and drunken debauchery. A town marshal was elected in the small community, but one thing lacked – a jail!


ANTON ADAMIC
MANAGER

TELEPHONE WHITE 189

The Prospect Heights Liquor Company
(INCORPORATED)

DEALER IN FINE IMPORTED AND DOMESTIC
WINES, LIQUORS AND CIGARS

All kinds of bottled beer for family use a specialty

PROSPECT HEIGHTS, COLO.

Ernie Sell was reportedly hired to construct the jail, and did just that with the help of his father. They quickly completed the project and, upon being paid for his services, Ernie Sell stepped down the road and commenced to celebrating. Within a few hours, Ernie Sell ironically became the very first occupant of the jail he just built. Silent-movie star Tom Mix also reportedly graced his presence in the Prospect Heights Jail. In 1911, while in the area making one of his many western silent-movies, Tom Mix got drunk and began shooting his guns off in the middle of the street. The film's producer quickly bailed him out the following morning when he failed to appear on the set.

Prospect Heights glory days ended in 1909 when the U. S. Smelter closed down, hurting business, and the saloons were threatened with legal actions. In September 1909, supported by a Colorado Supreme Court decision upholding local option laws banning alcohol sales, the saloons in Prospect Heights were all closed. This was later reinforced when Colorado became one of the first states in the Union to enact a statewide prohibition law closing all saloons in 1916, followed in 1920 by the ratification of the 18th Amendment, establishing prohibition in the U. S. until repealed by the 21st Amendment in 1933.

The last time the jail was used as a detention facility was in 1914 when U.S. Army troops were called into the area to quell the

violent Coal Strike of 1914. The Prospect Heights Jail was added to the Colorado Register of Historic Places as 5FN.1803 on March 12, 2003. It is also listed as a Fremont County Landmark in 2014.

By 1990, the town's water system was failing and residents petitioned to tap into Cañon City's water system. Cañon City government passed a resolution that allowed Prospect Heights to be added to their water lines, but the town needed to disincorporate. After paying a $250 water tap fee, the town dissolved and began receiving water service from Cañon City, even though it is not part of the City.

MC-P-07: AT&SF Tracks. (*Continue north on 4th Street, across the railroad tracks)* The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad historically served area mines and mills including the Wolf Park mine. More recently, it served the 2,600-acre Cotter Corporation Uranium Mill in Lincoln Park, now an EPA Superfund Site.

MC-P-08: South Cañon Ditch. (*Follow the road around to the left where it becomes Highland Avenue, jog to the right briefly on 2nd Street, but follow New York and turn right on 1st Street)* The historic South Cañon Ditch, which passes under the street just past Catlin Avenue, has water rights dating to 1880. It draws water from the Arkansas River near its confluence with Grape Creek and transports the water to the Lincoln Park area for agricultural use.

MC-P-09: Robison Mansion. (*Turn right on 1st Street and drive north for four blocks)* The Robison Mansion at 12 Riverside Drive was built in 1884 by Lyman Robison, who made a fortune during the Leadville Silver Boom beginning in 1879. Robison and his wife Mary soon made their home in Cañon City, escaping Leadville's 10,000-foot elevation and cold winters. Investing in three of Cañon City's biggest business blocks, he built the Apex, Annex and Sulphide blocks which were named after his mining properties. The couple, their son and his family enjoyed entertaining at the mansion, which fell into disrepair during the depression. A series of owners have worked to restore the mansion to its glory and it is available today for functions and events. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 as 5FN.99.

MC-P-10: Coal-Fired W. N. Clark Power Plant. (demolished in 2014). (*Continue north on 1st Street to Royal Gorge Blvd, US-50)*

On the left is the reclaimed site of the 42-Megawatt W. N. Clark Power Plant. The landmark power plant on the western edge of Cañon City was originally built in 1897 and most recently updated in 1959. Fired by coal from the Cañon City Coal Field, it was decommissioned by Black Hills Energy to meet requirements of the Colorado Clean Air-Clean Jobs Act and ceased operations at the end of 2012. According to the *Cañon City Daily Record*, "The plant was owned by Southern Colorado Power Company, called SoCoPoCo, then Central Telephone and Utilities, also called CENTEL, which was bought out by WestPlains Energy, a subsidiary of Utilicorp. In 2002, the company became part of Aquila, a multi-national corporation that later was bought out by Black Hills Energy in 2008."

MC-Cc-01: City Hall Mill Site and MC-Cc-02: Veteran's Park. (*Turn right onto Royal Gorge Blvd, US-50; then immediately right into Veteran's Park. Restrooms are here and visitor information is available, seasonally.)* The Cañon City Milling Co, later Peerless Milling, operated here in the early 1900s using power from the Cañon City Mill Ditch, which continued to serve water users. The prison also had a power plant on the ditch. This is now the site of City Hall parking lot.

MC-Cc-03: Railroad Station. (*Continue east through the park and turn right on 3rd Street; Follow around to the Railroad Station which now serves the Royal Gorge Route Railroad)*

Built by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in 1913 to

replace a smaller frame structure constructed in 1887 when the *Atchison* (as it was known then) first reached Cañon City; this served as a combined freight and passenger depot. Years of bitter competition existed between AT&SF and General Palmer's Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (whose narrow-gauge rails arrived in 1874 and whose depot is now a bank at 9th Street and Royal Gorge Blvd/US-50), which included legal and physical confrontations over building the railroad along the Arkansas River through the Royal Gorge (known as the *Grand Canyon of the Arkansas* at the time) to reach Leadville. At the narrowest point in the Gorge, railroad tracks pass over a hanging bridge built over the river. The legal battle was resolved in the 1880 *Treaty of Boston* (headquarters of AT&SF), spelling out the settlement. Residents of Cañon City had been long thwarted in their attempts to secure rail passenger service and welcomed AT&SF.

MC-Cc-04: Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center. (*Return to Royal Gorge Blvd, turn right and drive four blocks east to the Museum; Turn right on 6th Street, then left into the parking lot).* Located in the former Municipal Building, the Museum has an extensive history collection and is a repository for fossils collected on U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) properties in the area. Check http://www.rgmhc.org/ for hours of operation.

This concludes the description and tour of Fremont County Coal Camps. But wait, there's more! To answer key questions and increase understanding Part II of the guide will provide brief additional information, identify references and suggest additional resources for the curious.

- Why call it the Cañon City Coal Field?
- What is Coal and how does it form?
- How is coal mined?
- How did coal mining start in Fremont Count?
- When did coal mining end in Fremont County?

Why call it the Cañon City Coal Field?

The City of Florence did not exist in the earliest days of coal related activity. When the Coal Field was first identified, Cañon City was the largest place in Fremont County and the County Seat. Joseph T. Musser had marketed coal from near Coal Creek as *Cañon City Coal* and entered it in competitions, where it gained a good reputation. References to the coal field predate the platting of Florence by James A. McCandless in 1872. The D&RG stopped at Labran, about a mile east of what was then called Frazierville, which it had purchased from John Locke and platted in

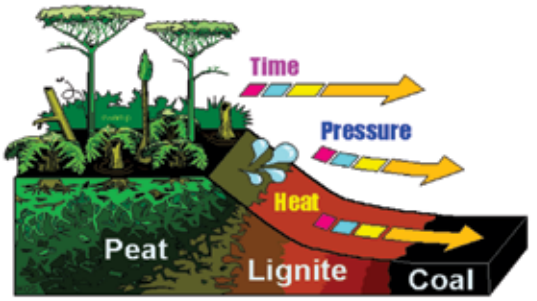


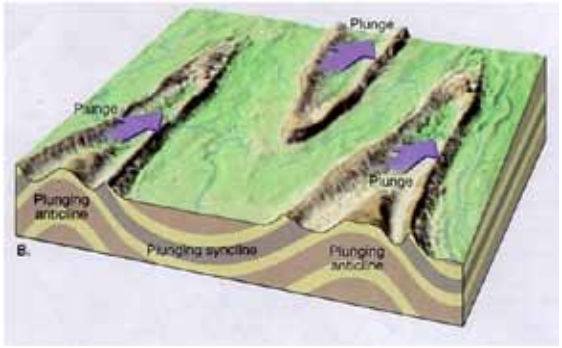
Illustration of coal formation from peat under time and pressure, courtesy of the Kentucky Geological Survey.

Coal in Colorado was formed in peat mires during the Cretaceous and Paleocene-Epoch of the Tertiary Period, between 100 and 55 million years ago. Fresh-water bogs formed along the coastal plains adjacent the shorelines of the Western Interior Seaway that existed in the mid-continent at the time. The climate was hot and sea level was generally high, and the seaway shorelines fluctuated greatly through geologic time.
Source: Colorado Geological Survey

keeping with Palmer's much reviled custom of creating new townsites on land owned by his company that were served by the D&RG. After Florence became successful, Labran was abandoned and Palmer pushed the first rail line into the coal field at Coal Creek.

What is Coal and how does it form? Geology of the coal field.

Coal is an organic sedimentary rock that formed about 300-million years ago from the remains of trees and other plant material at the bottom of a swamp. Many layers accumulated and became **Peat**. As other rock layers built-up over time, the heat, pressure and chemical changes that followed created coal. Coal is a combustible rock and, along with oil and natural gas, is one of the three most important fossil fuels.



The Cañon City Coal Field is structurally what Geologists refer to as a ***Syncline***: a downward arc, trough or curve of a fold in the earth's surface caused by forces within the crust of the earth. (See Illustration) It has steep overturned dips on the west and gentle dips on the east. The coal is bituminous, non-coking and occurs in the **Vermejo Formation** of the **Late Cretaceous Age**. It is more like the Raton Coal Field to the south than the Denver Field to the northeast.

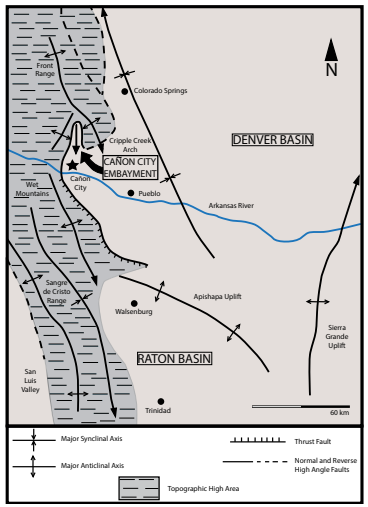
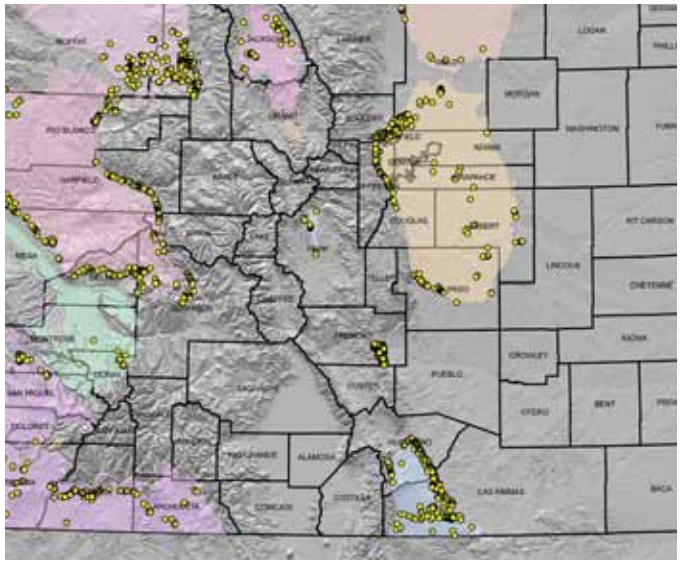


Figure 1.1. General geographical and structural map of the Cañon City Embayment region (modified after Gerhard 1968). Note in particular the Apishapa Uplift, which separates the Denver Basin from the Raton Basin, and the synclinal Cañon City Embayments position between the Wet Mountains and Front Range. (Cross, Pg. 3)

The area is in the ***Cañon City Embayment***, a geologic feature that lies between Colorado's Front Range to the north and the Wet Mountains to the south. It provides the Cretaceous era sediment that results in both the Cañon City Coal Field and the Florence Oil Field. 100-million years ago, the ***Western Interior Seaway*** occupied this area. It covered portions of North America for about 60-million years and its fluctuating boundary created the swampy, marsh type environment that was home to dinosaurs and various marine creatures where trees, ferns, palms and other vegetation thrived. As these plants and animals died, they piled up and created layers of decaying organic material that was later covered by sand and dirt.



Vermejo Formation is what geologists call the resulting ***Late Cretaceous*** period beds from which the bituminous coal was

mined. It is covered by a deep layer of 66-million year old ***Raton Formation Sandstone***. The resulting heat and pressure on top of the accumulated decaying plant material resulted in chemical and physical changes which forced out oxygen and left rich carbon deposits that, over time, became coal. At the end of the Late Cretaceous era "the great changes in North America that resulted in the withdrawal of the sea and the upheaval of mountains in its place naturally caused great changes in climate, and therefore in plant and animal life." (Washburne) This may have been further influenced by the ***K-T Event*** or the Cretaceous-Tertiary Mass Extinction Event, 65-million years ago when about 70% of all species then living on Earth disappeared within a short time, including the dinosaurs. A large asteroid that impacted the Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula is thought to have contributed, along with massive volcanic activity.

How is Coal Mined?
Historically, coal was mined in 185 Fremont County coal mines.

Underground coal mining involves opening one or more portals or shafts into the earth that follow or intercept coal seams that are too deep for surface mining methods. A ***Slope Mine*** follows a coal seam into the ground. A ***Shaft Mine*** uses a vertical entrance to lower miners and equipment in a **Cage** and raise coal to the surface. The shaft intersects **Drifts** or horizontal passages underground which may follow a coal seam or provide access to areas where coal is currently being extracted. **Ventilation** is required for fresh and return air, which may require additional openings on the surface and large fans to move the air. Mine cars loaded with coal and rock were removed from the mine in the early years by **mules or donkeys**, some of which had been left to roam by earlier gold prospectors. Many were stabled underground; when brought to the surface they needed to be blindfolded until their eyes adjusted to the light.

Two main methods of underground mining were practiced: **Room-and-Pillar**: Generally used for seams that are relatively flat or gently dipping. As the 'room' is mined, large 'pillars' of coal are left behind to support the weight of the overburden and rock layers above. This type of mining was the traditional method of underground mining used here and could result in as much as 75% recovery of the target coal seam. When the mine was nearing closure, the roof was temporarily shored-up and the pillars sequentially removed with the roof being allowed to collapse as the miners retreated toward the mine entrance. **Longwall Mining**: Generally used in areas where the coalbed was fairly flat, of uniform thickness and free from faults or other intervening geologic features. Typically done in deeper mines, a large section of coal was prepared by creating access on three sides, then the roof was supported and coal removed from the face of the wall. As the coal was removed and transported away, the roof supports were removed allowing the roof to collapse into the void and miners continued to extract coal from the face of the wall. While this method may have been more productive, it also required a greater investment in equipment and training for miners.

GLOSSARY OF MINING TERMS by Beverly Kissell Harris

1. **Carbide Lights**: A miner's light or lamp with a reflector lens that uses carbide, a compound of carbon, to fuel the flame device. It is usually mounted on the front of a miner's hard hat for the purpose of illuminating the work area. Carbide lights were used prior to battery powered electric lights.
2. **Chute**: An incline or opening, from one level to another level, for dropping ore into cars for transport to a different area.
3. **Coal**: A dark brown to black, natural, solid substance formed from fossilized plants. It consists mainly of carbon and is widely used as a fuel and raw material.
4. **Coal forest**: A growth of the large tree-like plants that existed millions of years ago, and whose fossil remains are found today in the form of coal.
5. **Commissary**: A company store.
6. **Dog House**: A small excavated area in the mine, enclosed with boards, where miners could go to eat lunch and dry wet clothes or boots.

7. **Drift:** A horizontal, or near horizontal tunnel underground, which follows an ore vein.
8. **Driving tunnel**: Excavating a horizontal passage underground, coming from the surface.
9. **Face:** The end of a tunnel, drift or excavation, where the work is done.
10. **Fan House**: Usually a semi-circular enclosure/structure that housed the large fans that forced air down below into the mine. The air ventilation was necessary for the miners to breathe and to remove dangerous gases a such as methane, hydrogen sulfide and carbon monoxide. To prevent inhaling these dangerous gases, underground calmness must be sufficiently ventilated. Often the total weight of the air pumped through the mine exceeded the total weight of coal removed.
11. **Graveyard shift**: Shift times vary in mines. The graveyard or night shift was approximately 11:00 PM until 7:00 AM.
12. **Hoist:** A lift; a power-driven drum with steel cable attached, used primarily for raising or lowering miners and mining materials to various levels. It was connected to a *Headframe* at the top of the *Shaft*.
13. **Lode**: An irregular vein without well-defined walls
14. **Mancage**: Also known as a cage, a contraption similar to an elevator, used for hoisting or lowering ore cars, men, and material.
15. **Mantrips**: Rail-mounted cars constructed with benches to transport miners in and out of a mine at the beginning and end of each shift.
16. **Manways**: Usually a vertical excavation about the size of an elevator shaft, with ladders for climbing to different working places (stopes), or to different levels.
17. **Mine**: A large excavation made in the earth, from which to extract coal or certain other materials. May be open pit or underground.
18. **Muck**: Earth, rocks, or clay excavated in a mine.
19. **Muck Car**: A rail mounted car used primarily for holding and hauling rock and ore.
20. **Pick**: A tool for loosening or breaking up coal or dirt consisting of a slightly curbed bar at both ends and fitted onto a long handle.
21. **Portal:** The opening into a mine.
22. **Powder**: Explosives used in a mine.
23. **Pulling Pillars**: Blasting pillars after excavation or ore is complete, and safety is no longer an issue, in order to get the remaining coal out of a stope.
24. **Raise**: A vertical or near vertical excavation, about the size of an elevator shaft, driven from the bottom up. Similar to a manway.
25. **Shaft**: A vertical or incline excavation for prospecting or working mines. Commonly the size of an elevator shaft, it is sunk from the top down.
26. **Shift Boss**: A front-line supervisor.
27. **Skip**: A square bucket used to raise or lower rock, supplies, or men. It travels on wooden guides in the shaft. The term "skip" is often used interchangeably with mancage.
28. **Stope**: An excavation from which coal has been extracted from a vein.
29. **Swing Shift**: Shift times vary in mines. Swing shift is approximately 3:00 PM until 11:00 PM. The day shift is usually 7:00 AM until 3:00 PM.
30. **Tipple**: A large and imposing structure at the mine where mine cars were "tipped" over and dumped into larger railroad cars for shipment. The cars were loaded down below in the second or third level and brought up on the cages through the main shaft and to the tipple.
31. **Timbering**: Providing ground support with either wood or steel.
32. **Tramcar**: A car, similar to a large bucket, that runs on rails, for transporting broken rock or coal.
33. **Trolley**: A small truck or car operating on a track in a mine.
34. **Vein**: Any mineralized zone. A vein of coal could run anywhere from a few inches to many feet.

Of course, many miners had their own terms and explanations of

working and tools used to mine coal. A miner usually had to supply his own axe, shovel, pick, hat and light. A miner's bucket was in two parts, usually the bottom was filled with water and top was filled with a sandwich and, if lucky, a cookie, piece of pie or fruit. When a miner entered the mine to work he had a tag, usually a metal bar with a number he was assigned when hired, that was taken off a peg board. At end of shift, the miner had to put his tag back on the board. If there was a problem, explosion or fire in the mine, rescuers could look to see whose tag was missing and know who was in the mine. Coal mining was and still is a very dangerous job, with cave-ins, premature explosions or falling slabs just to name a few hazards.

Colorado Fuel & Iron (CF&I) was the first vertically integrated steel mill west of the Mississippi River. As a vertically integrated mill, CF&I controlled all the necessary natural resources to produce steel. Coal, iron ore, limestone, dolomite, and vast reserves of water are all integral to the production of steel. To satisfy these needs, the company owned and operated over 60 mines and quarries spread across Colorado, Utah, Oklahoma, Wyoming and New Mexico. The company became the largest private land owner in Colorado. CF&I claimed some of the most important water rights along the Arkansas River, and created many reservoirs to quench the blast furnaces. CF&I created the Colorado and Wyoming Railway to transport the resources from the distant mines to the steel works. It took thousands of employees to operate such a massive company, and for many years CF&I was the state's largest private employer.

The promise of work in the mines and mills brought immigrants from around the country and across the globe to the West. According to CF&I's Camp and Plant, "over 30 nationalities were employed in company operations – 3,700 Americans, 3,500 Italians, 2,000 Austrians, 1,000 Mexicans, 900 Irish, 800 English, 600 Slavs, 600 Negroes, 400 Hungarians, 400 Welsh, 300 Scotch, 300 Germans, 250 Swedes, 200 Poles, 200 Greeks, 150 French, 100 Swiss, 50 Belgians, 50 Finlanders, 25 Bohemians, 25 Hollanders, the balance being made up of Canadians, Russians, Scandinavians, Norwegians, Indians, Spaniards, Danes and some others." (CF&I, April 18, 1903) The workers brought their work practices, traditions, food and drink preferences as well as wives and children; creating incredibly diverse communities. The immigrant families lived in company houses, shopped at the Colorado Supply Company store, were educated in company-dominated schools and were treated by company doctors.

In efforts to create a loyal, productive and "Americanized" workforce, CF&I was a pioneer in corporate social engineering. Under the direction of its chief surgeon Richard Corwin, the company created a Sociological Department in 1901. The new department was charged to oversee the "betterment of the workers." The company sponsored lectures on hygiene, civics, politics, home economics, history, and the dangers of communism. Classes in English, sewing, citizenship, electrician training, cooking and many other topics were provided for workers and their families. Kindergartens were started in mining camps to help form good citizens, who would in turn, become good company employees. CF&I made a considerable effort to dominate all aspects of their workforce's lives. (Beverly Kissell Harris)

Mary Drenick's Story about life in Rockvale, mining and other interesting aspects of the community follows. Miss Drenick was born in Rockvale in 1904 to Yugoslavian immigrant parents and devoted 47 years of her life to teaching elementary school students in Rockvale and later Florence. The oldest of 10 brothers and sisters, she attended grade school in Rockvale, High School in Florence and earned a degree from Colorado Teachers College, now the University of Northern Colorado, in Greeley.

She began teaching at 16 and retired 47 years later at 63. Miss Drenick did not miss a day of teaching during her career, according to her sister Helen, and received a number of community honors including Distinguished Citizen for the 1971 Florence Pioneer Days, Distinguished Citizen at the Rockvale 100th Anniversary Celebration in 1986, and Florence BPW Woman of the Year in 1967. A lifelong member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Rockvale, she passed away at 99 years of age on October 8, 2003.

ROCKVALE
BY
MARY DRENICK

Written in 1981--100 years after Rockvale was founded.

Rockvale is a coal mining town which was founded in 1881. It is located in Fremont County, Colorado about 3 miles southwest of Florence and 8 miles Southeast of Canon City.

Colonel May homesteaded the land where Rockvale is located. In 1860 he built the first log cabin which is still standing.

At one time, Rockvale was the location of an Indian Village. Arrowheads and other Indian artifacts were found here.

Rockvale is surrounded by many small hills. Some people would refer to them as mountains.

Pikes Peak is in full view from Rockvale.

The air is so clean; not polluted with gas, fumes, or other pollutants.

Most of the population immigrated from Europe and the British Isles. They came from Austria, Yugoslavia, Italy, Germany, Poland, Russia, Wales, Ireland, England, and Scotland. Each group settled in different sections of the town.

Most of the immigrants who settled in Rockvale had very little formal education, but they were filled with great hope and desire to make an honest living and raise a family in their new world, the United States. They had very little money, but always seemed to scrape up enough money to keep going.

The men found work in the coal mines. They women stayed home and took care of the house and children. Most families were large.

The coal mine in Rockvale was owned and operated by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The chief stockholder was John D. Rockefeller, Sr.; the grandfather of the vice president of the United States during Gerald Ford's administration.

In 1914 Mr. Rockefeller Sr. came to Rockvale to look at his mine. While he was in Rockvale, he passed out some shiny new dimes.

The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company shipped coal to Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma for domestic use. They also owned and operated a steel mill in Pueblo, Colorado. The mill is still operating and is the main industry in Pueblo.

There were other mines in the Rockvale viciny within a radius of two to eight miles. Some of the names of those mines were: Nushaft in Coal Creek; Chandler mine in Chandler; Radiant mine in Radiant; Bear Gulch and Williamsburg mines in Williamsburg.

Radiant and Chandler are now ghost towns.

The coal miners did not work full time in the summer months. The men were lucky to get two or three shifts a week.

As the years went by, discrimination raised its ugly head. The people who came from England, Wales, and Scotland referred to themselves as "Americans" and called the people from other countries "Foreigners".

They referred to the Catholics as "Red Necks".

It developed that the so-called "Americans" were employed as bosses, fire-bosses, and superintendents. The so-called "Foreigners" had to dig the coal with a pick.

At that time Catholic men and women could not get jobs as school teachers.

In the early 1900's when Rockvale was in its boom days, the town had six saloons, a town hall, a blacksmith shop, two livery stables, a company store and meat market, two family owned grocery stores, a post office, a barber shop, two churches, a public school, two movie theaters, and a small hotel.

Movies were held once a week in the town hall. They showed two reels of a serial each week. We could hardly wait until the following week to see the next two reels. Of course, each week held one in suspense. Each serial lasted fifteen or twenty weeks.

Most of the houses were of wooden construction with four, five, and six rooms. Each house had a cellar underneath the house where apples, potatoes, and other vegetables were stored. Barrels of sauerkraut were also stored there.

We didn't have electricity in our house until 1920. Before that time we had kerosene lamps. The lamps needed to be cleaned weekly and the wicks had to be replaced quite frequently.

IRONING

We used irons which were heated on the hot stove lids. We kept a half dozen irons on the stove on ironing days. The irons were lifted from the stove with a special handle made to grasp the iron firmly. When one iron cooled off, we would put it back on the stove and pick up a hot iron.

Before using an iron, it was tested on a cloth to be sure the clothes to be ironed weren't scorched.

In those days, everything was heavily starched. There weren't any polyester or wash and wear fabrics. Almost everything had to be ironed.

1914 STRIKE

In 1914 the miners went on strike for higher wages. The strike was against the powerful Rockefellar interests. The wages at that time were $2.30 a day for a ten to twelve hour day.

Miners who worked on a tonnage basis earned less. Tonnage basis was the wages that the miners earned for the amount of coal the miners actually mined and loaded into a coal car.

Today the coal is cut by large cutting machines. The wages are about $100 a day.

The strike lasted two years.

During the strike, much violence ensued. The Chandler Mine tipple was burned. The company store was ransacked and robbed of many supplies. The miners who did not go on strike were lured into dark corners and beaten badly. In fact, a few men, were killed. The miners who did not go on strike were called "scabs"

The violence reach to such a stage that the Governor of Colorado ordered the State Militia to Rockvale to establish a semblance of order.

When the militia was enroute, by train, to Rockvale, they were warned that the miners were lined up along the route with rifles and shot guns. They were told a massacre would occur if they entered Rockvale. The militia returned to Denver which was a wise decision. Otherwise, some men would have been brutally killed that day.

Because the local and state authorities could not suppress or control the violence, the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, called the regular army and declared martial law in Rockvale. The army stayed in Rockvale for six months.

At the end of the strike, many of the union miners were put in jail for disturbing the peace and destroying property. After long and bitter trials, the miners were freed. They lost the strike and returned to work for lower wages.

DEPRESSION

During President Herbert Hoover's administration in October 1929 a great depression hit the United States.

MAFIA

Many Sicilians resided in Williamsburg. A number of them belonged to the Mafia. In those days they were called the "Black Handers". They were from some of the most respected families in the county.

They didn't bother anyone outside of their own circle. They hand-picked the company they kept. They either liked a person or hated him. If one didn't cross a Black Hander, he didn't need to worry--but pity the one who did!

The Mafia wiped out only members of their organization. One man was appointed leader. They held regular meetings and everything was planned as to who and where someone of the organization was to be eliminated. It was one group of members against another group. When a member was to be wiped-out, a meeting of the other members took place. At the designated meeting each man pulled a piece of paper out of a hat. The one who pulled the piece of paper with a black X printed on it had the responsibility of eliminating the unwanted member. If he did not go through with his assignment, he became a "dead duck". Somehow, the members always knew who had pulled the paper with the black X.

The head of the Mafia in the United States lived in Williamsburg. He was just an ordinary friendly person. He peddled fruits and vegetables to the people in the coal mining communities from his horse-drawn-wagon.

In his later years, he moved to Los Angeles, California. He died a natural death there, not a violent one, as one might expect. The papers claimed that he had one of the longest funeral processions in the United States.

COAL MINING

In the early days, the tools required were a pick to dig the coal and a wide shovel to shovel the coal into the pit cars.

The other necessary item was a lunch pail.

The lunch pail was made of aluminum. It had three compartments. The pail was about 14 inches high. The bottom of the pail held the drinking water for the day. It held about a half gallon. The handle was on that part. The next compartment, which fit into the first, was about six inches deep. The sandwiches and fruit were placed in that section. The compartment that fitted into that was a round plate about 2 1/2 inches high. This was for the dessert--cake, cookies, etc.

The miners always fed some scraps from their lunches to the mine mice because they were the miners' friends. Whenever there was danger of a cave-in, the mice scurried away. That was a signal that danger was ahead. When the mice ran, the miners followed.

The miner's hat was made in such a way that the carbide lamp was attached to the front of the hat.

The carbide lamp was an essential part of the equipment. The lamp gave out a good beam of light. The lamp had to be replenished with carbide daily. Most miners bought the carbide in ten pound cans.

After the carbide was placed in the lamp base, the carbide was slightly moistened and then the flint was flicked. This ignited the fumes from the carbide. This provided the light.

The Rockvale mine, and other mines in the area, produced bituminous coal. It burns with much smoke and a yellow flame. It is a soft coal.

The miners went down into the mine in a cage which is similar to an elevator. After arriving at the bottom, they walked about two hundred yards and got on a twelve or twenty-four pit car trip.

The cars were coupled together, and six men got into each car. They were the same cars men loaded with coal. A steel cable was hooked to the last car going down the slope.

The cars traveled at a good rate of speed for several miles. The men got out of their car and walked to their working place.

A miner was assigned to a definite area, and it was called his "place". It was each miner's responsibility to timber the roof and to take every precaution to make the area a safe place to work.

When a miner was digging and loading coal underground, he was continually aware of danger. He tried to make the area a safe place to work. He timbered and checked the roof often.

Some of the miner's fears were alleviated by the "Fire Boss". Each morning at 3:30, he entered the mine and inspected all of the working areas and slopes. He examined the working places for the detection of gases present. He also examined the roof of each place and checked for any weakness in the timber.

To detect gas, he carried a gas flame light called a "Wolfe Lamp". If the flame turned yellow, the oxygen was normal. If the flame turned blue, it meant dangerous gases were present. The Fire Boss held the lamp near the floor and slowly raised it until it was near the roof. He did this several times before he went to the next place.

The Fire Boss made a report of his findings to each miner as he reported to work.

No miner was allowed to enter the mine until it was reported safe. No matches or lighters were allowed in the mine. A mere spark could cause an explosion and the loss of many lives.

If the Fire Boss discovered any gas, a crew of men was assigned to the task of converting the flow of air into the mine. The men placed burlap curtains in several locations which changed the flow of the air.

In the Rockvale mine there were two thousand to three thousand feet of rock and soil between the miners and the surface.

After the coal was mined, it was loaded into a pit car. The mule driver came by, hooked the loaded car and left an empty car in its place. Before the driver left with the loaded coal car, the miner attached an identification number on the car. Each miner was assigned a number and he received credit for the coal he mined.

All the mule drivers met at a station called "partin". There were several stations located in different parts of the mine. Several drivers were assigned to each station. Each driver delivered three or four empty cars to each miner in his area.

After the cars were loaded with coal, the drivers took the loaded cars to the station. They coupled twelve to twenty-four pit cars together, so the cars could be pulled out of the mine by a cable to the bottom of the shaft. Each car was then pulled separately to the top of the mine and the coal was dumped out of the car.

The early coal miners dug coal with a pick and the assistance of some powerful dynamite.

Today most of the mines are equipped with machinery which cuts the fuel. Most of the work is done with automatic equipment. Of course, there are still small mines which do not have automatic equipment.

THE WAY MY DAD MINED COAL

The first thing he had to do was undercut the coal in the base of the vein. (The veins of coal ranged from three to four feet.) He had to dig the coal lying on his side. As he proceeded, he stopped to brace (the miner's term "Sprag") the vein with props to prevent the coal from toppling down on him.

For the next step, a hole two inches in diameter was drilled into the vein of coal at the top. After the hole was drilled, the miner made a six to twelve inch cartridge out of newspaper. The cartridge was filled with black powder. The cartridge was pushed into the hole with a needle--the needle stayed in position until the next step was accomplished.

A needle is difficult to describe. It is made of copper and is about six feet long. The copper prevents sparks from being ignited. The needle has a handle on one end which enabled the miner to get a good grip as he turned and twisted.

For the next step, the miners mixed some coal dust with some rock dust and moistened it just enough so that it remained compact as they tamped.

The procedure took two men. While one threw handfuls of the wet mixture into the hole, the other man tamped the mixture with an iron bar. This procedure continued until the hole was filled. After the hole was filled, the miners twisted and turned the needle until it was released from the hole. After the needle was out, an opening, the thickness of a pencil remained. The squib was inserted near the edge of the hole. The safety lamp was used to light the squib.

The miners then ran for cover. It wasn't long before they knew that the lighted squib had reached the black powder. An explosion was heard. The coal was released and ready to be shoveled into the pit car. A lot of digging had to be done also.

When dynamite was used, every safety rule was followed. When the fuse was inserted into the blasting cap and into the dynamite, it had to be done very gently, Dynamite is a very high explosive. A slight jar could cause it to explode.

The miners worked on a tonnage basis. They were paid so much per ton for the coal they dug. The rates were

75¢, $1.00, and $1.25 per ton.

Many times the coal had to be shoveled two or three times before it was loaded into a pit car.

"Breaker Boys" as young as eight years old worked in mines separating the coal from the slate.

Typical pay for a ten hour day was six cents an hour.

"Breaker Boys" in Fremont County were called "Slate pickers".

How did Coal Mining Start? Industrialization of the Coal Field

Development of the Cañon City Coal Field, its mines and the Coal Camps that housed its incredibly diverse workforce, was closely linked to the post-Civil War industrialization of America. The American economy grew at the most rapid rate in history, doubling in size during this period, and a few powerful industrialists began to dominate through ruthless competition. Before the Civil War, most Americans worked for themselves but, by 1900, most were employed by corporations. In 1869, about 600 Coloradans worked in 154 manufacturing plants, by 1889 over 11,000 Coloradans worked in 904 plants – including the Steelworks in Pueblo. This rapid industrialization created significant economic and social changes in Colorado – none more than in the Coal Camps.

The harsh treatment of workers, anti-competitive business practices, graft and corruption of the day caused Mark Twain to satirically describe the period as the ***Gilded Age*** – making fun of the term *Golden Age* by referring to the coating of a cheaper metal with a thin layer of gold.

General William Jackson Palmer was the most prominent initial influence in developing the Cañon City Coal Field. Prior to distinguished service in the Civil War, General Palmer had worked for east coast railroads and led the conversion of the Pennsylvania Railroad from wood to coal burning locomotives. He had served as Confidential Secretary to J. Edgar Thomson, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, who later sent him west to work on

the expansion of the affiliated Kansas Pacific Railroad. Through Thomson, Palmer encountered other east coast Industrialists and Financiers, including Andrew Carnegie, and wealthy Philadelphia investors.

Palmer, using funds from east coast and English investors, acquired 10,000 acres of land near Colorado City for the new resort town of Colorado Springs which he and long-time friend and associate Dr. William A. Bell of London established in 1871. Palmer had the idea of a north-south railroad along the Front Range and through the mountains that would ultimately cross the Rio Grande and serve Mexico City. He envisioned a three foot wide *narrow gauge* railroad that would reduce construction and operating costs while speeding construction and be more nimble in serving mountainous areas. This contrasted with the *standard gauge* of 4 feet 8½ inches that had been established by President Abraham Lincoln to standardize the construction of the transcontinental railroad and was used by most other American railroads.

The narrow gauge Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) began regular service to Colorado Springs on January 1, 1872, by June reached Pueblo and by October reached the Cañon City Coal Field. Railroad access to this coal field was of great strategic importance to Palmer. His enterprises needed coal and he knew that the Cañon City Coal Field was the source of some of the best bituminous coal in the west; D&RG locomotives got 85 miles per ton, compared to 40 miles with coal from other areas. He could also use the D&RG to ship coal to other locations where Cañon City Coal was much in demand. In Denver, at that time, Cañon City coal "sells for over $20 per ton, replacing the coals from the neighborhood, which may be had at about one-fourth this price." (Lamborn, pg. 309) So, the coal field was critical to D&RG as both a source of significant freight revenue and as a source of fuel for railroad locomotives.

Seeking ways to minimize costs and maximize profits, Palmer "realized that the railroad could save money by producing its own steel rails. So, he consolidated D&RG's subsidiaries in 1879 and built a steel mill in Pueblo – and thus was born the Colorado Coal and Iron Company (CC&I)" (Clyne, pg. 5). As an Industrialist and business tycoon, Palmer was truly a 'man of his times.' He was "as good an example of a Gilded Age Industrialist as Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Rockefeller, Gould or Pullman." (Sturdevant, pg. 9)

The Pittsburg of the West is what Palmer set out to create with the Steelworks in Pueblo. By merging the Colorado Fuel Company with CC&I and his other holdings, Palmer and his associates brought under single management the iron ore, coal and other resources needed in steel-making. With the D&RG and associated land holdings, Palmer "was assembling the component parts of an integrated industrial network at the foot of the Rockies…. using capital from J. Edgar Thomson and a small clique of other investors from Philadelphia and England. On these tracts, he projected the building of lumber operations, irrigated farms, cattle ranches, tourist resorts, townsite developments and other enterprises…. All Palmer's imaginings rested upon the coal outcrops of southern Colorado." (Andrews. Pg. 49) In addition to the D&RG and the steel mill south of Pueblo, through the Central Colorado Improvement Company (CCIC), Palmer and associates purchased many other properties totaling some 84,000 acres, giving the company an early advantage in control over production and shipping of coal in the region.

The construction of the railroad and development of the coal field added to the economic prosperity of the four counties D&RG passed through between 1870 – 1873 with growth of assessed property value from $7 million in 1870 to over $18 million in 1873, according to Palmer's associate Dr. Bell.

Railroads were essential to serve significant coal mines and there was fierce competition between the D&RG, known locally as the "Little Road" or "Baby Road," and the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroads (AT&SF), generally known as "the Atchison." Both battled over serving the coal field, developing coal mines and extending their respective lines. The D&RG had reached Cañon City in 1874,

An 1892 Colorado Railroad Map shows the D&RG had lines into the coalfield serving mines at Coal Creek, Fremont and Chandler while ATSF served Rockvale, Williamsburg and Radiant. See Overlook 4.

after extorting $100,000 from the City for the privilege of a station, and was building along the Arkansas River to the Silver mines in Leadville when, on April 19, 1878, it encountered AT&SF construction crews at the east entrance to the Royal Gorge. The resulting two-year legal battle also included physical confrontations between the railroads – led by W.B. "Bat" Masterson, J.H. "Doc" Holliday and 60 or so of Dodge City gunmen for AT&SF and J.R. DeRemer (whose hastily constructed rock defensive structures would become known as ***DeRemer Forts***) for the D&RG. The confrontation ended with the "Treaty of Boston," agreed to in AT&SF's hometown, with D&RG winning the right to continue its line through the Gorge, which narrowed to a mere 30-feet where a hanging-bridge carried the tracks over the river.

Raton Pass was another location where the two companies battled for control early in 1878, but that was easily won by AT&SF. They purchased the rights to the Pass from R.L. "Uncle Dick" Wootton who built a toll road over Raton Pass in 1865. Wootton turned down the initial AT&SF offer of $50,000 for the pass; agreeing instead for lifetime groceries and a pass on the train for he and his wife, who lived until 1937. This dashed Palmer's plan to cross the Rio Grande into Mexico; instead, he would knit together gold and silver mining towns with railroad access.

RAILROAD BUILDING TO THE COAL CAMPS:

NAME	FROM	TO	BUILT	CONVERTED	ABND/SOLD
Denver & Rio Grande					
Coal Creek Branch	Florence	Coal Banks	1872 (NG)	1887 (3R);1911 (SG)	1924
Oak Creek Branch	Florence	Coal Mines	1881 (NG)	1890 (SG)	1905
Chandler Creek Br	Chandler Jct.	Chandler	1890 (NG)	1905 (SG)	1944
Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe					
Rockvale Branch	Pueblo	Rockvale, etc.	1881 (SG)	(also served Radiant)	1947
Brookside Spur	Brookside Jct.	Mine	1888 (SG)		1947
Wolf Park Mine	Cañon City	Wolf Park	1908 (SG)	(& Royal Gorge mine)	1942

NG = Narrow Gauge, (3-feet between rails); SG = Standard Gauge, (4-feet, 8½ inches between)

Coal from the Cañon City Coal Field, the Raton coal beds near Trinidad and other locations in Colorado, New Mexico and the west, stoked the furnaces at the CC&I steel mill south of Pueblo. Work began in February 1880 on a blast furnace and the plant produced 284 tons of pig iron in 1880, growing to 6,392 tons in 1881 and the first 30-foot steel rails by April 1882 using the Bessemer Process developed by Sir Henry Bessemer of England in 1856. The market for steel products slumped in 1883 and began a series of economic ups and downs. This, along with various anti-competitive transportation and production practices of the times, challenged CC&I's profitability. In 1884 Palmer, always short of the cash needed to carry out his grand ambitions, and CC&I defaulted on interest payments and Wall Street investors replaced him with east coast Coal Baron Edward J. Berwind. While Berwind was able to boost company income a bit by the development and sale of housing to mill workers, the steel mill continued to struggle; partially due to the competition John C. Osgood's Colorado Fuel Company (CFC).

John C. Osgood came to Colorado from Iowa as a representative of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad to inspect Colorado's coal resources. In 1884 he moved to Denver and, with Iowa associates, organized the Colorado Fuel Company, which became a fierce competitor with CC&I that would take many contracts from the older organization. In October 1892 disgruntled CC&I investors,

who had suffered years of financial losses, agreed to a merger with Osgood's company and Colorado Fuel & Iron (CF&I) was formed. The merged company had $13 million of authorized capital and controlled about 72,000 acres of coal land, 14 coal mines with capacity of 12,000 tons per day, four coking plants with 800 ovens that could produce 1,000 tons of coke per day and over 2,000 acres of iron lands.

Unable to legally sell the Bessemer works, Osgood began to modernize and expand the plant. The Panic of 1893, caused by the Sherman Silver Purchase Act resulting in the failure of many Colorado silver mines, created further problems for CF&I. Mines were closed, wages cut, the use of scrip (company money) instituted; all of which lead to worker unrest. Osgood, an ardent foe of Unions, was faced with a strike lasting from April to August 1894 which cost CF&I $40,000; mostly offset by the company's "strike fund," created from charging miners a small fee for every ton of coal they mined. CF&I would continue to be beset by labor difficulties, anti-competitive practices and modernization expenses for what was then called its Minnequa Works. Faced with a threatened takeover by Chicago's United States Steel Corporation, Osgood invited financial assistance from Industrialists George Gould and John D. Rockefeller, who became principal shareholders in 1903. Osgood left CF&I after losing control, but continued his involvement in the Cañon City Coal Field and other Colorado coal mines through his Victor-American Fuel Company which owned the mines and controlled the company towns at Chandler and Radiant.

"The Pueblo mills stood at the core of a vast industrial ecosystem encompassing iron and manganese mines, limestone quarries, retail and wholesale stores, immense hydraulic systems, two subsidiary railroads, a telephone company, a cooperage for making nail kegs, sales offices stretching from Los Angles to Kansas City and from Spokane to Fort Worth, and, of course, more than a dozen collieries and several coking plants." (Andrews, pg. 61) This vast complex began with the vision of General William Jackson Palmer and initial support from the Cañon City Coal Field. In 1901 Palmer sold his shares in D&RG for $15 million, $1 million of which was distributed to company employees. Palmer retired to his impressive estate, Glen Eyrie, near the Garden of the Gods. In 1906 he was severely injured in a horseback riding accident. Palmer died on March 13, 1909 at the age of 72 leaving an estate estimated at $15 million in value by the *New York Times*.

Industrialist John D. Rockefeller and Financier George Jay Gould and their related interests had control of CF&I by 1903. Labor policies instituted under Osgood were taking their toll in worker unrest and the company began to change its approach, instituting employee relations programs intended to counteract increasing union pressure. A Sociological Department had been established to foster labor force stability and influence the lifestyle and habits, especially of immigrant miners, mill workers and their families, in response to a 1901 strike. This included the publication ***Camp & Plant*** published for five years for the CF&I employees. The publication ended in company cut-backs in response to an economic downturn in 1908. After the 1913-14 strike and subsequent Ludlow Massacre where 66 men, women and children were murdered by CF&I forces, President John D. Rockefeller, Jr. strengthened CF&I's employee programs, which included bringing the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), of which he was a national Trustee and important donor, into the camps to improve conditions.

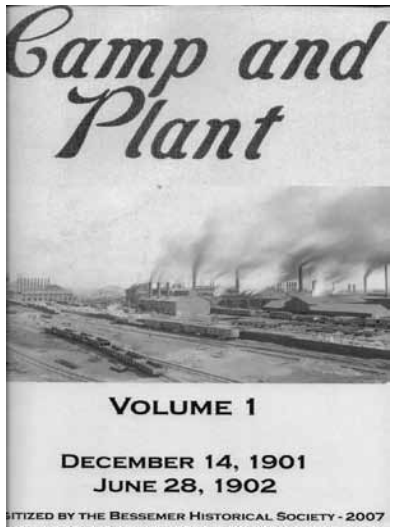
The development and evolution of the Coal Camps mirrored American economic and social trends of the times. Unions emerged in response to the companies' treatment of workers, but it would be 1933 before CF&I workers replaced their company union with the United Mine Workers of America, even though labor leader and Union President John L. Lewis had worked in Rockvale in 1901. In response to poor and unsafe working conditions and the worst of the anti-competitive and corrupt business practices, hearings were held by State and Federal legislative committees and a host of new agencies and rules were promulgated. Theodore Roosevelt's succession to President in 1901 after McKinley's assassination began the era of Trust-Busting which continued with his 1904 election.

"During his terms as President, Roosevelt battled big business to regulate it and prevent monopolies from harming American society. He believed that these so-called robber barons (or captains of industry, depending on one's view), had helped America advance and become a major influence internationally, but he also wanted to tame them so they could not to harm the average citizen." (Gilder Lehrman Institute)

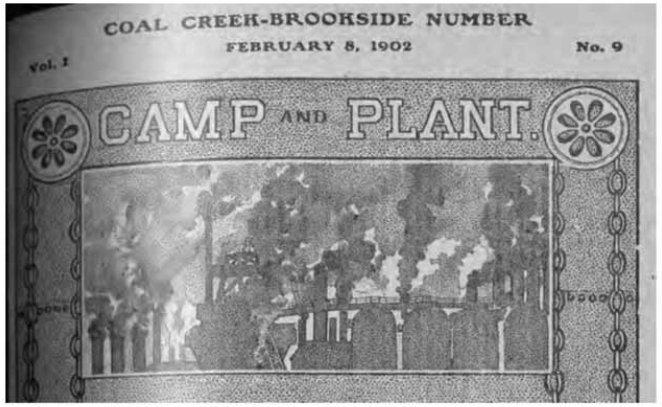
Synopsis from Camp and Plant, The CF&I Newsletter, from December 1901 to June 1902 Source: Steelworks Museum digitized edition of Camp and Plant
By: the Fremont County Heritage Commission and Fremont County Historical Society

Coal camps throughout the Western United States were owned by corporate companies for support of their other industries – such as CF&I Steel works in Pueblo. The camps were connected to CF&I in many ways; medical, company stores, night schools, kindergartens, reading rooms, baseball teams and the weekly newsletter put out by the Sociological Department of CF&I. Due to the multinational composition of the company workforce, some articles in Camp and Plant were written in German, Spanish, Italian and Slovenian. The newsletters were digitized by the Bessemer Historical Society in 2007. This book is available at the museum of the Steelworks Center of the West in Pueblo. This includes the stories, baseball scores, hospital reports, camp news, and other enlightening items as well as jokes and advertisements.

The Coal Camps of Fremont County were established in 1860 by the hand dug and wheelbarrow methods practiced by various owners of the land in the coal belt – Florence to Cañon City. The CF&I Corporation then purchased the most promising of these claims, and continued to expand and increase the tonnage of many of them. There were up to 185 mines in Fremont County at one time, and the CF&I Corporation owned many of them. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company and the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad supplied these camps with goods for the Company Stores, and carried away millions of tons of coal to the Pueblo Steel Mills. At the time of the first printing of ***Camp and Plant*** there were 68 coal, iron and coke camps throughout New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. There were 16,000 men working in these camps. Subscription to the newsletter was $1.00 a year for employees, or $.10 an issue.



The newsletters available in ***Camp and Plant*** are a treasure of stories about each of the camps and the people who were living and working in them at the time. The doctors, Colorado Supply Store managers, the bookkeepers, and the mine foremen were often mentioned in the stories, as well as social events, birthday parties, cultural events and traveling of the employees. The Hospital reports in March, April, May and June are repetitive, so not much information is new after April. However, it is the Spring editions of the newsletter that have the baseball scores of the various teams, which were written up in an enthusiastic way with description of the great play and players of the game. The baseball teams were of great importance to the camps.



Excerpts from the Camp and Plant newsletter follow, courtesy of Beverly Kissell Harris, who has amassed an amazing number of historical documents, pictures and stories about the Coal Camps in Fremont County.

Volume 1, #7, January 28, 1902:
"January 8, we had a serious accident here by which John Peteneck, an Austrian, was killed by a fall of rock. The deceased was a single man, and the Austrian Society, of which he was a member, took charge of his remains and buried them in the Highland Cemetery."

Volume 1, #8, February 1, 1902:
"Our superintendent J. P. Thomas is receiving congratulations on account of our mine producing 1,021 tons of coal on Tuesday, January 21, 1902 which was the largest production for one day for a year".

Volume 1, #9, February 8, 1902:
"In 1871, the first extensive work was begun for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company in Coal Creek by Mr. Depue to develop the Company's mining property at this point. The town of Coal Creek did not exist".


CAMP AND PLANT

VOLUME III WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1903 NUMBER 5

COAL CREEK.

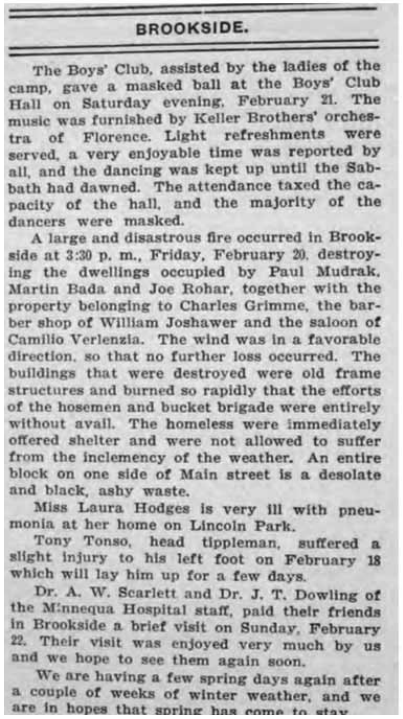
Mae Gregory arrived this week from Illinois to visit at the home of her grandmother, Mrs. Sarah K. Davis.

The Eighth Grade has taken up the study of bookkeeping for the remainder of the year. A great interest is manifested in the work.

The citizens of this place held a meeting recently and voted to organize a brass band. Twenty-four names were secured as members and a committee was appointed to select and purchase instruments. As soon as the instru-


CAMP AND PLANT

VOLUME III SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1903 NUMBER 9


BROOKSIDE.

The Boys' Club, assisted by the ladies of the camp, gave a masked ball at the Boys' Club Hall on Saturday evening, February 21. The music was furnished by Keller Brothers' orchestra of Florence. Light refreshments were served, a very enjoyable time was reported by all, and the dancing was kept up until the Sabbath had dawned. The attendance taxed the capacity of the hall, and the majority of the dancers were masked.

A large and disastrous fire occurred in Brookside at 3:30 p. m., Friday, February 20, destroying the dwellings occupied by Paul Mudrak, Martin Bada and Joe Rohar, together with the property belonging to Charles Grimme, the barber shop of William Joshawer and the saloon of Camilio Verlenzia. The wind was in a favorable direction, so that no further loss occurred. The buildings that were destroyed were old frame structures and burned so rapidly that the efforts of the hosemen and bucket brigade were entirely without avail. The homeless were immediately offered shelter and were not allowed to suffer from the inclemency of the weather. An entire block on one side of Main street is a desolate and black, ashy waste.

Miss Laura Hodges is very ill with pneumonia at her home on Lincoln Park.

Tony Tonso, head tippleman, suffered a slight injury to his left foot on February 18 which will lay him up for a few days.

Dr. A. W. Scarlett and Dr. J. T. Dowling of the Minnequa Hospital staff, paid their friends in Brookside a brief visit on Sunday, February 22. Their visit was enjoyed very much by us and we hope to see them again soon.

We are having a few spring days again after a couple of weeks of winter weather, and we are in hopes that spring has come to stay

When did Coal Mining End?
The last reported coal production in Fremont County was in 2000.

The Cañon City Coal Field was one of the earliest developed coal fields in Colorado. After 1878 as many as 185 mines operated (some may have been the same mine with a different name or ownership), producing a total of 48-million tons of coal. Based on an estimated 295-million tons of coal located here, about 247-million tons remain in the ground. Peak mining activity occurred between the 1890s and 1940s and began to dwindle in the 50s and 60s. In 1958 the field had 21 active mines but, by 1978, there were only six coal mines in Fremont County producing about 125,000 tons per year. In 1980 there were only four active mines here, three of which were

underground and one a surface mine, where the coal was close to the surface without too much ***Overburden*** needing removal. By 1990 there were only two mines. While abundant coal reserves remain in the ground, demand for coal is declining and there are lower cost strip mines in northwestern Colorado that produce coal at a much lower cost.

Energy Fuel's Southfield is: The last coal mine
By Davalynn Spencer
Special to the Daily Record;
Editor's Note: This story appeared in the Daily Record on April 18, 1996
(Used by permission)

Low-profile shuttle cars were used to carry freshly-mined coal to the conveyor belt. (*RGRMHC Photos*)

Miners wedge a forest of pine timbers close to a pillar of coal that will soon be mined. Bearing the weight of the mine ceiling as the coal is harvested, splitting timbers tell the men when it's time to back away.

A thousand feet beneath the hills of southern Fremont County stands a squatty grove of timers that creak and groan from the weight of rock and soil and stream.

Coal miners call it no-man's land - the place where no man goes once the talking timbers are set.

Miners wedge the lifeless forest into the coal vein to protect themselves while they harvest the rich mineral fuel - and to warn them when it's time to leave. Their lives depend upon the decades-old system the same way their father's and grandfather's lives did before them.

However, one thing sets those generations of miners apart, and that's the very process by which they pull the satiny black coal from the earth.

Today coal is unearthed by machines called Continuous Miners or Long Wall Miners, all electrically powered. Yet even above the noise of the machinery, a crew foreman listens as the timbers talk in squeaks and pops and groans.

A cave-in is what he wants - it closes the hole behind the miners like a dentist fills a cavity. But the trick is to know before it happens that it's going to happen, and only the foreman's eyes and ears can pinpoint the moment.

"It's a race between us and mother nature - before the roof caves in," said Gary Carroll, Southfield's Safety Manager.

Operated by one man with remote control, the 50,000 ton mechanized eel chews away at the face of an 80 to 100-foot cubicle 'pillar'. In less than 30 seconds, nine tons of coal are loaded onto a waiting shuttle car and driven to a conveyor belt 100 yards away. From there, the black nuggets begin their 4,500 foot long ride up an eight percent slope to daylight.
As the mass of the pillar is removed, the weight-bearing timbers begin to bend and moan, splintering out last-minute warnings that the ceiling is ready to give way.

Anticipation builds; even the atmosphere changes as men strain their eyes for the foreman's cap-lamp to slice the darkness from left to right and back again - his signal for imminent danger.
When it comes, man and machine appear to leap into reverse, backing away from the crumbling wall of rock and coal. Like so many toothpicks, the timers splinter beneath the crushing weight. Just as the foreman hoped, the collapse fills in the long dark cavities of the emptied vein without trapping the men.

As though painting themselves out of a room through a single door,

the miners retreat to another pillar in the underground maze. With only their cap-lamps to guide them in the seamless dark, they set more timbers, and start the process all over again.

This scenario is worked out every day at the Energy Fuels Southfield Mine south of Florence off Highway 67. A portal slits a hillside near Florence Mountain Park and opens the underground vein like an IV in the arm of a sleeping giant.

Fremont County is rich with the history of coal mining, from the discovery of the first vein in 1863, to the independent family mines and eventually company-owned operations like Southfield. The same subterranean field containing the rich vein currently mined by Energy Fuels runs beneath Rockvale, Coal Creek, Brookside and up to Cañon City. Scattered abandoned mines pock-mark the field, bearing witness to the fact that coal was the early life-blood of the area.

Now, two and three generations later, Southfield bears the distinction of being the last operating coal mine in the county as well as on Colorado's front range. But not for long.
By December even the last mine will be gone and the coal fields of Fremont County will forever be a buried memory.

"It's more than rumor," said George Patterson, general mine manager at Southfield. "We don't have a real hard schedule yet, but it's certainly headed that way. The Southfield mine is and always has been dependent on local business in the area, back to 1978."

The first blow came last December when Energy Fuels lost its contract with WestPlains Energy. Another local contract with Holcim runs out the end of this year.

Production is scheduled to shut down the first week of June, but the mine will continue filling contracts for the rest of the year, Paterson said. And even though reclamation is slated to begin in January, officials are still trying to find an avenue for continuation.

"Unless we can find that miracle, we're headed for shutdown," he said.

Shutting down the mine means shutting down 51 family incomes in the area: 49 from Fremont County, and one each from Custer and Pueblo counties. Family bread winners will have to look elsewhere for work.

"If I stay with the mining industry, I'll have to relocate," said Carroll. Coal dust stains the creases of his hands, a telltale sign of 20 years in the industry. Others will look for work wherever they can find it.

Southfield was developed in 1978 and during the 1980's employed more than 200 people who worked three sections of the mine at once.

Between 1900 and 1992 the mine pumped more than $11 million into the county and nearby area in wages, leases, royalties, taxes and vendors.

Today, just one arm of the 1,500 underground acres is mined.

Production begins at 7 a.m. - three hours after fire boss Cecil Slattery enters the portal alone to check the day's work site for safety. There is little difference between the dark of pre-dawn night and the throat of the mine at three o'clock in the morning.

The "ribs" or walls of the mine, as well as the ceiling and floor, are dusted with limestone to lessen the combustibility of the coal dust. Three fans maintain a continuous airflow, pulling 52,000 cubic feet of air per minute. They suck out deadly methane gas and pull in fresh outside air. Dust and methane levels are constantly monitored for the miners' health and safety. Too high a level, and the operation shuts down.

Every piece of underground machinery is electrically powered

through a thick cable snaking 4,160 volts of electricity into the cool, dark caverns. In 1995, electrical bills from WestPlains averaged more than $16,500 a month.

Since 1979 the mine averaged 300,000 salable tons of coal a year until 1995. If operations continued at that rate, there would be six or seven years' worth of coal left to mine. At a slower rate, even more.

Producing 900 to 1,000 tons of coal per eight-hour shift, Southfield can't keep up with "long wall" processes on the Western Slope, in Wyoming and the East. Long Wall miners chew out between 25,000 and 30,000 tons per shift - 200 percent more than Southfield.

"We're just a small mine," said Patterson. A diagram of the underground labyrinth hangs on his office wall: a grid of mains and roads and pillars. "It's basic industrial competition and big companies."

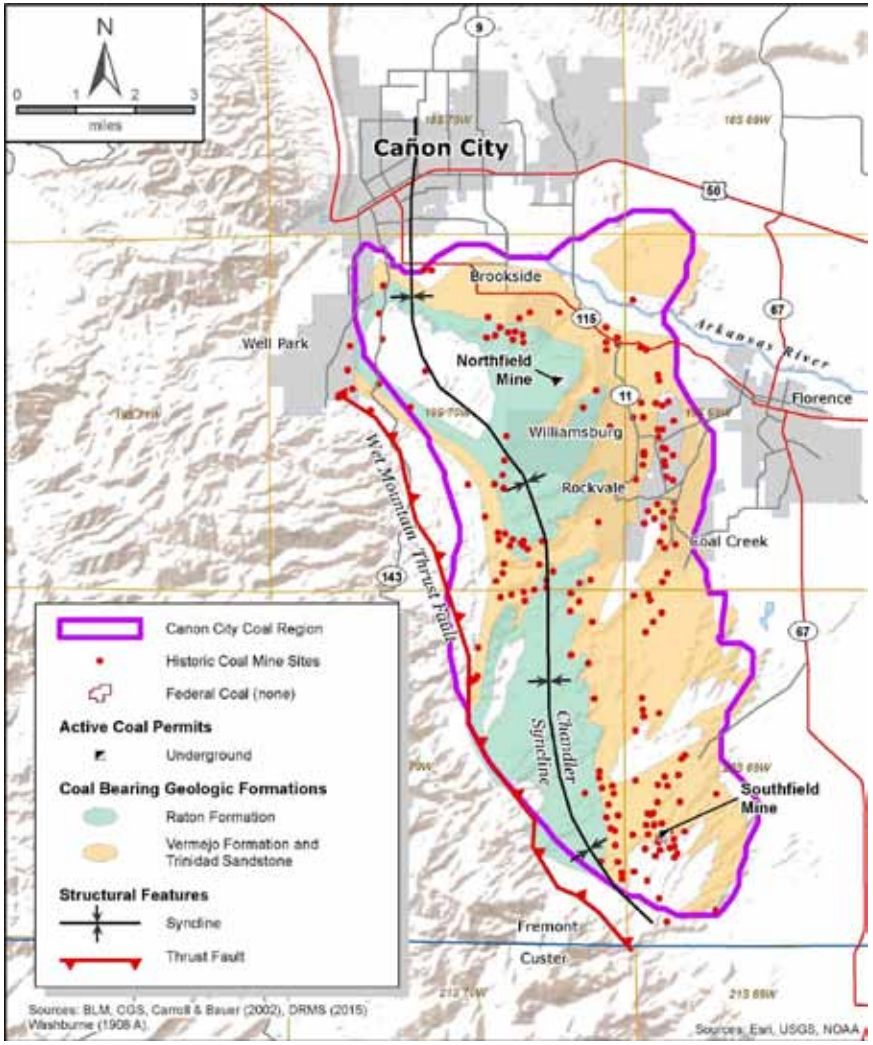
Economics are shutting down the mine. "We have to look at our cost," said Patterson. "Our customers have to look at the bottom line also.

If the miracle contract doesn't come in, Southfield will cave in on itself. At first the process is sudden, even painful as the portals are destroyed, buildings and equipment removed. But restoration takes longer as grasses and native brush are reseeded and the area "reclaimed" to its original pastoral setting.

"Reclamation takes years," said Patterson, a specialist in the process. "There are so many stages. They must be sealed, inspected, approved. We haven't started anything physically yet, but we're in the planning process."

If all goes on schedule, a decade from now sons of miners may climb the gentle hills near Florence Mountain Park, look down into a quiet hidden valley and say, "My daddy was a miner there . . . a long time ago."

The Southfield mine reported production of over 230,000 tons of bituminous coal from the Dirty Jack seam in each of 1998 and 1999. Through July of 2000 it reported production of about 117,000 tons. From 1984 to 2000 it produced a total of 6.36-million tons. There are no further reports of coal production in Fremont County although the 42-MW Clark Power Plant continued to burn approximately 250,000 tons of coal per year for electric generation through its closing at the end of December 2012.



Resources & References

The Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center, 612 Royal Gorge Blvd, Cañon City, 81212 supplied photos and research files on coal mining, railroads, area history and related topics. Hours open and other information is available at http://www.rgmhc.org/.

The Florence Historical Archive, Inc. 600 W. 3rd Street, Suite H, Florence, 81226 supplied photos and research on coal mining, railroads and area Coal Camps. Hours open and other information is available at https://www.facebook.com/Florence-Historical-Archive-432771616926733/.

The Florence Pioneer Museum and Research Center, 100 E. Front Street, Florence, 81226 is a good resource with information and displays on area mining. Hours open and other information is available at https://www.florencepioneermuseum.org/.

The Fremont County Historical Society, P. O. Box 965, Cañon City, 81215 owns the Prospect Heights Jail and provides periodic tours and programs on historic topics every other month. Information is available at https://www.fremontheritage.com/fc-historical-society/.

The Fremont County Heritage Commission, 615 Macon Ave, Cañon City, 81212 supported the publication of this and other Heritage Guides presenting information on area history. Information is available at https://www.fremontheritage.com/fch-commission/.

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This ***Fremont County Heritage Guide*** is one in a series intended to convey the fascinating history and extensive heritage of our diverse county. Fremont County is among Colorado's original 17 counties, established in 1861 as part of Colorado Territory. The Arkansas River spills out of the Rocky Mountains onto the Great Plains here and served as both a route of early exploration and an international boundary after the Louisiana Purchase.

The ***Fremont County Heritage Commission*** and the ***Fremont County Historical Society*** have joined together to provide accurate and authentic information about the area. Assisted by the Fremont County Tourism Council and aided by a grant from the Colorado Tourism Office these heritage guides are available to download for free at https://www.fremontheritage.com/self-guided-heritage-tours-2/. Printed copies are available at museums, Chambers of Commerce and area businesses for a modest donation to assist with the cost of reprinting. For questions or further information, please contact info@fremontheritage.com.

Panorama # 1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2 Water Tanks Coal Creek & Rockvale	Wet Mountains	Alkali Creek	Rockvale	Oak Creek	Coal Creek	Williams-burg	Brookside	Arkansas River

Union Highlands Overlook

The beige wave you see before you begins flat at the Arkansas River Valley floor (9) to your right, to rise slowly to almost vertical as it breaks against the base of the southerly curving Wet Mountains (2). The coal field's many north-south horizontal layers are visible against the blue of the Wet Mountains.

The entire length of the coal field, as it lies against the mountain range, is divided into segments by five creeks flowing from the Wet Mountains into the Arkansas River: Alkali (3), Coal Creek (6), Oak Creek (5), Chandler Creek and Sandy Run. The latter two are out of sight on the other side of the bluff at Williamsburg (7).

The land segments between the creeks are very mountainous and rugged. Alkali Creek (3) defines the southern edge of the coal field near Radiant, with Sandy Run near Prospect Heights and Cañon City defining the northern edge of the field.

Each one of the major coal towns, Coal Creek (1), Rockvale (4), Chandler, Brookside (8), and Prospect Heights, lie on or near one of these five creeks that were used by the railroads to provide access. Rockvale (4) and Williamsburg (7) both lie on Oak Creek (5) as it heads for Florence and the Arkansas River (9).

Oak Creek (5) roughly divides the field in half. Most of the northern plateau lies before you from the water tanks at (1) – Coal Creek rusty brown, Rockvale, white – to Sandy Run at Cañon City. You cannot see Chandler Creek, Brookside (8) or Sandy Run as the segment between Oak Creek and Chandler Creek; the bluff facing you at Williamsburg (7) is too high for you to see over.

Photo – Carol McNew

Panorama # 2

Southern Coal Fields Overlook

There is a deep valley that runs down to the southern coal fields below Radiant; this steep mountainous range is the land segment between Coal Creek and Oak Creek. Oak Creek lies along the tree line just across the meadow. The closed and reclaimed ruins of several mines (1), (3) and (4) are located on these hills. The blue mountain range beyond the peaks is the southerly trending Wet Mountains from which all the creeks flow. The mountainous land segment between Oak Creek and Chandler Creek lies at your back.

The abandoned railroad and access roads to Twin Pines, Cedar Canyon and Last Chance mines lie on the far side of these ridges. Only County Road 86, along the backside of these ridges, accesses the white Rockvale Water Tank (2) that was visible from Panorama #1 at Union Highland Cemetery.

Photo - Margaret Stiles Storm

Panorama # 3

Brookside Overlook

Traveling north from the intersection of U.S. Highway 50 and Colorado Highway 67 (1) beyond the red barn in the distance, CO-67 crosses the Arkansas River Valley to the mountains at Indian Springs (2). To the south CO- 67 passes behind the three buttes on a high plateau on which lie the Fremont County Airport (3) and the Florence High school. The plateau dips down into the Arkansas River Valley where the river runs west to east along the backside of these buttes hiding Florence (4) from view. The river takes an abrupt eastward turn at Castle Rock (5) receiving Oak Creek. Mc Cumber hill (7) is the backside of the bluff that was visible from Union Highland Cemetery obscuring Brookside. County Road 11A runs down this bluff from Williamsburg to the river at Brewster (8). Hidden deep in the valley between Fawn Hollow (10) and Brewster is the dam and head gates of the Minnequa Canal (9) feeding water to the steel mills in Pueblo. MacKenzie Avenue (11) connects US 50 with CO-115 hidden in the valley below. All the land on the far side of the river to US-50, between (11) and (4) is Colorado Department of Corrections - prison land.

Photo - James C. Storm

Panorama # 4

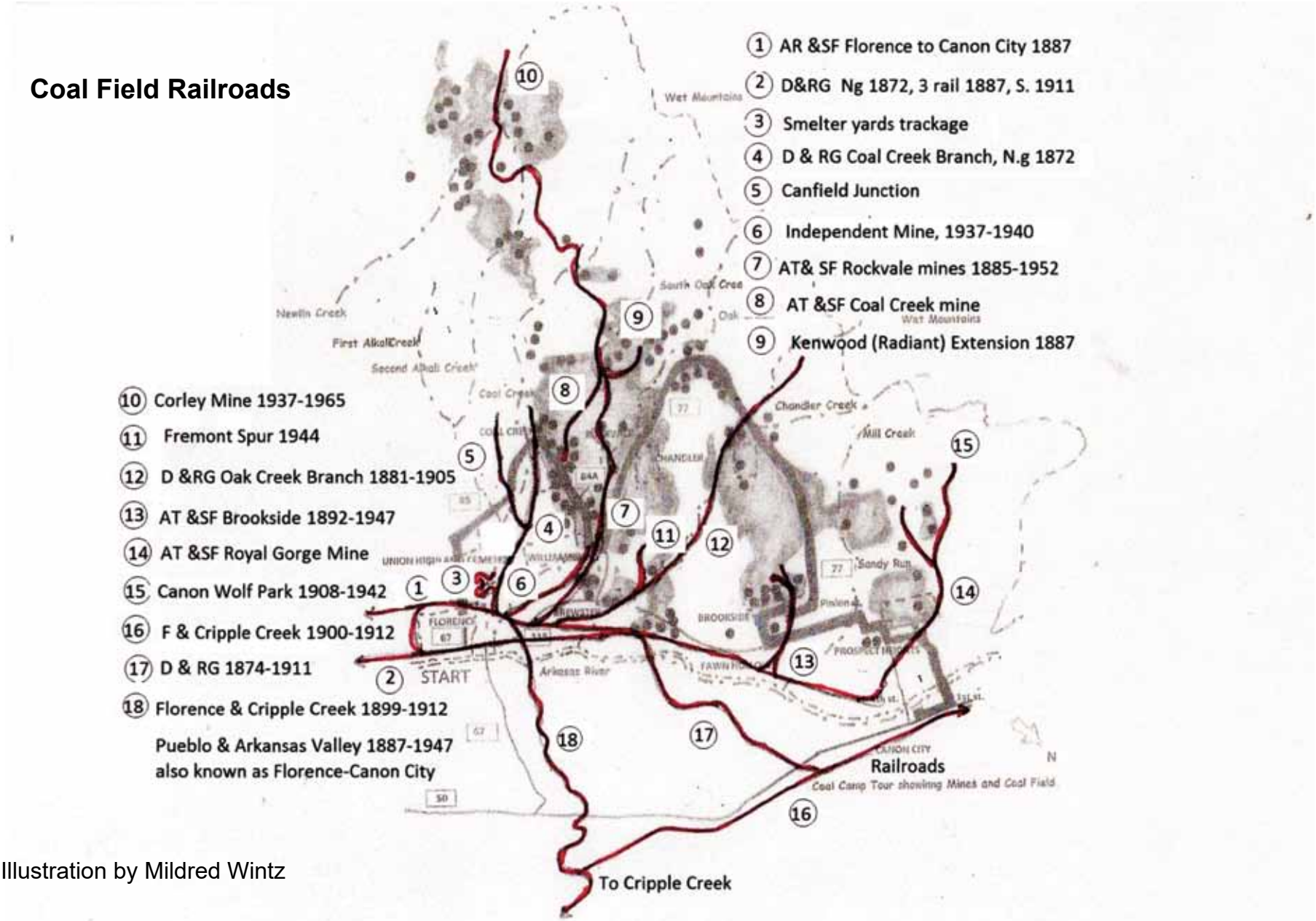

Illustration by Mildred Wintz