

Windshield Heritage Tours of Fremont County, Colorado:

Safe, Fun, Educational Ways to Explore



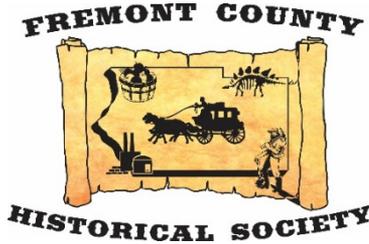
**FREMONT COUNTY
HERITAGE GUIDE**

Over 30 hours of scenic drives, complete with historic and geologic detail, are offered in this SUMMARY Heritage Guide. Since 2015 the Fremont County Heritage Commission with support from the Fremont County Historical Society, Fremont County Tourism Council and Colorado Tourism Office has created nine Heritage Guides. Those guides are referenced in this summary guide which augments the others with additional information on:

- **Landmarks** designated by Fremont County
- **Interpretive Sign Locations** providing interesting details
- **Hidden Gems** revealing little known information
- **Additional Resources** to aid understanding

Printed versions of this Summary Guide as well as the nine others are available and can be obtained at Museums, Chambers of Commerce and other destinations for a small charge to enable reprinting. Digital versions may be downloaded free at fremontheritage.com/self-guided-heritage-tours-2/. The individual guides contain maps and information that is essential to the effectiveness of this guide.

The purpose of this Summary Guide is to enable residents and visitors to safely enjoy Fremont County’s magnificent scenery and rich heritage from their vehicle. Questions and comments are welcome and may be sent to FCHC at 615 Macon Ave, Cañon City, CO 81212 or to info@fremontheritage.com. First printed, October 2020.



Cover photo courtesy of Florence Historical Archives, Inc.

INDEX

Guide	Time (Hrs.)	Stops		Page
		<i>Guide</i>	<i>Additional</i>	
Downtown Cañon City	3	36	17	4
South Cañon Geology	2½	24		8
Skyline Drive	2	5	2	9
Rocks & Fossils	8+	37		9
Downtown Florence	2	21	13	10
Coal Camps	4+	66	7	13
Cemeteries	4+	19	8	15
Western Fremont	4+	37	14	16
Historic Howard	1	18	4	19

The time needed to enjoy a tour is approximate. Each tour stop in a Heritage Guide has a unique identifier code. Additional sites of interest described in this Summary Guide have unique identifiers that continue the numbering of the respective Guide. Follow the links in the PDF for further information.

This Guide was researched, written, reviewed and mapped by an all-volunteer team from the Heritage Commission and Historical Society. Millie Wintz, Margaret Stiles Storm, Carol McNew, Linda Skinner, Betsy Denney, Gloria Stultz and Jim Nelson contributed, among others.

Please help others enjoy this tour by taking your trash home and leaving what you find. Please respect private property.

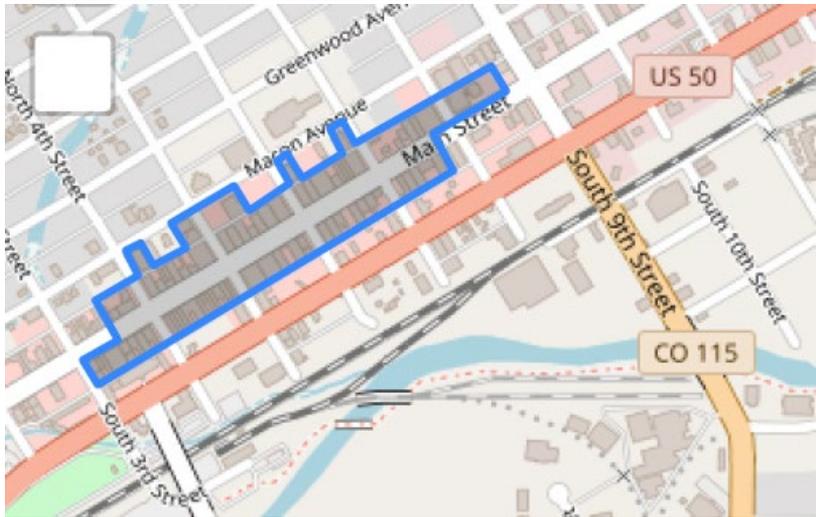


<https://www.Colorado.com/articles/leave-no-trace-care-Colorado>

Downtown Cañon City Heritage Tour

Within the Cañon City Downtown Historic District (5FN.720)¹ the tour features 36 buildings stretching along Main Street from the Territorial Prison to 9th & Macon. This area reflects the town's growth as a regional trading center between 1870 and 1939. Allow about three hours to follow this Guide, either as a walking tour or driving block-to-block and parking to view the buildings. Wayfinding signs, installed in 2020, will help you locate key features and places of interest.

www.fremontheritage.com/downtown-canon-city



The Cañon City Historic District (outlined) includes 81 buildings, primarily along Main Street. The time of development, quality of design and construction, scale and number erected are reflected in one of the largest intact historic districts in the state. Cañon City began as a bustling transportation and commerce center serving area mines. Wide, dusty roads and wooden sidewalks were designed long-ago for large covered wagons transporting items for pioneer families and

¹ All recorded cultural resources receive a Smithsonian number. This is a trinomial number with a state numerical designation (Colorado is #5), a two-letter designation for the county (FN=Fremont) and a sequential number for the resource. Search the Site Number on the internet for additional information.

businesses. Today the area is refreshed by trees and sculptures while Cañon City remains as one of Colorado's original 17 County Seats.

1st Street, the most westerly cross street, is the beginning of the Historic District. These are Cañon's first blocks; commercial businesses where territorial prisoners worked, and the earliest settlers shopped and did business. Early businesses include wagon makers, blacksmiths, butchers, tailors, laundries and millinery shops. There were brick makers, drug and photography stores, mercantile stores and freight offices. Freightage, in fact, was a leading occupation with pack trains and later wagons carrying supplies to mining camps. Among the few shipments to the East Coast in 1877 were dinosaur bones to rival paleontologists Othniel Charles Marsh and Edward Drinker Cope.

Cañon City's Downtown features ground floor commercial space with second floor lofts providing meeting rooms, offices and residential space. Elaborate architectural features such as richly decorated cornices and arched windows reveal a time of wealth and community pride. Many structures are accented with native stone from Fremont County's own quarries and bricks made with local clay in local brickyards.

- **Museums:** Printed Guides available, Reference Room, Displays
CC-37 Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center, 612 Royal Gorge Blvd (US-50) museum.canoncity.org/ (719-269-9036)

- **CC-38** Museum of Colorado Prisons, 201 north 1st Street
prisonmuseum.org/ (719-345-4046)

- **Landmarks** Designated by Fremont County (as of October 2020)

- **CC-39** Fremont County Administration Building (Macon & 7th Street)

- **CC-40** Greenwood Cemetery (1st Street, ½ mile south of US-50)

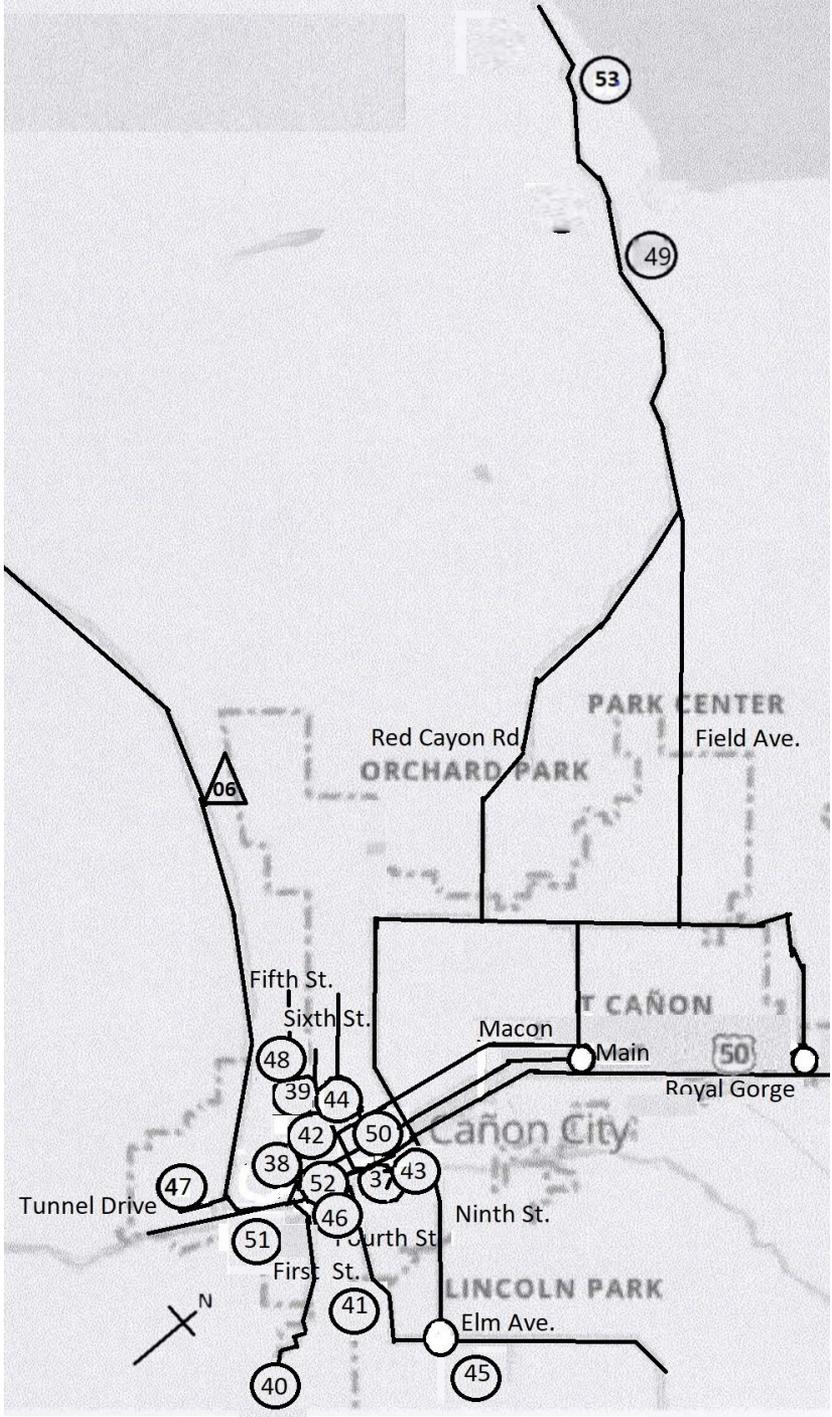
- **CC-41** Prospect Heights Jail (4th Street north of Elm)

- **CC-42** Deputy Warden's House (1st Street & Main)

- **CC-43** Rudd House & Cabin (at Museum)

- **CC-44** Franck House (Macon, east of 7th Street)

- **CC-45** Lakeside Cemetery (Elm & 9th Street)



- **Interpretive Sign Locations**

CC-46 Pike Interpretive Sign at Veterans Park (by the Visitor Cabin near the entrance just east of 1st Street & US-50): Describes Pike's 1806-07 camp near here.

CC-47 Pike Monument at Tunnel Drive Trailhead (From US-50 follow Tunnel Drive road ½ mile): The 1922 Marker placed by the General Marion Chapter; Daughters of the American Revolution has been moved here from an earlier location along US-50 near Sand Creek.

CC-48 Bridge Creek Interpretive Trail (Floral Ave Trailhead Parking Area at the foot of Skyline Drive west of 5th Street): 11 signs explaining area fossils from over 68 million years ago when the Western Interior Seaway covered the region.

CC-49 Garden Park Fossil Area and Pike Expedition Signs at BLM's Cleveland Quarry picnic area (Follow Field Ave [Gold Belt Byway] north from Central Ave a little over 2 miles to the Red Canyon Road intersection and continue right on County Road 9 for 3 miles to BLM's Cleveland Quarry picnic area): Interpretive signs explain the Garden Park Fossil Area and historic dinosaur discoveries made here as well as Zebulon Pike's 1806-07 exploration mission. Continue ¼ mile north to learn more at the Marsh Quarry Interpretive Trail.

- **Hidden Gems**

CC-50 *Fremont County National Bank with façade removed*, 6th St & Main: This 1921 building was hidden by a 1975 remodeling. The façade was removed in late 2019 after Tezak Heavy Equipment Co. purchased the building from Wells Fargo, who had acquired the bank in 2005.

CC-51 *Obelisk on the Riverwalk*, (west of 1st St on Riverside Drive): This is one of 47 monuments placed in 2014 by the University of Arizona's DeLIMITations Project to commemorate the 1821 international boundary between the United States & Mexico.

CC-52 *Cañon City Mill Ditch* can be seen flowing from the Arkansas River at the west end of Veterans Park and across US-50 at the City Hall Parking Lot. Senior water rights date to 1869. A Flour Mill once stood along the ditch where City Hall is today.

CC-53 *Historic Garden Park School* 10 miles north of town, past the Garden Park Fossil Area on County Road 9 (Drive north on Field Ave from Central Ave): Restoration continues on the 1895 school which served area farming and ranching families until its 1961 closure.

- **Additional Information Available**

(Fremont County Historical Society) These charming residential tours in the Cañon City/Florence area provide information on historic neighborhoods. *If Walls Could Speak* and *About the Avenues* were initially prepared by Elinor McGinn and Cara Fisher in the mid-1980s. *Prospect Heights* was prepared more recently by area residents and FCHS volunteers. The booklets have been reprinted by FCHS and can be purchased at area Museums, Chambers of Commerce and other destinations in support of FCHS programs or downloaded free here.

- If Walls Could Speak: www.royalgorgeregion.com/wp-content/uploads/If-Walls-Could-Speak.pdf
- About the Avenues: www.royalgorgeregion.com/wp-content/uploads/About-the-Avenues.pdf
- Prospect Heights: www.royalgorgeregion.com/wp-content/uploads/Town-of-Prospect-Heights-Fre-Cty-CO-6-17-2019-F-Adamic-DraftRev-1.pdf

South Cañon Trails Geology Hike

This Guide features a 2½-hour hike that includes distinctive geology visible from several of the hiking/bicycling trails beginning 3 miles south of US-50 off Temple Canyon Road. You will see an ammonite fossil, dinosaur tracks, the remnants of the original ancestral Rocky Mountains, rocks from the dawn of vertebrate life, layers from the Western Interior Seaway, the remains of a volcano as well as the *Great Unconformity*, where Ordovician rocks lie directly on Precambrian rocks; a gap of over 1 billion years. The illustrated guide is available for purchase at area Museums, Chambers of Commerce and visitor locations or free download at www.fremontheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Geology-Hike.pdf.

Skyline Drive

Skyline Drive, a 2½ mile scenic drive built in 1905 with prison labor, travels over an upturned Dakota Sandstone Hogback. The one-way drive is entered about 2 miles west of Cañon City off US-50 and features a stone arch entry, Ankylosaur footprint, scenic views and 450-foot drop-offs from the narrow, paved road. The Heritage Guide provides information on the history and geology of the area with five stops. This tour begins at the Fremont Campus of Pueblo Community College and ends at the Floral Street Trailhead where the short Bridge Creek Interpretive Trail offers information on area fossils. Several hiking/biking trails are available in the Hogbacks Open Space.

www.fremontheritage.com/skyline

- **Interpretive Sign Locations**

▲**06** By the Ankylosaur footprint a short way up the drive (map, pg. 6)
CC-48 On the Bridge Creek Interpretive Trail at the Floral Ave Trailhead near 5th Street

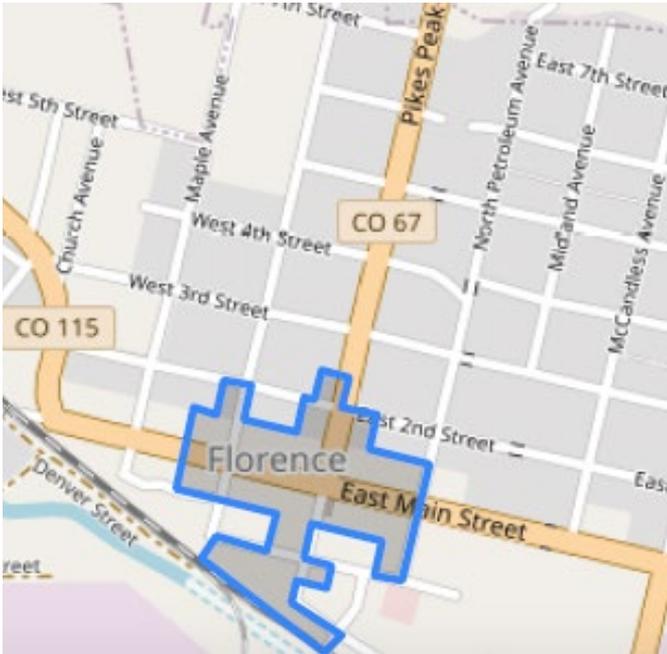
Rocks & Fossils of Fremont County

Explore Fremont County's distinctive geology and paleontology beginning on the Pueblo Community College – Fremont Campus. Local rock formation examples have been assembled here and are displayed on a Geology Time Trail that is part of the *Crossroads Through Time Heritage Park*. The 61-page Guide includes 37 stops throughout the county describing such locations as the Garden Park Fossil Area north of Cañon City. Many dinosaurs, including the Colorado State Fossil, have been discovered over the past 120 years and are on display at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Smithsonian Museum and others. The Guide also has information on the Royal Gorge, area geologic formations, quarrying, Coal and Oil Fields and other geologic resources as well as geological timescales of Fremont County.

www.fremontheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Rocks-and-Fossils-Online4.pdf

Florence, Colorado

The Downtown Florence Historic District (5FN.523) is the focus of the Heritage Guide's 21-stop tour. The Guide details the people, buildings and events that shaped this historic community. Generally bounded by Main Street, Santa Fe and Petroleum avenues between west 2nd & Railroad streets, Downtown Florence experienced significant booms in 1890s and the period from 1910 to 1920. The Heritage Guide tour begins and ends at a historic church; today's Bell Tower Cultural Center. Allow at least two hours to explore this fascinating district. www.fremontheritage.com/florence-colorado



The Downtown Florence Historic District (outlined) includes 69 buildings and reflects Florence's history of agriculture, early oil wells, coal mining, gold ore refining and railroads. Jesse Frazer's 1866 orchard and nursery began Fremont County's fruit industry. He was also key in starting the extensive coal industry, which brought railroads

in the 1870s. With the 1881 discovery of oil, the Florence Oil Field became the second oldest in the U.S.

- **Museums:** Printed Guides available, Reference Room, Displays
FL-22 Florence Pioneer Museum and Research Center, 100 E. Front Street
Street www.florencepioneermuseum.org/ (719-784-1904)

- FL-23** Florence Historical Archive, Located in City Hall 600 W. Third Street
Street www.florencehistoricalarchive.org (719-429-5515)



- **Landmarks** Designated by Fremont County

FL-24 Castle Hall of Knights of Pythias (Main Street, west of Pikes Peak Avenue): erected in 1888 by this non-sectarian fraternal order.

FL-25 Bell Tower Cultural Center (Petroleum Ave. & E. 2nd St)

FL-26 New Hope Church & Cemetery (7 miles south on CO-67, turn at the sign on Siloam Rd and follow signs for 2 ½ miles; see map, pg. 14)

FL-27 Rialto Theatre (Main Street, west of Santa Fe Ave.)

- **Interpretive Sign Locations**

FL-28 Pike Interpretive Sign at Pioneer Park (southeast corner of CO-67, Pikes Peak Ave, & 4th St): The sign near the northwest corner of the park describes Pike's 1806-07 exploration through the area.

FL-29 Hardscrabble Interpretive Signs (9 miles south of Florence on CO-67): describe area history dating back to initial settlement by trappers in the 1830s. (♦29 on the map on Page 14)

FL-30 Historic Rio Grande Railroad Viaduct Sign (1 mile east of Florence at junction of CO-115 & 120): remembers the 1931 Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad overpass. This was replaced by the current bridge in 2016. (♦30 on the map on Page 14)

- **Hidden Gems**

FL-31 Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Station at Coal Creek Spur jct. (Pikes Peak Ave. & Railroad St): The spur was built in 1872 for D&RG access to the high-quality Coal Banks. The railroad was later extended.

FL-32 Coal Mine/Oil Well Interpretive Display (inside Florence Pioneer Museum): graphically shows coal mine and oil well locations.

FL-33 WPA era *Antelope Watering Hole* mural in the Florence Post Office (Pikes Peak Ave & 2nd St): was painted in 1939 by Santa Fe artist Olive Rush (1873-1966) as a Works Progress Administration project.

FL-34 McCumber Gravesite (on CO-115 between Cañon City & Florence, ½-mile east of MacKenzie): Final resting place for two members of the Benjamin McCumber family struck down by the 1898 smallpox epidemic. Benjamin's wife Malinda and son Franklin were among the 14 family members quarantined. (♦34 on pg. 14 map)

Coal Camps of Fremont County

Southwest of Florence lies an area that, beginning in 1871, became one of Colorado's earliest major Coal Fields. William Jackson Palmer's Denver & Rio Grande Railroad relied upon on the first mine near today's Town of Coal Creek to gain access to high quality coal that gave his trains twice the mileage of lower quality coal – an important edge in a fiercely competitive industry! The Cañon City Coal Field predated the founding of Florence and hosted as many as 185 mines producing 48-million tons of coal. Peak production occurred between the 1890s and 1940s; then began to decline in the 50s and 60s. The last reported coal production in Fremont County was in 2000. The mines attracted immigrants from around the world including 3,500 Italians and at least as many from Central Europe, creating multicultural communities. Even though the mines are long gone, the towns of Coal Creek, Rockvale, Williamsburg and Brookside continue to serve the region. The 90-page ***Coal Camps of Fremont County Heritage Guide*** provides further details on the area, including 66 stops and industry background. (NOTE: To access the area from CO-115, follow Churchhill Rd, CR-11A. To access from CO-67, follow Arrowhead Drive past Union Highland Cemetery.) www.fremontheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Coal-Camps-Online.pdf

- **Museums**

- Florence Pioneer Museum and Research Center, 100 E. Front Street www.florencepioneermuseum.org/ (719-784-1904)
- Florence Historical Archive, Located in City Hall 600 W. Third St. florencehistoricalarchive.org/ (719-429-5515)
- Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center, 612 Royal Gorge Blvd (US-50) museum.canoncity.org/ (719-269-9036)

- **Landmarks** Designated by Fremont County

MC-A04 St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Brookside (Brookside Ave, just south of CO-115: ▲04 on pg. 14 map)

MC-A05 May Cabin (in Rockvale on Main at Knob Ave; ▲05 on pg. 14 map): built by 1863 homesteader Col. William Horace May.

- **Interpretive Sign Location**

MC-A06 Union Highland Cemetery (south of Florence at entrance on Arrowhead Drive off CO-67; ▲06 on pg. 14 map): The sign explains the cemetery's history.

- **Hidden Gems**

MC-A07 Spring Creek Park in Brookside (south of CO-115, off Brookside Ave, turn right on Pinon Ave and go 3 blocks to Spring St; ▲07 on pg. 14 map): The park is located on an historic reclaimed Coal Mine site. It features over 1 mile of trails, a picnic shelter and restroom.



◆ = Kiosks: Part of CDOT's Southeastern Colorado Wayfinding Project

Cemeteries of Fremont County

Fremont County cemeteries date back to 1865. That is 11 years before statehood in 1876 but four years after Colorado became a territory in 1861. The 74-page Guide maps and details 19 cemeteries starting in eastern Fremont County, including the Florence and Cañon City areas and extending into western Fremont County. Major development periods are chronicled, and the character of communities served is described. The location and history of each cemetery is provided, including historically significant individuals and families laid to rest there. www.fremontheritage.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/cemetariesonline.pdf

A separate Resource Guide is available at the following locations.

Fremont County Cemetery Heritage Resource Guide

Available at the following locations:

- Penrose Community Library
- Wetmore Community Library
- John C. Fremont Public Library
- Florence Historical Archives, Inc.
- Florence Pioneer Museum & Research Center
- Cañon City Public Library
- Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center
- Museum of Colorado Prisons
- Western Fremont Historical Society's History Museum

The *Resource Guide* includes detailed information on Tombstone Symbols, Abbreviations and their meaning; Tombstone Epitaphs; why headstones face east; Pandemics since 1900 and other information to aid in understanding. It also contains additional information on private cemeteries and their contacts.

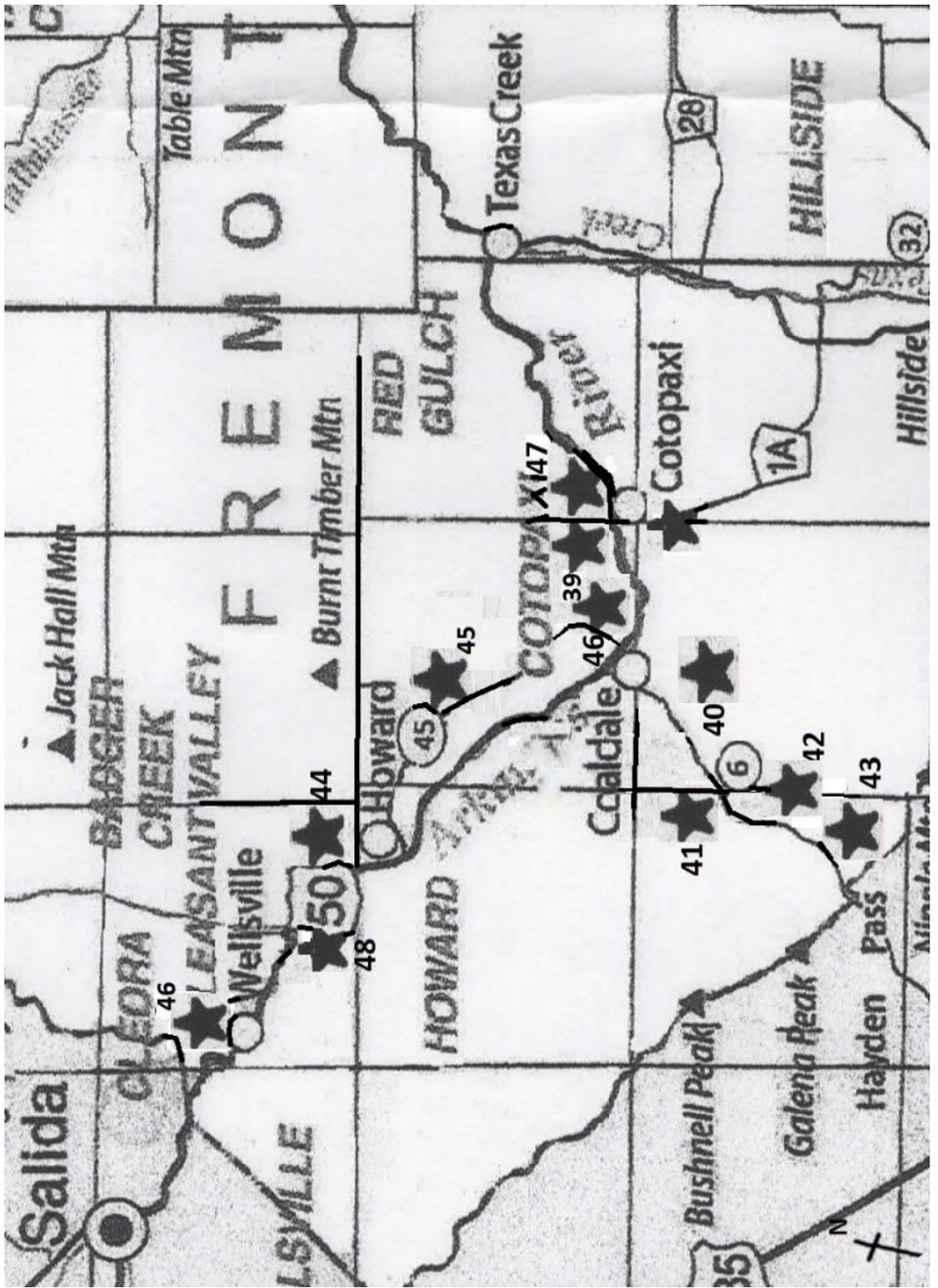
- **Landmarks** Designated by Fremont County
 - Greenwood Cemetery (south 1st St, Cañon City)
 - New Hope Cemetery (south of Florence off CO-67)
 - Cotopaxi Cemetery (north of US-50 off County Road 12, turn left past the school)
 - Lakeside Cemetery (Elm & 9th St, Cañon City)
 - Howard Cemetery (3 miles east of Howard on CR-45)
 - Coaldale Cemetery (½ mile south of US-50 on CR-6)
- **Interpretive Sign** Locations
 - Union Highland Cemetery (south of Florence at entrance on Arrowhead Drive off CO-67)
 - Jewish section of Cotopaxi Cemetery (north of US-50 on CR-12, turn left at sign past the High School)

Western Fremont County

A scenic tour on US-50, west of Cañon City includes 37 stops from Parkdale to Wellsville. The highway follows the Arkansas River and features grand views, incredible geology, Gold Medal Trout fishing, world class rafting and rarely seen wildlife viewing opportunities. Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) park facilities (\$) provide stops along the way with river access, interpretive signs, watchable wildlife displays, restrooms, picnic areas and camping. Before a highway was developed, packtrains of burros and later wagons transported supplies from Cañon City to Leadville and other mining areas along this general route. By 1915 the route was shifted to be more along the river and called the **Rainbow Route** as part of Colorado's Good Roads movement. The Guide details the sights seen on this 50-mile scenic drive as well as the area's history.

www.fremontheritage.com/western-fremont-county.

- **Museums:** Printed Guides available, Reference Room, Displays
WF-44 Western Fremont County History Society (WFHS), 70 County Road 56, Howard, Colorado www.westfremonthistory.com



- **Landmarks** Designated by Fremont County

WF-39 Cotopaxi Cemetery (north of US-50 off County Road 12, turn left at the sign past the High School)

WF-40 Coaldale Charcoal Kilns (south of US-50 on CR-6, Hayden Creek Road about ¼ mile, on the left): In the 1880s charcoal was used to process ore in Leadville, since local coal was not available. Abundant Piñon Pines were harvested and loaded into kilns to produce charcoal that was hauled by the D&RG railroad to Leadville. The kilns were removed in 1988 by the railroad for public safety.

WF-41 Coaldale Cemetery, (south of US-50 about ½ mile on CR-6, Hayden Creek Road)

WF-42 Julius Parker Homestead

WF-43 Barnes City Site (3 miles south of Coaldale on CR-6)

WF-44 Old Howard Church (north of US-50, follow CR-4 across the Arkansas River, then right to the old Howard loop)

WF-45 Howard Cemetery (Follow CR-45 a little over 3 miles east of the Howard Church)

Interpretive Sign Locations

WF-46 Pathway Into History signs – 12 Interpretive signs on County Road 45 from the US-50 intersection northwest from the Vallie Bridge Recreation Site to Wellsville. This route was initially the Pleasant Valley Wagon Road and later served early automobiles before the construction of US-50 in the 1930s. Early families and events are honored on these signs installed in 2004 by the Western Fremont Historical Society in cooperation with others (some may be difficult to reach, make local inquiry; 4WD is advised between Badger Creek & Swissvale. **NOTE:** the last easily accessible sign is 0.03 of a mile past the Howard Church. Two more accessible signs are available by going back to the Howard Church, then returning to US-50, then right on 50 to CR-7 at Wellsville. Turn right on CR-7, then bear right on CR-45 for 0.09 miles to the two signs. Return to 50)

WF-47 Cotopaxi History Sign (near AHRA's Lone Pine pullout)

WF-48 Pike Interpretive Sign (just east of Swissvale)

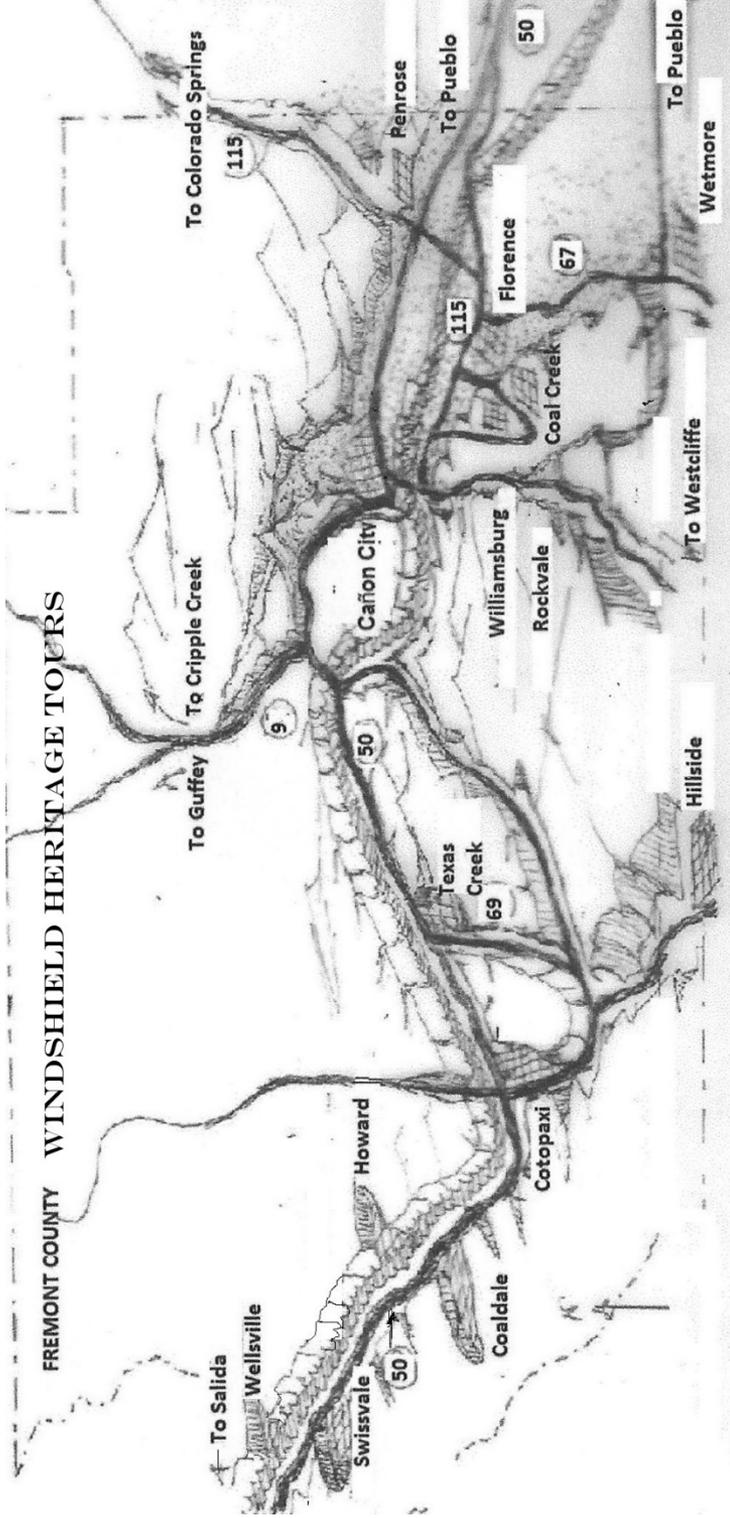
- **Hidden Gems**

- West of Parkdale on US-50 remnants of the old road, including rock retaining walls built by prison labor, are visible south of the road at mile marker 265.7, just before the slow vehicle turn-out. US-50 was originally called the **Rainbow Route** and ran from Eastern Colorado through to Grand Junction.
- DeRemer Fort (pullout at slow vehicle turn-out, MM 264) was located north of the river and high on the cliff. Stone forts were used by the D&RG in 1878 during its battle with the ATSF to build tracks through the Royal Gorge. DeRemer's men would roll rocks down on ATSF crews. (Western Fremont Heritage Guide has details.)
- Plum Street, Cotopaxi, so named because it runs "plum through town."

Historic Howard, Colorado

Historic Howard's surviving structures are featured in this 18-stop tour of the Howard Townsite. Many have been changed by owners over the years and are no longer in their original use. Memories persist, however, and the community has shared a glimpse of this bygone 1800s era. www.fremontheritage.com/historic-howard

- **Museums:** Printed Guides available, Reference Room, Displays
WF-44 Western Fremont County History Society (WFHS), PO Box 181, 70 County Road 56, Howard, CO 81233 www.westfremonthisory.com
- **Landmarks** Designated by Fremont County
WF-44 Old Howard Church (north of US-50, follow CR-4 across the Arkansas River, then right to the old Howard loop)
WF-45 Howard Cemetery (Follow CR-45 a little over 3 miles east of the Howard Church)
- **Interpretive Sign Locations**
WF-46 Pathway into History from Vallie Bridge Recreation Site to Wellsville on CR-45



Fremont County Heritage Guides are available for Free Download at

<https://fremontheritage.com/self-guided-heritage-tours-2/>