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ENDURING PLACES: LANDSCAPE MEANING, COMMUNITY PERSISTENCE, AND PRESERVATION IN THE HISTORIC MINING TOWN

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ENDURING PLACES: LANDSCAPE MEANING, COMMUNITY PERSISTENCE, AND PRESERVATION IN THE HISTORIC MINING TOWN

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

BY

Richard L. Nostrand

Gavin Bridge

For my mother and father

Valerie and Gordon Robertson

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ABSTRACT

Outsiders commonly view historic mining landscapes—defunct mineral extraction and processing areas and associated settlement communities—as troubled by dereliction and impermanence. Residents, however, may regard these locales in more complex and positive ways. Through a set of case studies, this research interprets and compares the meaning historic mining towns hold as places and investigates the related cultural processes of community persistence and landscape preservation. Place perception is explored from the mineral discovery phase through mine closure and deindustrialization in Toluca, Illinois; Cokedale, Colorado; and Picher, Oklahoma. The case studies affirm that mining landscapes are perceptually complex, that community survival is a common phenomenon in one-time mining regions, and that the sometimes unsightly physical trappings of mining have meaning for residents and deserve to be preserved. In each study site, the physical and cultural characteristics of the mining way of life are shown to be constitutive of local identity. These industry-based attachments to place have survived mine closure and facilitated community persistence. They are also reinforced by the mining landscape, whose preservation is important to maintaining a local sense of place. I conclude that the historic mining town is a locale of enduring settlement and that attachment to place is not necessarily wedded to aesthetic attributes or to the physical and economic support a landscape provides for survival. Resident attachment to a degraded landscape produces a range of economic, environmental, and preservation challenges that are important to overcome, for the historic mining town serves as a valued community and home.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> The residents of the anthracite towns of Pennsylvania show a considerable loyalty to a landscape that provides them with little of material value. This should remind the observer that any broad concept of place must address two different aspects of a landscape: the physical support it provides (means) and the intangible rewards it offers (meaning).
>
> —Ben Marsh, "Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania"

In the popular and scholarly imagination, historic mining towns are forsaken places. Deprived of their founding industry – their reason for being – defunct mining communities are generally perceived as derelict and temporary locales. At best, they may be recognized as curious relics of a surpassed industrial age. However, as the epigraph above describes, these perceptions discount the meaning historic mining towns hold as lived-in environments and ignore the fact that many persist as locally valued places.

Such ignorance is not a trivial matter. On a continent where economic development has been fueled, in large part, by the exploitation of a seemingly limitless natural resource base, defunct industrial settlements like the historic mining town are numerous. The North American landscape is dotted with one-time oil boomtowns, logging and fishing villages, mill towns, and agricultural communities, decaying one-industry settlements where life struggles on. These are difficult locales in which to live: hard places whose residents are burdened by significant economic, social, and environmental problems. Moreover, the hardships and challenges of deindustrialization[1] are often made more difficult by a lack of outside understanding of the value these communities hold as lived-in places. Widely held perceptions of dereliction and impermanence cast an unsympathetic shadow on these localities, which when viewed as centers of human experience may be found to hold significant value as communities and homes.

Through a set of case studies, this research interprets and compares the meaning historic mining towns hold as places and investigates the related cultural processes of community persistence and landscape preservation. The experiential qualities of the historic mining landscape, defined as defunct mineral extraction and processing areas and associated settlement

communities, is explored from the mineral discovery phase through mine closure and deindustrialization. A broad range of place perceptions, those held by residents and outsiders, are considered. The intent is to capture the varied and evolving meanings these locales hold as they cycle through the boom and bust stages of a mineral dependent economy. In so doing, a new narrative is constructed, one that draws attention to the mining community's value as an enduring place and emphasizes the relationship between place meaning and community survival and landscape preservation.

Geographer Ben Marsh's 1987 article, "Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania" serves as the contextual starting point for this research. Marsh explores place meaning and community persistence in the coal mining region of northeastern Pennsylvania and describes how there is a paradox to this area. In terms of local meaning, he writes, "these are fine and distinctive places to live [and yet] by conventional economic or demographic measures, and by the normal standards of landscape esthetics, this is the least attractive part of Pennsylvania." Despite severe economic problems and considerable landscape decay, residents maintain a strong commitment to place. This, Marsh claims, represents the duality of the place concept: "place is partly the *means* an area provides for its own continuation but also the *meaning* derived from its past for its continuation."[2]

Marsh explains community persistence by showing that, while the land offers little in the way of material reward, it means much. This meaning, he describes, is a product of the historical continuity of place: "difficult times in the early coal towns created communities so strong as to discourage people from leaving [this] unproductive landscape." In addition, Marsh describes that the mining past also threatens the very survival of these places. Mining may leave positive imprints on regional culture, but it also impacts, in tumultuous ways, local economies and environments. Conflict between an uninhabitable land and a commitment to place, he explains, shapes a difficult future for historic mining regions.[3]

Marsh believes his observations regarding the duality of place have application beyond the historic mining towns of Pennsylvania stating that his research applies to the "poor and powerless of other places the world has passed by." Indeed, a small body of ethnographic research conducted in mining settlements supports this claim. For example, cultural anthropologist Kathleen Stewart's *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America,* explores life amid the ruins of West Virginia's coal mining towns. Stewart's main goal is to show how these communities exist as excluded subtexts to the national narratives of capitalism, modernization, materialism, and democracy. In her intimate approach to landscape study, however, she also captures the duality of place experience. Stewart describes how this ruined landscape has become a signifier of social memory and meaning.[4] She writes:

> At the end of a long century of occupation by the coal industry -- through the economic and cultural destabilizations of cycles of boom and bust, the mass migrations to the cities and returns to the hills, and the final mine closings . . . the hills find themselves reeling in the dizzying, diacritical sensibilities of the local and the transnational, the past and the present, the all-too-real effects of history. The impossible dream of a stable home place proliferates within the shock of a threatening surround that has penetrated it to the core. [Yet] [t]he detritus of history piled high on the local landscape has become central to a sense of place emergent in re-membered ruins and pieced-together fragments.[5]

Folklorist Kent C. Ryden's *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place,* also engages landscape meaning in the mining community. Ryden explores the Coeur d'Alene mining district of northern Idaho. Through careful interpretation of local folklore, he illustrates how the mining past plays a central role in maintaining regional identity. Like Marsh, Ryden shows that the mining landscape is of considerable local value. Despite its wasted appearance, Ryden describes how the land remains rich with meaning and "generous in the imagination."[6] Attachment to place, he explains, grows out of the miners' habitual approach to life and work: mining communities identify themselves with the rugged severity of a landscape and a life that has always been rich but difficult. He writes:

> In travelling to the Coeur d'Alene mining district, I hoped to explore and reveal the vibrant invisible landscape that overlies this little-known and unprepossessing part of the world and thus demonstrate that the marginal can (and should) be seen

> as meaningful – that the obscure backwater that the outsider may view in a negative light can be a positive, nurturing place for the people who live there.[7]

Like Marsh, Stewart, and Ryden, the primary focus of this research is landscape meaning in the historic mining area. Three historic mining towns, representing previously unexamined study sites, are investigated: the coal mining communities of Toluca, Illinois and Cokedale, Colorado; and the lead and zinc mining settlement of Picher, Oklahoma. However, this work does not attempt to replicate, albeit in original study sites, a body of research already in existence. Unlike previous research, this study incorporates a comparative case study approach that interprets and compares landscape meaning in three distinctive communities. In addition, I emphasize the varied, complex, and often conflicting relationship that exists between place meaning and the related cultural processes of community persistence and landscape preservation.

As described in the remainder of this chapter, place, community persistence, and landscape preservation, are significant research themes in cultural geography. In constructing three detailed historical narratives linking these topics, and by exploring their interrelatedness within and between three previously unexplored research sites, an original analysis of the mining landscape is provided. It is my intention to paint a more internally informed portrait of the historic mining area, one that reveals its perceptual complexity. As will be shown, the mining landscape has been a well-studied but often misrepresented locale. This research aims to dispel a societal metanarrative that characterizes the mining settlement as derelict and temporary, an abstract external viewpoint that fails to communicate a sense of the meaning and value these locales hold as lived-in places.

Intellectual Framework

Cultural Geography and Humanism

This study is an exploration in humanistic cultural geography. Described by Marie Price and Martin Lewis as one of the most ambiguous terms in geography's lexicon, cultural geography's definition and practice have been topics of considerable disciplinary debate.[8] The

major tradition of cultural geography is recognized to be a twentieth century product of American scholarship. For many years, cultural geography was dominated by the work of Carl O. Sauer and his students at the University of California, Berkeley, whose research reached out both chronologically and spatially to seek an understanding of how, why, and with what effect people alter the landscape.[9] By stressing that humans are active geographic agents, Sauer established a humanistic research tradition in cultural geography that has ebbed and flowed over time. Traditional cultural geography reached its peak of disciplinary dominance in the late 1950s. However, the Quantitative Revolution challenged the subfield's relevance and the subdiscipline fragmented. Some areas of research, cultural ecology for example, sustained productive constituencies. In general, however, humanistic fields of research waned. It was not until the late 1970s that humanistic themes and concepts were rediscovered.[10]

Humanism is a complex term representing a highly fragmented and diverse philosophical perspective.[11] According to William Cronon, "the central tenet of modern humanistic scholarship is that everything we humans do – our speech, our work, our play, our social life, our ideas of ourselves and the natural world – exists in a context that is historically, geographically, and culturally particular, and cannot be understood apart from that context."[12] The humanistic perspective in geography gives preference to questions of human experience and action and it reemerged in the 1970s as a critique to the positivistic approaches that dominated the field.[13] The humanist critique of these approaches has been well documented. Humanistic geographers criticized positivism for emphasizing human passivity, avoiding discussion of the experiential relationships people have with the environment, and for the assumption that scientific observations were objective and value free.[14]

Cultural-geographic research coalesced around a desire to "re-people" geographic inquiry and by the early 1980s a "new cultural geography" had emerged. However, as Hugill and Foote note, this coalescence was "new," only insofar as it suggests the value of a "unity of focus across a broad range of themes."[15] Significant tensions regarding the appropriate scope and method of

cultural-geographic practice remain. Certainly a new cultural geography emphasizing social-theory has emerged. Its advocates often claim intellectual superiority over those who practice more traditional forms of humanistic inquiry. However, the seeming dichotomy that exists between "traditional" and "new" forms of cultural geography is an oversimplification. As geographer Lester B. Rowntree has observed, "for decades, cultural geographers have asked and answered the same sorts of questions that currently occupy the 'new' cultural geography." He and others have cautioned that while terminology and conceptual emphases may differ, many of the same questions are being asked by the new as they were of the old.[16]

What then is the unity of focus in cultural geography and which of its themes are relevant to this research? Drawing on terminology used by Fay Gale, I view cultural geography as the study of how people live "on" and "in" the cultural landscape.[17] This definition captures the breadth of the subdiscipline and its central focus. Cultural landscape is a theme that binds cultural geographic research.[18] Representing the humanized geographical content of an area, the concept reflects the complex interplay between culture and environment.[19] The notion that cultural geographers study the ways humans live "on" and "in" the cultural landscape is inclusive of traditional themes (generally emphasizing how landscapes reflect the ways humans live "on" the land), and of those more often claimed by new practitioners (cultural patterns of significance "in" the landscape, and the land's reflexive role "in" molding social relations).[20] In fact, geographer Richard Schein claims that the study of cultural landscapes as tangible, visible entities that are both reflective and constitutive of society, culture, and identity is one of the field's most coherent traditions.[21]

It is within this custom of humanistic landscape interpretation that this research is embedded. This study treats the historic mining town as a complex cultural landscape, one that reflects past and present ways of life and serves as a key component in building and maintaining local identities. Of the numerous ideas explored by cultural geographers, three related themes are of greatest significance to this research: place, community persistence, and preservation.

Place

"Place" has a number of definitions. To some it is simply a portion of geographical space occupied by a person or thing.[22] To others it is a view of the landscape as a center of meaning, constructed through experience over time.[23] According to geographer J. Nicholas Entrikin, geographers have employed a variety of theoretical positions and attempted to answer a range of questions through place analysis.[24] Fundamentally, however, to study place is to explore landscape meaning. The most intimate aspect of the human-environment relationship, interpretation of landscape meaning requires consideration of the environment's experiential qualities: the less observable facets of the land such as mood, character, and atmosphere.[25]

For many geographers, the focus on place has led to a consideration of the ways in which landscapes serve as a foundation on which local identities are structured, and on the ways they provide life with a sense of rootedness. For geographer Peirce Lewis, this sense of landscape attachment, what Yi-Fu Tuan has called "topophilia," is a product of the intangible qualities of places that make them special and worth defending.[26] Often, the concept of "sense of place," defined by anthropologist Keith Basso as "an enduring affinity with known localities and the ways of life they sponsor," is used to describe this landscape quality.[27] Lewis and others believe that sense of place is as indispensable to the human experience as our basic urges for food and sex. "I do not think that one can survive as a human creature," writes Lewis, "without special attachments to special places."[28]

However, as geographer Douglas Porteous suggests, sense of place is important to human well-being but it does not necessarily have to involve topophilia.[29] As is recognized in this research, the study of place includes consideration of a full range of landscape meanings, both positive and negative, which may be held simultaneously by individuals and communities. The values ascribed to places may also differ across social and perspectival divides, particularly between internal and external points of view. Multiple values exist in cultural landscapes, and to capture their essence as places it is necessary to recognize their complexity. This holds especially

true for visually unpleasing and seemingly derelict places such as historic mining towns, which as Marsh and others have shown, reflect radically different value when viewed in terms of landscape means and meaning.

Recognizing such perceptual complexity also serves to maximize the potential place analysis has to provide practical insight into a broad range of issues concerning human-environment interactions. As geographer Michael Smith explains, the study of place can produce information of significant practical value: "It is deeply human to make places, and to think in term of places. . . place is a satisfying, humane, and responsible way by which to approach larger questions of environmental prudence and social justice."[30] In fact, an understanding of place can assist in addressing numerous environmental and social problems existing in mining towns, including challenges related to community persistence and landscape preservation.

Community Persistence

The topic of community persistence represents a general concern with the processes and experiences of community decline and survival. These issues have been explored across a range of disciplines. An excellent overview of this body of research, as it exists both within and outside of geography, is provided by Porteous in *Planned to Death: The Annihilation of a Place Called Howdendyke*. Drawing disciplinary context from rural geography, sociology, and planning, Porteous explains that the bulk of scholarly research on community decline emphasizes political and economic causes in agricultural and urban areas. Only more recently, he notes, have scholars begun to devote attention to the ways communities respond to decline. Included in this more internally focused research are studies exploring community experiences in single-industry settlements such as mining towns.[31]

Porteous highlights several of these studies and makes the following observations. First, he notes that researchers have generally paid more attention to the rise of one-industry communities than to their decline, writing: "clearly the boom end of the boom and bust cycle has been deemed more exciting and lucrative." Second, Porteous explains that research on

community decline shows that outright annihilation is a less common outcome of deindustrialization than community persistence in the midst of decay.[32] For example, a period of out-migration and economic decline usually follows deindustrialization in mining communities. If no alternate employment is available, or if isolation diminishes outside opportunities for work, the mining town may be abandoned. Similarly, in company-owned towns, operators frequently chose to demolish town infrastructure following mine closure, an action that results in immediate community death.[33] However, as Porteous points out, in many single-industry communities residents find the means, however marginal, to maintain an existence through deindustrialization.[34] These two observations are important for they highlight the prevalence of community persistence in defunct industrial areas and show the need for studies that explore the challenges their residents face.

Perhaps Porteous's most significant observation is that scholars need to provide more data on, and interpretations of, the disruption caused by decay. "Too often," he explains, "the reactions of impacted populations are neglected."[35] This is not to say that researchers have failed to recognize that residents may retain place attachments in defunct one-industry towns and resist relocation.[36] Marsh provides an example of this fact, as do the collection of case studies appearing in *Coping with Closure: An International Comparison of Mine Town Experiences.* The editors of the contributed volume, Cecily Neil and Markku Tykklainen, write: "It would be a mistake to underestimate the attachment of local residents to mining communities – even those communities created specifically to house employees for a mine known to have a limited lifespan."[37] *Coping with Closure* represents an extensive analysis of deindustrialization effects on the mining community and Neil and Tykklainen correctly recognize the existence of place attachments among residents. Unfortunately, however, none of the case studies presented in the work explores this phenomenon in detail. Several recognize that place attachments complicate the processes of community decline by drawing abandonment out. However, place is largely

ignored as a factor in community persistence, a general shortcoming of empirical research on mining communities and one-industry towns in general.

Preservation

Few types of human enterprise generate as profound an impact on the environment as mining. For this reason, preservation is a challenging task in mining areas.[38] Each community investigated in this research, for example, faces a range of obstacles in attempting to hold on to elements of the mining landscape. As will be shown, because the mining past plays a central role in reinforcing and maintaining the meaning of place, there is strong local support for retaining minings' physical legacies. However, preservation of the mining landscape is complicated by the fact that the objects of local affection often represent hazardous elements of the environment. Balancing the objectives of preservation with public health and safety concerns and environmental quality issues is a common problem. Preservation is also complicated by the fact that government policy and public perception hold that minings' physical legacies require removal from the landscape. Frequently, negative outside perceptions inhibit recognition that the mining landscape may contain something worthy of preserving.

The failure to recognize the landscape's internal value is not unique to mining areas. It is a common problem in professional planning fields and other forms of environmental intervention. As early as the 1960s, for example, architects acknowledged that professional expertise alone was inadequate in effective planning.[39] The practice of community design—the belief that citizens have a right to be represented in decisions about their environment and that planning benefits from maximum public participation—was first established in the field of architecture, but its ideals spread into related fields.[40] Landscape scholar J.B. Jackson, for example, believed in abandoning the spectator stance when evaluating the worth of a landscape whatever its form. He thought that every planner, landscape architect, and conservationist had an obligation to rethink what a landscape is worth to the person who inhabits it. Jackson wrote:

> The human landscape is the product of much sweat and hardship and earnest thought; we should never look at it without remembering that, and we should never tinker with the landscape without thinking of those who live in the midst of it – whether in a trailer in an oil field or in a city tenement. What the spectator wants or does not want is of small account.[41]

Effective landscape planning of all types recognizes the need to maintain or preserve locally meaningful elements of the landscape. Perhaps planner Kevin Lynch said it best when stating "the human experience of a landscape is as fundamental as any other factor and should be considered from the first."[42] Unfortunately, local concerns and desires are often overlooked. For example, one of the most common strategies for addressing problems of severe landscape dereliction, be it a decrepit inner city neighborhood or a defunct mining area, is to obliterate any evidence of the offending features from the landscape. Abandoned mine land reclamation demonstrates the point. The most common strategy adopted by reclamation engineers is to eliminate mining features and attempt to return the land to its pre-mining, or approximate original contour (AOC).[43] Landscape architect John Simpson investigated the development of mine reclamation policy in the United States and concluded that AOC approaches reflect society's revulsion of mining landscapes, rather than representing effective or economically rational reclamation strategies. Simpson cites an influential Department of the Interior study (1962) on abandoned mine lands as an example of the kind of reactionist response that has guided American reclamation policy. The following excerpt from this document does not describe a particular locale but is intended to be a general characterization of the defunct mining region:

> The face of the earth is riddled with abandoned mineral workings packed with subsidence, gashed with quarries, littered with disused plant structures and piled high with dross and debris, and spoil and slag. Their very existence fosters slovenliness and vandalism, invites the squatter's shack and engenders a "derelict land mentality" that can never be eradicated until the mess itself has been cleaned up. Dereliction breeds a brutish insensibility, bordering on positive antagonism. It debases as well as disgraces our civilization.[44]

Clearly, it is important that minings' environmental impacts be addressed. However, by attempting only to obliterate what are perceived by outside professionals to be offending landscape elements, AOC reclamation strategies often destroy locally valued elements of place.

In fact, as this research will show, it is common for residents of mining areas to resist such reclamation programs, or other forms of planned landscape change, that significantly alter the mining environment.

Like all planning challenges, the problems of mining landscapes need to be addressed with the involvement of the people who live and work within them, and this includes recognizing the need to preserve the valued qualities of place. The concept of place preservation has been explored by Peirce Lewis, who explains the real need for planners to retain landscape elements that are central to a local sense of place.[45] Lewis advocates the need to preserve the monumental elements of landscapes and their more common things, "those features that give distinctiveness to a place, and help tie its present to the shared experience of a common past." With this statement, Lewis made an early plea for "cultural landscape preservation." A growing area of scholarship, cultural landscape preservation is described by architect Dolores Hayden as a field advocating "a broader approach to preservation, one more attuned to preserving the unique complexities of places as cultural resources, be they urban, suburban, or rural, built or natural, evolved or designed."[46] Explicitly recognized is the importance of preserving the cultural landscape's vernacular elements: ordinary features that generally evolve unintentionally and represent multiple layers of time and cultural activity.[47] This includes the kind of working-class and industrial features that are common elements of the mining landscape.

Cultural landscape preservation serves multiple purposes. Foremost, landscape preservation serves as a mode of recognizing and appreciating the past. The industrial landscape's function as a historical resource, for example, is central to the field of industrial preservation, and in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, landscape architects Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnick describe the historical significance of mining landscapes.[48] "A mine site may appear a misused or even abused landscape that begs for restoration," they explain, "but a proponent of cultural landscape preservation may very well deem the same site worthy of protection and interpretation because of evidence of human forces that have shaped it over

time."[49] Journalist Edwin Dobbs in his discussion of Butte, Montana further develops this theme. Dobbs comments on the mining landscape's historical importance in a post-industrial age:

> Now that the United States is increasingly trading in such abstractions as service and information . . . the history and fate of Butte may appear irrelevant. But they are not, and precisely because we are so eager to shed our industrial past, well in advance of grasping the extent to which industry's shadow is still with us—indeed, is the very stuff of which we are made. The mines, mills and factories upon which twentieth-century America was founded receive scant attention in the popular stories we tell about the period, when they are acknowledged, it is usually from the perspective of heroic valorization or naive disdain. Especially regarding the use of such limited resources as timber, energy, and metals, public debate has become so fragmented that it obscures the connections that tie all Americans to places like the Berkeley Pit, thereby precluding well-considered, honest responses to the uncomfortable questions they raise about desire and complicity, capitalism and modern culture.[50]

Hayden argues that preservation of vernacular landscapes also serves to interpret the social history of ordinary citizens, an aspect of the past often ignored in traditional preservation practice.[51] Significantly, Hayden argues that cultural landscape preservation is crucial to the maintenance of a local sense of place. Through the meaning they hold as places, cultural landscapes serve to structure and reinforce local identity. She describes this phenomenon as the "power of place." Hayden writes: "The power of place – the power of ordinary landscapes to nurture citizen's public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory – remains untapped for most working people's neighborhoods."[52] Although Hayden's interests lie primarily in preserving working-class urban neighborhoods, her observations regarding preservation are pertinent to all vernacular landscapes including the historic mining town.

The field of cultural landscape preservation is advancing, but critical issues remain. Historical landscape interpretation, for example, requires a complexity of understanding. No one has investigated this topic in greater detail than geographer David Lowenthal, who shows how landscape heritage has been manipulated since ancient times to serve different religious, political, and social agendas.[53] As Alanen and Melnick state: "The assumption that one "cultural landscape" exists – including accepted meanings, values, and preservation priorities – is simplistic and faulty." This holds especially true, they argue, for cultural landscapes that are not

visually pleasing, and may not be easily recognized as historical resources.[54] The issue of authenticity also poses a challenge to cultural landscape preservation. The beautification, sanitization, and commercial exploitation of heritage landscapes is an increasingly common phenomenon. Geographer Richard Francaviglia wrote, "generally, heritage landscapes preserve those systems or images that are most acceptable to our culture, which explains why saccharine examples of rural prosperity, virtuous small-town life, and harmonious urban landscapes are preserved, marketed, and consumed rather than images of countryside poverty and slums." Of historic mining landscapes, Francaviglia writes: "former mining communities that now serve tourist instead of producing metals vaguely remind us of the rewards of risks taken on the frontier while, at the same time, their revitalization distances us from the consequences of that risk."[55]

Integrity is also an issue in cultural landscape preservation. A central criterion for nominating historical sites to the National Register, integrity refers to the present condition of a property and its ability to convey its historical significance. Derived from architectural models, integrity is often an inappropriate measure of cultural landscape significance as landscapes are in a constant state of change and because their historical value may not be readily apparent. For example, landscape architect Catherine Howett writes: "the quality and importance of any preservation project is determined not by the integrity of the site, but by the quality of what is made of the site through interpretation of its history. That is the added value that can turn even a precious few evocative fragments . . . into significant history."[56] Howett's comments have important implications for the preservation of mining landscapes, where deindustrialization usually insures that only fragments of the mining past are left in place. Moreover, the ruin and waste that remains in a mining landscape often fails to adhere to broader ideas of what kinds of features should be treasured for their historical integrity.

Human Geography and the Mining Landscape

Human geographers have produced a significant body of research on mining environments. The earliest discussion of mining that may be attributed to the work of a modern

geographer is George Perkins Marsh's 1865 analysis of the impacts of European mining in *Man and Nature, physical geography as modified by human action.*[57] As geographer Randall Rohe noted, a number of human geographers followed Marsh's lead in examining minings' environmental impacts.[58] However, greater disciplinary attention has focused on other aspects of the industry. Paralleling disciplinary trends, mining-related studies conducted in the 1930s-1950s were largely descriptive regional accounts.[59] Beginning in the 1950s, spatial approaches that emphasized economic modeling became popular. Homer Aschmann's 1970, "The Natural History of a Mine," is a good example. Aschmann used economic and demographic variables to describe four stages in the lifecycle of the mining community.[60] Economic geographers have focused the greatest amount of attention on mining, and Raymond E. Murphy's 1954 "The Geography of Mineral Production" provides an overview of their contributions. In addition, Murphy identified seven frontiers for future research, several of which are pertinent to this study. One is a need for research focusing on the mining settlement, its changes through time, and the social problems of mining regions. He also identified a need for additional regional analyses of the character of individual mining regions. Interestingly, he identified the Tri-State Mining District, including the town of Picher, as an area requiring further investigation.[61]

The social and cultural aspects of mining settlements began to receive attention in the 1960s, and in the decades that followed human geographers built a substantial body of research on the social dynamics of mining communities.[62] By the 1980s, an increasing number of cultural and historical geographers were also focusing attention on the mining landscape. Randall Rohe's analysis of the material culture of Western mining camps is a representative study.[63] However, no cultural geographer has investigated the mining landscape in greater detail than Richard Francaviglia, whose *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America's Historic Mining District's* stands as the most comprehensive analysis produced to date.[64] Viewing the mining landscape as a cultural and historical resource, he highlights the significance of minings' landscape legacies. Although Francaviglia also provides some commentary on the mining

landscape's perceptual nature, other geographers have paid more explicit attention to the topic. Ben Marsh's research is representative, but also deserving mention is the work of Christopher Davies and William Wyckoff. Davies explores regional identity and place meaning in the South Wales Coalfield. Like Marsh, his research documents the existence of cohesive communities amid severe landscape decay, and he laments deindustrialization's slow eradication of the region's mining towns. Wyckoff investigates this theme in the copper mining district of Butte, Montana. He explores deindustrialization's influence on sense of place, and he explains that while economic decay has produced a complex local response, the remaining population holds a positive vision of the landscape. Wyckoff shows that a positive sense of place exists in Butte, and that the historic mining landscape serves as a key venue for the expression of common place experiences and meanings.[65]

Collectively, this small body of geographical research that focuses on the mining landscape's internal meaning, along with previously cited works produced by folklorist Curtis Ryden and anthropologist Kathleen Stewart, shows that these are complex perceptual places. In a variety of ways, the mining landscape is a highly troubled locale, but from the viewpoint of its inhabitants it can also retain significant value as a lived-in place. This observation is important for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that it lies in dramatic contrast to the dominant way that the mining landscape is viewed by the outside world.

The Mining Town Metanarrative

In *Technics and Civilization*, Lewis Mumford examines industrialization's affects on humanity, and the mining town plays a prominent role in his discussion. For Mumford, the mining industry, and its societal and landscape influences, provide model examples of industrialization's destructiveness:

> Taking mining regions as a whole, they are the very image of backwardness, isolation, raw animosities and lethal struggles. From the Rand to the Klondike, from the coal mines of South Wales to those of West Virginia, from the modern iron mines of Minnesota to the ancient silver mines of Greece, barbarism colors the entire picture.[66]

Technics and Civilization represents one of the most influential discussions of the mining region, but by no means has Mumford been alone in his critique of these places. A vast body of popular and scholarly commentary joins *Technics and Civilization* in its damnation of minings' influences. Providing a comprehensive overview of this enormous body of literature would be a difficult and time-consuming task. However, identifying the major themes running through this work allows me to summarize its content. Dominating accounts of the historic mining town is a set of clearly defined ideologies, a metanarrative with two central themes: dereliction and impermanence. The mining town metanarrative represents the overriding outside perception of the mining environment.

As Francaviglia observed, mining landscapes do not conceal the fact that mining is an environmentally abusive and economically exploitative industry.[67] As a result, it is not surprising that a great deal of scholarly research and popular commentary on mining landscapes has focused on issues of physical, social, and economic dereliction. According to geographers John Jakle and David Wilson, a place is considered derelict when symbols of disinvestment, vacancy, and degradation dominate it. Dereliction, they believe, comes at the end of a cycle of birth and decline, it symbolizes failure and communicates that a place is less than it once was.[68] In mining-related literature, the historic mining town represents a quintessentially derelict place.

Natural scientists have long shown an interest in documenting environmental deterioration in mining areas. Clarence Glacken describes how debate over man's right to exploit mineral resources at the expense of other surface uses can be traced as far back as the sixteenth century.[69] Since this time, a large body of work details minings' physical assault on the landscape.[70] In the social sciences, mining-related research has focused on a broader range of topics. Issues of social organization in the mining community, for example, have received considerable attention.[71] However, a far greater amount of scholarly energy focuses on topics such as labor conflict, economic and social hardship, and population decline. For the social

scientist, the economic and social maladies of the historic mining town – its social degeneration – are of primary concern. Emphasized in this body of research is the demographic and economic collapse that accompanies mine closure.[72]

The works of historians, social commentators, novelists, and journalists, exhibit similar themes. Historians have investigated mining at both local and regional scales, and have produced powerful accounts of community and environmental decay.[73] The mining region also holds a prominent place in the realm of social commentary and popular literature. Upton Sinclair's *King Coal*; Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*; Emile Zola's *Germinal*; Richard Llewellyn's *How Green Was My Valley*; and Henry Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, are cases in point.[74] Widely-read exposés of industrial exploitation, social plight, and landscape degradation, these works represent place-defining novels: popular regional narratives that assign powerful meaning to the mining landscape.[75] In addition, a large critical genre of reform-minded journalism has also been produced that, on the whole, depicts mining regions as forsaken places.[76] Indeed, as geographer Kenneth L. Wallwork has described, there is a long tradition of literary and scholarly description that equates mining landscapes with social squalor and landscape decay.[77] In the societal imagination, the historic mining town is a physically, socially, and economically derelict place, a portrayal so prevalent that many mining regions—Appalachia is a good example—have become synonymous with destitution.[78]

The second dominant theme in outside views of the mining landscape is impermanence. In *The Story of Utopias*, Lewis Mumford again uses the mining town as a symbol of industrial deprivation. Using Charles Dickens' fictional "Coketown" as an illustrative symbol, Mumford describes the character of the mining community. Coketown, he writes, "is devoted to the production of material goods; and there is no good in Coketown that does not derive from this aim. . . nothing in Coketown is finished or permanent or settled: these qualities are another name for death."[79] In viewing the mining community solely as a place of industrial production, a temporary and superficial "blister on the earth's surface," Mumford provides a clear expression of

one of the historic mining town's most domineering images: impermanence. Typically, the mining town is portrayed as a highly unstable community with a short life span, a locale occupied by a transitory population holding superficial ties to place. In reviewing historical studies of Western mining regions, for example, Duane Smith explores the common idea that mining towns are transitory places, occupied as temporary homes for miners who move on to find other fortunes when mineral production ceases.[80]

Before criticizing these conventional ideologies, it should be noted that themes of dereliction and impermanence hold a considerable degree of truth. Historic mining towns are places plagued by landscape decay; they do sometimes disappear following mine closure; and, resident mobility is a relatively common phenomenon, especially in isolated mining camps where little in the way of alternate employment is available when mineral production ceases. However, it is also important to note that there are shortcomings inherent in these prevailing viewpoints. Cultural geographers have long recognized, for example, that notions of dereliction, like all judgements made of landscapes, are highly subjective.[81] This point is raised not to downplay the physical, social, and economic problems that exist in mining areas, or to ignore the hardships caused by deindustrialization. Rather, it is raised in order to point out that, in the eyes of residents, the mining landscape is not necessarily a derelict place. As will be shown, landscape decay is not always a symbol of community failure. Nor do the physical and economic problems of place necessarily lessen its value. Universalizing notions of dereliction ignore the fact that these places may be viewed in positive ways by those who live within them. Likewise, while ghost town imagery is common in external views of the historic mining town, community persistence is a frequent phenomenon, one that has not received detailed attention. The role of the mining town as a factor in enduring settlement, writes Randall Rohe, remains a difficult question to answer because the fact that mining communities often outlasts their industrial usefulness has been overlooked.[82] Nowhere is this better exemplified than in local mining histories. A common shortcoming in this body of work is that historians either ignore, or treat as

an epilogue, the post-mining years of community existence. More often than not, the end of mining signals the end of the historical narrative.

On the whole, it has been largely assumed that former mining towns are derelict and ephemeral places, and this dominant viewpoint has created powerful misperceptions of the nature of life and landscape in mining areas. Mining towns are generally perceived, for example, to hold little or no value as lasting communities. Again, Mumford's Coketown serves to illustrate this point. "Coketown is not a complete community," he writes, "an environment that is devoted solely to the production of material goods is obviously no sort of environment for a good community."[83] For Mumford, the mining town is devoid of an enriching social life. It is a place of lawlessness, where utter landscape decay and dereliction inhibit the development of viable communities. For some, the seemingly temporary nature of these settlements also confirms their lack of value as meaningful places. Classics scholar James D. Muhly writes, "the villages and encampments of the miners, their families, and their female associates – are most likely to be ephemeral affairs, created by individuals who always saw their residence at the site as temporary. Mining provides a community of occupation, not a community of place."[84] In the popular and scholarly literature, the mining town exists as a locale void of local value.

Another common misperception that derives from these abstractions is the notion that landscape dereliction creates a defective, depressed, or fatalistic mentality. Residents of defunct mining areas, it is held, are shaped by their befouled surroundings, becoming listless and hopeless. For example, using Appalachia as a case study, psychiatrist David Loof describes how depression often plagues historic mining regions, and he views this mental state as a product of the deranged landscape. Kenneth Wallwork claims that a "derelict land mentality" causes residents to accept their surroundings as an inevitable accompaniment to mineral workings and he claims that resident apathy and fatalism can only be overcome by carrying out schemes of reclamation designed to liberate inhabitants from their befouled surroundings. Again, the "derelict land mentality" ignores the fact that mining landscapes may be viewed positively by

those who inhabit them. It is a view based on outside interpretations of the landscape and its assumptions border on environmental determinism. Moreover, as is evident in Wallwork's comments, such characterizations may also produce a paternalistic attitude among those charged with the task of addressing the problems inherent to these environments.[85]

The differences that exist in accounts of the mining landscape based on insider knowledge, versus the larger body of literature based primarily on external observations – the mining town metanarrative—are striking. Clearly, residents perceive the mining landscape in a different way than outsiders, and it is important to attempt to mediate these points of view. Certainly, life within the historic mining town is not always pleasurable or meaningful, but neither is it necessarily dehumanizing. A central goal of this study to produce a narrative that moves beyond images of dereliction and impermanence, to show the perceptual complexity of these locales and the value they hold as lived-in places.

Methods

> The subject demands exactness, detail, the sort of care for the assumed and the unstated, for what is only felt or only enacted, that might be called ethnographic tact. It is a patient art, and frequently a passive one. No one lines up people and asks them to define "place" and lists three examples of it. No one really has a theory of it. No one imagines that it is some sort of data set to be sampled, ordered, tabulated, and manipulated. To study place, or, more exactly, some people or other's sense of place, it is necessary to hang around with them – to attend to them as experiencing subjects.[86]

As anthropologist Clifford Geertz explains above, qualitative methods are essential to interpreting experiential geographic knowledge. Qualitative approaches focus on subjective understanding rather than statistical description, and in humanistic geography, qualitative methods are used to uncover systems of shared meaning.[87] Unfortunately, the difficulties inherent in unearthing and interpreting such knowledge make practicing humanistic geography a challenge. A number of geographers have suggested the use of multiple research strategies to come to terms with these challenges, an approach that has been adopted in this research.[88]

Place research explores the experiential relationships people have to the land around them. According to Tuan, the study of place requires recognition that places lie both external to humans as environments and internal as centers of meaning.[89] Building on Tuan's ideas, Entrikin describes the concept of place as a fusion of space and experience that give areas of the earth a "wholeness" or "individuality." Because places contain objects and events as well as memories, images, and emotions, Entrikin states that the study of place requires consideration of relatively subjective and objective elements. He recommends the use of a narrative-like synthesis for accessing the objective (decentered) and subjective (centered) realities of place. [90] In this study, multiple research methods are used to interpret landscape meaning in the historic mining town and to explore the related processes of community persistence and landscape preservation. Local history is synthesized with insider and outsider landscape accounts, drawing together the decentered and centered realities of place. A variety of ethnographic and archival methods, employed within a comparative case study framework, are used. Whenever possible, I garnered information on landscape meaning through ethnographic fieldwork: interviews and observations made within the study site settings.

Local History

An understanding of local history is central to place analysis. According to Marsh, the past defines what a place means to its residents, and approaching place analysis through local history is a functional method that relates place as an evolving psychological and social entity, to place as a piece of a changing physical landscape.[91] Porteous also highlights the importance of local history in place analysis. He describes the centrality of local history to landscape inquiry, but he also emphasizes how locally produced histories can provide important data for place analysis. These texts are important, he claims, because they focus on the lives of ordinary people in ordinary landscapes.[92] Each of the case studies is arranged chronologically, exploring the physical, social and perceptual evolution of the historic mining town from the mineral discovery phase through mine closure and deindustrialization. Recognizing that place is rooted in the

history of ordinary people, locally produced histories are used to assist in interpreting place meaning.

The Insider/Outsider Dichotomy

As Porteous explains, local histories are important because they communicate an insider's understanding of the landscape, information that is central to place analysis. "Insiders" are those who inhabit place and exhibit a rootedness within it. Insideness is a measure of membership in a community and is held to be a product of inhabiting a place over time. "Outsiders," in contrast, are individuals for whom places are not significant centers of existence. They are short-term or temporary visitors to places, for whom the landscape is distinguishable only by its superficial qualities.[93] As landscape meaning often differs with an individual's situatedness to place, the insider/outsider dichotomy serves as a useful tool for unearthing the complexity of place meaning, including its decentered and centered realities.

However, the insider/outsider dichotomy must be used carefully. It was not always possible to clearly identify informants as either an insider or an outsider.[94] New residents posed a particular problem and it was necessary to explain in detail the individual's relationship to the mining landscape (for example, how long they had lived in the study area, their degree of perceived acceptance within the community). In addition, the meanings ascribed to place often showed considerable variation within these perspectival divides, and care was taken to avoid overgeneralizations that diminished the perceptual complexity of place. Furthermore, also recognized is that factors of social identity—gender, age, and ethnicity—also influence place meaning. As it was my intent to capture the perceptual complexity of the historic mining town, I remained cognizant of both the situatedness of informants, and their social identity, and I recognized the varied nature of place perception both within and between these categories.

Ethnographic Research

The interpretation of place requires researchers to position themselves within the landscape. Ethnography commonly refers to participation of the researcher in the daily lives of

those they study. Many anthropologists believe it is the most basic form of social research because it bears a close resemblance to the routine ways in which people make sense of the world in everyday life.[95] Two types of ethnographic field techniques were used in this study: personal interviews, and observation derived from personal experience.

The most important means by which landscape meaning was interpreted was through non-directive interviewing. In this technique, the questions asked, their sequence, and their wording, were not strictly worked out beforehand. Unlike formal interviewing techniques, non-directive interviewing assumes that it is not already known what the interview will uncover.[96] As geographer Cary de Wit describes, this style of interviewing works well in experiential research where there is no way to predict what issues will bear on an individual's sense of place.[97] Although non-directive interviewing is informal it should not be considered haphazard. Checklists of topics to be covered were formulated prior to interviews and discussion was directed along avenues of interest. For reasons already discussed, in addition to eliciting insider/outsider accounts, an attempt was made to interview people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, and both men and women.

Unfortunately, my own status within these communities—single, male, and outsider–often limited my access to certain groups of informants. Although attempts were made to interview people of varied backgrounds in every study area, this was not always possible. Each of the study sites posed different challenges. Because of its small size and insular nature, Cokedale proved to be the most difficult case study in which to gain access to a diverse population. Although I was abie to interview a number of women in Cokedale, efforts to interview members of its Hispanic community failed. The majority of informants in Cokedale were also elderly. As in Cokedale, the majority of informants in Toluca were elderly, but in Picher, the principal difficulty proved to be gaining access to female informants. The individual study sites exhibit shortcomings in informant diversity that are discussed within each analysis. However, when measured across the case studies, a varied population was sampled.

A "snowball" sampling technique was used to gain access to informants: key individuals were contacted who in turn were asked to provide the names of others in the community who might be willing to participate. This proved an effective way to build a body of informants, but caution had to be taken to insure that contacts were made outside of familial or friendship networks. In several instances, I used several snowballing networks. In total, I conducted 42 personal interviews with residents living in the study areas.

Personal observation in the fieldwork setting also provided insight. Interaction with residents in local meeting places and at public events proved useful in gaining local trust and access to informants. Most significant, it provided a first-hand understanding of the setting and atmosphere of the study areas. Accepting that cultural landscapes reflect the attitudes and values of those who have created them—that the landscape can be read for meaning as one might a book–personal observation showed how place meaning had been invested in the landscape.[98] The determination residents displayed, not only in refusing to abandon these defunct mining communities, but in working for their continued improvement, was one of the most telling demonstrations of an emotive attachment to place. However, other indications of place attachments, especially those based on remembering the mining past, were pervasive in the study areas. The incorporation of mining motifs in street names, public murals, and memorials; resident interaction with the mining landscape; and mining based community celebrations—all proved to be highly informative.

Archival Research

Documentary sources were used to provide historical and contemporary information on landscape meaning, community persistence, and preservation, as well as to supplement ethnographic data. Written depictions of the landscape proved especially important in investigating place meaning in the early years of settlement, but I also used a variety of sources providing accounts of everyday life. These included newspapers and local histories written by resident or county historical organizations. Where available, I used fictional works to provide

insight into the meaning of place. Documents of a more formal nature such as scholarly publications; government, industry, and planning documents; and interview transcripts from other research endeavors, provided both insider and outsider landscape views. I used archival documents to build local and regional histories of the study areas.

Validity, Bias, and Advocacy

Humanistic research has been criticized for its failure to generalize, its neglect of structural constraints, and because verification of its observations is often difficult. Humanists have countered these arguments in a variety of ways. Some have argued that humanistic geography provides complementary research, not designed to replace positivist or structuralist approaches, but to provide insight overlooked by these perspectives.[99] For example, without attempting to understand the experiential qualities of historic mining towns it is clear that we are left with an incomplete understanding of their character. By looking beyond the scientific purview, this research provides undocumented insight into the nature of these locales. Critics also question the validity of qualitative interpretation based on its subjective nature. I have attempted to overcome such potential criticism by justifying my interpretations on the strength of presented evidence and by producing honest discussion of information that complicates assumed relationships between phenomena.

Due to the explicitly interpretive nature of their work, qualitative researchers are obliged to state and address their biases. Let me state that I am sympathetic to the plight of those who live in historic mining areas. I do not believe that mining landscapes are defined solely by dereliction and decay. Rather, I view these locales as working landscapes that are representative of difficult lives lived in valued places. I also see value in retaining minings' historical imprint on the land. That said, it is important to note that this research should not be construed as an advocacy of the mining industry or of the landscapes it has produced. Despite the fact that value may be found in mining landscapes, it should not be forgotten that mining creates serious environmental and social problems. Clearly, mining brings environmental destruction to places

and leaves economic depression in its wake. At the same time, however, harboring outrage toward the mining industry does little to help us deal with minings' negative legacies. To the contrary, as planner Kevin Lynch has explained, reactionary responses to "wasted" landscapes often inhibit society's ability to deal with such locales in an effective manner:

> Professionals do not know how to deal with waste - old farms and scrub growth, derelict mines and buildings. . . . If these phenomena are simply regarded with distaste, if our only hope is to hide them or push them farther away from wherever we happen to be, then in time we shall live surrounded by our own excrement. But when we look at waste and scars with interest, we may learn how to integrate them into a continuous cycle of use. . . . we must modify our automatic squeamishness. We need to look at it open-eyed, to see its present value so that it can be exploited for its own unique character.[100]

The deindustrialized mining community is a reality that cannot be wished away from the American landscape. As a result, it is my belief that we must learn as much about the mining landscape as we can. We need, as Lynch states, to view these places with open eyes. This includes examining the alternate ways mining landscapes are perceived by those who call them home. Such information is presented so that we might learn better ways to deal with these places. I am reminded of a statement made by Peirce Lewis in discussing the beauty of commercial agricultural landscapes: "it is not necessary that one admire an artist to admire the art."[101]

The Case Studies

Because case studies are utilized, some of the observations made are highly contextual: by definition, case studies focus on what can be learned from the single case. Indeed, this research is not intended to produce a series of grand theoretical statements on the nature of the historic mining town. To the contrary, an important goal is to highlight the individuality of these locales. However, it should not be inferred that by using a case study approach the goal of obtaining broader insight is abandoned. Developing careful assertions from case studies is a conceptual responsibility of the qualitative researcher. By utilizing multiple case studies and a comparative approach, a deeper understanding of these locales is achieved, one that allows the complexity of place to be revealed, while at the same time identifying common experiences.[102]

The study sites selected are not representative of all historic mining towns. Such a sampling task would be impossible to achieve given the physical and cultural variability of America's historic mining communities, and would be philosophically at odds with the goal of highlighting the complexity of these places. Nonetheless, attention was paid to providing a diverse set of case studies so as to maximize the insight that could be gained from this research. Three study sites were selected: the coal mining towns of Toluca, Illinois (pop. 1,400) and Cokedale, Colorado (pop. 300); and the lead and zinc mining town of Picher, Oklahoma (pop. 1,700). All are small working-class communities that have experienced the boom and bust cycle of a mineral-dependent economy. All have shown significant population loss since mine closure. Underground mining techniques were employed in each, and all contain state or federally designated abandoned mine lands for which government agencies are now responsible for potential clean up. None of the study sites are currently mineral producers, nor is it likely that mining will resume in any of these places.

Beyond these general commonalities, however, each of the study sites is unique. First-generation European immigrants largely populated Toluca and Cokedale. Picher contained a predominantly Anglo-American workforce. By definition, Cokedale is the only site that can be considered a company town, owned, built, and operated by a single firm. Mine closure occurred at different times. The Toluca mines closed in the 1920s, in Cokedale the 1950s, and in Picher the 1960s. The study sites also differ dramatically in terms of local histories, the outcomes of deindustrialization, and the character of the mining landscape. In addition, in each community, residents have faced different challenges in attempting to preserve the mining landscape, and in turn retain the local meaning of place. In various ways, each of the case studies represents a different kind of physical and social locale, but in all, residents share a mining history that continues to give meaning to the landscape.

The first case study presented is Toluca. The town lies in the heart of the Illinois Corn Belt, a Midwestern landscape of intensive agricultural production. Toluca began life as a quiet

farming community, but coal mining soon transformed it into a boisterous mining town. Toluca's economy and population boomed, but several decades later mine closure brought economic collapse. The community returned to its agricultural roots and Toluca now stands as a relatively prosperous farming town. However, Tolucans have not forgotten their mining past, and in many ways, both physically and perceptually, Toluca remains a mining town. The most significant features remaining from the mining era are two large spoil piles, features residents have affectionately named "the Jumbos." Beginning in the 1980s, conflicts arose over the future of the landmarks and the community rallied for their protection, and in the late 1990s, a formal reclamation initiative threatened the Jumbos continued presence in the community.

Cokedale lies in an isolated canyon in the Hispano borderlands of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of southern Colorado. It is the second case study presented. Cokedale's coal mines operated for four decades before mine closure and out-migration decimated the community. Today, Cokedale offers little in the way of economic opportunity, but it persists as a relatively stable community with a highly unique history. In 1981 the town was designated a National Register historical district on the basis of being one of the best-preserved company towns in the American West, and local identity is closely bound to this cultural landscape. However, most of Cokedale's industrial features have either been obliterated or are in a serious state of decay. Complex issues of heritage interpretation and formal preservation planning remain unresolved.

The final case study is Picher. A one-time lead and zinc mining community, Picher's landscape remains utterly dominated by the ruins and wastes of the mining era. Lying on the margins of the Ozark Plateau in northeastern Oklahoma, Picher's citizens are plagued by severe economic and environmental problems that have long diminished the local quality of life. Designated an EPA Superfund site in 1981, environmental problems threaten Picher's very existence, yet many residents remain because of the deep attachments they hold to place. Landscape meaning in Picher is intimately tied to, and complicated by, issues of environmental quality. For the last two decades, federal and state agencies have engaged in a variety of

remediation activities. While necessary to protect the health and safety of Picherites, remediation has proven to be a mixed blessing for it is slowly eradicating the bonds residents have to the mining landscape.

CHAPTER TWO: TOLUCA

In January 1997, a news story appeared on Cable News Network (CNN) describing a small community's fight to save two mountains of mining waste—relics of a moribund coal mining industry—from being removed by city bulldozers. "Some people in an Illinois town are going to bat for slag," stated the report. "It looks like a mound of dirt . . . but some say the slag is a national treasure and they want to preserve it." The town was Toluca, a historic coal mining community located 110 miles southwest of Chicago. The television feature summarized how the community was organizing to protect its two landmarks, "the Jumbos."[1]

While residents were grateful for the attention their cause received, Toluca's momentary exposure in the media spotlight provided only a superficial glimpse into a much larger and richer story. The CNN report was of the type national media outlets often use to round-out coverage of more serious news of the day: a snapshot of the seemingly eccentric behavior of a small community in a far-off corner of the countryside. Portraying Toluca's affection for its piles of industrial waste as unusual, the feature downplayed the significance of events occurring in the town. True, the CNN report partially recognized the significance of the Jumbos when it stated that the waste piles represent "heaps of history." The Jumbos, and the dozens of similar mounds of mining waste scattered across northern Illinois' historic Longwall Mining District, are the most significant features remaining from a mining era that began more than a century ago (Figure 2-1).

However, the Jumbos are more than just relics of an important economic era. As will be shown, they also stand as valued community landmarks. The Jumbos serve as memorials to those who built Toluca, and to family and friends who toiled and died in the mine. They also reinforce more broadly the town's past and present value as a lived-in place. Indeed, not communicated in the CNN report, or in the majority of accounts written of the community since its founding in 1890, is the internal value Toluca held as a home in the mining era. True, life was hard, and the town's outside reputation as a rough and unforgiving place was well deserved. However, for those who lived and worked there, Toluca was a cherished place. In fact, the community

survived mine closure largely as a result of the attachments residents cultivated to the town. Moreover, although outsiders viewed Toluca's industrial imprint disparagingly, residents long viewed minings' influences in a more meaningful way. Mining became a central aspect of community and individual identity, and although more than seven decades have passed since the last loads of coal were pulled from the Toluca mine, the industry's physical and social legacies remain central to a local sense of place. In this context, the community's fight to protect and preserve the Jumbos takes on greater significance. At stake in residents' efforts to protect the mining legacy is the very meaning Toluca holds as a lived-in place.

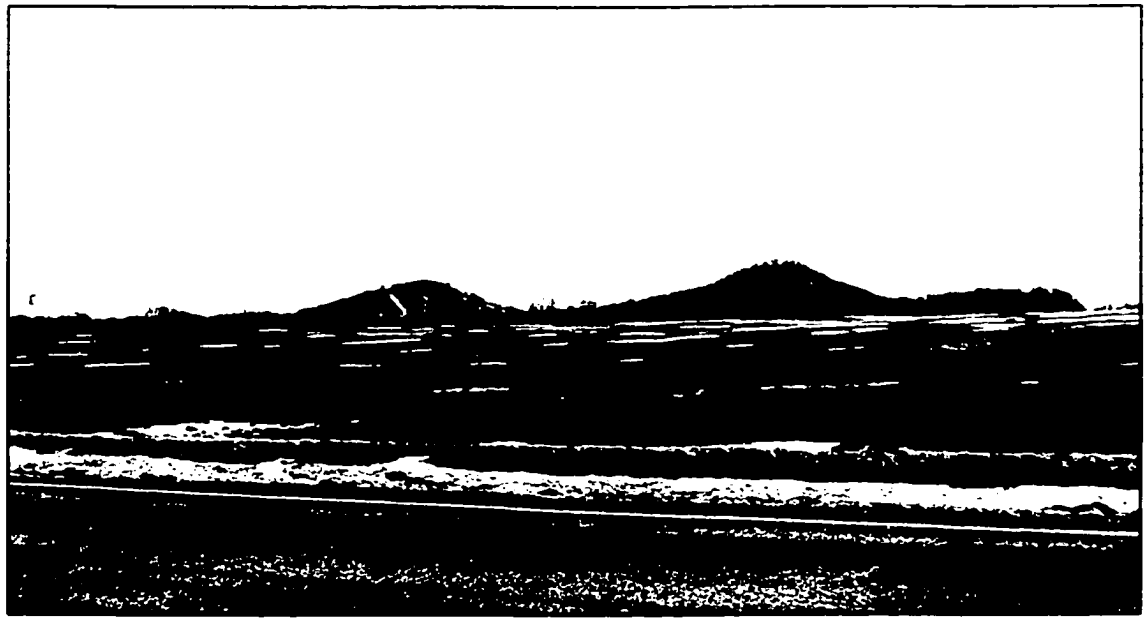


Figure 2-1: The Toluca Jumbos, 1998. The north Jumbo, at left, rises to a height of approximately 110 feet. *Photograph by the author.*

So strong is Toluca's attachment to the Jumbos, that when state reclamation officials came forward with a plan to mitigate hazards on the Jumbo property in the late 1990s, residents demanded that the appearance of the features not be compromised. A lengthy debate ensued. However, working with the community, the state produced an innovative reclamation plan to stabilize the Jumbos and at the same time preserve their visual and historical integrity. Completed in the summer of 2000, the reclamation project has been a great success. Toluca

provides proof, that reclamation, when sensitive to experiential landscape values, can be accomplished without destroying minings' physical legacies.

The Longwall Mining District

The Longwall Mining District, of which Toluca was a part, was the site of several firsts in both the U.S. and Illinois coal industries. It was the first large-scale commercial coal mining field in Illinois. It was the only coal field in the United States to rely almost exclusively on the longwall method of mining. Finally, the district played an important role in the early settlement and industrialization of the state. However, despite this significance, the Longwall District has received little scholarly attention. The few historical studies that have been undertaken in the region, for example, focus on labor issues, ethnicity, and mining disasters in isolated communities and a need has been recognized for the presentation of a more comprehensive history of the area.[2] Moreover, such historical background provides the foundation upon which to build an understanding of the past and present meaning Toluca holds as a place. The specifics of community development and landscape meaning in Toluca cannot be addressed before this historical context is provided. An understanding of the meaning of place, of the significance of Toluca's mining culture and the legacy the industry has left behind, begins by looking to the past.

More than a century of Euro-American settlement has transformed the gently rolling glacial plain of north-central Illinois, once a poorly drained expanse of tallgrass prairie, into a bountiful agricultural landscape. Settlement in this region adheres to the well-established images of the Midwestern landscape. It is an area of small towns platted along railroads, agricultural trade centers that grew up around train depots and grain elevators. Images of fenceless fields of soybean and corn, weathered red barns and corncribs come to mind when one thinks of this part of the country, but such pastoral representations are incomplete. While cash grain farming remains the dominant land use, this is also an industrial landscape. Less common in number than the grain silo, but no less a part of the rural landscape, are the tall stacks and cooling towers of power plants; the warehouses and railyards of food processing factories; and the power lines,

railroads, and interstate highways that connect this rural industry to urban commerce. The relics of nineteenth century coal mining are also an important part of the regional landscape. In more than thirty towns scattered across the area, mounds of mining waste stand in testimony to the fact that industry has been an important part of the landscape here for nearly as long as the frontier farm (Figure 2-2).[3]

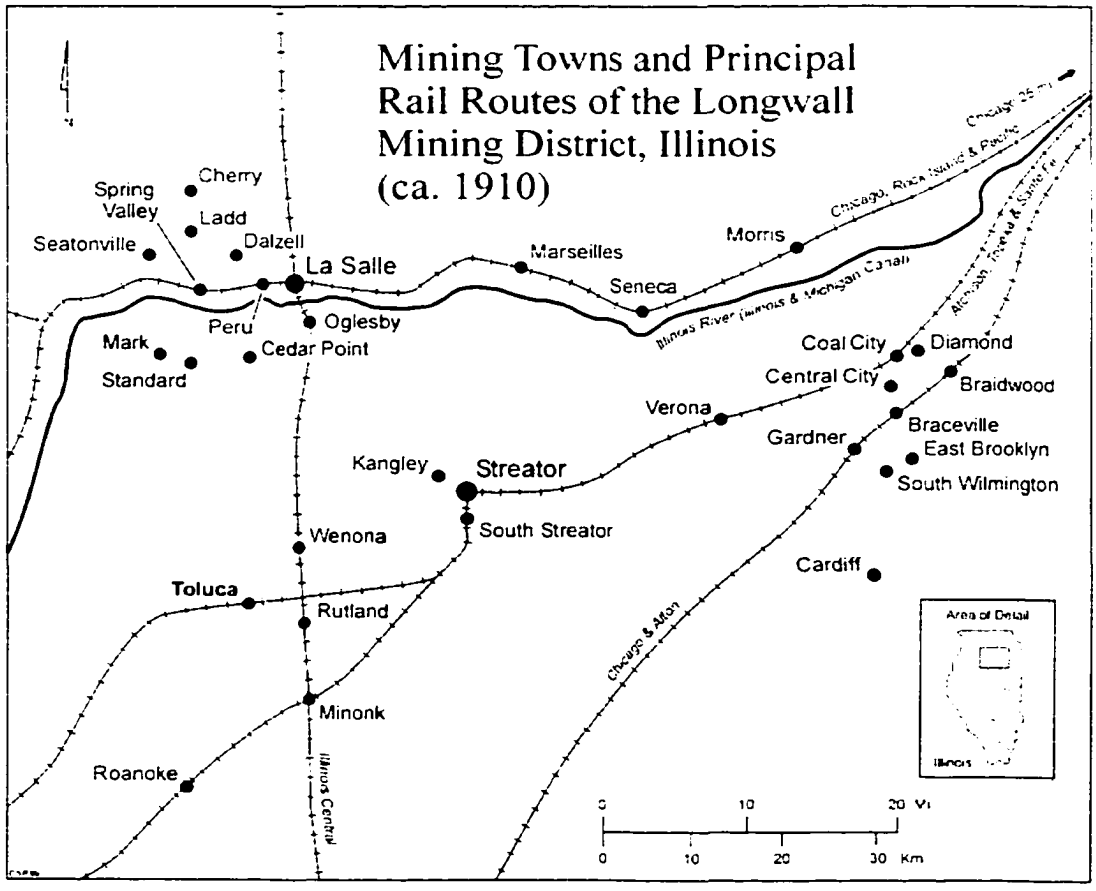


Figure 2-2

The first recorded discovery of coal in North America occurred not far from the future site of Toluca, in the bottomlands of the Illinois River in 1673. Coal was discovered in outcrops along the river by French explorers Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette, a deposit that would be among the state's first to be exploited when settlement pushed its way into the river valley in the mid-1800s. Early operations were comprised of small-scale drift mines. During the pre-railroad era, mining was limited to outcrops on the margins of the coal basin near navigable rivers and

population centers. Coal was used for local domestic purposes, but lacking a means to transport the resource, growth of the fledgling industry stalled. Several developments occurred in the 1850s, however, that facilitated the development of the coal mining industry. The growth of Chicago brought about an increase in demand for coal, and the completion of the Illinois-Michigan Canal and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad provided operators with a way to transport coal to this market. The first large-scale commercial coal mining operations in the region were developed in 1856 in La Salle County. The initial mines proved profitable, and the industry grew. By 1860, La Salle was the third largest coal-producing county in the state.[4]

The real boom for the district occurred in 1865 when coal was discovered in Will and Grundy counties, 50 miles southwest of Chicago. In 1866, mines were developed in the region and coal its coal shipped to Chicago over the Chicago & Alton Railroad. The small town of Braidwood, around which the majority of the mines were focused, boomed into a city with a population of more than 5,000. Although the coal mining districts of central and southern Illinois are better known, it was the northern field that led in state coal production in the later decades of the nineteenth century. By 1870, the focus of Illinois coal production had shifted still further north, and Will, Grundy, and La Salle counties were the second, third, and fourth leading coal producers in the state. Will County held the distinction of being the state's leading coal producer from 1875 to 1880, and from 1875 and 1887, the northern district led all others in total coal production.[5]

Prior to the development of the northern field, Chicago received coal primarily via water routes from Pennsylvania and Ohio, but now much of the coal consumed in the city could be obtained from mining operations located in its immediate hinterland. Helping to power the early expansion of Illinois industry, the proximity of the field to the Chicago market gave the northern coal region an economic significance once described as second to none in the state. More important, however, the northern field became a principal supplier of fuel for Illinois railroads, whose operations were central to Chicago's development as a manufacturing and distribution

center. The primary mine operators in the northern coal field were railroad companies. The rapid expansion of the railroads in the 1850s and 1860s brought agricultural settlement to the uplands of north-central Illinois, and the discovery of coal in the Braidwood region revealed that the coal measure outcropping along the Illinois River stretched south into these newly settled regions. Now aware that a vast fuel supply lay below their trunk lines, the railroads began developing mines at various points along their routes. Soon, mines began to appear farther south and west of established mining areas in La Salle and Braidwood, along the growing network of trunk lines radiating from Chicago. All of the major rail companies running lines west of Chicago operated coal mines in northern Illinois.[6]

As railroad and mining operations spread, the full extent of the northern field, occupying 1,700 square miles, was realized. The bituminous coal measure underlay portions of nine counties. The most productive vein in the region was the "Wilmington" coal. In the Braidwood area, the Wilmington was relatively shallow, in places lying only 60 feet below the surface. In western portions of the field, however, the coal lay at greater depths, from 350 to 550 feet underground. Unlike the southern Illinois coals, which lay in seams averaging 84 to 108 inches, the Wilmington coalbed was thin, averaging only 38 inches. In terms of quality, the northern coal was also less valuable, having a heating capacity ranked sixth among all coals in the state.[7]

The northern Illinois coal field, designated by the Illinois State Geological Survey as District I, became known as the Longwall District because of the method of underground mining practiced in the area. The Longwall District was the only coal field in the U.S. where the longwall technique was the dominant method of mining. Unlike conventional room-and-pillar systems, longwall mining removed the entire coal seam, and mining progressed along a continuous working face. The layout of the mine may be likened to a wheel, the hub representing the shaft pillar, a block of coal left in place to preserve hoisting and ventilation shafts, and the rim representing the constantly enlarging working face of the coal seam. In the longwall system, miners placed waste rock (gob) into the mined-out areas between the working face and the shaft

pillar. After removing coal by hand, the roof was allowed to collapse onto the mine gob, which would be relied upon to support the roof and preserve the working spaces and haulage ways.[8]

Given the relatively ubiquitous nature of the coal resource, the siting of mining communities in the Longwall District was not strictly dictated by geology. Mines were developed primarily near preexisting trunk lines and railroad communities. That mine locations were determined by established settlement and railroad patterns is a unique aspect of the Longwall District. Many of the area's mining communities, especially those in southern portions of the field, began life as agricultural trade centers. However, the opening of mines quickly transformed these farming villages into mining communities. Mining brought rapid population growth and an influx of European immigrants. Census data reveals that the population of Longwall mining communities nearly doubled every decade from the 1850s to the 1880s. By 1890, more than 49,000 people lived in the district's mining towns, a number that peaked in 1910 at more than 75,000.[9] The district's pioneer miners were mostly of Anglo-American, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh decent. African Americans were also found in the district in the early years of its operation. As the northern field expanded at the turn of the century, however, labor needs stimulated an influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe including Austro-Hungarians, French, Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Russians, of which Italians were the most numerous. In 1920, it was estimated that there were twice as many Italians working in Illinois coal mines as any other nationality. The Italian presence was especially strong in the Braidwood and Spring Valley districts, and in communities in southern portions of the field like Toluca. Most of these migrants came from regions in northern Italy, many abandoning marginal farming and mining occupations to join family and friends already working in Longwall area mines.[10]

Because many of the mining communities evolved from agricultural villages, Longwall settlements differed in appearance from mining towns found elsewhere in the state. According to one account, Longwall towns were more "attractive" than the "raw" mining camps springing into existence in southern Illinois. The advantages of the Longwall mining towns were highlighted in

a statement released by the Northern Illinois Coal Operators Association in 1923: "Cities and villages in which the mines are located contain the best of advantages: paved streets, grade and high schools, water works; and living conditions are consequently second to none and must not be confused with the so-called mining camps [of southern Illinois]. This being an old field, the homes are owned by the employees, and company houses are practically a thing of the past." While living conditions were better than those in mining camps elsewhere, mining transformed the Longwall communities in ways consistent with the traditional mining town of the era. Mining brought a boom in construction of new residential areas and businesses. European immigration led to the development of a diverse array of ethnically based churches, social organizations, and eateries. The saloon and union hall became common place, and if there was any doubt that coal had not displaced corn as the Longwall mining towns' key commodity, it was soon dispelled by the impressive head frames and power houses of the mining operations and by the growing piles of mine gob rising above the prairie landscape.[11]

The Longwall District reached its peak productivity in the first decade of the twentieth century. The period of prosperity for most mining towns was short-lived, however, with the median life span of mines in the district being only 14 years.[12] The demise of area mines had numerous causes, many of which were related to the method of mining practiced in the region. The longwall system removed a greater portion of coal from a given seam than room-and-pillar methods, a necessity given the area's thin coal seam. Unfortunately, the longwall method also had several disadvantages that limited the ability of the district's mines to compete with those elsewhere in the state. Longwall mines took a longer time and larger capital investment to bring into production. After a shaft reached coal bearing strata, no coal could be produced until a stable shaft pillar and initial working face were cut into place, a process that took seven to ten months. Once under production, longwall mines were more expensive to run because miners spent a good deal of their time packing gob and brushing roofs—"dead-work"—time that was more productively spent removing coal in room-and-pillar operations. In 1912, the average

underground coal miner in Illinois produced 4.9 tons of coal per day, but miners in the Longwall District produced only 2.4 tons.[13]

Also contributing to the high cost of longwall mining was the district's poor accident record. Longwall mines experienced fewer fatalities than others districts but ranked consistently high in the number of non-fatal accidents, the majority of which were caused by falling rock and coal. In 1912, for example, the Longwall District averaged one fatal accident per 1000 employees, while the state average for all mining districts was 2.6 deaths. Still, the Longwall District averaged 16.8 nonfatal accidents per 1000 employees, more than any other district (the state average for nonfatal accidents in 1912 was 10.6). The high accident rate can be attributed to the hazards of longwall mining. That explosive gases were not present in the northern coal bed reduced mine fatalities as explosions tended to result in greater losses of life than other types of mishaps. Longwall mines, however, were not immune to catastrophe. One of the worst mining disasters in U.S. history occurred in the Longwall town of Cherry in 1909, where 259 miners were killed in an underground fire. Although the human costs of such fatalities and of the hundreds of debilitating accidents that occurred in the district are incalculable, such mishaps had a direct economic impact on operators. In many cases, accidents resulted in compensation to the miner or his surviving family, and in all instances, accidents represented time and labor lost to production. Because of its low coal output per employee and its high accident rate, the Longwall District produced the fewest tons of coal per accident in the state. In 1912 the district averaged 24,194 tons of coal produced per accident (the state average for all coal districts was 66,866 tons), a statistic that reveals that the human and economic cost of producing Longwall coal was high.[14]

In addition to the high cost of coal production, operators faced external constraints that also limited the viability of their mines. In 1915, geologist Gilbert Cady outlined the reasons why Longwall District coal production was on the decline. Despite apparently ideal transportation facilities and market location, operators paid higher freight rates than southern coal producers. A

statement released in 1923 by the Northern Illinois Coal Operators described how Longwall coal had been "practically barred" from the Chicago market by freight subsidies that benefited southern producers. Although located close to the largest coal market in the Midwest, virtually the entire product the field produced was being shipped westward. With higher transportation rates, lower quality coal, and higher labor costs, the Longwall District's advantage of nearness to markets disappeared and the center of Illinois coal production shifted south. The year of peak production in the Longwall District was 1907, when 6.4 million tons of coal was produced from the field. Production declined after 1907, and by 1913 only 4.2 million tons were produced. The decreasing number of mines in operation after 1900 also demonstrates the field's decline. The Illinois State Geological Survey identified 43 longwall mines in operation in the district between 1900 and 1910. That number fell to 28 in the 1920s, to 16 in the 1930s, and to 7 in the 1940s (Figure 2-3).[15]

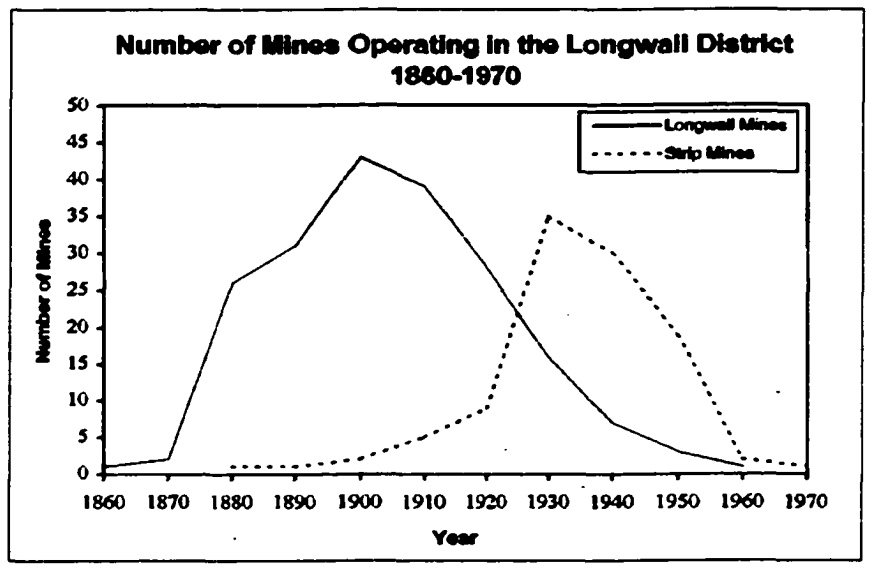


Figure 2-3

With the advent of strip mining in the 1940s and '50s, some areas of the field experienced a resurgence of mining activity. However, most district communities were no longer significant coal producers by this time. As quickly as mines opened, stimulating growth and prosperity, mines closed, triggering out-migration and economic decline. The unemployed miner

and his family faced great hardship, and most mining towns experienced significant out-migration as miners moved elsewhere in search of work. Many families moved to other area mines still in operation, eventually ending up in the southern Illinois coal fields. Others abandoned the industry entirely. Mine closure appears to have had less impact on the populations of the area's larger communities, where miners were more easily absorbed into other forms of industry. Hard hit, however, were the district's smaller communities. According to census data, of 32 Longwall mining towns, 20 experienced at least a 25 percent reduction in population in the decade following mine closure. More significantly, 11 of those towns lost more than 50 percent of their populations during this period. For these communities, the social and economic impact of mine closure was severe, but it is interesting to note that few of even the hardest hit towns disappeared following mine closure. For the most part, miners and others who chose to stay found new employment in agricultural, manufacturing, and service industries. Although many of the district's smaller communities never again saw population numbers as high as those of the mining era, almost all of the Longwall's mining towns endured. Toluca is one such town.

Farm Town to Mining Metropolis

Toluca was platted on the south side of the Sante Fe railroad's Chicago-Kansas City main in 1889, on land owned by a local farmer named William Twist. Recognizing the need for a stop along this section of the railroad—an uninterrupted 50 mile run between Streator and Chillicothe—Twist petitioned the Sante Fe for the establishment of a depot. The train stop was established in 1890 and the settlement was named Toluca, a toponym with uncertain origins. One account claims that Mexican railroad laborers were responsible for naming the town after the industrial city in their homeland. According to folklore, a packing case addressed to the Mexican city fell from a train. The amused workers nailed a board from the case displaying the foreign address to a shack in the switchyard and the name stuck.[16]

Growth was modest in the early years. By 1890, Toluca was a rather unremarkable farming community, an unincorporated village of 300 residents whose homes clustered around a

grain elevator and a stockyard. Servicing farmers within a 20-mile radius, Toluca initially functioned as an agricultural trade center and within two years of its platting the town contained a small residential neighborhood, two stores, a post office, lumberyard, and passenger train depot. Despite these humble beginnings, however, by 1892, community leaders were enormously optimistic about the future of the town. Charles Devlin, manager of the mining properties for the Sante Fe, and Henry Duggin, an exploration engineer and former mayor of Spring Valley, were prospecting the town site for coal. When three veins of ore were discovered, the Sante Fe purchased the coal rights underlying Toluca. Work began on two shafts, located two blocks west of the village, and the lower vein of coal was reached on September 1, 1893. A third shaft was started half a mile to the south but was abandoned when the shaft walls caved in. Toluca's transformation into a mining town had begun. More than 150 men were at work preparing the mines. Twist, Devlin, and the Sante Fe organized a land company, and housing and business additions bearing their names were platted on the north side of the tracks. Soon after, the Sante Fe began building 200 company houses to accommodate the expected influx of miners.[17]

No coal was produced from the mines until 1894, but industry preparations were already transforming the farming village into what local promoters would advertise as a soon-to-be "coal and manufacturing metropolis." Unemployed miners were numerous in the district as many of the Longwall mines had already closed by the time Toluca's were being established. The new operation offered at least a few more years of employment and the tiny farming village grew into a bustling mining town. Some have estimated Toluca's population as high as 6,000 in the late 1890s. While it is possible that such population totals were achieved, the 1900 census, the first conducted in Toluca, lists the town's population at 2,629. This is the highest population listed for Toluca in the census record. Toluca's official population during the three decades of active mining never fell below 2,400 (Figure 2-4).[18]

Figure 2-4: View of Toluca looking northeast from atop the north Jumbo, 1911. At the time, the mining town contained a population of more than 2,400. *Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993, Toluca: privately printed, 1993.*

Population growth was directly tied to the fortunes of the coal mine. Officially known as the Devlin Coal Company No. 1, the mine was described as one of the most productive and best equipped in the Longwall District (Figure 2-5). Two shafts penetrated the coal seam lying 512 feet below the surface and averaging 34 inches thick. Both shafts gave access to the same mine workings. The north (No.1) mine shaft, served as the primary hauling shaft for coal and waste rock. A tall wooden tower, later replaced by a steel tower, was erected above the mouth of the shaft, where loaded pit cars were drawn and weighed. Coal was graded and emptied into coal bins to await shipping, and waste rock was moved via an elevated tramway to a large spoil dump adjacent to the shaft where Toluca's north Jumbo now stands. The south (No. 2) mine housed a similar operation, but as the better coal was found in the northeast workings of the mine, the No. 2 served primarily to haul men and equipment. Less rock was removed via the No. 2 shaft, resulting in the formation of a smaller spoil dump: Toluca's south Jumbo.[19]

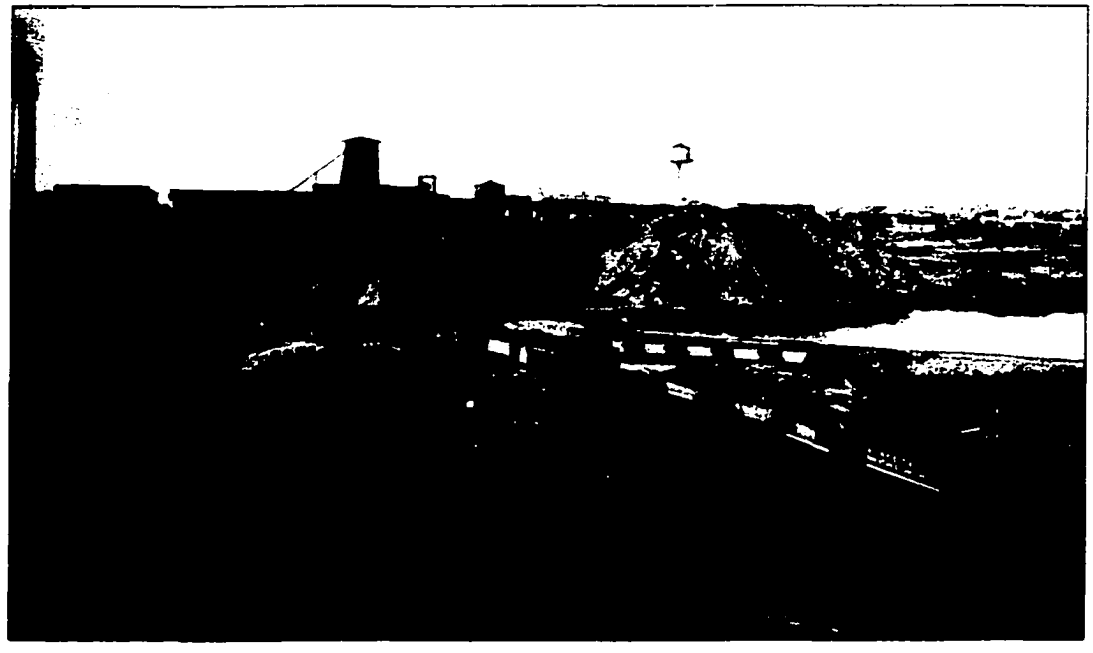


Figure 2-5: The Toluca mine looking north along the trestle between the No. 1 and No. 2 shafts, circa 1900. The mine headframe is pictured at center-left, the powerhouse at far right. The pile of mine spoil at the center of the photograph is the beginning of the north Jumbo. *Used with permission, Jack Gerardo private collection.*

The first loads of coal were removed from the mine in 1894. Although production and employment dipped briefly in 1897 and 1898, the Toluca mine grew every other year during the first ten years of its operation. Toluca was the only coal stop on the Sante Fe main line between Chicago and Fort Madison, Iowa. The Sante Fe stopped all of its locomotives in Toluca to re-supply with coal and water. Figure 2-6 shows coal production and employment figures over the life span of the Toluca mine. Producing more than 1,000 tons of coal a day, the mine reached both peak production (379,000 tons of coal) and employment (a total of 771 workers, 664 underground) in 1905.[20]

As in most mines in the Longwall District, Toluca miners were paid on the basis of the tonnage of coal they dug. The mine operators and the United Mine Workers of America negotiated wage scales. In 1907, the Toluca mine ran two shifts, and the average price paid to the miner was about 75 cents per ton. Mule drivers, mechanics, and other non-mine workers were

paid an hourly wage and were better paid. In 1915, a mule driver working in the Toluca mine made $2.87 a day. By the 1920s, miners' wages had increased to $1.10 per ton, but 8 cents was deducted by the company to cover operating expenses of the mining machines introduced into the mine in the later years of its operation. Miners working in the Longwall District generally earned less than their counterparts in the southern Illinois coal fields, and wage disputes were common. The wage was especially low considering the dangers miners faced underground, and the amount of uncompensated dead-work that was required to keep the mine in operation. According to state statistics, 20 men died in the Toluca mine, and 441 were injured during the years of its operation. Men were killed falling down mine shafts and by falling rock. In addition, run-away mine cars, kicking mules, and dynamite blast injured many.[21]

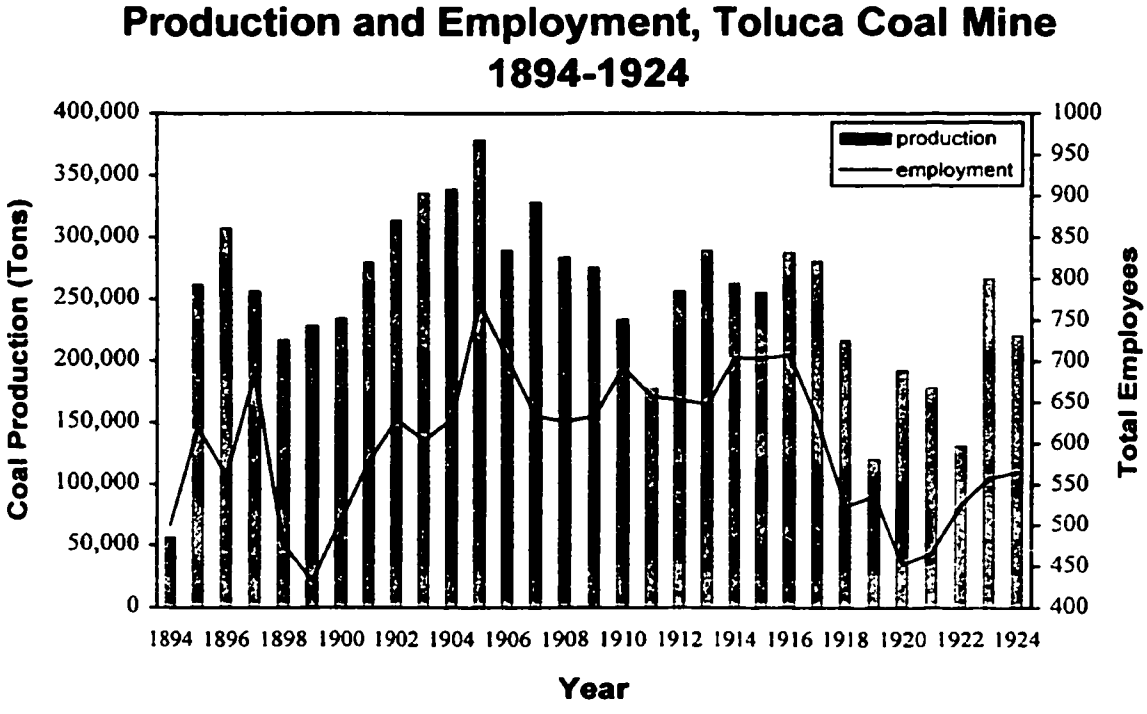


Figure 2-6

Some of the first laborers to work the mine were African Americans. Little is known of their history in Toluca but it appears that they were brought in as temporary workers. Generally, African Americans were not well received in the Illinois mining fields, and Toluca was no

exception. When a Toluca man was lynched near Lacon in 1896 the entire Black population moved on. Europeans replaced African Americans, and by 1900, 39 percent of Toluca's population was listed by the census as foreign born. Although Scottish, Irish, Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Serbs, and Austrians migrated to Toluca, its dominant ethnic population was Italian. The primary occupation for most male Italians was coal mining, but a number also established themselves in service enterprises as grocery owners, store clerks, and saloon keepers. According to historian Nancy Lutgens, who investigated ethnic relations in Toluca, the town's northern-European and Anglo-American majority often marginalized Italians. However, this did not hold Italians back from eventually obtaining positions of prominence within the community. At one time or another, Italians were employed as city marshall, fire chief, tax collector, and mayor.[22]

Mobility in status was not available for the majority of Italian women living in Toluca, who were generally discouraged from working outside the home. As always, however, women's labor played an important role in the local economy. In addition to cooking, cleaning, laundry, and caring for children, most women also tended vegetable gardens and livestock. They also boarded relatives or operated boarding houses in their homes. According to Lutgens, 48 percent of Italian homes in Toluca in 1900 either kept boarders or had relatives outside of the main family living with them, an exhausting, low paying, yet necessary service in a growing mining town.[23]

Toluca's ethnic diversity is reflected in the types of social institutions and businesses that developed in the community. Toluca became known for its Italian grocery stores and eateries (Figure 2-7) but its cosmopolitan nature is best reflected in its churches. Toluca's early Anglo-American and northern-European settlers established St John's Lutheran Church (1891-1991); the Toluca Methodist Episcopal Church (1891-1913), and the Antioch Christian Church (1892-). The First Baptist Church, established to serve Toluca's African American community, existed from 1893-1896. Two Catholic Churches were also established during the mining era. St. Joachim's Parish and school house (1900-1921), served the Italian community (Figure 2-8). St. Ann's Parish (1893-) served the Irish community. St. Joachim's united with St. Ann's in 1921.

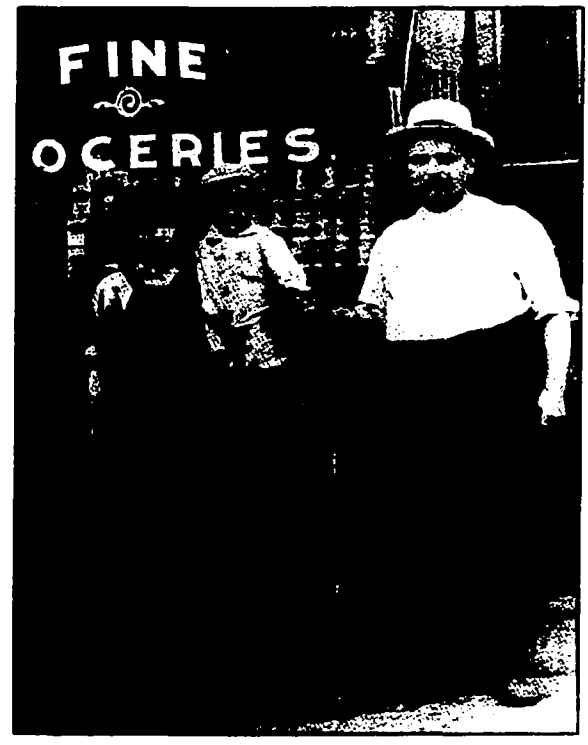


Figure 2-7: Grocer Dominic Gerardo (right), pictured with sons Emil (left) and Jack (center), migrated to the U.S. from Italy in 1884. Four generations of Gerardos operated grocery stores in Toluca between 1896 and 1992. *Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993, Toluca: privately printed, 1993.*

Figure 2-8: St. Joachim's Parish School, circa 1900. *Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993, Toluca: privately printed, 1993*

Production and employment in the Toluca mine varied from year to year, but the general trend after 1905, the year of peak production and employment, was one of decline. Many factors contributed to the annual fluctuations in coal output. Low production around 1911, for example, was caused by a change in mine ownership following the bankruptcy of Charles Devlin. Trustees received $500,000 for the mining property, which was purchased by the Jackson-Walker Coal & Material Company of Wichita, Kansas. The mines were reorganized as the Toluca Coal Company. Other events, such as the statewide strike called by the United Mine Workers union in 1910, the destruction of the No.1 shaft tower by fire in the summer of 1914, and a general decline in the price of coal in the years following World War I also diminished mine production.[24]

Compared to other operations in the Longwall District, the Toluca mine had a relatively long and profitable life span, and in the final years of operation, production and employment in the mine was still relatively high. Coal production was greater in the last two years of operation than it had been the previous five years, indicating that there was still plenty of coal in the ground and men to dig it out when the decision was made to close the mine. Over the 31 years of operation, the Toluca mine produced an average of 250,000 tons of coal per year and employed 600 workers. When the mines closed on May 8, 1924, the mine was running at high capacity having already produced 221,000 tons of coal for the year. In many mines nearing the end of their life span, operators begin slowing production over a period of time but that was not the case in Toluca. More than 500 men were left without work on the day the mine closed.[25]

"A Rip-Roaring Town": Perceptions in the Mining Era

> What has Toluca? The finest coal fields in the great commonwealth of Illinois; the finest farm land in the world and a climate superb. Its water is the purest that Mother Earth contains and its people are prosperous and happy. . . The greatest barbecue ever known in the state will be given at Toluca when the shafts have been sunk to coal. That will be the dawning of a new era of prosperity for Toluca. All hail the time! [26]

So claimed the earliest published account of Toluca, which appeared in the first issue of the *Toluca Star Herald* in 1893. As the quotation reveals, local promoters were embracing

mining and their early accounts painted Toluca in a highly favorable light. However, many of the claims being made by local boosters were highly questionable. Described in 1893 as having "the richest coal field in the state," one promoter predicted that Toluca would have a population of over 10,000 inside of a year. Boosters tied Toluca's future prosperity and growth to coal, ignoring the finite nature of the resource. Coal "is the rock on which Toluca is building, a rock as solid as the Rock of Ages," exclaimed the *Star Herald*.[27]

While tremendously optimistic about the future, it is interesting to note that some early promotional discourse actually confronted the potentially negative aspects of development. The lead article in a 1895 promotional edition of the *Star Herald* provides a good example:

> The West has seen many towns spring up, as if by magic, during the last few decades. Many of these towns, some of them now important commercial centers, stand today as monuments to American push and enterprise; others with nothing to hold and employ the thousands attracted to them, have fallen to decay and unimportance. There has been so many of these wildcat towns, whose alluring prospects only existed in the heads of designing real estate speculators, that, as a people, we have become very wary, of real estate booms and "boom-towns."

The article went on to claim:

> In presenting this special edition of the *Star*, we propose to tell in detail as much as possible about Toluca. We intend to confine ourselves to a recital of actual and existing facts. Any other course would be foolish as it would be wrong.[28]

It seems odd that caution over the temporary nature of boom-town growth would be voiced, for the promotional publication, which included real estate advertisements and biographies of prominent speculators, was clearly intended to advance Toluca's development. However, such qualifying discourse served a useful role. Promoters recognized that those coming to Toluca were not naïve about the future of the town. Many were coming from one-time boom-towns in other areas of the Longwall District where mines had already closed. They were well aware that Toluca's long-term prosperity was uncertain. By attempting to address potential resident skepticism, newspaper promoters were legitimizing their claim that Toluca would be a different kind of place. This proved necessary not only because many had first-hand experience of the boom and bust nature of the mining economy, but also because many of the "facts" being

put forward by the newspaper were difficult to believe. Included as "certainties" of Toluca's future in 1895 was a population of 15,000; three mines employing 2,000 men; and a scheme to run a Spring Valley to St. Louis branch of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad through the town. All of these predictions proved fanciful.[29]

More balanced information on Toluca's character during the mining period is difficult to come-by. Toluca's mines closed more than 75 years ago, and few local documents from the era have been preserved. Information can be gathered from local histories and from a smattering of stories on Toluca that appeared in nearby town newspapers. However, because of the biases inherent in this literature—both promotional biases boosting Toluca's image, and mining town and ethnic prejudices that cast the community in an overly negative light—this material must be used cautiously. In order to provide as complete an account of life in the mining era, these sources were compared and contrasted with the firsthand accounts of residents themselves.

According to those whose observations were recorded, or those who remain who can remember the mining era firsthand, Toluca was an uncompromising place. "Toluca was a rough, tough, hardworking, and hard-drinking town made up of Italians, Irish, and Polish people," writes resident and onetime funeral director Pete Aimone in *Toluca-100 Years, 1893-1993*, a locally published community history celebrating Toluca's centennial.[30] In an interview conducted with Aimone by fellow Tolucan Anne Mae Terrell in the 1980s, he elaborated:

> Toluca was a rip-roaring wide-open town. At one time there were 33 taverns and it was brother against brother. Thursday night was pay night and women and children stayed off the street because there was bloodthirsty fights, razor fights. There are many scars. There were several murders that took place. This was quite a town. It looked like a Western town because we had a store called the Great Western and also a cooperative store run by the mine. The miners would go in there and buy their things and they were put on their bill and then on pay day they would take this out of their pay. Unfortunately many of the taverns also took plenty of money out of the miners' pay and the women didn't like that too much. The wives were not receptive to that.[31]

Consistent elements in resident accounts are stories of Toluca's wild nature, and the dominant role its close-knit Italian community played in the social life of the town. The

comments of Jack Gerardo, a retired grocer whom I interviewed in 1998, are a case in point:

> Talk about Dodge City, Toluca was a rough old town. Guys would come out'a taverns with knives in 'em. There was always fightin' over women. I remember one guy took a big knife to the head. He came out of the tavern and died on the sidewalk. There was a black stain on the pavement there for years, his blood soaked right into the cement. I used to walk by it everyday on my way to school. Toluca was a wild place and all the mothers would tell their daughters to watch out for them Italians [laughs]. A lot of girls weren't even allowed in town Thursday and Saturday nights. Oh we had some rough ones here.

Later, Gerardo attempted to show me the black stain on the pavement where the man had bled to death but the mark had disappeared from the steps of where now stands the front door of the Toluca City Hall. Gerardo continued:

> Toluca was just like Las Vegas or Tombstone or any of those places. At one time, Rutland [a neighboring mining town] had an outdoor pavilion with a dance floor. The guys from Toluca went over there to a dance one night and they got into a tie with them Rutland boys. First there was a big fight like the Devil and then someone called up Rich Baker, he was the bully of Toluca and was just as powerful as a horse. So he brought a car load of guys over, they had a Model-T at that time, they pulled into Rutland. They was right on the dance floor, the car and all, and everybody was squared-off and they was fightin' like hell. Holy Christmas! Why I'll tell you, this town really had some hotties.[32]

The comments of Gilbert Flynn, a retired Rutland miner whom I also interviewed in 1998, confirm Aimone and Gerardo's observations of Toluca:

> There were more taverns than anything in this town, there was 30 some taverns. The other towns, Wenona, Rutland, Minonk, weren't as bad, Toluca was about the worst of the bunch. It was because of the Italians. Then the bootlegging days came along and they started bootlegging. Oh yeah this was a tough town.[33]

Toluca's boisterous reputation was well deserved. It is claimed, for example, that during prohibition the federal government targeted five Illinois cities notorious for bootlegging: Chicago, Peoria, Rockford, Rock Island, and Toluca.[34] Locals were especially skilled in wine-making. In one year, it is alleged, more than 40 railroad cars of Zinfandel grapes were secretly shipped to the town from California. Furthermore, although claims that more than 30 taverns once operated in the town are difficult to confirm, it is clear that a large number of such establishments were in operation (Figure 2-9). Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show 20 saloons operating in downtown Toluca in 1910, seven of which stood on a single block between Railroad and Sante Fe avenues.[35]

Figure 2-9: Scene from the Club Saloon, also known as the Italian Club, one of 20 taverns in operation in Toluca during the mining era. *Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993. Toluca: privately printed. 1993.*

Other than early promotional material, it is difficult to find early accounts of Toluca that do not include stories of saloons, bootlegging, gaming, and violence. This is especially true of the sporadic stories about Toluca that appeared in the newspapers of nearby communities. Toluca-related stories appearing in the *Lacon Home Journal*, for example, are dominated by coverage of prohibition sting operations and bootlegging arrests.[36] Other topics relating to the seemingly lawless side of Toluca also appeared; the Litchfield and Leonard murders committed in the home of "crazed" Toluca miner Joe Stimas in 1925 being the best example.[37] News from Toluca was rarely positive and evidence suggests that outside accounts were biased by Toluca's notorious reputation. Certainly the *Lacon Home Journal* and the *Henry News Republican*, Marshall County's two leading newspapers, were selective in the kinds of stories they chose to print about Toluca, favoring reports of scandalous events over occurrences of more significant consequence to Toluca and the county. Even at the height of the town's growth, when its mines were operating at peak production and the town was prospering, Toluca could not overcome the

ethnic biases and stigma associated with minings' influences. Consider the following description of Toluca appearing in *Past and Present of Marshall and Putnam Counties, Illinois*, published in 1907:

> The foreign population is largely of the better class of Italians, although there are enough American residents to give tone to the society. . . . While Toluca is the largest of the towns in Marshall County, containing a population more than three times that of any of the others, it is behind them in embellishments and improvements. The nature of the population being largely miners are more or less shifting all the time and do not take the same interest in their homes and surroundings as do those towns where the inhabitants are more permanently settled.[38]

Descriptions of ethnic troubles and the boisterous nature of the mining way of life are common in both resident and outsider accounts of the community. Clearly, archetypal imagery of the mining town, especially ethnic conflict and rowdiness, colored internal and external perceptions of Toluca. Even early promotional material attempted to confront the mining town metanarratives of dereliction and impermanence, albeit for the purpose of providing a more convincing description of Toluca's merits. In fact, so dominant are these historical discourses, that more than other aspects of the town's past, residents today are aware of Toluca's tumultuous history. However, the question that should be asked is does such a conceptualization capture the breadth of meaning Toluca held as a place? Or, does such imagery simply remain dominant because it fits into broader societal perceptions of the nature of mining towns, as a result withstanding the test of time better than other narratives? Evidence suggests the latter. Without question, Toluca had a wild side, but such a conceptualization of community life is incomplete. For many, especially Toluca's miners and members of its Italian community, the mining town served as a meaningful place.

Not as well documented, but equally descriptive of life during the mining era, are recollections that focus on the less-sensational aspects of community life. In an article published in the *Toluca Star* in 1938 entitled "Echoes of the Past," for example, H. V. Alexander, the founder of the newspaper, provides a different view of Toluca. Alexander focuses on the positive

aspects of town development, and the efforts of residents to build a lasting community:

> A short time after we got things to going good, Postmaster Twist came into the Star office. He lit a fresh cigar, put his feet on the editor's table, and said: "This town is going to make the big ones stand up and take notice. You can tell them that Toluca is going to have a "Capitol Hill," a "Four Hundred," and all the high brow stuff that goes with it, and that I am going to start it by building a home that will out-shine them all." Old timers will tell you that Twist did build that home, and that it was the talk of the town and county for some time. It was too, the starting of Toluca's "Capitol Hill," and there followed many fine new homes.
>
> About this time the Sante Fe town site agent let it be known that trees were to be set around all blocks. The varieties selected were ash, black walnut, box elder and silver maple. Everybody volunteered to help set the trees, including myself. The residents of this magic wonder where thrilled when two private rail cars stopped in front of the Toluca depot. One was of J. W. Reinhart, President of the great Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. The other car was that of C. J. Devlin. After thoroughly examining the work at the shafts, they were driven to the bank, the Company stores, all over the town site. Their visit was a revelation to them, and they were not slow, expressing their admiration for the town.[39]

As common in interviews I conducted with longtime residents as accounts of taverns, bar fights, and murders, were stories related to everyday occurrences: the clouds of dust that were stirred into the air when cattle were driven down Toluca's unpaved main street; the running of the "doodlebug", a one car passenger train that ran from Toluca to Streator; the sound and sight of miners trudging home in the darkness at the end of the late shift; the ominous three blows of the steam whistle that sounded at the mine when there was an accident underground. Especially common among female residents, were accounts of community events as the annual Labor Day parades, Fourth of July picnics, and the concerts that were held Thursday nights by Alphonso Bernardi's Italian Band (Figure 2-10).

Relatively banal accounts of town development, the comings and goings of main street businesses, and fond recollections of family and friends were also typical. More often than not, these recollections also included prideful references to Toluca's ethnic diversity, and the cohesiveness of its various immigrant groups. Perhaps the most colorful recollections told to me, however, were those involving the exploits of well-known town characters. Longtime resident and accomplished storyteller Pete Venturi, for example, described how in order to expose the

culprits who were stealing coal from backyard bins, one man set out as a trap coal doctored with gunpowder. He also recalled how an unfortunate town local was coerced into rolling down the north Jumbo in a wooden wine barrel. To the pleasure of those assembled to witness the event, the barrel and its occupant flew down the mine dump. Such stories are common among those who remember Toluca's early days, and they are recollections of the type one would expect to hear in any place occupied long enough for residents to lay down roots.[40]

Figure 2-10: Alphonso Bernardi's Band gave Main Street concerts Thursday nights in Toluca in the 1920s. *Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993, Toluca: privately printed, 1993.*

The reflections of Pete Aimone provide specific examples. Aimone's comments reveal the family ties that bound him to Toluca :

> I remember this town well. My first recollection was when I was a school boy going to school at St Joachim's. It was attached to a little Italian church. My Grandmother was buried there. I have roots in this town. My grandfather and his brother had a business in the old town across the Sante Fe tracks. They later moved down to main street and it was called Aimone's Opera House. My father was a barber, a postmaster, county treasure of Marshall County twice, and also a funeral director and embalmer. I couldn't possibly follow in his footsteps. I just took one facet of his work and expanded on that.

In the recounting of everyday events related to the running of the mines, the trains, and to town social events, his remarks reflect a positive experience of community life:

> I remember the miners coming home from work and stopping at the coal office, which is at the present location of the American Legion. They were lining up for their pay and they'd be lining up for blocks. A lot of these fellows were drivers of these little mules down below the mine. They had their big black whips and they would snap those whips and we thought they were like Pisarro or something coming in to wreck vengeance on the town [laughs]. It was a very good mine and the Sante Fe railroad stopped every train, both freight and passenger, to get coal from the coal chutes and water. We would all go down to the Sante Fe depot to watch the Number Five or the Number Twenty Two come in. . . It was a big event just to see the trains.
>
> Alfonso Bernardi was the leader of the Toluca Band and it was an excellent band. The band concerts were held on Thursday night and they were held right in the center of town. The lumber yard would set up a platform at the corner of Main and Sante Fe. The streets would be lined with cars and the concert would last for about two hours. There must have been 35 members of that band. The oddity of this thing is that the merchants stayed open and they did a land-office-business. The music could be heard up and down at the grocery stores and the taverns of course. After every number they would all hoot and holler and toot their horns.

Finally, Aimone's retelling of the celebrities that visited Toluca also express a deeply felt pride in community:

> Many celebrities, movie stars and executives walked the streets of this town, waiting for the trains to take on water and coal. This is true. I remember Elaine Pola Negri. She stopped and looked at the marquee on the theatre because one of her pictures was playing. Spencer Tracy walked these streets. This is true and I'm certain people should know this if they have any knowledge of the history of Toluca.[41]

Accounts from a range of sources suggest that perceptions held of Toluca during the mining years varied substantially. To outside newspaper reporters and historians, the mining town was little more than a spectacle of debauchery. The view from outside was that of a lower-class, ephemeral, and quintessentially wild mining town. Although elements of such discourse, which is representative of the mining town metanarrative, are present in both external and internal views of the community, the historical narrative presented from the inside is made more complete by pleasant and everyday memories of community life. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the negative aspects of life in the mining town are interpreted differently by residents and outsiders.

The difference in interpretation is subtle but significant. Tolucans, especially males, communicate a sense of pride in their ability to have endured at their difficult occupation and frequently express an affinity for their town's rough beginnings. What has been termed a "rambunctious fraternity" by Curtis Ryden in describing the social life of the mining towns of the Coeur d'Alene, a sense of pride in the rough nature of community and working life, also seems to have existed in Toluca.[42] As the comments of miner Joe Vallino reveal, the work was hard and dangerous but there were certain advantages to working in the mines:

> Each one of the miners worked individually. Because we worked independently it wasn't like working on a bench in a factory, we were independent. If we felt like working we worked, if we didn't we went home. It was up to the miner to produce or he didn't own anything. Oh, it was a hard dangerous work but it was an independent sort of a life . . . it sort of worked on you in such a way that you begin'ed to have a feeling for it, you enjoyed it in a way.

Tolucans recognized that the town was a difficult place to live, but according to Vallino, residents were hard working, honest, and reliable:

> Every two weeks we would go to the coal company office . . . There was a window and Mr. Martin was the paymaster, he would give us our pay envelope and it was always in cash. Now I often wondered why it was that he was never robbed. Mr. Martin would go from the bank, pick up this tray of pay envelopes, walk back to the window and pay us all. He walked along there for twenty some years and no one ever bothered him. We were always talked about as being a rough people in Toluca. Hard living, heavy drinking, hard working, but no one ever bothered Mr. Martin, no one ever stuck him up.[43]

Furthermore, although the seedier side of life in Toluca is usually portrayed in a shameful way by outsiders, residents remember this aspect of Toluca's past in a more sentimental way. Humor and pride underlie local accounts of Toluca's rough-and-tumble past. The following dialogue recorded between Jack Gerardo and Gilbert Flynn is a case in point. Gerardo and Flynn reminisce about one of Toluca's more notorious saloons:

> Gerardo: The Club Saloon up there, they used to sell big steins of beer. A nickel a piece, or six for a quarter. The guy would fill that thing up and send it "zing" right down the line. That was one of the longest bars they had around this part of the country.
>
> Flynn: Jack, when I was a kid about five years old, or six maybe, my Dad took me in there. It was on payday. He got his pay at the mine and he took me in that

saloon. I can still remember him with that big schooner of beer. He let it down and let me have a taste of it. I can still remember that. Oh they were big huge schooners.

Gerardo: Yep, six for a quarter. I delivered papers there that's how come I know so much [laughter].[44]

Despite the toil and danger of the work, despite Toluca's mining town trappings, the community functioned as a valued home. Furthermore, compared to neighboring Longwall collieries, mining operations in Toluca lasted a relatively long time. This allowed a second generation of miners to follow their fathers underground. As a result, familial roots were laid down and deeply felt attachments to place were cultivated. These bonds were strengthened within Toluca's ethnic milieu. While factions existed, Toluca's ethnic groups, especially its Italians, formed cohesive and nurturing communities. Indeed, when the mine became less profitable and inevitably closed, hundreds of Tolucans were faced with the difficult decision of choosing between the only livelihood they knew, and the only place they knew as home.

Mine Closure and Community Persistence

That outsiders were dismissive of the deeper meaning Toluca held as a community and home is further demonstrated in the newspaper reports of events surrounding mine closure. When the Toluca mine closed, putting hundreds of miners out of work and threatening the very existence of the county's largest community, the Lacon and Henry newspapers focused the bulk of their attention on recounting the "humorous incidents" that occurred as panicky depositors pulled accounts from Toluca's bank. Accounts even varied as to the cause of mine closure. An article in the *Henry News Republican,* for example, claimed that the mine lost its coal contract with the Sante Fe Railway. Others cited a decrease in profitability and an inability to compete with southern Illinois coal producers as the primary causes. Clearly, the profitability of the mine was strained by a drop in the price of southern Illinois coal, and labor troubles, and two events occurring in the weeks prior to closure appear to have doomed the Toluca operation. In March 1924, the value of southern Illinois lump coal dropped 75 cents, to $3 a ton. For Longwall District

mines it was difficult to produce a profit at this price. Onetime district miner Gilbert Flynn explains: "They couldn't compete with the big mines in the south. This is only a three foot vein of coal here and down in the south they've got eight to ten foot veins. They put machinery down in the mines but they just couldn't compete around here."[45]

While the reduction in the coal price may well have spelled the end to mining in Toluca, some believe that the mine did not close until labor troubles forced the company's hand. "I don't want to lay this on the union," stated resident Pete Aimone, "but apparently the Sante Fe decided that the workers'contract was getting a little exorbitant. They had a very good mine, a very efficient mine, it was all electrically equipped and the coal was excellent, but the Sante Fe decided that that was enough so in 1925 [*sic*] everything just ceased." William McCall, whose father worked in the mines and was involved in their decommissioning, explains: "[Sharkey Laffins] was the head of the union. He was a tough man. The Sante Fe told him no more strikes or we're going to close. They went on strike. They closed it down. The next week they were taking the mules out. The week after that they took all the rails out of there. My Dad worked over there for months. They took everything out." While the union uprising likely played a role in the decision to close the mine, evidence suggests that a shutdown may have been in the planning well prior to this event. In a move common to mine operators facing closure, the Toluca Coal Company offered its houses for sale to its employees several months prior to shutdown. Attempting to limit losses on their investment in town infrastructure (knowing that the houses would be more difficult to sell once the mines had closed), such actions suggest that the Toluca Coal Company was planning to quit the mine well before the union uprising occurred. According to one account, many of these homes were sold and one can only speculate at the hardship faced by miners who bought homes and soon found themselves unemployed.[46]

Once the order to quit was made, the mine was quickly disassembled. The rapid and complete dismantling of the mine led the *Henry News Republican* to observe that although many residents held out hope that the mine would reopen, such prospects were unlikely. As one might

expect, the closing of the Toluca mine had a severe impact on the community. Some have estimated that Toluca lost two-thirds to three-quarters of its population in the year following closure. The census record confirms that the decline in Toluca's population was great, although not as high as those estimates. In the 1920 census, the last taken before the mines closed, Toluca's population was listed at 2,503. By 1930, the population had dropped to 1,413. Those who left migrated to neighboring Longwall mining towns such as Minonk, where mines were still in operation, to the southern Illinois coal fields, or to urban areas such as Chicago and Peoria.[47]

In May 1925, one year after the mine was closed, the Toluca Coal Company dismantled the hoisting tower over the No. 1 shaft, the final stage of the salvaging operation, and the mine office was preparing to close. At approximately the same time, hearings were being held before the Interstate Commerce Commission to consider a plea on behalf of the Chicago & Alton Railroad to allow for the abandonment of their Rutland to Granville branch line. Originally built as a coal line by Charles Devlin and named the "Toluca, Marquette & Northern," the railroad provided Toluca with an important north-south route for grain shipment and passenger service. The hearings were the beginning of the end for Toluca's second railroad line, and despite attempts by the Greater Toluca Club and other organizations representing communities along the line, the Chicago & Alton quit the road on April 28, 1927. The loss of the line was a significant blow to the local economy, which was now making the difficult adjustment back to agricultural production and trade.[48]

Whereas state mine records allow one to track declines in coal production and employment, and census data can be used to provide insight into population trends, such data provides little detailed information on community survival, including the difficult relocation decisions Tolucans faced when the mine closed. Historical accounts of mining communities typically pay little attention to the period following mine closure, and Toluca's historical record is no exception. For example, in the *History of Marshall County*, and in other historical biographies written of the community, the post-mining years are summarized with a few generic, epilogue-

like sentences describing the resilience of the town. For historians and others, the halt to mining effectively signals the end of the Toluca narrative.[49] With the "shaft plugged, the equipment gone, the miners, most of them, scattered to the winds" writes Jerry Klein in the *Peoria Journal Star*, "a sense of peace and order" descended upon the town. With these words, the story of Toluca ends.[50] Such a lack of attention reveals the influence the mining town metanarrative has had in shaping outside perceptions of Toluca. Despite the fact that Toluca survived as a viable community, the town is remembered in the historical record only as an ephemeral and wild mining boomtown. It appears, that once the mine closed, few stories were left to tell.

This omission in the historical record can be corrected somewhat by exploring the recollections of those remaining who lived through mine closure. Unfortunately, just as there is a lack of archival information on the post-mining years, resident accounts also lack the detail required to fully document and describe this difficult period in the town's past. When asked about the closing of the mine, for example, most residents could offer little more than general references to those who left, or to the decay of various mine structures. Why residents seem less able to recall the details of life during mine closure is difficult to determine. It is possible, that Tolucans were less willing to share with me the unpleasant memories of mine closure and community decline. Perhaps, too, as children, they were not privy to the array of societal changes that occurred. However, the lack of formal interest in Toluca's immediate post-mining years may also have influenced resident memories. Historians and others have paid so little attention to this period, that Tolucan's have been robbed of the opportunity to continually rehearse and recall the events of mine closure. In the absence of the occasion to re-remember this difficult period, recollections have been lost.

What then can be said of community survival and persistence in the years following mine closure? With the demise of mining, did the ties that bound residents to place dissolve, resulting in community ruin? Such is clearly thought the case in studies characterizing mining settlements as ephemeral "communities of occupation," but did this hold true of Toluca?[51] While details may

be lacking, one thing is certain: Toluca did not become a ghost town when the mine closed. The reluctance of many to leave Toluca, the sheer persistence of the community, says much about the commitment Tolucans held to place. Clearly, numerous factors enabled Toluca to survive mine closure. Foremost, was the town's location in the heart of one of the nation's richest agricultural areas. The fact that the Toluca mine operated for more than 30 years, also allowed for the development of a diversified local economy better able to accommodate deindustrialization than mining communities where mineral production lasted for shorter periods. Important, too, however, were the attachments residents had cultivated to place. The thoughtful comments of Anna Mae Terrell, shared in personal correspondence I had with the onetime resident in 1999, shed light on how residents coped in the years following mine closure:

> Many families went to other areas to work, but for those who stayed, the fertile black soil held the key to survival, not only to the farmers with acres to plant, animals to feed, but also to those who continued to live in the company homes, as there was land enough around them for a big vegetable garden and fruit and nut trees. Each had a well. Those who didn't have room for pigs or cows, might have a goat or two for milk and cheese. Most had chickens for eggs and if it was a tough old bird, chicken soup. If younger it was roasted. Friendships ran deep. Church bells tolled the funerals, rang out the angelus and vespers. No one locked their doors. Everyone was a story teller.[52]

Despite Toluca's locational advantages, it was difficult for residents, especially miners and their families, to resist leaving the community when the mine closed. The coal company employed close to 60 percent of Toluca's workforce.[53] Not only did the town lose its primary employer, but mining jobs were also readily available in nearby towns. Moreover, better-paying work existed in coal fields elsewhere in the state. Clearly, such circumstances caused many to leave, but as census data reveals, more Tolucans made the decision to stay despite the hardships being faced. As the comments of Johnston-Terrell indicate, the fertile land provided a means for survival, but it would appear that it was an unwillingness to abandon their homes—where friendships, family ties, and a commitment to community ran deep—that provided many with the motivation to stay.

Attributing such sentiment to those who lived in Toluca more than seven decades ago may seem speculative, but when considering the community through the eyes of those who lived during the mining era, it is evident that the town long served as a valued home. Mining was central not only to Toluca's economic development, but contrary to popular perception, its mining culture played a positive role in the meaning Toluca held as a place. Community and individual identities were rooted in minings' influences, and while deindustrialization severed the industry's economic role in the community, it did not break residents' ties to the mining culture. Mine closure did not result in the dissolution of community, in part because the social traits that developed during the mining era—an ability to endure hardship and pride in community—and the bonds cultivated to place in the closely-knit mining town, where largely unaffected by deindustrialization. Toluca's mining culture continues to exert a profound influence on the community today.

Minings' Legacies and Changing Community Perceptions

> The Toluca coal mines closed . . . the city's population was reduced by two-thirds. But the city, instead of dying with the mines, made a comeback. . . . Big Jumbo and Little Jumbo slag heaps rear their cones high above the prairies, sole reminders of the boom days when Toluca was a thriving mining community. The miners' shacks are gone and Toluca is a community of fine homes and thriving business. Like many another community, part of its past was built on a hope and a dream; and like many other communities, it relinquished the dream and built solidly by utilizing opportunities at hand.[54]

An excerpt from a Marshall County Historical Society biography of Toluca, the above passage reveals that the community recovered following the initial shock of mine closure. Although significantly reduced in size—since the mines closed Toluca's population has hovered between 1,300 and 1,400—the town has fared well in the post-mining era (Figure 2-11). Life is comfortable. Unemployment and poverty rates are below state averages and per capita incomes are on par with rural Illinois communities of similar size. Furthermore, Toluca has a surprisingly diverse local economy that includes garment and window manufacturers, an Italian frozen food factory, and a healthcare center. Socioeconomic indicators reveal little that identifies Toluca as a

defunct mining town. While the community has had a long time to recover from mine closure, and favorable agricultural conditions facilitated the restructuring of the local economy, it is significant that the mining town has survived as an economically viable place.

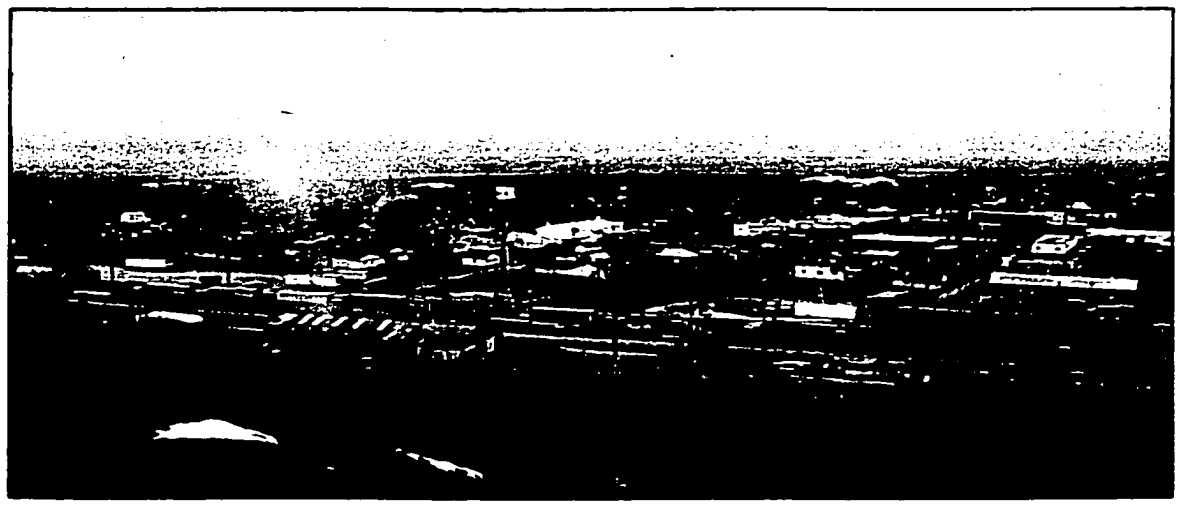


Figure 2-11: View of Toluca from atop the north Jumbo, 1998. *Photograph by the author.*

Economic indicators provide important measures of community health, but in a variety of other ways, Toluca remains a vibrant town. "People like Toluca," stated resident Pete Venturi, who described how in recent years, several families with roots in the community have come back to Toluca to retire. Although Toluca's population is aged (in 1990, close to 40 percent of residents were over the age of 65), many find the community a good place to raise a family. Toluca's high school was consolidated with neighboring mining towns Wenona, Rutland, and Minonk in 1992, but the town maintains both elementary and middle schools. The community also boasts a public library, municipal swimming pool, and four churches, including three established during the mining era: the Antioch Christian Church, St. John's Lutheran, and St. Ann's Parish. Furthermore, while the town's commercial district may be less vibrant today, downtown Toluca remains alive with activity and commerce (Figure 2-12). Gone are many businesses: the Ball and Twist grain elevator; the Fay and Palace hotels; Gerardo's grocery store; the Great Western Department Store; and the many saloons of the mining days. These have been

replaced, however, by the Benson Farmers Co-op, the Toluca Super-Valu, the American Legion, and the Toluca Bowling Lanes. What's more, there are still four taverns in operation, a fair number for a community of Toluca's size.[55]

Figure 2-12: Main Street Toluca, 1998. *Photograph by the author.*

Stretching five or six blocks beyond downtown lie Toluca's residential neighborhoods. Most of the town's original house lots remain occupied by modest well-kept homes, and in most respects Toluca appears to be a typical Illinois farming town. However, the cultural landscape contains elements, legacies of the mining era, which set Toluca off as unique. The town's most significant local attractions are its two Italian restaurants, Mona's and Capponi's, that were originally established as shot-and-beer parlors in the prohibition days of the 1930s. In the 1960s, Capponi's was purchased by the Bernardi family. The owners of Mona's, the Bernardi's food heritage stretches back to the mining days when they operated the Toluca meat market. Merged under single ownership, the two restaurants continue to operate under their original names but now open on alternate days. Serving inexpensive homemade Italian food, Mona's and Capponi's are popular eating and drinking locales that draw visitors from throughout Marshall County and beyond. So successful have these enterprises been, that the family founded Bernardi's Italian Foods, a frozen food company whose Toluca factory employs over 150 workers.[56]

A good deal of minings' material legacy has been erased from the landscape through decay and redevelopment. However, as attested to by Mona's and Capponi's, which are operated by the descendents of mining-era immigrants, the Toluca landscape contains numerous features that connect the town to its mining past. Toluca's Italian influence is especially dominant. Italian flags and Virgin Mary statuettes adorn many homes. A sign nailed to a residents' garage exclaiming "Parking for Italians Only," reveals that to a significant degree, Toluca remains an Italian place (Figure 2-13). Other indicators of Italian influence include residents' continued passion for Bocce Ball, and the fresh sausages and other Italian specialty foods sold in the Toluca Super-Valu. Evidence that the town was occupied by an array of ethnic groups, not only Italians, is more subtly revealed by the surnames inscribed on the headstones in Toluca's Lutheran and Christian cemeteries. That the descendants of many of these migrants stayed on in the community is confirmed by the careful upkeep of these burial grounds, and the continued viability of Toluca's non-Italian based churches.

Figure 2-13: The Italian influence remains strong in Toluca. At left, Mona's restaurant. At right, Pete Venturi, son of an immigrant miner, stands with his wife Betty in front of their Toluca home. The sign behind the couple reads "Parking for Italians Only." *Photographs by the author, 1998.*

Many commercial and public structures built in the mining days have disappeared from Toluca, but a number of important older buildings remain, providing reminders of the substantial economic investment made in the town at the height of the mining era. Still in operation, is the old Toluca Public School, an imposing brick schoolhouse that once had an enrollment of over 400 students. The elegant First National Bank Building, with its impressive neoclassical façade, now serves as the Toluca Public Library. The Citizen National Bank building also remains in good repair, as does the old City Hall. Among other main street buildings, Tito Palumbo's Tavern also still stands. Now operating as the Main Street Pub, the tavern's rustic atmosphere provides an authentic glimpse back in time to the days when every fourth or fifth business in downtown Toluca was a saloon. In addition, Toluca has retained many of its company-built houses. Although at first difficult to recognize due to additions and other modifications, the simple, four room, rectangular houses are typical of the mass produced company homes built in American mining towns at the turn of the century (Figure 2-14).

Figure 2-14: Company-built houses lining Main Street, 1998. *Photograph by the author.*

Remnants of the mining past can be found in Toluca's commercial and residential areas, but virtually all of the town's mining-related structures have been lost. Salvaged and sold during

mine decommissioning, or lost through demolition and neglect, all that remains of the hoisting towers, power and fan houses, coal chutes, machine shops, and other industrial features, are a few cement foundations. Prior to the summer of 2000, when reclamation activity transformed the mine site, Toluca's industrial works lay shrouded under a tangled forest. The overgrown foundations of the fan house and a circular concrete slab sitting atop the opening of the No. 1 mine, were all that remained of the impressive surface structures that had processed coal and rock, and transported men and mules from the enormous mine radiating below the community (Figure 2-15). Having collapsed into a conical depression, and partially filled with debris and trash, the No. 2 shaft lay buried deep within the back acreage of the mine yard.

Figure 2-15: The fan house foundations of the No. 1 mine, 1998. The north Jumbo stands in the background. *Photograph by the author.*

Little is left of Toluca's industrial structures. However, two very significant landforms associated with the mine's operation have survived, insuring that the legacy of mining remains evident in the landscape. Towering over the old mine yard, visible from virtually anywhere within the community and from many miles distant, stand Toluca's two mountains of mining waste, the Jumbos (Figure 2-16). The Jumbos are frequently described as "slag piles" (slag is a smelter waste produced from metal processing), but the mounds are actually comprised of mining

"gob": small fragments of shale, clay, coal, and scraps of debris, removed from the underground workings. During the mine's operation, gob was conveyed from the shafts by way of elevated tramways running to the top of the waste piles. The tracks of the tramways were lengthened as the piles grew, resulting in the formation of two elongated conical mounds. Toluca's Jumbos are remarkably different in appearance (Figure 2-17). The north Jumbo, located closest to the town site and sometimes referred to as the "main" Jumbo, is the larger of the mounds. Prior to being reclaimed, the slopes of the north Jumbo were sparsely vegetated and the feature had a striking red hue, a result of the burning and oxidation of the gob. In the 1980s, the height of the north Jumbo was measured at 110 feet . As locals seldom failed to mention, however, the Jumbo had shrunk considerably since the mining era. Erosion was clearly evident in the deep gullying along the sides of the Jumbo and the thick apron of alluvium encircling its base. The south Jumbo, adjacent to the No. 2 shaft, was smaller, measuring 95 feet in height. The most striking difference in the appearance of the south Jumbo, however, was that its slopes were blanketed by a forest of black locust and cherry trees.

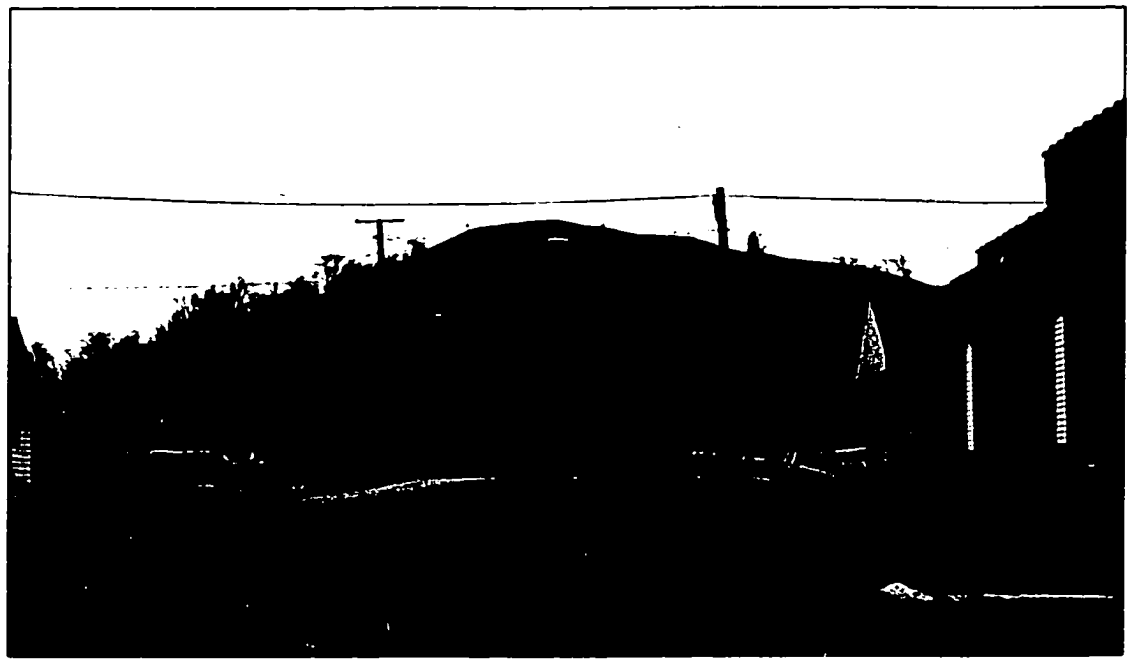


Figure 2-16: Toluca's north Jumbo, looking south down Olive Street, 1998.
Photograph by the author.

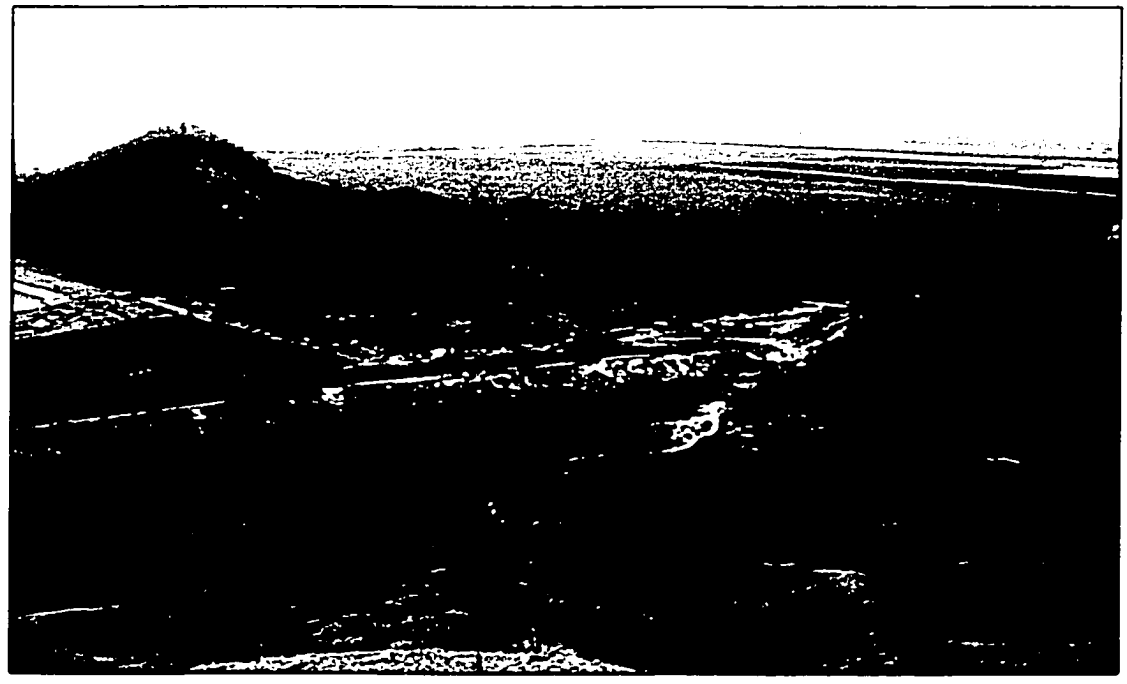


Figure 2-17: View of the smaller south Jumbo from atop the north Jumbo, 1998. Note the thick forest cover on the south Jumbo and the deeply gullied slopes of the north Jumbo visible in the foreground. *Photograph by the author.*

Without question, the Jumbos are the community's most notable landmarks, and the bulk of outside attention the town has received in recent years has focused on Toluca's mountains of mining waste. Even if not the central focus, external accounts of Toluca almost always make mention of the Jumbos. For example, a romantic description of Toluca appearing in the *Illinois Guide and Gazetteer* in 1969 stated: "Two inverted cones of slag, pink in the rays of sunrise and sunset, tower 200 feet above this central Illinois town, monuments to long-dead coal mines which begot and reared the community." In an article entitled "A Sunday Tour In Summer," Marshall County historian Eleanor Bussell identifies the Jumbos as one of the county's most significant features. "Consider the county as a living museum," Bussell writes, "have a close-up look at the twin pink and grey slag piles which dominate the skyline and are monuments to those years when coal was industrial king here." A 1999 editorial on Toluca appearing in the *Bloomington Pantagraph* opened with the statement, "Toluca usually brings to mind a couple of good Italian restaurants and two huge hills at the south edge of town." Even the *Chicago Daily News*, in

reporting the defeat of the Toluca High School basketball team at the state tournament in 1962 made mention of the Jumbos: "No victory fires burned last night on Toluca's mountains—the two huge slag heaps that stand beside the abandoned coal mines that once were the town's major industry."[57]

That the Jumbos have become central to Toluca's outside image is exemplified in an article entitled "Here's Looking at Toluca," written by *Peoria Journal Star* reporter Jerry Klein in 1975. Klein paints a quaint portrait of Toluca, one in which the Jumbos are associated with the anticipation experienced by Italian food lovers on their "gustatory pilgrimages" to the town. He writes: "The great slag pile known as Jumbo still lies beyond the horizon, and there are miles to go before one eats." Most significant, Klein describes the mining history of Toluca and he entwines his narrative with wistful images of the Jumbos: "All that is left of the mine is Jumbo, the red and weathered pile of slag." Klein's regretful account of how Sante Fe locomotives now thunder past this once important train stop also includes reference to the features. "There is the noon whistle again, stirring long echoes. It caroms off the furrowed sides of Jumbo and reverberates off across the prairie."[58]

These accounts of the mining landscape represent a major shift in outside perceptions. A new image of Toluca emerged following mine closure. Negative perceptions faded as Toluca evolved back into a farming community. No longer burdened by mining town associations, a rural aesthetic was applied to the landscape. Furthermore, outside representations, once critical of minings' influences, began to revere the industry's final remnants. As reminders of the mining industry were erased from the landscape, nostalgia for what was left set in, and Toluca's industrial detritus became romantic reminders of the town's history. While minings' demise, and nostalgia for a past way of life, may explain the changes that occurred in external representations, it is also possible that outside accounts merely came to reflect more accurately the views of Tolucans, who had always held their mining culture in high regard. Nowhere is such sentiment better revealed than in the community's efforts to protect and preserve the Jumbos.

Saving the Jumbos

That the mining past is of tremendous local significance is evident in the debate that unfolded in the 1980s over the future of the Jumbos. At the time, the Jumbo property was owned by the heirs of Dominic Valesano, an ex- miner who had purchased the property following mine closure. Initially, Valesano operated a mule yard and grazed cattle on the site. Following his accidental death, an incident that has become an important part of Jumbo lore and will be described in detail shortly, the property was willed to other family members. By the 1980s, the Jumbo's owners no longer resided in Toluca. As a result, the site lay unused and was frequently trespassed upon. Refuse was dumped in the old mine yard and shale was occasionally removed from the base of the gob piles. Such activity was frowned upon in the community, but Tolucans did not become actively involved to protect the site until rumors began to circulate that the Jumbos were about to be removed.

In 1985, construction was underway on Interstate Highway 39, running 5 miles east of Toluca. The new interstate was replacing U.S. Highway 51 running between Bloomington and Rockford. What concerned Tolucans, was that two gob piles in the nearby town of Minonk were obliterated when the state used them to provide fill material for the construction of an interchange. Rumors began to circulate that the Jumbos were to be put to similar use. On October 17th, 1985, resident Glenna Schmitt, in a front-page story appearing in the *Toluca Star Herald*, called the community to action. Schmitt wrote: "Rumor is that our two monuments will soon be gone. The state plans to use the shale for landfill for the new state highway. We should not let this happen! All should band together . . . Write our state officials. Come to council meetings and urge our Mayor to take action. Start now before it is too late![59]

These words signaled the beginning of Toluca's first "Save the Jumbos" campaign. Residents young and old joined the fight. High School students erected bed sheets on the Jumbos painted with the campaign slogan, and letters of support were sent to the editor of the *Toluca Star*. In addition, a petition was organized by resident Elton Pearson, who would be influential in

generating interest in the Jumbo cause (Figure 2-18). Pearson obtained the signatures of close to 300 residents on his petition, which demanded that the Jumbos be protected. As a result of the community's mobilization, the Toluca City Council was urged to take action. In November 1985, Mayor Larry Harber assured the community, through written assurance from the Illinois Department of Transportation, that the Jumbos would not be used for highway construction.[60]

Figure 2-18: Elton Pearson standing in front of the north Jumbo, 1996. *From Phil Luciano, "Toluca man takes on 'jumbo' project," The Peoria Journal Star, 15 November, 1996. Photograph by Larry Brooks.*

Several months later, a letter sent to the *Toluca Star* by Anna Mae Terrell, one of the owners of the Jumbo property, revealed that the Valesano family had had no intention of selling the Jumbos to the state in the first place. Her letter revealed that the Jumbos were valued by their owners as much as they were for those living in Toluca (Terrell was now residing in California), and she encouraged the community to do everything it could to protect the landmarks:

> The "Save the Jumbo" campaign has brought attention to the affection all of us have for the Jumbos. We climbed them as children, walked sons, daughters and even grandchildren up to the top to look around. The Jumbos are Toluca. No one wants that lovely wooded area preserved more than the nieces and nephews Barney Valesano willed the land to. We love it! We played there as children, we visit as adults. But we don't live here. Therefore, it is up to the residents of Toluca who care about the area, to see that laws are not broken, that shale is not taken, discards are not dumped, that signs be maintained so strangers do not

> consider it public property and abuse it. No one in the Valesano trust wants to sell any part of the Jumbo; but sometimes we get discouraged when we see it. The Jumbos need your help. It's up to you to save the Jumbos.[61]

Although the threat to the Jumbos appeared to have been largely without basis, rumors of their removal heightened awareness of their local value to the community. For several years following this event, however, little progress was made in the way of protecting the Jumbos from misuse. In 1993, the Valesano family held discussions with the Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Council (a state regional development program hereafter referred to as Prairie Rivers RC&D), and a concept plan was drawn-up to develop the property into recreation and wildlife preservation zones. No headway was made in furthering these plans, but in 1995 events unfolded that reawakened "save the Jumbos" sentiment in the community. Earlier that year, the City of Toluca began searching for a site to construct a new wastewater treatment plant. Elton Pearson suggested that the city consider buying the Valesano property for this purpose. Of the 101 acres owned by the family, 40 acres were suitable for construction and farming. Pearson suggested that the city use 10 acres for the construction of the sewerage plant, lease or sell the other 30 acres to local farmers, and put aside the remaining 61 acres of the mine yard for preservation. The proposal was appealing to the city for the Valesano family was willing to sell the 40 acres of farm land, and simply donate the remainder of the site as a gift to the people of Toluca. When Pearson and his wife Evelyn organized a second petition urging the city to act on buying and preserving the Jumbo property, again garnering the support of nearly 300 citizens, the city council agreed to the plan and the purchase was made.[62]

The City's purchase of the property was viewed as a significant accomplishment by those concerned with preserving the integrity of the Jumbo site. Unfortunately, the City's early stewardship of the property proved controversial. Toluca's new wastewater treatment plant was built on the south side of the main Jumbo in 1996. However, in the process of constructing the plant's access road, gob was removed from the north Jumbo for use as road fill, leaving a large excavation scar on the western slope of the landmark (Figure 2-19). It is unclear who made the

decision to use the Jumbo for fill material. According to Mayor Harber, who was not in town at the time the Jumbo was disturbed, it was a blameless mistake made by the outside construction firm. Use of the gob saved the city an estimated $30,000 in construction material, but whoever made the decision failed to recognize the full consequences of this action. Residents were outraged with what Pearson described as the City's "defacing" of the Jumbo. The scar was clearly visible from the town site and the excavation came within several feet of the backbone of the pile. Used as the route to its top, the path along the backbone began to crumble into the excavation, making climbing the mound difficult and dangerous.[63]

Figure 2-19: The excavation scar on the west slope of the north Jumbo, 1998. Gob was removed by the city for use as fill material in the construction of the wastewater treatment plant. *Photograph by the author.*

Once again, the community mobilized. In letters sent to the editor of the *Toluca Star*, Pearson and Terrell again urged Tolucans to come to the Jumbo's aid. Pearson wrote: "Walk over and see the large gouge visible on the west side of the closest Jumbo. It is almost impossible to climb to the top anymore. We wanted our elected officials to preserve our Jumbos from others

hauling them away. Now our own officials are using them up." In the same edition, Terrell wrote that it was again time for residents to protect the Jumbos before they become "the Toluca mole hills." She wrote: "The City of Toluca now owns the Jumbos. It belongs to the people. If they still feel an affection for them, perhaps it might be time to think once again about saving the Jumbos."[64]

When citizens complained at a City Council meeting in October 1996 about the city's actions, a newspaper reporter was present from the *Bloomington Pantagraph*. The newspaper ran the story under the title, "Slag piles earn city heaps of attention." Soon, reporters from the *Peoria Journal Star* and *Chicago Tribune* were also visiting Toluca. The Associated Press then picked up the story, which subsequently made its way to CNN television. The attention Toluca received was highly supportive of the residents' cause. No longer looking down on the community and its mining influences, the outside media was now embracing Toluca's mining culture.[65]

In the midst of this publicity, the City of Toluca unanimously approved passage of a non-binding resolution recognizing the Jumbos as part of the heritage of the city. The resolution was printed on the front page of the *Toluca Star* on October 24th, 1996. It read: "The Jumbos are declared to be part of the heritage of the city of Toluca, to be preserved and protected, and any further diversion is declared to be against the policy of the City." Despite this formal statement, however, concern remained that the non-binding status of the resolution left the property unprotected. As a result, in November 1997, Pearson spearheaded the creation of a non-profit organization called "Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc." The mandate of the community group was to ensure preservation of the Jumbos and to develop the site for the educational and recreational betterment of the community. The organization's short-term plans included a community clean up of the mine site. As long-term plans, the organization hoped to restore the excavation scar, facilitate wildlife preservation, and construct a picnic area, hiking trail, museum, and miners' memorial.[66]

The community organization actively pursued these goals. Meeting once a month, the group has held a modest membership of approximately 35 residents. Its visibility within the community, however, has been far greater than that number indicates. The organization has issued regular press releases of its activities, organized community tours of the mine site, and has even run Jumbo floats in the annual Labor Day parades. The organization's primary function has been to assist the city in its management of the Jumbos. Most significant, however, the group has played a central role in promoting site improvements, which culminated with the development of a formal reclamation and preservation plan for the north Jumbo, completed in 2000.[67]

"The Jumbos Are A Part Of Us": Meaning in the Mining Landscape

Tolucans have expended considerable effort ensuring that the Jumbos not be disturbed, and the question that begs answering is why? Answers begin to emerge in looking at how the community has responded to various threats to the integrity of the features, but the full meaning of the Jumbos, and the numerous roles they serve in Toluca, requires more careful and personal investigation. The Jumbos play a functional role in the community and have become icons of the town. They also stand as memorials, not only to those who died in the mine, but also to a way of life that residents are not yet willing to forget. More generally, the Jumbos have become important venues of social meaning, tangible landscape features that help maintain individual identities and a collective sense of place.

Several of these roles are evident in longtime resident Marion Brandt's "The Jumbos," a poem appearing in *Toluca – 100 Years*. As she later explained, her poetry was designed to capture the feelings of the entire community when the Jumbos were under threat.

> The Jumbos are our Landmarks,
> They're really a tradition;
> To climb them sometimes during life
> Has been each one's ambition
>
> And when we're at the very top,
> So many things we see;
> It makes us stop and think
> How thankful we should be.

We think about the ones long gone
Who built this little town,
And hope that all who live here now
Will never let it down

We all do love the Jumbos,
We've loved them through the years;
they've been there in our smiles
And even through our tears.

We hope they're always with us
And we will never part,
For our beloved Jumbos
Are in Tolucans' hearts.[68]

As revealed in the opening stanza of Brandt's poem, the Jumbo property is of functional value to Tolucans. The wooded habitat and relief provide amenities not available in the surrounding countryside. The Jumbos stand as an accessible island of wildness in this intensively cultivated landscape. The property is home to a diverse array of bird and animal life, and for many years, residents have been walking the wooded trails that wind through the area, picnicking, playing, and in other ways using the site in informal ways. Most important, almost all Tolucans have, at one time or another, scrambled to the top of the north Jumbo to enjoy the impressive vista: a 360 degree view over the town and surrounding farmland. On a clear day, gob piles in the adjacent mining towns of Wenona, Mark, and Standard, standing as far away as 20 miles to the north, can be seen from atop the Jumbo.

The Jumbo property has been especially popular with children. Although some adults whom I interviewed in 1998 expressed safety concerns over potential plans to develop the site into a park, many admitted that the Jumbos were their favorite childhood play area. Resident Margaret Hattan, for example, displayed a scar on her forehead, that she explained had been obtained when she fell on the Jumbo as a child. She stated that she never allowed her son to play at the old mine site but was aware that her restriction probably went unheeded: "Forty five years old and he's never been on the Jumbos. . . at least not that I know of," she qualified with a smile. Childhood memories of playing on the Jumbos are common among resident accounts. Children

sled down the mounds on pieces of cardboard or discarded car hoods. Gerardo recalled a time when a rope hung from a flagpole that had been erected near the summit of the Jumbo, providing a terrifying swing over its side. The mine yard remained a well-used space following mine closure. For many years, the site was home to the Legion Swimming Pool (Figure 2-20). Lying adjacent to the north Jumbo, the pool was built from the remains of the old reservoir that had once supplied water to the mine's boiler house. Residents boasted that the pool was, at that time, one of the largest in the state, and that it attracted people from all over the county. "I remember swimming there. . . floating on my back watching the moon come up over the Jumbo," fondly recalled Marion Brandt.[69]

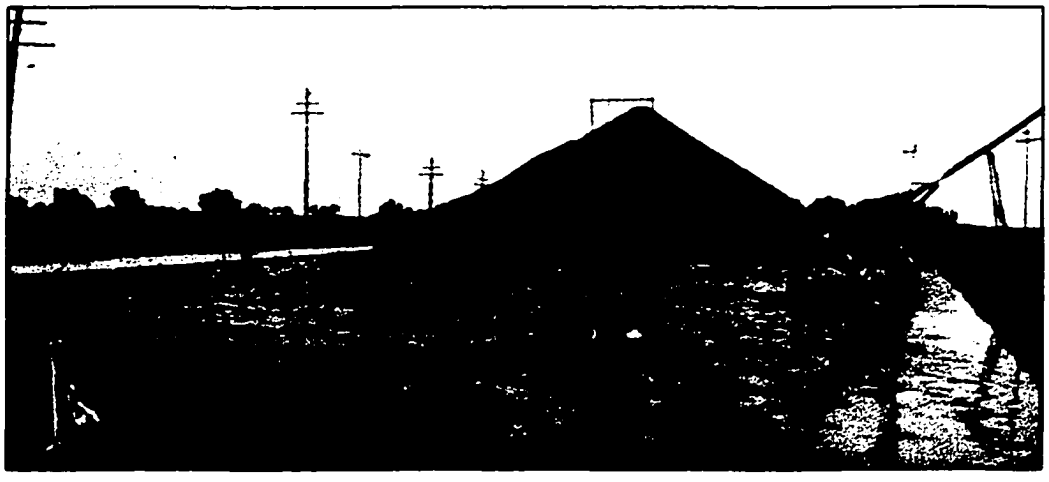


Figure 2-20: The Legion Swimming Pool. The north Jumbo stands in the background. *Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993, Toluca: privately printed, 1993.*

Clearly, the Jumbos have long held utility as recreational amenities, but as Brandt's poem reveals, they have also served a variety of less tangible functions for the community. The Jumbos are considered unique symbols of Toluca, and their iconic value is reflected in the widespread use of their image. The Jumbos are prominent on the town flag, the town crest worn by city employees, and the front-page banner of the weekly *Toluca Star Herald.* In addition, they have been used in promotional material celebrating Toluca's centennial. The front cover of *Toluca – 100 Years*, for example, displays a sketch of the Jumbos. The Jumbos are also prominent on

Toluca's two welcoming signs (Figure 2-21). Used in this manner, their image declares the uniqueness of the town to visitors. Just as important, however, the Jumbos serve to remind residents themselves that theirs is a place set off from the rest.

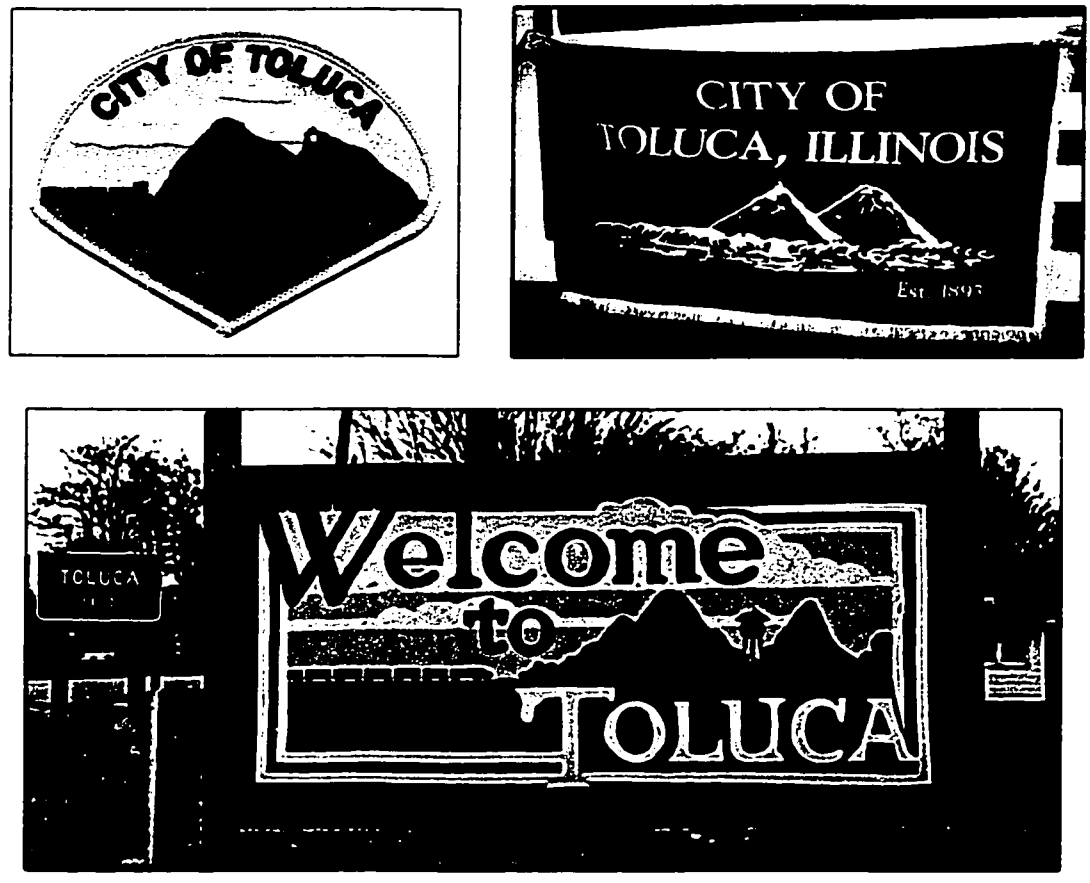


Figure 2-21: The Jumbo image appears on the Toluca town crest (above left), the city flag (above right), and on town welcoming signs (bottom). *Photographs by the author.*

The Jumbos are locally referred to as the "trademarks" of Toluca, and the "Jumbo" name is unique to the town's gob piles. However, their distinctiveness is complicated by the fact that other communities in the area also have mountainous mine dumps. When asked about this, Tolucans tended to downplay the significance of their neighbor's gob piles, claiming that they were smaller or in other ways less significant. Marion Brandt told me, for example, that the spoil pile in the nearby town of Wenona, which also has its mound displayed on welcoming signs, "has no name . . . and it doesn't have the same feeling like here." Although the residents of

Wenona would likely disagree (as will be explained, Toluca is not the only Longwall community to display affection for its gob piles), the fact remains that Tolucans view the Jumbos as unique.[70] The comments of resident Barney DeRubeis, a founding member of Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc., provide insight:

> If you go into these other towns that have these Jumbos, well I call them Jumbos, and you say, "I see you got a Jumbo here in town"—"What's that," they'll say. The best thing about our Jumbos is that when you're coming in to town, from the north especially, you look right at them. I mean its the focal point of the road. You see the Jumbos before you see anything else. You know a lot of these other ones are along the highway off to the side. But in Toluca, its right there. You see them coming in from the east and from the west. You *see* the Jumbos.[71]

For Tolucans, the Jumbos are markers of home. Several residents told me, for example, of the strong feelings they experience at the first sight of the landmarks when returning from an extended period away: "When you're coming to Toluca and you see the Jumbos," stated Brandt, "you know you're home!" Other associations of home connected to the Jumbos were also observed, a sentiment that appears strong among young and old. Graduating class photographs in the Toluca High School Yearbook show students posing on the north Jumbo. In mental maps drawn of the town by Toluca grade school students, collected by the author in 1998, the Jumbos are prominently displayed as town landmarks. The drawings suggest that from an early age, Tolucans are aware of the role the Jumbos serve as community landmarks (Figure 2-22).[72]

As evident in media coverage of the community's fight to protect the Jumbos, the landmarks are also valued for their historical significance. In interviews I conducted with residents, it was significant, that talk of the Jumbos almost always resulted in a recounting of Toluca's history. The Jumbos stand as a landscape mnemonic that stimulates memory of an industry and way of life that was vitally important to the growth of the town. While looking at the Jumbo, for example, Pearson told me, "one time we had a population of 5,000 people and it's all because of the Jumbos."[73] The significance of the Jumbos in facilitating public memory of the economic history of Toluca is fairly obvious and outside accounts almost always connect the features to the town's mining history. For residents, however, the Jumbos are more than simply

relics of an important economic era. For many, the Jumbos reinforce important aspects of social identity, namely familial roots, ethnicity, and class. Mayor Harber, for example, stated that the Jumbos are thought of with affection, because many people's ancestors worked in the mines. "With the ancestors here, there's still a lot of memories," he told me. In an article on the Jumbos appearing in *The Streator Times-Press*, DeRubeis stated: "The slack piles [Jumbos] are like one of our kids. We grew up with them." Moreover, for those descended from European emigrants, the Jumbos represent the beginning of their families' lives in America. When explaining the significance of the Jumbos to a CNN reporter, an unnamed resident stated: "all the immigrants, the poor people, worked in those mines." Using the mine and its mountain of waste as a metaphor, the resident stated that the Jumbos represent the immigrants, "getting out of the hole."[74]

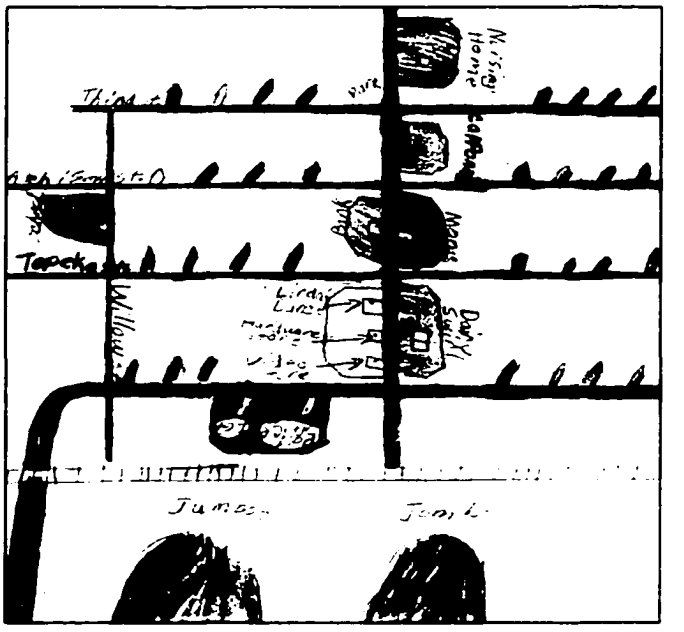


Figure 2-22: At left, a graduating class photograph showing Toluca High School seniors posing on the slope of the north Jumbo. At right, a mental map drawn by a Toluca fourth grader shows the Jumbos prominently displayed as town landmarks.

While the Jumbos serve as direct reminders of family and friends who worked in the mines, they also stand as memorials to those who died in them. When I asked Mayor Harber of

the personal significance of the Jumbos, he stated that they represent all of the men who died in the mine. "My wife's father worked in the mine all of his life and my wife's uncle, he got killed in there," he told me, "he was only 21, got kicked by a mule." *Toluca Star* staff writer Glenna Schmitt also recognized the commemorative role the Jumbos serve when she wrote in 1985: "The Jumbos stand in their glory as a vivid memorial to our descendants who toiled long and hard in the bowels of the earth."[75] It is also telling, that since its founding, one of the primary goals of Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc., has been to establish a miners' memorial on the Jumbo site. In the absence of any formal recognition of those who worked and died in the mine, the Jumbos served this role.

Clearly, the Jumbos hold broad social meaning for Tolucans. In both a literal and metaphorical sense, the Jumbos are elevating features. They serve as a promontory upon which residents can gaze upon their town. They give Toluca an iconic prominence, serve as beacons of home, and represent elevating symbols of the community's uniqueness and of the emigrants lot in life. In other ways, the Jumbos represent the visible manifestation of a largely invisible past: they facilitate public memory of an industry and way of life long gone, and of the many lives lost to mining. The Jumbos also play an important role in facilitating a sense of place in Toluca. In the stories and folklore residents tell about the features, for example, is revealed the role they play in maintaining the collective identity of the community.

Of the tales Tolucans tell of the Jumbos and the old mine, several are held in common. No story is more often shared than that involving the disappearance of Dominic Valesano. The first owner of the abandoned Jumbo property, the 73 years old Valesano disappeared from Toluca in May 1939. "One morning he ate breakfast and they never saw him again," explained Gerardo. After a two week search failed to locate the missing man, residents Bob Guderjan and Frank and Jack Gerardo devised an ingenious plan that solved the mysterious disappearance and brought Toluca nation-wide attention. The men speculated that Valesano might have fallen into one of the old mine shafts on his property. They assembled a camera with a flash unit, attached it to a

telephone cable, and lowered it into the mines. According to Gerardo, the cable weighed over 300 pounds and it took all three of the young men to lower and lift the camera unit. When a photograph taken at the base of the north shaft revealed Valesano's body wedged between beams 400 feet below the surface, the mystery was solved and the three young men became instant celebrities. Their story, accompanied by the gruesome photograph, ran in newspapers across the country. The tale of Dominic Valesano's disappearance is legendary in Toluca, and Jack Gerardo was long remembered for his role in this story. As one of the last alive who could recall the mining era firsthand, Gerardo was also viewed as a principal keeper of town history and mining lore. With his passing in 2000, the community lost an important link to its past (Figure 2-23).[76]

Figure 2-23: At left, Jack Gerardo (far left) stands with his brother Frank, and Bob Guderjan, over the shaft of the No. 1, mine where the amateur photographers discovered the body of Dominic Vallesano in 1939. At right, Jack Gerardo poses with the camera unit outside his Toluca home, 1998. *Photographs, Toluca-100 Years: 1893-1993, Toluca: privately printed, 1993; and by author.*

Another story relating to the mines occurred in 1929. Several residents described how in the summer of that year, a tornado moving toward Toluca was deflected by the Jumbos saving the town from destruction. The most complete and colorful account was provided by Gerardo:

> It looked like the tornado came up from the south or southwest. You could see it up on top of the Jumbo twirling like this here [motions with his hand] and dust coming up. The first thing you know it hits Jensen's. . . it had a big tin roof and it took that thing up in a big ball of steel and put it down in the alley. I saw this happen. It looked like the Jumbo saved us I can tell you that. The tornado just stood spinning up there in the dirt. It damaged a few homes around here . . . but I'd say the Jumbos were a good thing.[77]

Others were also aware of the tornado story. "That's the day the Jumbos saved Toluca," stated Joyce Bernardi in 1998. Her friend Margaret Hattan added, "and that's why we should keep the Jumbos."[78]

In addition to these shared stories, almost all residents with whom I spoke had their own tales to tell about the mine site. Residents tell stories passed down from the mining era, recount fond memories of childhood experiences playing in the mine yard, and describe the community's coming together to save the features. While not all references directed toward the mine site were positive—tales of personal mishap, of packs of coyotes living within the wooded mine yard, and of poisonous gas leaking from open mine shafts were also told—even those with negative stories valued the Jumbos for their uniqueness and community significance. Through these place-centered narratives is nurtured a sense of place in Toluca. In the stories residents share about the Jumbos, in their daily interaction with these highly visible and meaningful landmarks, is cultivated a community's identity based upon interaction and experience with a common landscape. "The Jumbos are a part of us," Mayor Harber told me, and knowledge of such sentiment helps explain why the landscape legacy of mining is protected in Toluca.[79]

Reclaiming the Jumbos

In 1996, reporter Phil Luciano of the *Peoria Journal Star* commented on the challenges Tolucans faced in attempting to save the Jumbos. In an article covering Pearson's efforts to protect the site from disturbance by the city, Luciano wrote: "Outsiders might see the public sentiment as merely making mountains out of coal hills, the waste product from 30 years of mining. But the Jumbos mean much more to Toluca." Luciano correctly predicted that community efforts to protect the features would only succeed if city officials learn to understand,

"what the heaps mean to Toluca." Moreover, his observation that raising awareness of the local value of the features was a prerequisite to protecting them, also applied to state officials in whose hands the property's future soon lay. Tolucans enthusiastically supported efforts to save the Jumbos. Obtaining public ownership of the property, and convincing the city that the features should be protected, were significant accomplishments. Once these goals were achieved, however, residents were faced with a new set of challenges related to the site's future. In many ways, saving the Jumbos proved an easier task than balancing the objectives of local preservation with reclamation needs.[80]

Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc., envisioned preserving the Jumbos and developing the publicly owned site into a park and historical interpretive center. Unfortunately, these goals would be difficult to achieve, for the fact remained that the Jumbos were two mounds of chemically active, eroding mine spoil, lying on an abandoned mine site containing significant safety hazards. Convincing reclamation officials at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (hereafter DNR) that energy and capital should be devoted to preserving the area, and increasing public access to it, would not be easy. As the over-riding purpose of abandoned mine reclamation is to protect public safety and the environment, it should come as no surprise that the heritage value of mining landscapes is often overlooked in reclamation planning. Such was initially the case in Toluca, where early environmental assessments conducted by the state recommended a complete re-grading of the Jumbo property.

It is important to note that the state had been investigating environmental problems, and reclaiming abandoned mine sites in the Longwall District, well prior to its involvement in Toluca. From the standpoint of mining-related environmental impacts, the gob piles—the state estimated that there were more than 120 mine dumps standing in the field in 1982—are relatively benign. Although acid drainage and sedimentation are common problems, a state study of 18 Longwall sites identified the waste material itself as non-hazardous. More significant issues, are site safety hazards. The bulk of reclamation activity conducted in the area has focused on addressing the

dangers of vertical shaft openings and the slumping of gob piles onto railroad tracks, drainageways, and farmland. According to research conducted by the Illinois Geological Survey in the 1980s, the gob is stable enough to be used for a variety of construction purposes including road fill. The Survey's research also showed that the piles could be made stable if slope angles are reduced and planted. Such recommendations guided early reclamation projects conducted by the DNR in the area. In the 1980s and early 1990s, many of the district's gob piles–including those in Mark, Morris, Spring Valley, Peru, Ladd, and Standard—were regraded or removed through state-funded reclamation (Figure 2-24).[81]

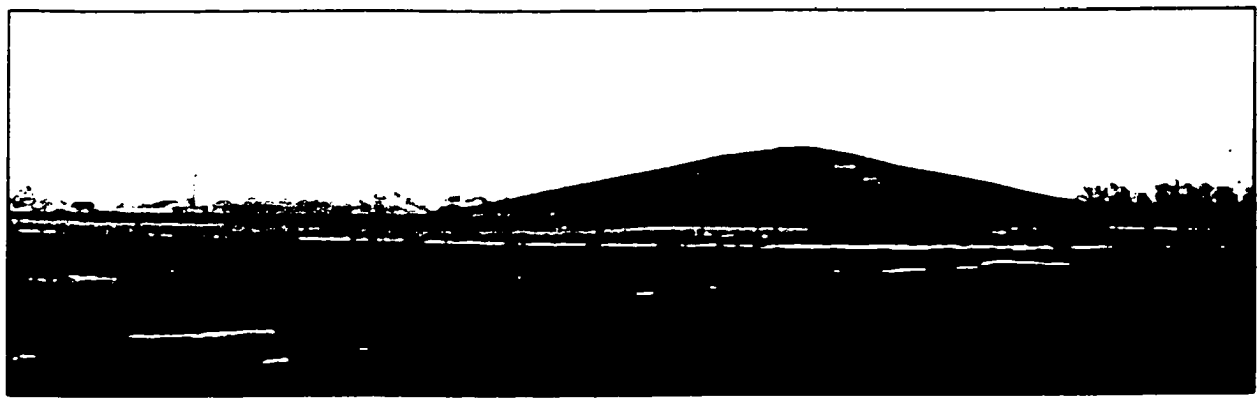


Figure 2-24: The reclaimed gob pile at Standard. Prior to reclamation, two piles (158 and 141 feet in height) stood at the site. Slumping and sedimentation problems were addressed by the DNR by grading the spoil down into a single mound, and replanting the feature with grass. *Photograph by the author, 1998.*

The state's first involvement with the Toluca mine site occurred in 1981. As required by the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (1977), the state conducted environmental inventories of all abandoned coal mining sites in Illinois. The Toluca assessment was conducted by researchers from the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory. The 1981 inventory identified significant erosion and sedimentation problems on the north Jumbo, and revealed that acid discharges were leaching from the gob pile and affecting offsite areas. State assessors classified environmental impacts as "severe," and recommended that "massive removal, grading, revegetation, covering, and/or excavation" was needed to address the area's problems. The only

post-reclamation development potential identified for the area was wildlife habitat. [82]

How Tolucans would have reacted had the DNR attempted to implement such a reclamation program is unknown, for resident input was absent from the site assessment, a shortcoming that helps explain why no alternative other than removal of the Jumbos was initially proposed. However, given that residents would soon rally to the cause of saving the Jumbos from other threats, and given the controversies that developed over other reclamation projects conducted in the Longwall area, it is likely that removal of the features would have been resisted. Fortunately, the reclamation threat was not to test Tolucans just yet. Although the 1981 assessment classified impacts as severe, the hazards at Toluca were insignificant compared to those existing at the hundreds of other abandoned mine sites in the state at that time. The DNR's reclamation office had its hands full, and Toluca was classified as a low-priority reclamation site. Nearly two decades would pass before reclamation of the Jumbo property would be considered.

Although preservation values were not considered in Toluca's initial mine site assessment, it is interesting to note that state officials did come to recognize the social value of Longwall District mine sites. In a 1987 report, the Illinois Geological Survey described how the waste piles were often of local historical value. The study described how the gob piles were relics of an important era in the industrial history of the state and that many of the mine sites served as tributes to the men who worked in the mines. Unfortunately, the Geological Survey suggested only that reclamation include the collection of industrial, community, and personal histories related to the mining era. As such, their recommendation represented little more than an attempt to inventory the mining landscape before reclamation obliterated the industrial legacy. Furthermore, although the Geological Survey recognized the social significance of these sites in their research, the DNR largely ignored these findings and subsequently become embroiled in several controversial reclamation projects in the Longwall District.[83]

Such was the case in the town of Mark, located 20 miles north of Toluca, where residents fiercely opposed DNR reclamation of its two gob piles. Allegedly, the larger of the Mark mounds

once stood 500 feet high, making it the tallest in the district. In the mid-1980s, however, in an attempt to stabilize the slumping mine dumps, the DNR reclamation office pushed the two mounds together. The single reworked pile was then graded down to a height of 135 feet. Longtime Mark resident Ray Justi, in an article appearing in the *Peoria Journal Star*, stated: "I thought it was the prettiest, as well as the biggest, tallest peak in the whole state." He went on to describe how the new reclaimed pile was "ugly," commenting: "It's not what the miners created. It's an abortion, a perversion of what it used to be." Justi explained that he would rather the state had completely removed the mounds rather than leave the rounded pile that exists in Mark today.[84] In an interview I conducted with Tolucan Pete Venturi in 1998, he also recalled the Mark project. His comments reveal that the residents of Toluca were following reclamation projects elsewhere in the area and were aware of its consequences:

> Over at Mark the state spent 250,000 bucks or more, environmental stuff. The mound was its original shape outside of erosion. Oh Mark had a beautiful one, shaped real pretty. But they go over there and put bulldozers on it. Bulldoze all that old leached-out shale away from it and they got down into that crap that has really got sulfur in it, that's still alive. And then they try and plant stuff on it. Well Mark raised Hell, they didn't want it done. Oh man did they raise Hell but they went and done it anyway. They dressed it all down and planted it.[85]

To be fair, the DNR has been faced with a difficult task: stabilizing the slopes of gob piles and removing safety hazards is difficult to accomplish without significantly altering the mining landscape. Furthermore, despite the problems experienced in Mark and elsewhere, it should be noted that the DNR's reclamation program is one of the nation's most innovative. More than other state abandoned mine land reclamation programs, the Illinois office has tended to consider alternatives to the standard return-to-original-contour approach that dominates the reclamation field. The DNR's ground-breaking, albeit controversial, *Effigy Tumuli* project, located on an abandoned Longwall District strip mine near Ottawa, Illinois (30 miles northeast of Toluca), is a case in point. Designed by landscape artist Michael Heizer, and completed in 1985, the project is a tribute to the Native American burial ground: five enormous earthen sculptures – a snake, turtle, catfish, frog, and water strider – have been fashioned from the strip mine spoil.[86]

Moreover, the DNR learned a valuable lesson from early reclamation controversies in the area. Jim Gregg, northern regional manager of the DNR's reclamation program, recognized the controversial nature of reclamation in the Longwall District. In an interview I conducted with Gregg in 1998, he stated that the office had developed a greater sensitivity to local desires in its reclamation planning. Now, he claimed, reclamation work was not even being considered at some sites due to the sentimental and historical value the dumps hold for the communities in which they stand. He cited the towns of Roanoke (located 20 miles southwest of Toluca), and Cherry (30 miles to the north), as examples (Figure 2-25). The City of Roanoke flies an American flag on the pinnacle of its gob pile and places a lighted cross and star on the peak during religious holidays. Like the Jumbos, the Roanoke pile stands as a beloved community landmark. "I think it's pretty," stated resident La Verna Bachman in the *Peoria Journal Star*. The Bachmans, the newspaper described, built their home 50 feet from the base of the Roanoke pile. They enjoy walks around the mound and consider it an important part of the town's history. Likewise, the gob pile in the town of Cherry has important historical significance. Cherry's mine dumps serve as the backdrop for a state historical marker memorializing the 259 miners killed in a fire that swept through the mine in 1909, one of the worst mine disasters in U.S. history.[87]

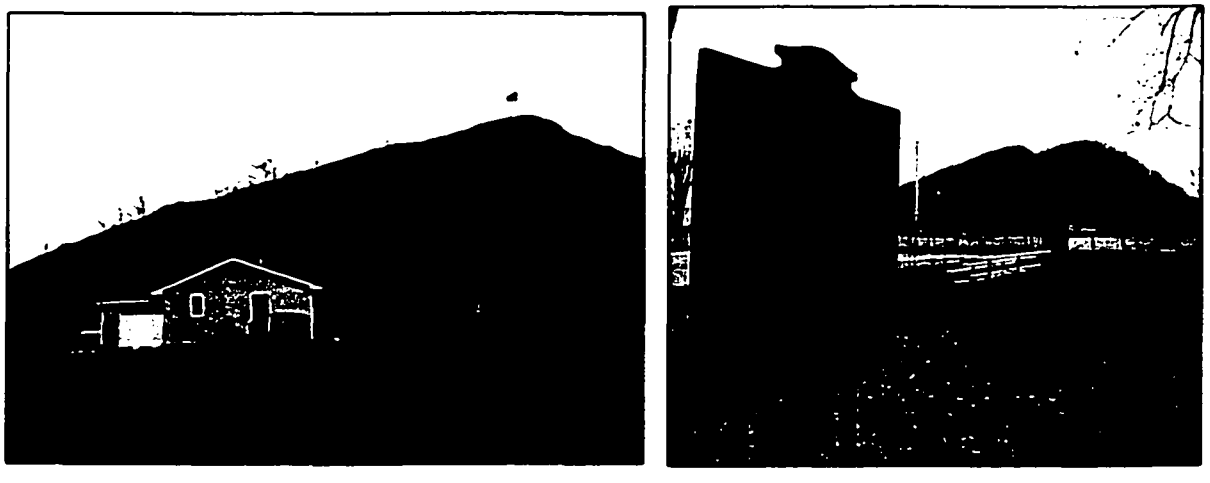


Figure 2-25: The Roanoke (left), and Cherry (right) gob piles. *Photographs by the author, 1998.*

The DNR, Gregg said, was taking a new approach to reclamation in places like Roanoke and Cherry, where community sentiment is clearly opposed to disturbance of the mining landscape. Prior to becoming involved in reclamation planning, the DNR now waits for a consensus to be reached within area communities on what type of work is acceptable. Although little negotiation is possible when considering mitigation alternatives for high-priority safety hazards such as unplugged mine shafts, the DNR is no longer undertaking lower-priority work such as gob-pile regrading without first obtaining considerable community input. This is the strategy the DNR has taken in Toluca. By law, the DNR was not required to reclaim the Jumbos, which were classified as low-priority hazards. However, as high-priority hazards existed on the site—three unplugged mine shafts—the state could, in the process of addressing these, consider community proposals for reclaiming the Jumbos. The DNR did not become involved in plans to reclaim the features until the community requested their assistance.[88]

Before reclamation work could proceed in Toluca, the community first had to formulate a vision for the Jumbo property. As described, the fight to save the Jumbos culminated in 1996 with public ownership of the site. Shortly thereafter, the City leased the Jumbo property to the Toluca Sportsmen's Club for a nominal rent of $1 per year and with the condition that the property be used solely for recreational purposes. In turn, the Sportsmen's Club agreed to pay property taxes and carry site liability insurance. Under the lease, the Jumbo property remained publicly accessible and Tolucans continued to use the area in an informal manner, much as they had always done. Increasingly, however, discussion was circulating in Toluca over the future of the area, and in March 1998, Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc. conducted a community survey in which residents were asked to identify potential uses for the property. The survey revealed that Tolucans held competing ideas of how the site should be used. Among other things, responses included preservation of wildlife habitat; creation of a public park with pathways; construction of a miners' memorial; construction of fish ponds, bicycle trails, and camping sites; expanded opportunities for farming; and creation of a city dump. A number of

respondents also expressed a preference to see the site left as is, at most only made more "presentable" by removing trash and other debris. This was the predominant position of the Toluca Sportsmen's Club, whose members favored habitat preservation. Also expressed were concerns over constraining monetary, legal, and practical matters that might arise if the site were developed into a formal park. Some feared increased city taxes, others expressed safety and liability concerns.[89] "This site for a park has many drawbacks," wrote resident Leah Bakel in the forum section of the *Peoria Journal Star* in 1996. She explained:

> If someone were injured climbing the Jumbo, a lawsuit against the city is certainly a possibility. Another hazard is the main line of the Sante Fe railroad, which run adjacent to the property. Most people would have to cross the tracks to get to the park. . . We already have a beautiful park in Toluca, complete with a swimming pool, tennis courts, playground, picnic tables, shade trees and parking lot. Surely for a city the size of Toluca, one park is enough. Lets take care of the one we have. Saving the Jumbo is a worthy cause, but it is not a suitable site for a park.[90]

Although disagreement existed, Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc. continued to push for improvement of the Jumbo property, and their enthusiasm for recreational development and historical preservation proved infectious. In May 1998, the City Council agreed to consider the group's development plans. Discussions were initiated with the DNR, and Prairie Rivers RC&D, to consider the group's ideas. Representatives from these state organizations attended numerous community meetings and held informal walking tours of the site. Considerable local input was included in the planning process. In 1999—in consultation with the City Council, the Sportsmen's Club, and Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc.—a preliminary reclamation plan was drafted by Prairie Rivers RC&D, which was then forwarded to the DNR. The plan called for the stabilization of the eroding north Jumbo and a sealing of the three mine shafts. It also included the creation of walking trails, a pathway to the top of the north Jumbo, picnic and parking areas, and a memorial to the men who worked in the mine.[91]

All parties agreed that the smaller south Jumbo, which had developed a thick forest cover over most of its slopes, did not require reclamation work. Other than sealing the south mine

shaft, the southern part of the property would be left untouched. This decision also addressed the Sportsmen's Club's desire to maintain wildlife habitat. In February 1999, the Club agreed to relinquish its lease on the northern part of the Jumbo property, a significant legal hurdle that made way for reclamation activity on the north Jumbo. The Sportsmen maintained control over the forested acreage surrounding the south Jumbo, which today stands as a wildlife preserve.

Not all of the proposals included in the community's preliminary reclamation plan could be addressed by the DNR. For example, the state reclamation agency did not have the authority to develop walking trails and a miners' memorial: the community would have to find its own way to fund such development. However, other community desires could be incorporated into the reclamation plan at little or no extra cost to the state. The DNR agreed, for example, to preserve the foundations of several mine-related structures, and as was later proposed, create a fishing pond from the borrow pit that would be created from removing fill and grading material. Without question, however, the most difficult issue to be negotiated was how much grading should occur on the Jumbo. While most Tolucans felt that the integrity of the feature was best preserved by limiting any alteration in the height or appearance of the feature, erosion was a clear problem that had to be addressed. No reclamation activity could be conducted without stabilizing and planting the gullied slopes of the Jumbo. Agreeing on how this should be accomplished was problematic. In 1999, for example, Prairie Rivers RC&D created a computer graphic of what the Jumbo might look like after its slopes had been significantly graded and the feature planted with grass (Figure 2-26). It was not well received by the community. In 1999, Barney DeRubeis showed me the graphic and exclaimed: "We told them that we wanted to save the *slag piles* not the *ant hills*. It looks too much like a hill and there's no backbone on the Jumbo. We want to preserve its shape."[92]

Tolucans refused to accept a significant reduction in the elevation of the Jumbo, but preserving its height complicated reclamation objectives: steeper slopes would be more difficult to vegetate and maintain. Eventually, however, a compromise was reached over the grading

issue. According to Jim Gregg, standard state practice was to allow for no more than a 4 to 1 slope ratio when reclaiming area gob piles: no more than 1 vertical foot of rise for every 4 feet of horizontal space. The DNR agreed to allow a 3 to 1 slope ratio on portions of the Jumbo, provided that the city sign a statement relieving the DNR from any future problems that might arise from the steeper slope (i.e. slope failure). It was calculated that the steeper slope grade would barely reduce the overall height of the Jumbo. With the community on side, a final plan was developed. The city council voted to go ahead with reclamation activity late in 1999 and work began on the project in June 2000.[93]

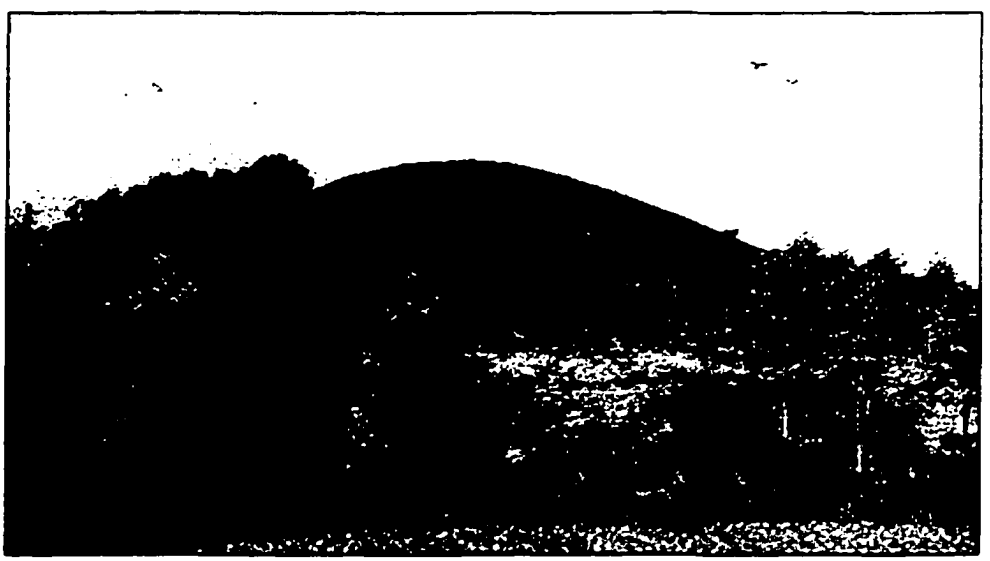


Figure 2-26: Computer-generated simulation of the reclaimed north Jumbo.

The DNR began the reclamation project by clearing all undergrowth on the 15.5 acre Jumbo property. Only the forested areas along the stream and on the northeast side of the Jumbo (determined to have enough forest cover to maintain slope stability), was left in place. Three mine shafts were filled with rock and closed. All that identifies the location of the shafts today are low circular concrete seals. The Jumbo slopes were then graded. A layer of lime was laid down on the smoothed-out slopes to neutralize the acidity of the gob. The lime in turn was covered with soil. The adjacent mine yard was also graded. Drainage ditches, lined with limestone rip rap (designed to neutralize acid discharges), were constructed along the southern

and eastern base of the Jumbo. The entire area, including the Jumbo itself, was then replanted with pasture grasses. In the process of removing soil and fill material, a 2.5 acre spring-fed pond was created on the western half of the property. In addition, the foundations of the fan house (located adjacent to the number one mine shaft), and those of the old mine reservoir/swimming pool, where left in place. The reservoir was filled to within 1.5 feet of site grade, leaving a rectangular bench that serves as a sitting area and gathering place. Finally, a parking area was constructed adjacent to the railroad tracks, where structures of the main mining operation once stood (Figure 2-27).

All of the reclamation work was completed in the summer of 2000. One year later, the entire site was covered with a thick blanket of grass, the pond had filled to a depth of more than 20 feet, and bird and aquatic life was colonizing the new habitat. Other than a significant slumping of soil on the south side of the Jumbo (the slump was determined the result of unfavorable weather conditions rather than slope grade and the DNR was planning to fix the failure in July 2001), the site has been stabilized. According to Gregg, in terms of addressing safety and environmental concerns, the project has been a great success. The danger posed by the mine shafts, for example, proved far greater than expected. Prior to reclamation, it was believed that the shafts were filled with debris. However, the material that had been tossed into the abandoned mines had only created a thin seal at the surface and two of the shafts were found to be unfilled to a depth of more than 500 feet. In addition, with the Jumbo slopes now smoothed and vegetated, sedimentation and acid drainage problems have largely been eliminated.[94]

The reclamation project is also proving a success from an economic standpoint. Despite the community's insistence that the height of the Jumbo be preserved, and that technically non-essential elements such as the pond be incorporated into the design, costs have come in lower than other reclamation projects undertaken in the area. Gregg explained that the most expensive aspect of reclamation involves heavy machinery work: hauling of fill material and grading. Although the unexpected shaft work increased costs (due to the expense of purchasing, hauling,

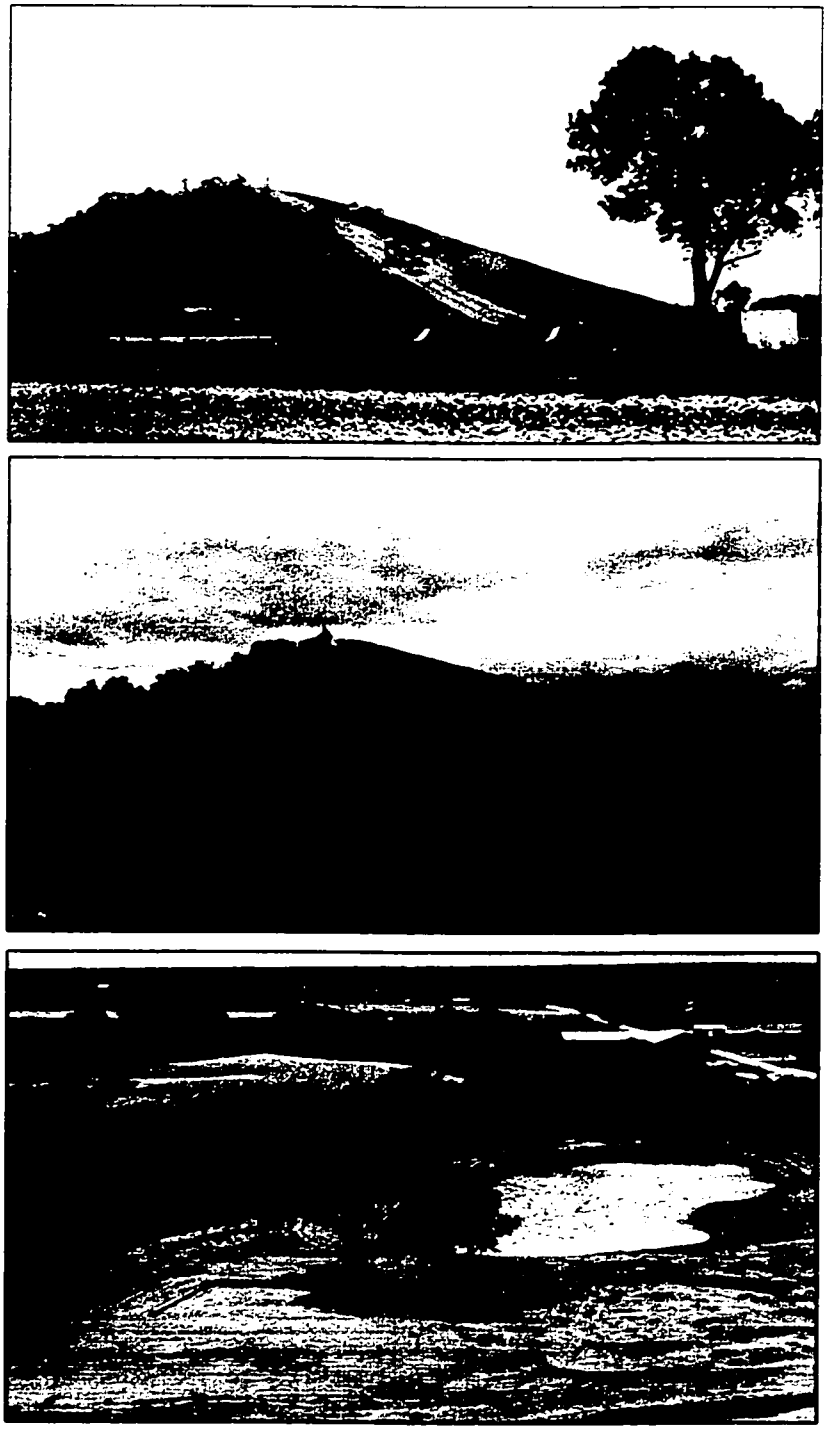


Figure 2-27: Top, grading work being undertaken on the north Jumbo, 2000. Middle, the reclaimed Jumbo, 2001. Bottom, view of the reclaimed mine yard, 2001. Note the fishing pond and the preserved rectangular foundation of the reservoir/swimming pool. *Top photograph used with Permission. Elton Pearson. Photographs by the author.*

and dumping a large volume of rock fill into the empty mine shafts), heavy machinery work was otherwise minimized. The higher slope angle, and transformation of the borrow pit into a pond rather than re-filling the depression back to site grade, reduced the amount of grading and filling activity. The DNR expects final costs of the project to come in at a reasonable $270,000. Toluca provides proof, that when carefully planned, community input does not have to increase the costs of reclamation. To the contrary, in the case of Toluca, preservation considerations and the incorporation of innovative design features actually reduced reclamation costs.[95]

In addition to being an environmental and economic success story, it is important to note that the reclamation project has also received tremendous community support. The DNR has achieved a goal often overlooked in reclamation planning: that of maintaining the social and historical significance of the mining landscape. By virtually all accounts, Tolucans are pleased with what has been accomplished. "The people here are really well pleased with the project," wrote Pearson in a letter I received in October 2000. Like many in the community, Pearson was eagerly following the site's rejuvenation and was looking forward to its future use. He wrote: "The new lake has been named "The Charles Devlin Lake" and it has at least 10 feet of water in it. . . The grass seed has sprouted all over, and the Jumbo itself is turning a nice green. There are plans for a Halloween Pow Wow and wiener roast for kids at the site of the old reservoir."[96]

The appearance of the mining property has dramatically changed, but residents are accepting of the area's new look. The Jumbo's more rounded appearance, and the blanket of grass that now covers its once barren and gullied slopes, give it a softer appearance. Other than the untouched northeast portion of the Jumbo, the property is now park-like and pastoral. One-time owner of the Jumbo Property Anna Mae Terrell explained, in a letter I received in September 2000, that she approved of the reclamation outcome. Like Pearson, Terrell was also looking forward to continued improvement of the site:

> Ever since I was little girl I knew that the Jumbo area could be more beautiful, more useful and safe. The slag pile has been stabilized, planted in prairie grass, all the mine holes filled, and a lagoon dug. Next year, three hundred trees are to

be planted, trails established, and whatever else the group [Toluca Coal Mine and Preservation and Development, Inc.] can gather.[97]

As hoped, the reclamation project is increasing resident use of the area. The graded Jumbo is now easier to climb, and many have made their first trek in many years back to the top of the landmark. In addition, during the winter of 2001, heavy snows attracted hoards of children to its slopes for sledding. Already, the community is facing the expected challenge of keeping youngsters out of the pond for fear that it will become a favored swimming hole. Most significant, however, residents are pleased that the Jumbo has retained its visual dominance (Figure 2-28). The DNR estimates that the Jumbo now stands only 10 feet lower than its pre-reclamation height. From the earliest days of reclamation planning, height was a central issue, a fact underscored by an incident that occurred when the DNR first moved heavy machinery onto the feature. It was necessary for the state to begin reclamation work by grading a roadway up the backbone of the mound, and cutting a level staging area at its peak. This resulted in an instant and dramatic change in the Jumbo's appearance. Vigilantly watching over the construction work, residents were outraged by what they believed was the DNR breaking its promise to maintain the landmark's elevation. Witnessing the Jumbo's seeming destruction, for example, Barney DeRubeis immediately drove up the construction roadway and blocked the DNR's machinery. The stand-off ended, and concerns were alleviated, only after residents were assured that the height of the feature would be built back up.[98]

Throughout the planning and construction process, Gregg recalled, the community expressed concerns regarding the reclamation project. "Many had doubts, it stirred up a lot of activity," he told me. However, he viewed this as a positive development. "The project brought many people together, and I am pleased with how well it has been received in the community," he stated, "many have worked together to improve the site, and I am sure it will be enhanced further in the future." In fact, in continuing to mobilize Tolucans to the Jumbo cause, the reclamation project has strengthened a sense of community in Toluca. As the DNR was engaging in

reclamation activity, for example, the community was working together on several initiatives aimed at obtaining additional funds for site improvements. The Sportsmen's Club led efforts to obtain a DNR grant to stock the new fishing pond. Area children, some of whom have already been diligently fishing in the unstocked waters, eagerly await the introduction of the fish, expected to begin fall 2001. Although a state grant application filed by Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc. to fund the construction of walking trails and other site improvements failed, the group is dedicated to trying again in 2002. Without question, however, the most important accomplishment the community has achieved since reclamation work began, was obtaining a State Historical Society Marker for the Jumbo site.[99]

Figure 2-28: View of the north Jumbo from Main Street, pre-reclamation (left), and post-reclamation (right). Comparison reveals that the Jumbo has retained its visual dominance in Toluca. *Photographs by the author, 1998, 2001.*

In large part, Tolucans have fought to preserve the Jumbos because of their significance as markers of the mining past and memorials to those who worked and died in the mines. However, although the Jumbos themselves long served these roles, many felt a need to commemorate minings' historical significance in a more formal manner. Since its founding, one of the central mandates of Toluca Coal Mine Preservation & Development, Inc., has been to establish some form of historical interpretation and a miners' memorial on the Jumbo site. This goal has now been achieved. Working with the Marshall County Historical Society, the group's

historical marker application was approved by the state in 2001. County historian Eleanor Bussell wrote the marker's 100 word narrative. The plaque provides a brief history of the mine, describes Toluca's Italian workforce, and concludes with a statement identifying "the Jumbos" as memorials to the region's coal industry.

The historical marker was placed at the base of the north Jumbo, an ideal location (Figure 2-29). The mound provides an appropriate backdrop to the marker's historical narrative. As visitors finish reading of the significance of the Jumbos, their eyes naturally fall upon the path that rises up the backbone of the feature, beckoning them forward to its peak. More than once, I observed visitors reading through the marker, stepping back to gaze up the slope of the Jumbo, and then begin the lengthy walk to its top.

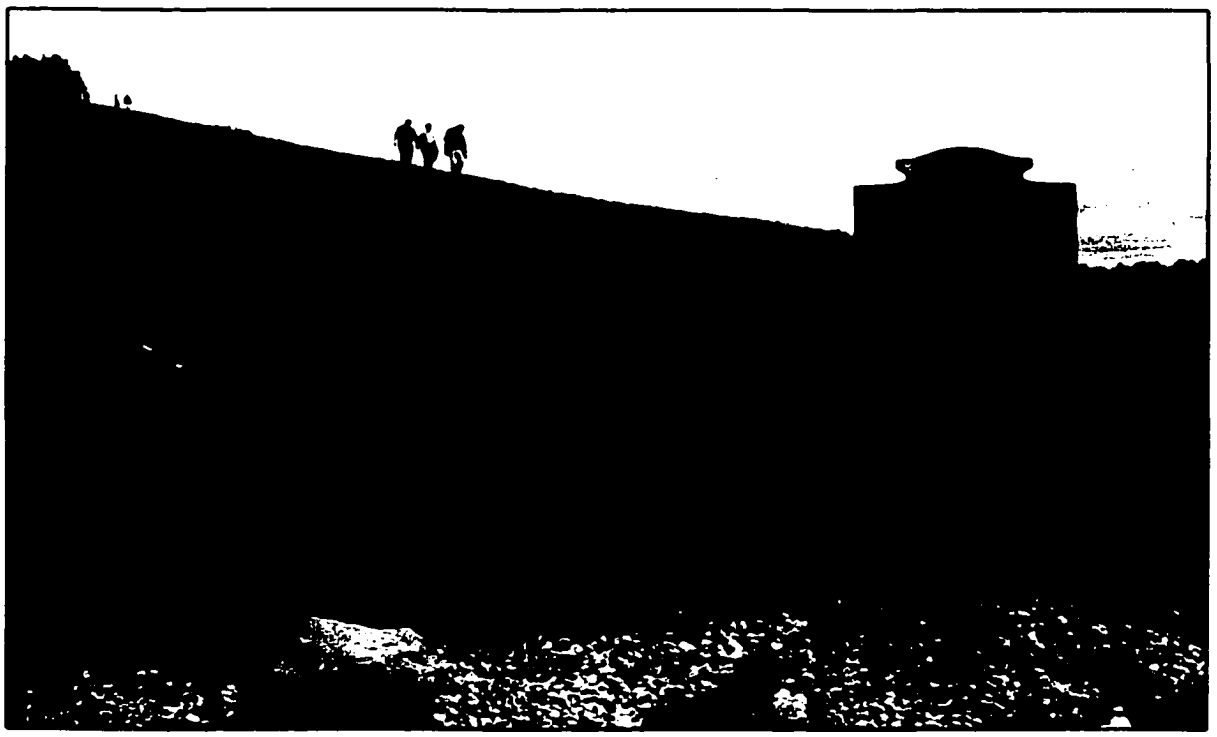


Figure 2-29: Toluca Coal Mine Historical Marker, 2001. *Photograph by the author.*

The historical marker was dedicated in an elaborate ceremony held June 3, 2001. More than 300 residents turned out for the event (Figure 2-30). In fact, the gathering served as far more than a marker dedication. The ceremony represented the culmination of nearly two decades of

community activism aimed at protecting minings' landscape legacies. It represented uncountable hours of debate and planning over the future of the Jumbos and was the crowning achievement in Toluca's decade-long campaign to save the features. Moreover, in providing an opportunity for residents to collectively recognize and celebrate the role the Jumbos serve in defining community and individual identities, the ceremony reinforced Toluca's meaning as place.

Figure 2-30: Historical marker dedication ceremony, 3 June, 2001. *Photograph by the author.*

The Jumbo dedication ceremony provided residents with their first formal opportunity to recognize those who built the community and to salute the men who lost their lives in the mine. Indeed, the gathering was as much a memorial service to Tolucans past, as it was a celebration of the site's historical significance. The event began, for example, with the assembling of the Toluca Color Guard. After a welcoming statement and invocation prayer was read, the great-granddaughters of Battista Cioni, a miner killed in the Toluca mine, placed a wreath beneath the historical marker. A prayer was then read for all of the deceased miners. After speeches were delivered by the mayor, and representatives from the Illinois Historical Society, the DNR, Prairie

Rivers RC&D, and others, including myself,[100] a somber roll call of the 21 men who lost their lives in the mine was delivered. The ceremony concluded with the unveiling of the plaque, a Benediction prayer, firing squad salute, and the playing of Taps. That the dedication was interwoven with the sobering ceremonies of memorialization, reveals the role the Jumbos serve as tributes to family members and others, on whose labors and sacrifices Tolucans are indebted.

As Pastor Michael Jones of St. John's Lutheran Church explained in the ceremony's invocation speech and prayer, it is not an overstatement to consider the Jumbos sacred ground. His words provided a luminous summary of the social significance of the Jumbos and the central role they play in reinforcing a sense of who Tolucans are. He prayed that the Jumbos would continue to enrich life and landscape in Toluca in the years to come:

> When we look back at these two large hills of rock, slag, and debris, we see one of the definite trademarks of our town of Toluca. They stand before us, silent yet ever-present, as if they are two guardians that watch over our daily lives . . . And it would not be too much of a stretch to think of them so, as guardians, for these hills in all their height and grandeur bear the indelible stamp of humanity for they are not born of nature, but of the toil and struggle of decades of hard work, work that made this town boom, work that fed the huge iron locomotive leviathans that used to prowl this vast flat prairieland, work that on occasion took life, as men struggled against the rigors of the depths of the earth.
>
> As is most ground, if we just take the time to stop and think and reflect, the land we stand upon here is sacred – that is, to be set apart in our minds and hearts. Whenever people interact and struggle with what life offers, whenever people pour their hearts and years into something grand, something bigger than themselves, something sacred is created . . . We see such sacredness in our national monuments, and we see it here today in Toluca . . . As ancestors of these miners, or as people who come here today to learn and leave the better for it, our lives are no less important than the miners and citizens of Toluca from years gone by, and indeed it is we who now carry the torch that is life into the future.
>
> Dear Lord, you bring us here today to catch a glimpse of the past. All about us, especially in the symbols that are these two great hills, we see and listen to the stories that define us as who we are. Give us the strength and the faith to carry the torch of life and light into the future. Guide us on the paths of righteousness and direct our footsteps so that we can make a difference in this world and in other people's lives. In your name we lift up our hearts for thanks and praise. Amen.[101]

Clearly, citizen involvement complicated reclamation in Toluca but in a very productive way. Toluca would be a poorer place had it lost its Jumbo "guardians," and a significant aspect

of the Toluca experience is that unlike many mining communities, where the concerns and interests of well-meaning, but often uninformed outsiders are the primary agents of landscape change, residents became active stakeholders in the decision-making processes shaping their environment. In Toluca, a way was found to accommodate the goals of both reclamation and preservation: to address environmental problems while holding on to the meaning of place. Finding this solution was no easy task. For Tolucans, however, it was a challenge worth taking on, for as the late Jack Gerardo once stated, "without the Jumbos we would all feel lost."[102]

CHAPTER THREE: COKEDALE

State highway 12 runs west from Trinidad, Colorado into the front-range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The road climbs past the Trinidad Lake reservoir winding its way over the dips and peaks of the foothills. Upon rounding a ridge eight miles west of Trinidad the dusty browns and greens of the pinyon-speckled hills are interrupted by a wall of coal waste. The highway parallels the ridge of black mine spoil as it descends into the valley bottom where two rows of crumbling coke ovens come into view. The double row of ovens stand on the south side of the highway. Curving down the canyon floor, in their ruin, the oven arches resemble an ancient Roman viaduct (Figure 3-1). On the north side of the highway, at the base of the tailings pile, a gravel road runs up the canyon. At this intersection sits a sign, placed on a framework of rusting I-beams. The sign reads "Cokedale - National Historic District." Built on Reilly Creek in 1907 by the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO), Cokedale is the only company town in the Trinidad area to survive mine closure and remain an inhabited place.

Cokedale lies hidden beneath a canopy of mature elm trees (Figure 3-2). Planted by ASARCO more than ninety years ago in an attempt to beautify the settlement, the trees stand as an oasis of greenery. After crossing the bridge spanning Reilly Creek, a parking area with a sheltered bulletin board marks the entrance to Cokedale. Lying behind yellowed Plexiglas, is a faded map of the town. The map shows the route for a walking tour; complimentary copies sit in a brochure holder. The best way to experience Cokedale is on foot with map in hand. The brochure provides a historical overview of the town. It reads: "As you go through Cokedale you can view the historical structures which keep the town clearly and visibly alive. Take a step back into the past." The map directs one north onto Spruce Street. Standing on the right is the old icehouse. The structure is difficult to recognize: its been converted to a home. To the left, a dozen small cottages, curiously similar in design, line the street. One is in utter disrepair with a cracking foundation, peeling roof, and collapsed porch. This, however, is the exception: the majority of houses are tidy and well kept.[1]

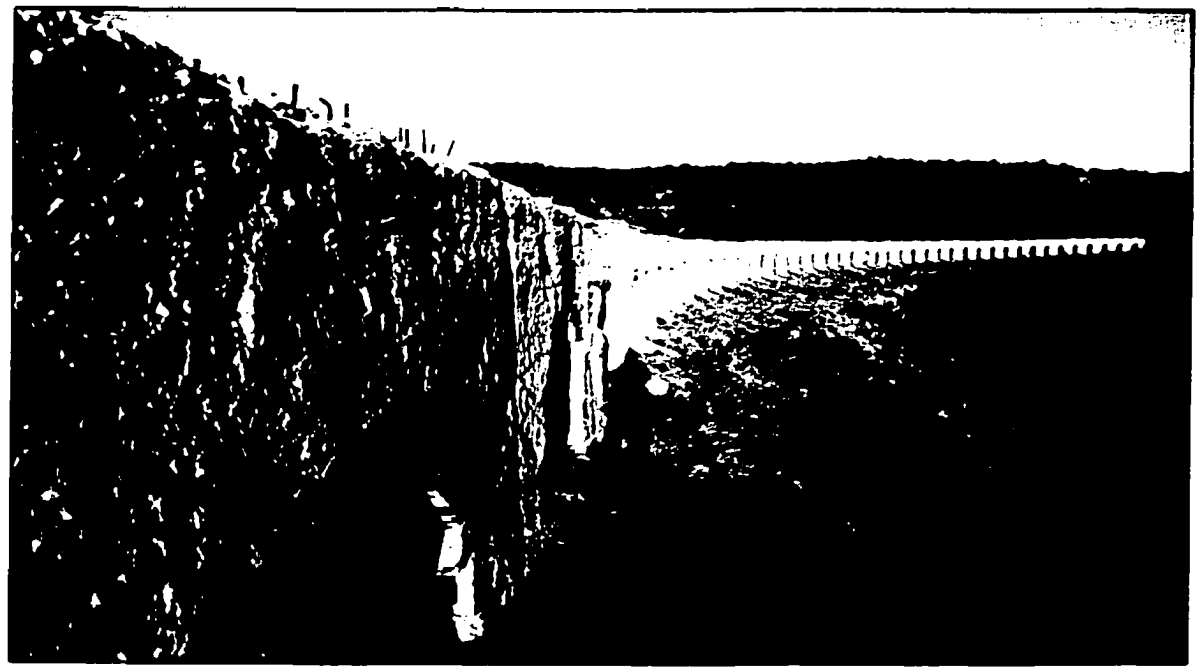


Figure 3-1: The Cokedale ovens, 1998. *Photograph by the author.*

Figure 3-2: View of Cokedale looking across Reilly Creek from the east, 1999. The large structure on the left is the old company store; on the far right stands the Cokedale schoolhouse. *Photograph by the author.*

In a grassy area near the end of Spruce Street sit the foundations of eight large two-story homes. Their residents were evicted, and the structures demolished, after the Cokedale mine closed in 1947. The road curves and climbs up to Elm Street. A car passes and the driver gives a long look before lifting two fingers from the steering wheel in cautious greeting. Other than the passing car and the distant sound of barking dogs, the town is quiet. At the junction of Elm and Spruce streets, a well-worn dirt road leads north to an elegantly restored schoolhouse, where hundreds of children, the sons and daughters of three generations of miners and laborers, once attended first to eighth grades.

Elm Street is lined on both sides with cottages. The houses on the west side sit high on the canyon wall, holding a commanding view of the community. Like all of the town's houses, they have metal-clad roofs and are two rooms wide. The houses on Elm, however, are larger than those found elsewhere, running three to four rooms deep. These were the homes of Cokedale's managers. In the mining era, Elm Street was known as "Silk-Stocking Row." Behind low chain-link fences encircling the houses lie flower gardens. Beside the front doors of many are wood-cut signs bearing the names of the home's occupants. If the cars lining Elm are ignored, it truly seems as though one is walking the streets of a living, early twentieth century mining town.

Cokedale's town center lies at the southern end of Elm Street. Here stand the community's largest and most impressive structures: the company store, bath and boarding houses, the doctor's and superintendent's homes, and the mine office. All but the company store now serve as homes, and the structures are in remarkably good condition. In front of each stands a small sign identifying its original use. Next to the steps of the restored company store – known as the Gottlieb Mercantile when it served as bank, post-office, dry-goods, grocery, and furniture store for more than 1,000 Cokedale residents – stands another sign declaring this the home of the Cokedale Mining Museum and the base of field operations for Abilene Christian University's Public History Program (Figure 3-3). Across the street from the mercantile building, and below the mine office lies a neatly maintained park. The Commons Park is a patch of grass containing

several planters, a picnic table, a historical marker, and a mining-era coal bucket. The bucket once rode an aerial tramway that transported coal waste from the washery to the tailings pile.

Figure 3-3: The Cokedale company store now houses the miners' museum. To the left stands the old boarding house. *Photograph by the author, 1999.*

All that remains of the walking tour is the south side residential area, where the majority of Cokedale's Italian and Hispanic miners and coke oven workers once lived. Paralleling a small arroyo along Pine Street stands Cokedale's only remaining multiple-unit housing structure. A single story duplex, the two-unit house now serves as the Cokedale Town Hall. At the top of Pine Street stands The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Church, a modest structure that residents pieced together from two unused company houses in the 1930s. The walking tour concludes on Maple Street. Again, the houses are uniform in design. The shady streetscape is a less tidy than other areas of town. The houses are smaller than those found on Elm, but most structures are in good condition, and all appear occupied. At the base of Maple Street, in an area where more two-story homes once stood, lies the Cokedale R.V. park. An overgrown enclosure with several picnic tables and a water outlet, the space looks little used. Fifty yards to the south lie the remains of the washery and tipple, but a fence and "private property" sign stand in the way of

further exploration. Looking back toward the creek, nothing can be seen of the weigh house, where the miners' loads of hand-dug coal were converted into pay. Beyond that, where the baseball field, meeting hall, and train depot once stood, lies a vacant field.

The walking tour takes about thirty minutes to complete. However, one can extend his/her stay with a visit to the miners' museum. Here, a copy of Cokedale's most extensive community history can be purchased: Holly Barton's *Cokedale 1907-1947: Anatomy of a Model Mining Community*. Skimming through the pages, the reader learns that Cokedale was a model mining camp. Allegedly, it was a harmonious place, run by a caring operator, and it differed from other company towns in the quality of life it provided. One also learns that Cokedale survived because it was a utopian company town, a place residents refused to abandon when the mines closed.[2]

This utopian narrative would seem to be confirmed by the visitor's stroll through Cokedale. The town appears to have changed little in the course of nearly a century of habitation: it is orderly and pleasant. However, with only its current appearance and local history as guides, the visitor is left with an incomplete sense of the town's history, and its past and current meaning as a place. Neither book nor tour reveal the hardship of life in the mining era or the challenges residents' faced following mine closure. Cokedale is not a living history museum where time has stood still. To the contrary, during the mining era Cokedale's population was more than five times what is today, and the town was faster paced. True, residents grew attached to the community and were proud of the lives they led, but these attachments were cultivated in the midst of a factional, hard-working industrial community governed and controlled by restrictive and sometimes brutal company rule. Theirs was not an ideal existence. Following mine closure, Cokedale's population plummeted, portions of the town were demolished, and what was left fell into disrepair. A small number of dedicated old-timers managed to keep the community alive but its survival had little to do with exceptional living conditions or company altruism. Cokedale struggled on through three decades of dereliction before changing economic conditions and

preservation efforts began the processes of rejuvenation evident in the landscape today.

As will be shown, Cokedale has, and continues to hold, complex meaning as a lived-in place. Like Toluca, however, Cokedale has proven susceptible to generalized outside representation. To date, Cokedale's history and survival have received only superficial attention, and yet the narrative that has been constructed has proven tremendously influential. Historians have represented Cokedale as a place that stood apart from the hardship that plagued the region's mining towns. This discourse both failed to communicate a sense of the town's true character, and shaped preservation efforts to the extent that Cokedale's contemporary landscape falls short in communicating significant elements of the town's history. Because this narrative has proven so influential, I devote significant attention to describing and questioning Cokedale's utopian mythology.

Cokedale is a historically significant place: in 1981 the town was designated a National Historic District on the basis of being one of the best preserved company towns in the American West. Indeed, in the early decades of the twentieth century, more than three dozen company-owned mining communities dotted the canyons of the Trinidad area. The company towns had notoriously poor reputations as places to live, and following mine closure all of these communities disappeared.[3] All, that is, but Cokedale. While few lamented the disappearance of these settlements, scholars of the company town have recognized that much myth and misconception have shaped the image of these places. Little attention has been paid, for example, to the development of community in the company towns, and in the case of Cokedale, its persistence.[4]

The Trinidad Coal Field and Cokedale

The Raton Mesa coal region straddles the Front Range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The region is split approximately in half by the Colorado-New Mexico state boundary, which serves as the dividing line between the New Mexico's Raton Field and Colorado's Trinidad Field. Commercial coal mining began in the Trinidad area in the 1870s.

The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) developed the first mines near the city of Trinidad. The early years were ones of general prosperity: the district contained a high grade coking coal and was the chief producer of coke west of the Mississippi. The product fueled the furnaces of a growing steel industry in nearby Pueblo, Colorado, and copper smelting industries elsewhere in the West. By 1910, dozens of mines and company towns had been established in the field.[5]

Output of coal grew over the first four decades of the field's operation, peaking in the decade of 1910-1920, and the rise of the mining industry brought dramatic change to southern Colorado. Prior to the onset of commercial coal mining, Las Animas County contained approximately 4,000 residents. By 1920 close to 39,000 people called the county home. The town of Trinidad, once a rail and ranching outpost, boomed into a mining metropolis of 11,000 inhabitants. The Trinidad Field attracted a sizable number of Anglo and Hispanic workers from New Mexico and elsewhere in Colorado, but miners also came from farther afield. The two largest groups of foreign-born workers came from Mexico and Italy. Also present were Austro-Hungarians, Slavs, Poles, Greeks, Germans, English, Irish, Scottish, Canadian, and Japanese.[6]

The Trinidad Field lay within an Anglo-Hispanic frontier made more diverse by the migration of foreign-born coal workers. The mining towns and their workers moved into a landscape dotted with Hispanic settlements, and as rail, coking, and mining operations spread, the old village life was destroyed.[7] Hispanic settlement was subsumed by more than two dozen company-owned mining communities built along expanding rail networks north of Trinidad, along the front-range of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains; to the south up the Raton Pass toward New Mexico; and, to the west along the Purgatoire River. Cokedale was built on a tributary of the Purgatoire known as Reilly Creek. It was the only mining town operated by ASARCO in the area (Figure 3-4).

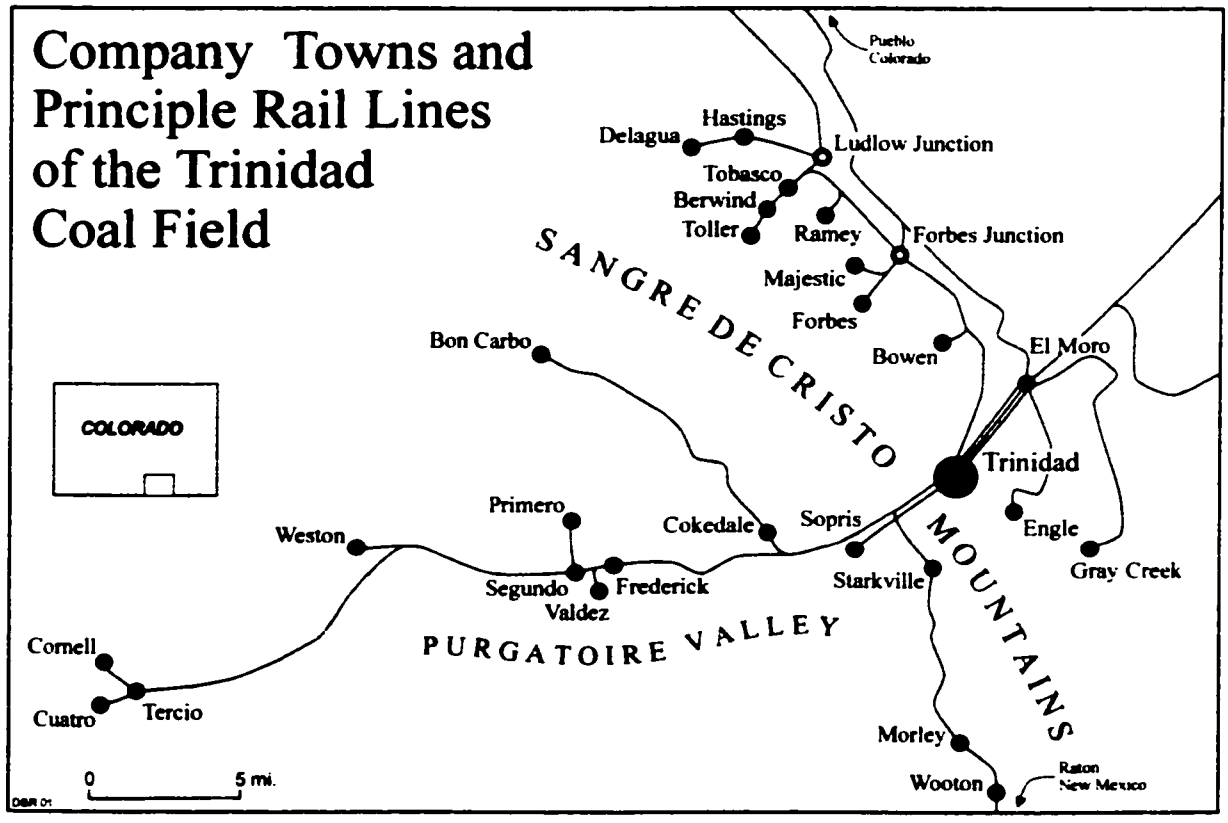


Figure 3-4

Although it became Colorado's most productive coal mining area, the Trinidad Coal Field is best known as the site of one of the bloodiest labor disputes in U.S. history. The coal miners' strike of 1913-1914 was not the area's only instance of labor unrest, but in shaping the identity of the mining region, The Great Coalfield War, as it has come to be known, was the most significant.[8] Delegates of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), representing the camps of the Trinidad Field, unanimously approved a motion to strike on September 16, 1913. Workers had several demands, the most important of which was union recognition. In the early months of the strike federal observers estimated that 90 to 95 percent of the district's miners had left their jobs. While operators were importing strikebreakers, even the union's fiercest opponent, the CF&I, was admitting the absence of 40 to 60 percent of miners from their jobs.[9]

Despite the loss in production, operators expressed little interest in negotiating a settlement. Their first response was to evict all strikers and union sympathizers from the

company towns. Assisted by the union, the evicted workers and their families established tent colonies at rail depots located near the mouths of the canyons leading to the coal camps. The largest of these, the tent colony at Ludlow Junction, housed more than 1,200 inhabitants. As the strike evolved, the camps became guarded military zones protected by company gunmen and agents of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. Hostilities in the camps and tent colonies grew as the strike moved into winter. Hoping to quell tensions, the State of Colorado ordered the National Guard into the strike zone in November 1913. Charged as an impartial peacekeeping force, strikers at first welcomed state intervention.[10]

Unfortunately, the National Guard's occupation only amplified tensions. Working side by side with the coal companies, the National Guard disarmed and harassed strikers, facilitated the importation of strikebreakers, and deported union organizers. Workers were outraged and the strike evolved into a violent standoff that came to a head on April 20, 1914 at the Ludlow tent colony. Much has been written of the "Ludlow Massacre," but the details surrounding the event are still uncertain. Shooting began in the morning, and by dusk the tent colony was ablaze. One militiaman perished in the battle, but at least five strikers were killed. More alarming, in the aftermath of the fire, the lifeless bodies of two women and twelve children were found in an earthen cellar beneath a burnt out tent.[11]

The Ludlow incident sparked an armed rebellion in the coal field. Finally overcoming his reluctance to interfere, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the United States Army into the field. With the arrival of federal troops the state military was ordered out and both strikers and operators were disarmed. The war was over but the strike continued and as the dispute moved toward its second winter the union cause weakened. The policy of federal troops proved not significantly different from that of the state militia. Strikebreakers continued to be protected by government troops, and although mine operations were impacted, production continued at most mines. By November 1914, with strike funds exhausted, the executive board of the UMWA recommended that the strike be terminated.[12]

None of the demands put forth by the union had been achieved. However, while operators clearly won the labor battle, they lost the propaganda war that surrounded it. The strike and Ludlow Massacre received widespread national press, much of which was critical of mine owners and their resistance to improving living and working conditions in the camps. John D. Rockefeller Jr., principal CF&I shareholder, received especially harsh treatment. Upton Sinclair, for example, wrote two quasi-fictional novels documenting oppressive conditions in the company towns: *King Coal*, and *The Coal War*. Furthermore, authorities conducted a series of highly publicized state and congressional investigations into the strike. Heart-rending testimonies delivered by workers and their families drew widespread attention to the brutality of company control in southern Colorado. This publicity bolstered the cause of workers. While life would remain hard, living and working conditions improved in the wake of the strike and union organization was eventually permitted in the camps. The events of 1913-1914 furthered growing public sentiment against the American company town, and the camps of the Trinidad Field have come to be vilified in the works of labor historians.[13]

Output of coal from the Trinidad field fell by half during the Great Depression. The 1940s saw a slight rebound in area production, but by the 1950s the Trinidad Field had played out. At its height (1910-1920), more than 70 commercial coal mines operated in the district, by the midpoint of the 1950s only seven remained. The high cost of underground mining, a general decline in the price of coal, increased labor costs, and poor conditions in the mines contributed to the field's decline. As collieries closed, the company towns were dismantled. In some cases buildings were moved to other camps still in operation but most of the towns were simply demolished – all, that is, but Cokedale.[14]

ASARCO entered the Trinidad Field in 1906 when it purchased a large property at the mouth of Reilly Canyon eight miles west of Trinidad. Operated by the Carbon Coal and Coke Company (an ASARCO subsidiary), the property was developed to provide coking coal for ASARCO's El Paso copper smelter in south Texas. The town was sited on the west slope of

Reilly canyon, a mile from its entrance into the Purgatoire Valley (Figure 3-5). Three rows of housing were built parallel to the creek. The top row of houses (Elm Street), contained homes built for ASARCO foremen and professional-class employees. A second group of housing, located south of Elm along Pine and Maple streets, followed a small arroyo into the west side of the canyon giving the town a reverse "L" street plan. A rail spur connected the community to the Colorado and Wyoming Railroad (Figure 3-6).[15]

Cokedale's public buildings—the company store, mine office, boarding, bath, and doctor's houses–were erected at the center of the community, as was the superintendent's house. The schoolhouse anchored the north end of town, and a community hall, icehouse, stable, and baseball field sat on the eastern margin. The company planted trees and maintained public spaces, which gave the camp a pastoral atmosphere. ASARCO took on all responsibility for the upkeep of homes. Residents were not permitted to paint, repair, or in any significant way change the appearance of their homes. The company hired painters, carpenters, electricians, and outdoor maintenance personnel. Officials enforced a uniform aesthetic standard.[16]

ASARCO built 86 single family cottages in Cokedale (built of pressed concrete blocks); 18 frame cottages; and two one-story, and 20 two-story duplexes. Modest in appearance, all of Cokedale's houses had hipped or pyramidal roofs and were finished with a plain stucco finish. Trim and roofing was painted a uniform dark green. Houses ranged in size from one to four bedrooms. All had small front porches, coal-burning stoves, electricity and drainless sinks. Only the community buildings and a few of the houses on "Silk-Stocking Row" (the top row of houses on Elm Street) had indoor plumbing.[17]

The mining and coking operation was located at the southern end of the community. Although a small cluster of houses sat on a bench above the coke ovens, industry was otherwise separated down-valley from residential areas. A large powerhouse and washery-tipple complex lay on the western slope of the canyon. An aerial tramway carried washery waste to the tailings pile located on the eastern slope. The cleaned coal was transported down valley by rail to the

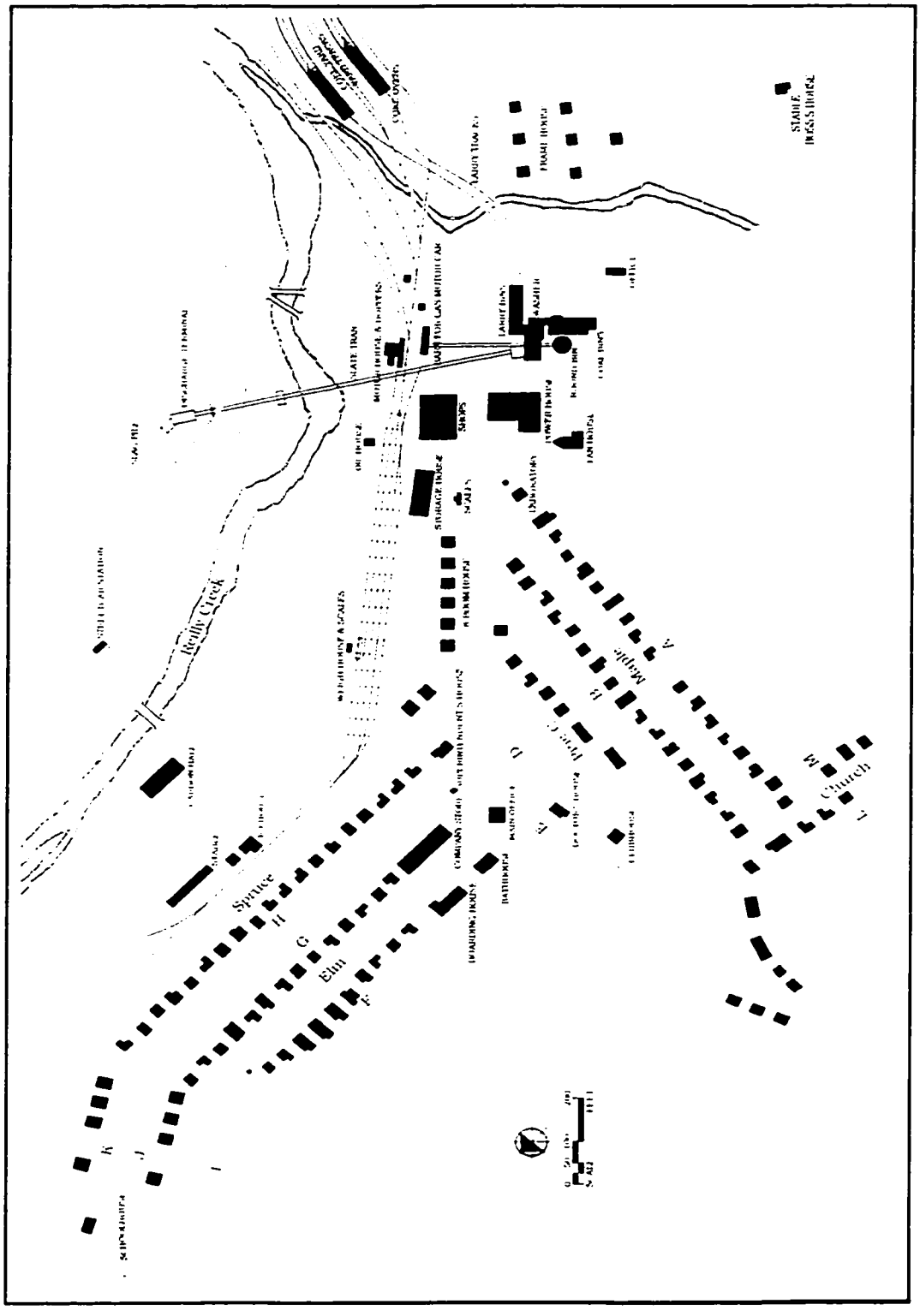
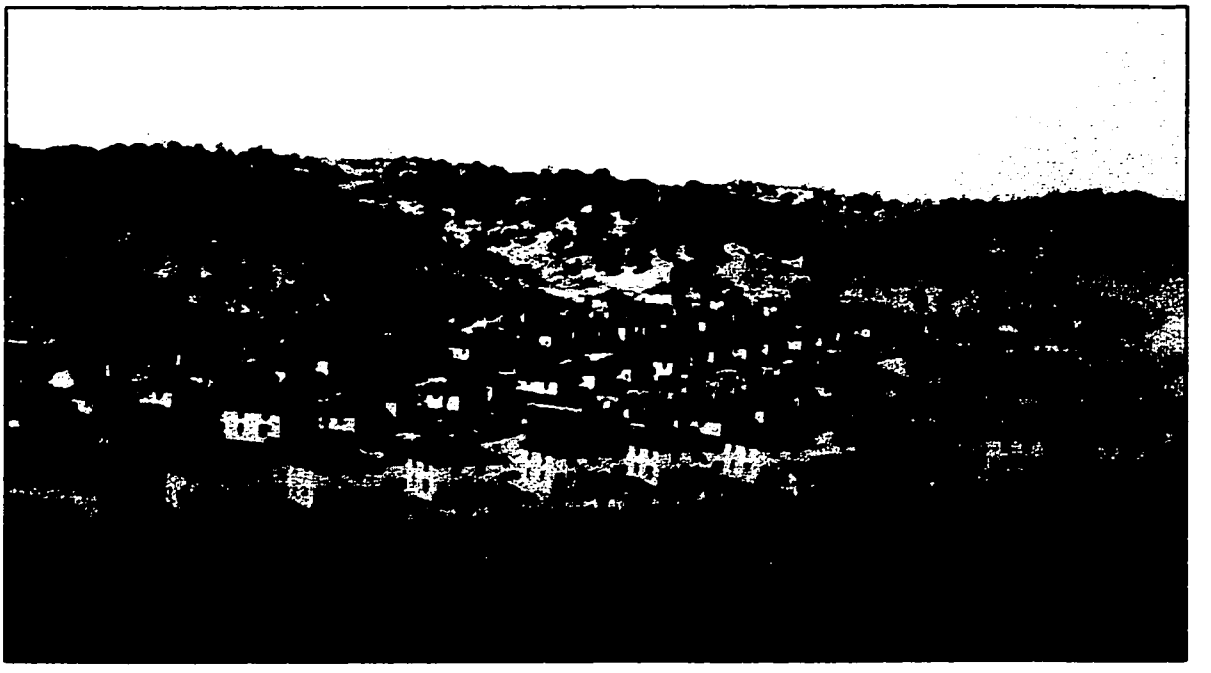


Figure 3-5: Town plan of Cokedale. *Adapted and reprinted from Gary L. Lindsey, "Creating Presence: The Early Twentieth Century Company Store in Three Coal Mining Towns in Southern Colorado," (MA thesis, Abilene Christian University, 1998).*



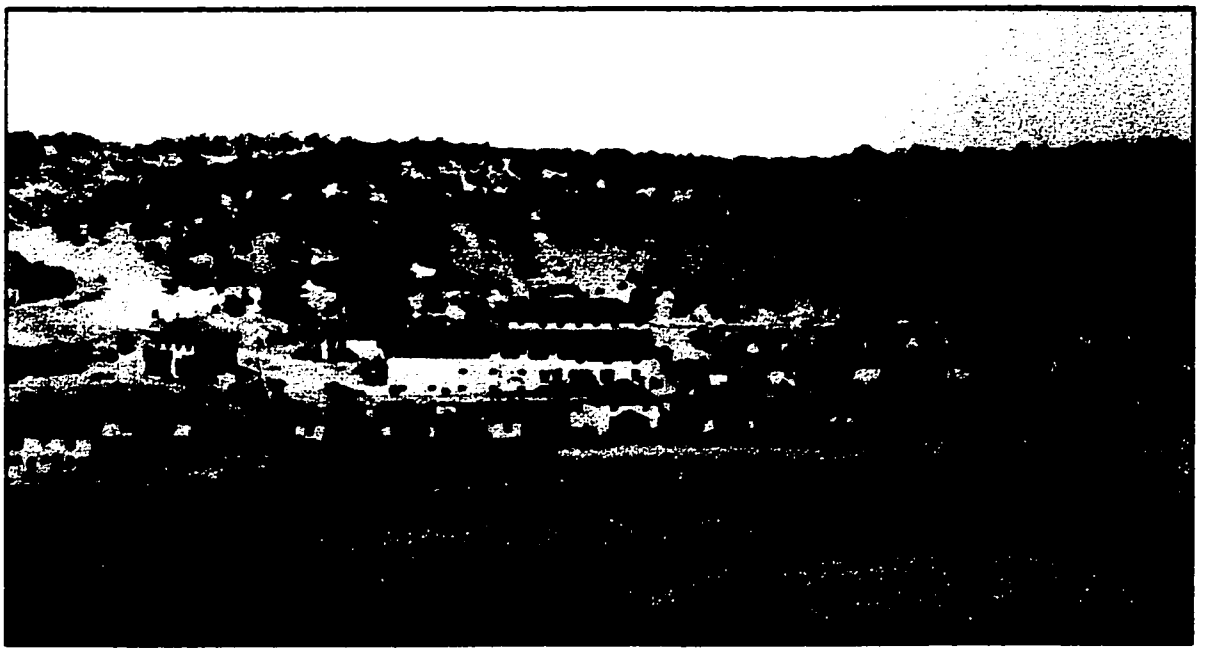


Figure 3-6: Portions of a panoramic photograph taken of Cokedale, circa 1910. The top photograph shows the rows of housing built along Pine and Maple streets. Note the large, shared, two-story houses in the foreground; these were demolished following mine closure. The bottom photograph shows portions of Spruce and Elm streets and the collection of community structures, the largest being the company store, located in the town center. Left of the mercantile stands the mine office. From left to right behind the store stand the bath and boarding houses. The large structure on the far right is the icehouse. The Cokedale baseball field is in the foreground. *Carnegie Library, Trinidad Colorado.*

coke ovens: a double row of beehive ovens built along the curve of Reilly Creek. Cokedale contained the largest oven complex in the Trinidad District, begetting the community's name. The first structures encountered upon entering the settlement, the 350 ovens were fired 24 hours a day and the column of smoke that rose from the smoldering coke was the town's most notable landmark (Figure 3-7). "I remember coke ovens glowing at night," stated resident Rollie Schafer, "the magic of their visual beauty heightened by their smell: strong and marvelously pungent." Coal was mined from two drift mines sunk into the west-side of Reilly Canyon. The No. 1 mine was located above the washery, the No. 2 near the southern end of the coke ovens.[18]

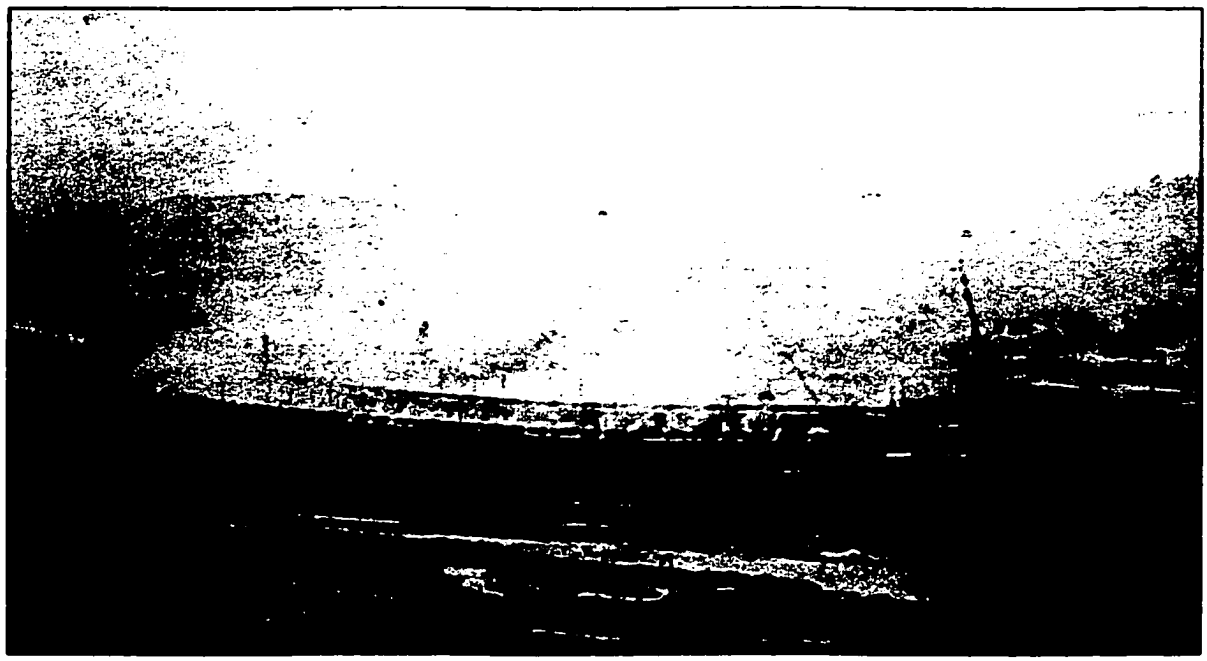


Figure 3-7: Smoke billows from Cokedale's double row of coke ovens, circa 1910. *Carnegie Library, Trinidad Colorado.*

Poorly planned, Cokedale's No. 1 mine was abandoned after the workings ran into property boundaries and poor production at the nearby No. 2 mine soon forced ASARCO to search for a new source of coal. Cokedale's third mine opened in 1918 at a site named Bon Carbo. The company built a small camp at the new mine site, located nine miles up Reilly Canyon. The majority of miners working at Bon Carbo continued to live in Cokedale, and coal was washed and coked down-valley: workers and coal were transported to and from town on a

spur line of the Colorado and Rio Grande Railroad. The Bon Carbo mines remained in operation for close to 30 years. A combination of factors resulted in their closure in 1947. ASARCO pulled out of Cokedale the same year.

Cokedale's Model Town Image

> At the turn of the Twentieth Century, company controlled mining communities throughout the nation were plagued by intolerable working and living conditions. Substandard housing, disregard for sanitation, oppressive company control, company indifference to the safety of the workers, and limited opportunities for constructive social activity were widely prevalent. Cokedale, however, was an exception.[19]

Cokedale's minimal scholarly attention includes several community histories that have proven important in shaping the town's image. The above excerpt comes from the most extensive of these works, Holly Barton's *Cokedale, 1907-1947: Anatomy of a Model Mining Community*. Barton's background, and her ties to Cokedale, are difficult to ascertain. No residents I interviewed could recall exactly who she was and I failed in my attempts to contact her. Barton's professional training is unknown and her Cokedale study appears to be her only published work. She had family ties to the Trinidad area but never lived in Cokedale. Furthermore, the fact that her history was released at Cokedale's first reunion of old-timers held in 1976, the 69th anniversary of the community's founding, suggests that she may have been petitioned to write the study for this event. In addition to Barton's work, a 1993 family geneology, *The Schafers of Cokedale, A Century in America*, written by one-time resident Rollie Schafer, deals in part with the history of the community. However, Schafer draws heavily on Barton's research in discussing the town's past, and *Anatomy of a Model Mining Community* clearly stands as the most influential historical account of the community. Uniform in its praise of living and working conditions, Barton portrays Cokedale as a utopian company town.[20]

Barton bases her historical narrative largely on promotional literature produced at the time of the community's founding. The most significant of these accounts came while the camp was still under construction. In January 1907, the *Trinidad Chronicle News* published an article

entitled "Riley [*sic*] Canon will be Model Camp of State." The article serves as a starting point in Barton's analysis. The newspaper claimed that ASARCO was investing an unprecedented one million dollars in the construction of Cokedale, where "no means were being withheld to build a model mining camp." Cokedale, it was explained, would be equipped with every convenience: solidly built and affordable homes, a clean water supply, a well-stocked general store, and a schoolhouse, doctors office, and fire department. A "veritable city . . . where every man was to be paid a fair price for his hire," would soon "pour its smoke of progress and send forth hundreds upon hundreds of filled cars of coal and coke."[21]

The *Trinidad Chronicle News*, an ardent supporter of local mining interests, followed events in Cokedale closely in the early years, including visits made by industry and government officials. In March 1907, for example, W. L. Bretherton, financial representative of the noted Montana "copper-king" and former U.S. Senator William A. Clark, toured Cokedale to gain insight into the workings of a "model coal and coke camp." According to the *Chronicle News*, Bretherton came away impressed: "I regard this Riley [*sic*] Canon camp as one of the very best I have ever seen," he stated, "money has been spent there without stint, in fact, almost too much money. It is an ideal camp."[22]

On August 28, 1907, U.S. Vice-President Charles Warren Fairbanks visited the district for a brief stopover while en route to California. Stating that this was the first time a national figure of Fairbanks' status had ever visited an area coal camp, the *Chronicle News* encouraged Cokedale residents to see that everybody turned out. A large gathering greeted the Vice-President at the Cokedale depot (Figure 3-8). The newspaper describes Fairbanks' tour:

> After making an address the Vice-President was taken over the little town. For once the smile that had played over his features vanished, usurped by a look of wonderment. He glanced at the library, at the general club rooms, at the concrete dwellings and at the clean, well-kept streets and he exclaimed, "wonderful, wonderful!" It was up to the Vice President to look amazed. He had been in coal camps before, but this was the first time he was ever in a Colorado model camp. "These people must be happy," he said as he surveyed their pretty little homes and their model institutions.[23]

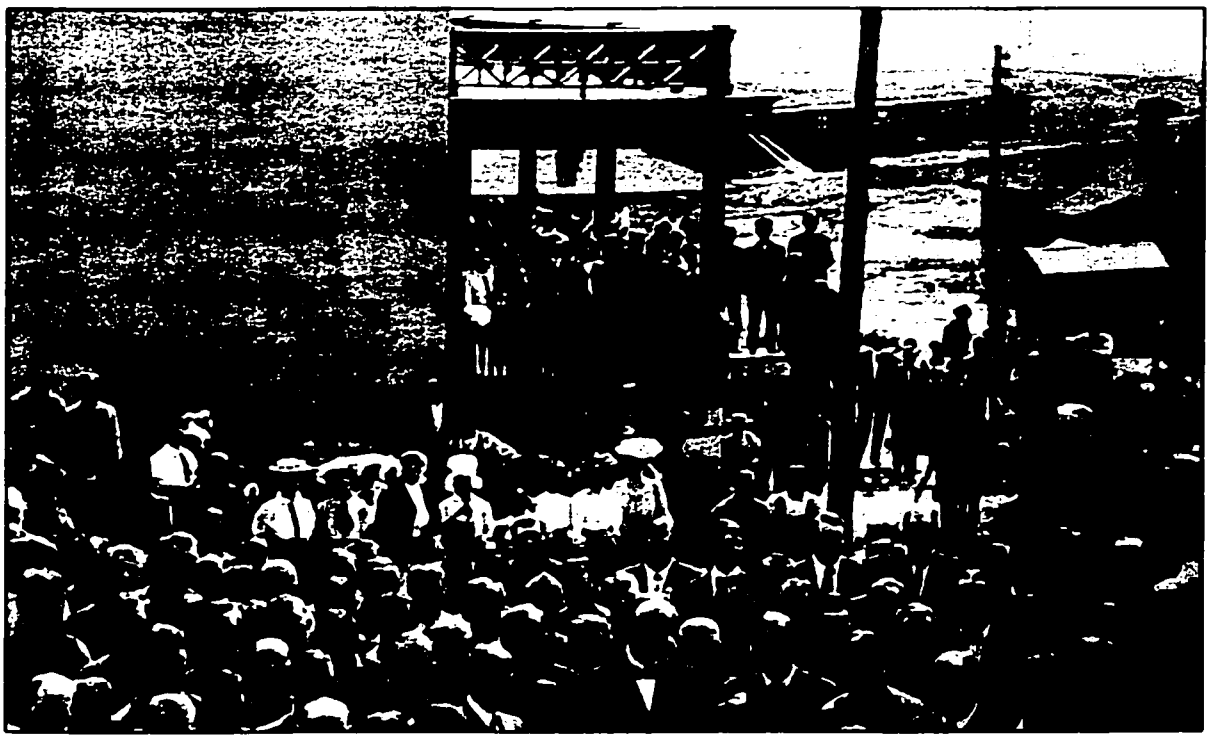


Figure 3-8: Vice President Charles Warren Fairbanks, center foreground, poses with Cokedale residents near the front steps of the company store, 1907. *Carnegie Library, Trinidad Colorado.*

Cokedale's status as a "model" mining camp was furthered by accounts appearing in state coal reports and industry journals. In 1908, the *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Coal Mine Inspector* contained an overview of the new Cokedale mine that heaped praise on its operation. The company, the report quoted, "has stepped out of the beaten track regarding houses for their workmen," making Cokedale "one of the prettiest mining camps in the state." In 1909, the *Engineering and Mining Journal* wrote a feature article on the "model plant at Cokedale." Detailing mining and coking operations and civic features, the article praised the community's cleanliness and systematic operation.[24]

According to Barton and Schafer, Daniel Guggenheim, then president and director of ASARCO, built Cokedale as a kind of humanitarian project. "Daniel Guggenheim decided to make Cokedale a model mining community," writes Schafer, "it was an extraordinary concept." The belief that Cokedale embodied the humanitarian concerns of ASARCO's president developed

from testimony Guggenheim gave at a hearing held by the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations in New York City in 1916.[25] Quoted by Barton, Guggenheim stated:

> I do not think there can be too much legislation along humanitarian lines. Surely no man can be happy when he realizes the conditions of the workers. We must see that the worker not only gets sufficient wages but also gets some of the comforts and luxuries of life. I have always felt that way. I believe in the democratization of industry.[26]

For Barton and Schafer, Guggenheim serves as the noble founding figure of Cokedale, and like the town he guided into existence, his status is bolstered through contrast with the most villainized operator in the Trinidad District, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Schafer writes:

> The American Smelting and Refining Company that built Cokedale had nothing for which to atone; if ASARCO's record in Colorado were judged from on high, it might have qualified for industrial sainthood – certainly when judged in comparison with other companies during this period. On balance, the CF&I's record would be judged harshly. If the verdict were delivered by a jury of southern Colorado coal miners, the judgement would be simple and direct: "Go straight to hell, Rockefeller! Thanks, Guggenheimer!"[27]

If Rockefeller and his CF&I camps represented the worst of the district, Guggenheim and Cokedale represented the best. According to Barton, the residents of Cokedale had much to thank Guggenheim for. "Cokedale was responsibly planned, offered substantial, comfortable homes, good community facilities and services, attractive surroundings, satisfactory working conditions, and an atmosphere that encouraged a healthy community spirit."[28]

Cokedale's array of outstanding physical and social amenities dominate Barton and Schafer's works. In her overview of camp conditions, for example, Barton lists the town's advantages. Cokedale had "modern" housing rented at the "very lowest possible rates." Sanitation, water, and electricity, services allegedly unavailable in many camps, were company priorities. Residents were provided with a "clean and healthy living environment." Health care was provided by a resident company doctor for a "nominal monthly fee." A regular maintenance regime, including garbage collection, house painting, and electrical and carpentry work, were supplied free of charge. A camp beautification program that included the planting of shade trees and grass helped retain an "orderly appearance," and the town earned the reputation as the

"cleanest and most attractive mining camp in the area." The company also provided an elementary school, one that "compared favorably with similar schools found in cities of ten thousand;" a club house, " a versatile facility that served well the social and recreational needs in Cokedale;" and prior to prohibition, a saloon (Figure 3-9).[29]

Figure 3-9: Children in the Cokedale school, circa 1910. *Cokedale Miners' Museum Collection.*

According to Barton and Schafer, and supported by historian Gary Lindsey in his 1998 master's thesis focusing on company stores in the Trinidad Field, one of Cokedale's most outstanding amenities was the Gottlieb Mercantile (Figure 3-10). Although the company store represents one of the company town's most reviled institutions, local historian's claim that Cokedale's was different. The company built and owned the store building, but Barton writes that ASARCO's operating philosophy differed from that of other area coal companies. ASARCO leased the building to a "non-company proprietor," a merchant named Leo Gottlieb, who set the store's prices. Barton reports that ASARCO had no desire to expand its economic control by forcing employees to trade at the store: the mercantile was built only for the town's convenience

and contained reasonably priced and diversified stock. Residents, it is claimed, traded wherever they wanted, and scrip (a company coupon redeemable only at the company store) was never issued in lieu of cash on payday. According to Schafer, scrip was only issued as an "advance" on future wages for miners needing supplies between pay periods.[30]

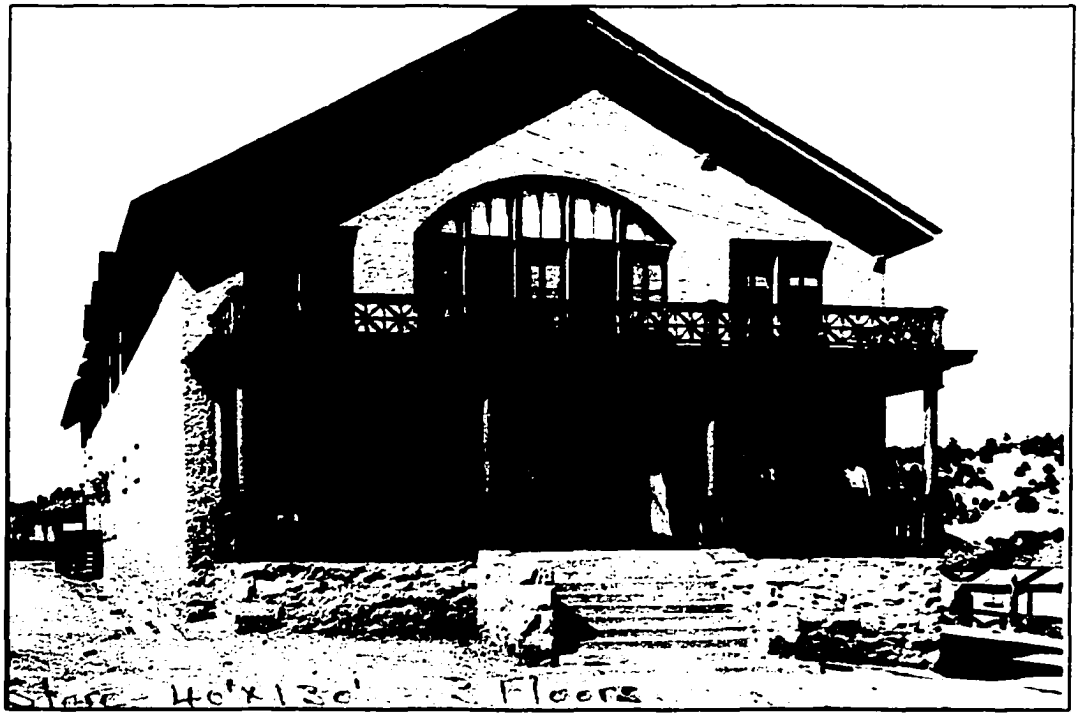


Figure 3-10: The Gottlieb Mercantile, circa 1910. *Cokedale Miners' Museum Collection.*

ASARCO's concern for the well-being of its residents purportedly extended into the workplace. Not surprisingly, early industry promotional literature heaped praise on the Carbon Coal and Coke Company's safety standards, the fairness of its weighing system, and wage scales. The picture painted by historians is also one of a company doing its best to care for its workers. According to Barton, Cokedale miners were satisfied with working conditions: ASARCO paid top wages, provided the men with a safe working environment, and encouraged good management-employee relations. Barton explains that during the Depression, for example, ASARCO often ignored rents that couldn't be paid, donated groceries to families in need, and provided domestic coal free of charge. Schafer states that the camp was the most fairly run in the

district and that the miners were well cared for. [31]

Barton also believes that Guggenheim's humanitarian concern for resident well-being created a harmonious and peaceful community. She explains that drinking and disorderly conduct were never serious problems and that conflict among the town's various ethnic groups was rare. The town constable, a company employee, is described as having "the easiest job in town."[32] She writes:

> Cokedale was a very peaceful little town. Despite the incredible variety of ethnic backgrounds, people got along remarkably well with each other. Since the children were raised with discipline, mischief never developed into delinquency. It has been said, that the company was highly selective in the hiring of employees, a practice that may have accounted for why standards were so high and why everyone got along so well.[33]

According to Schafer, a unique "Cokedale spirit" developed in the community. Residents thought they were important and were proud of their town. He also believes that fair treatment of the workers proved to be an effective antidote to unionization. Barton agrees, writing that worker grievances were "few" and "insignificant." It is claimed that for most of its operation Cokedale was the only camp in the Trinidad Field to remain un-unionized. The community was allegedly "unscathed" by the labor wars of 1913-1914. The camp, it is presumed, remained distant from the tragedy at Ludlow Junction, and was only unionized late in its operation. From the perspective of historians the story is consistent: Cokedale was a paradise compared to other company towns—a model, utopian mining camp.[34]

Generally, mining town histories pay little attention to the post-mining years, and Cokedale is no exception. Barton's historical narrative effectively ends at mine closure. She explains that a number of factors led to the cessation of mining, the most significant being unionization and resulting increases in operating costs. Unionization "played a significant role in the company's decision to shut down operations," Barton writes, and she is unsympathetic to the union cause. ASARCO was cooperative, the union was not, and she describes how the attitude of miners toward the company had changed. Pressure from newly hired men familiar with union

activities in other camps, she claims, were responsible for the eventual organization of the mine: these outside "ringleaders" were looking for any excuse to agitate and the company could not afford to make concessions that would increase pay. Although more sympathetic to the union's attempt to better working conditions, Schafer agrees with Barton's assessment: "the coal market was gone and the miners' demands could not be met economically . . .mining stopped in 1947, forty years after the Cokedale phenomena started." [35]

Questioning the Utopian Myth

Labor historians, who deal almost exclusively with labor conditions in the camps of the CF&I, have produced the bulk of scholarly research conducted in the Trinidad Field. As a result, the history and culture of company towns like Cokedale has, until recently, been largely ignored. Historian Rick J. Clyne's *Coal People: Life in Southern Colorado's Company Towns, 1890-1930*, published in 1999, is the only work yet produced to consider community life in these settlements. Clyne provides a valuable addition to the literature and Cokedale receives little attention in his analysis.

As will be noted, Barton's research raised awareness of Cokedale's past and has been of significant benefit to the community. However, her work is also problematic. The sources she uses to interpret conditions in the camp, primarily local newspaper accounts and industry publications, are questionable. Moreover, her narrative lacks historical context and critical appraisal. In addition, Barton's thesis, that Cokedale was a utopian company town is drawn from questionable inferences she has made regarding Daniel Guggenheim's humanitarian ethics. And yet despite these shortcomings, her work has, and continues to serve, as the primary source of information on Cokedale's past and on the meaning the community held as a place.[36]

Industry representatives and newspapers reporters commonly extolled conditions in the mining camps. The "model" reference, for example, was not just applied to Cokedale. In 1915, the *Trinidad Chronicle News* described the nearby town of Sopris, a CF&I camp notorious for poor living and working conditions, as a "model community." Furthermore, the "model camp"

concept was not unique to the Trinidad District. "Model" company towns were being constructed across the U.S. industrial landscape in the early decades of the twentieth century. What distinguished these communities was the desire of operators to extend paternal control beyond the minimal architectural requirements of factories and mines. Model towns were praised as places where operators had an altruistic interest in the well-being of the worker. In extending paternalistic measures, however, model towns were often oppressive places, and their construction was not, generally speaking, undertaken for altruistic concerns.[37]

According to geographer Anne Mosher, the labeling of industrial settlements as model camps was a good public relations move, for at the turn of the twentieth century, company towns were increasingly perceived as the embodiment of everything that was evil about big-business. Moreover, model towns also served the economic interests of industry. Mosher explains that an environmentalist philosophy underpinned the construction of model company towns: operators believed that good living conditions would yield a loyal workforce, and that company paternalism, operating in a carefully designed environment, could be used to maintain control over labor. At the time of Cokedale's construction, the need for such measures was substantial. Poor conditions in neighboring camps were being investigated by the state in the wake of the field's first general strike, held in 1903-1904. Furthermore, by 1907 labor interests in southern Colorado were reorganizing. With the more radical Industrial Workers of the World gaining a foothold in the area, incentive existed for operators such as ASARCO to minimize union activity. The model camp served this purpose.[38]

By placing Cokedale's development in broader historical context, it is reasonable to assume that ASARCO's decision to build a state-of-the-art camp in Reilly Canyon was guided by the belief that by subverting labor unrest and increasing worker productivity expenditures in town infrastructure would prove to be a wise investment. Such sentiment is evident, for example, in the concluding lines of the article "Riley [*sic*] Canon will be Model Camp of State," appearing in the *Trinidad Chronicle News* in 1907:

> Like men in love with their surroundings all work with a vim. The sound of the hammer, the crunch of stone, the creak of cables, the roar of dumped coal, all add to the crescendo blend of labor harmony. With this condition prevailing, Reilly Canon will soon be a great coal and coke producing camp, a model in every way.[39]

Unfortunately, Barton was either unaware of or ignored such pragmatic explanations, and focused instead on the idea that Cokedale embodied the humanitarian concerns of Daniel Guggenheim. It is Guggenheim's testimony to the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations that forms the basis for this belief. The Industrial Relations hearings were established in the wake of the Ludlow Massacre. At the hearings, Guggenheim expressed his sympathy for the worker. He also espoused radical new ideas of what should be done to improve their lot. His surprising deposition generated favorable press, and in quoting from Guggenheim's testimony, Barton and Schafer establish a philosophical base upon which to build Cokedale's utopian image. However, what has not been widely reported is that Guggenheim was ordered to appear at the Industrial Relations hearing because of ASARCO's history of labor troubles and the notoriously poor conditions that existed at the company's smelters and mines. An astute businessman, Guggenheim was aware that the hearings provided an opportunity to sway public opinion of ASARCO operations. Clearly, his testimony was not representative of the company's practices. Guggenheim claimed, for example, that ASARCO did not object to union negotiation. Under further questioning, however, he admitted that no ASARCO properties were operating under labor agreements. [40]

According to biographer Harvey O'Connor, Guggenheim turned the commission into a sounding board designed to undo the mischief caused by a generation of unfavorable publicity. However, more alarming in the use of Guggenheim's testimony is the fact that he made no mention of Cokedale at the hearing. This is a significant omission considering that he was given ample time to detail measures the company had taken to improve living and working conditions at its smelters and mines. Furthermore, on his numerous cross-country inspections of ASARCO properties, Guggenheim never visited his "model" mining camp in the Colorado foothills. No

firm evidence exists that Daniel Guggenheim had any direct involvement in the planning of Cokedale.[41]

It is also widely believed that the quality of life in Cokedale was exceptional. Barton describes housing, town infrastructure, and community services, for example, as being well above area standards, and there is some truth to these assertions. ASARCO devoted considerable resources to community upkeep and the town's organized layout and tidy appearance did set it apart from other company towns in the district. In addition, at the time of construction, Cokedale's housing was superior to that found in adjacent camps, many of which had already been in operation for several decades. In the early 1900s, many Trinidad-area mining families were living in dirt-floored shacks and Cokedale could rightly boast the absence of such conditions. It appears, that Cokedale offered a modest degree of comfort that was, for a time, unavailable in other company towns (Figure 3-11).

Figure 3-11: Early Cokedale streetscape, looking south towards the mining operation, 1907. Evident is the modest nature of living conditions. *Carnegie Library, Trinidad Colorado.*

It is important to note, however, that only in the earliest years of its existence were living conditions exceptional in Cokedale. Conditions in the Trinidad Field did not remain constant

over time. Living conditions were generally deplorable at the time of the 1913-1914 strike. In its wake, however, political pressures forced operators to implement changes. A wave of corporate liberalism swept through the mining field. In the CF&I camps, reform came by way of Rockefeller's Industrial Representation Plan. Although criticized for not significantly altering power relations between capital and labor, Rockefeller's reforms did result in an improvement in camp conditions. Following the strike, the CF&I began replacing dilapidated housing with structures comparable in design to those in Cokedale. Like ASARCO, the CF&I also instituted community beautification programs. Virtually all of the camps operated elementary schools and provided clubhouses and recreational facilities. Services such as garbage collection, company doctors, and company stores, were also standard. As a result, for most of Cokedale's operating life span, the town contained few amenities that were not available in other company towns.[42]

It has also been claimed that ASARCO rented housing at a nominal rate. However, evidence suggests that this, too, is an exaggerated claim. A 1920 report on housing conditions in Colorado mining towns shows that three-fourths of all operators charged between $2.00 and $2.50 a room per month. Housing in Cokedale rented for $2 a room per month, the same rate being charged by the CF&I for similar concrete block homes. Room and board rates were also comparable. Rooms in ASARCO and CF&I boarding houses rented for $25 and $26 per month, respectively. Cokedale's rental rates should not be viewed as anything but standard.[43]

Whether Cokedale's company store operated differently in terms of the use of scrip, the pricing of merchandise, and the degree to which workers were expected to trade at the establishment, requires further investigation. Evidence suggests, however, that the Gottlieb Mercantile was not as unique a company store as has been suggested. In an interview conducted in 1978, longtime resident Horace Hurtado stated that ASARCO "encouraged" employees to trade at the mercantile and that it barred "peddlers" from the community. Contrary to Barton, he also said that ASARCO used scrip as a means of pay early in the camp's operation. Workers who chose not to trade at the company store, Hurtado explained, often lost their jobs.[44]

In addition, historians have paid little attention to the Bon Carbo settlement, the site of Cokedale's third and longest-lasting mine. Bon Carbo was an integral part of ASARCO's Cokedale operation and the few accounts that exist of the settlement portray it in a less than flattering light. At its peak, 200 residents lived in Bon Carbo. ASARCO built a two-story office structure, a superintendent's home, schoolhouse, company store (a branch of the Gottlieb Mercantile), post office, and more than a dozen cottages at the site. Unlike Cokedale, however, the canyon at Bon Carbo was also lined with dozens of miners' shacks. Living conditions for those residing in the Bon Carbo shantytown were poor and the settlement appears to have been best known for its rowdy saloon and dance hall. John Johnson remembers Bon Carbo as a "rough place" occupied primarily by Slavic bachelors, and conditions at the site fail to uphold ASARCO's image as that of a benevolent operator.[45]

It is also believed that ASARCO was democratic in its treatment of employees and that ethnic division was rare in Cokedale. However, discrimination and segregation along racial, ethnic, and class lines was a common condition in the coal camps, and evidence suggests that Cokedale was no exception. Clyne describes how workers of Asian and Hispanic descent were the principal targets of discrimination in the Trinidad Field. Using Cokedale as an example, he describes the treatment of the town's sizable Japanese work force, a group of miners who lived and worked in the community in the early years of its operation. Cokedale's Japanese were completely segregated both above and below ground. They had their own bathhouse and a separate entry into the mine. It is not clear how long the Japanese stayed in Cokedale, or why they left, but by 1920 no individuals of Japanese ancestry remained in the town.[46]

Cokedale was an ethnically diverse place. Analysis of the surnames and birth places of residents listed in the 1920 manuscript census schedules shows that of the 142 homes in Cokedale, 48 contained heads of households of Anglo-American ancestry (34 percent), 24 were Italian (17 percent), 23 were Mexican (16 percent), and 33 were other Hispanic (23 percent). Europeans ancestries comprised the remainder. Spatial plotting of these households reveals that

the town was segregated along ethnic lines. Division existed between the northern and southern residential districts: the two arms of Cokedale's reverse "L" street plan. To the north, along Elm and Spruce streets lay 65 percent of Cokedale's Anglo-American headed households. Homes on Elm Street were 80 percent Anglo-American and only one home on "Silk-Stocking Row" contained a non-Anglo head of household. By contrast, to the south of the town center, mixed together on Pine, Maple, and Church streets, were 83 percent of the community's Italian, and 70 percent of its Hispanic-headed households. The census also reveals that the town's multiple-unit housing was dominated by residents of Hispanic and Mexican ancestry.[47]

Ethnicity also played a role in the occupations held by Cokedale residents. In 1920, 75 percent of miners—the largest occupational class in Cokedale and the lowest paid workers—were of Hispanic and Mexican ancestry. Only Italians and Hispanics, the former dominating in number, worked the coke ovens. In addition, of the roughly 20 managerial/professional positions in the camp, only two were held by non-Anglos: the coke oven foreman and section boss, both Italians. Almost all of Cokedale's positions of power such as the Camp Marshall, School Principal, Store Manager, Camp Superintendent, and shift bosses were held by Anglo-Americans.

Given these occupational biases, it is clear that a north-south cleavage existed in class structure. More than 60 percent of homes on the north side of town were occupied by managerial/professional workers and wage earners. A listing of the occupations of those living on "Silk-Stocking Row" (Chemist, Foreman, Accountant, Camp Physician, and Safety Inspector) reveals that this housing was reserved for those in professional jobs. In contrast, the majority of the town's lower-paid Hispanic and Italian workforce resided south of the town center. All managerial and professional residents lived in single family housing, and almost all of the multiple-unit housing was occupied by miners.

Because ASARCO assigned housing to its employees and jobs, it can be concluded that ethnic segregation and occupational discrimination were intentional. Clearly, ASARCO was not democratic in the treatment of its workers as Barton and others have claimed. To the contrary,

evidence suggests that the company supported racist behavior in the community. According to Clyne, an active chapter of the Ku Klux Klan existed in Cokedale in the 1920s and cross-burnings were commonly held on company property. Crosses were blazed on the hill above town and ASARCO had the authority to stop such activity. That it chose not to suggests that racist behavior had the tacit support of the company. Indeed, unlike the camps of the CF&I, it appears that ASARCO banned African Americans from employment. "A number of miners recall an unwritten company rule that Blacks were not to be hired," Clyne writes, and he quotes from Cokedale resident Frank Wojtylka to support this claim: "They [ASARCO] just wouldn't hire them . . . You never saw a colored man working here in this mine. You did at Valdez. . . They work in CF&I [mines] and Sopris and places like that, but not at Cokedale."[48]

Ethnic and class divisions are also revealed in the interviews I conducted with residents, where discussion frequently turned to the long-lasting animosities that existed between residents living on the north and south sides of the community. The childhood recollections of one longtime resident of Elm Street reveal the lasting nature of this division:

> They're real negative over there [Maple Street]. When we were kids we used to fight with them, with those people from over there. One night we were playing marbles under the arc lights and a gang from over there came by and started harassing us. I was a feisty one and I got a baseball bat. I said leave or someone will get hurt. I hit one guy with the bat and they took off. This guy was Polish or Czechoslovakian.[49]

Another resident whom I interviewed, a relative newcomer to Cokedale, describes the legacy of ethnic and class divisiveness. His comments also reveal how the layout and atmosphere of Cokedale's opposing residential areas helped to shape and maintain polarized attitudes.

> There has been a lot of divisiveness. It goes back to the coal mining days. Over here was "Silk-Stocking Row," Maple Street was the poor area. The town center was a dividing line. When I sat on the city council, this was still uppermost in many people's minds. I couldn't understand this conflict. Why couldn't these people get along, and why was there so much animosity and hatred? Part of it is ethnic, but Maple Street was also closer to the coke ovens and the machine shop, so it was noisier and dirtier. Living here during the winter months, I've also noticed that Elm is virtually snow free and that the sun is almost always shining. On Maple Street it's the pits. It gets dark very early, and there's ice over there all the time. I didn't live here very long, and for some reason I didn't like Maple

> Street. When I walk around town I almost never walk down Maple. I found that the people who live there, if I was to characterize them, which is probably very unfair, are not very civil or friendly. I don't know what it is, there's vibes or something in the air.[50]

Cokedale may have had one of the best-equipped mining and coking operations in the Trinidad District (Figure 3-12), but the quality of working life has been exaggerated. Working conditions in the mines, pay scales, and ASARCO's general policies regarding labor, were not exceptional. The Cokedale and Bon Carbo mines were as dangerous as any in the Trinidad District. According to annual reports produced by the State Inspector of Coal Mines, 62 men died in the Cokedale and Bon Carbo mines. Moreover, in 10 of the 14 years for which data was recorded, the fatality rate for Cokedale miners was higher than that of the CF&I: CF&I mines averaged one fatal accident per 244,000 tons of coal produced, ASARCO averaged one fatality per 148,000 tons. Although believed to have exceptionally safe mines, ASARCO's operations suffered from chronically unstable roofs. Furthermore, like other operations in the district, Cokedale's mines proved vulnerable to disaster.[51]

On the evening of February 9, 1911 an explosion ripped through the Cokedale No. 2 mine killing 15 workers. Two additional men were killed in the rescue operation. As with all mine disasters, state inspectors investigated the incident. Despite evidence suggesting that ASARCO was negligent in ordering miners into the shafts (prior to the explosion an inspection by the fireboss revealed the presence of volatile gases in the workings), the state exonerated ASARCO from responsibility. As was almost always the case, the state laid blame for the accident on worker negligence: the explosion was deemed the result of an overcharged shot. Furthermore, ASARCO's handling of the incident reveals the strict control the company had over its workers. Previous explosions at CF&I operations had brought miners and surviving family members out in mass to the shafts to express their grief and voice their dissatisfaction with working conditions. However, the *Trinidad Chronicle News* reported that ASARCO displayed firmer control over grieving family members. "A similar heartrending scene was not enacted in

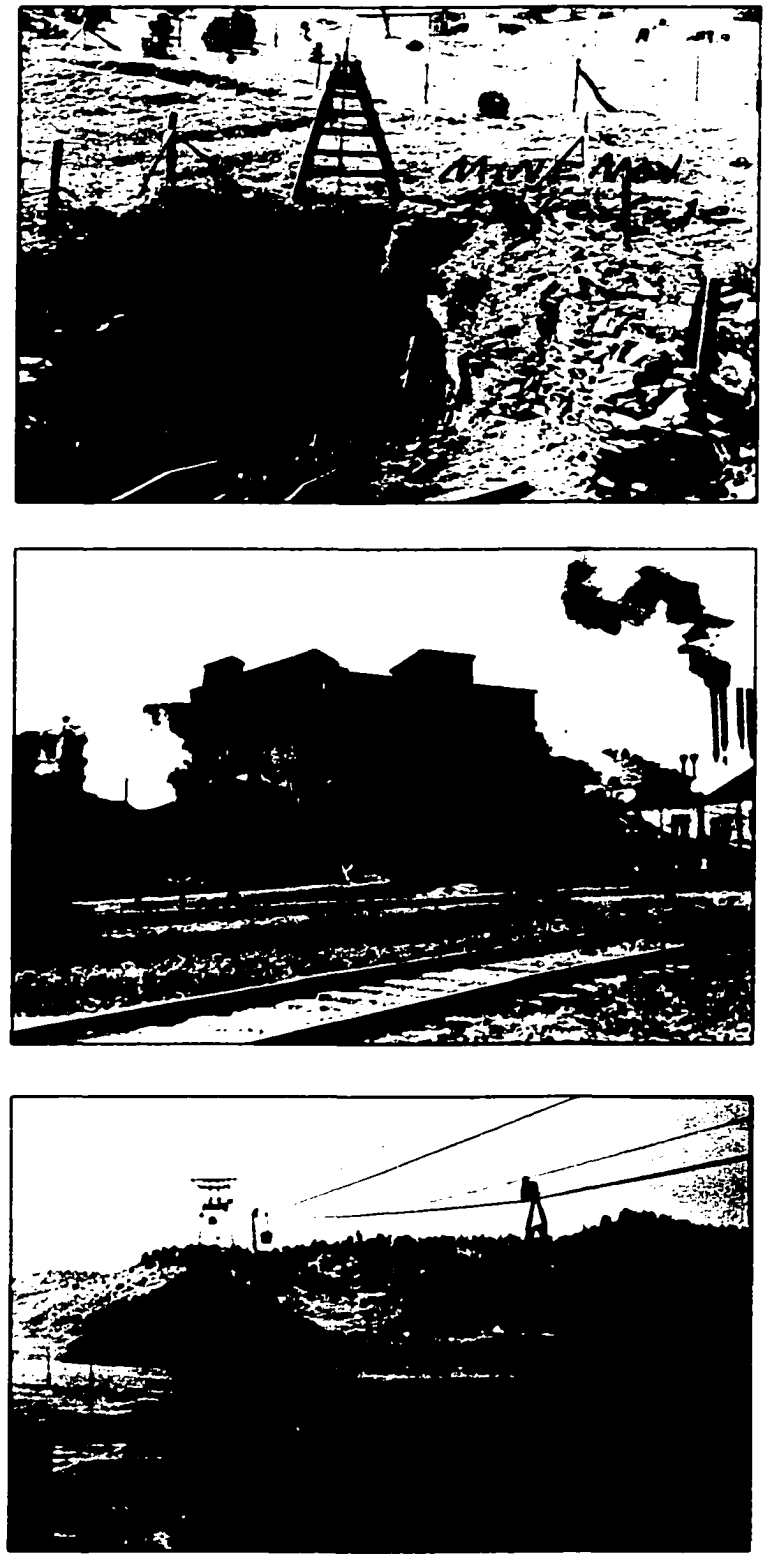


Figure 3-12: The Cokedale Number 1 Mine (top), the washery and powerhouse (middle), and aerial tramway and tailings pile (bottom), circa 1910. *Cokedale Miners' Museum Collection.*

Cokedale," the newspaper explained, "where the guard lines have been closely drawn and the utmost order prevails.[52]

During the 1913-1914 strike, pay rates for workers in the Trinidad District received considerable attention. Unfortunately, rates paid in Cokedale were rarely listed by union representatives in their propaganda wars. In 1917, however, the State Inspector of Coal Mines published a comparative listing of camp wages. As in most operations, Cokedale's miners were considered contract workers and were paid for each ton of coal they dug. In 1917, the rate paid in Cokedale was 58 cents per ton, the same rate being paid by the CF&I. Far from being top wages, ASARCO's pay rate was exceeded at ten mines operating in Las Animas County.[53]

According to John Johnson, one of the last remaining residents to have worked in the mines and one-time mayor of Cokedale, working conditions in Cokedale were poor. Johnson's description of how ASARCO treated its workforce contrasts markedly to the claims of historians. When I asked Johnson if workers could make a decent living in Cokedale he stated:

> You could if you were a company man, they were on a wage. The coal diggers had to make their own money. What ever you loaded, that's all they paid you. If you got a good place to dig you could make money, if you didn't you suffered. There were a lot of complaints especially at Bon Carbo. It was a lousy mine. The company, they didn't help out much. They'd tell you there it is - go at it."[54]

That ASARCO was not a generous caretaker of the worker is further demonstrated in Johnson's account of conditions during the Great Depression. Although Barton claims that ASARCO donated food and coal and excused rent to residents during this difficult time, Johnson remembers things differently:

> Coal miners had tough times, especially during the depression. It was really tough. Only one day a month could you go to work at the mine. Maybe load one or two cars of coal. When you'd go by the company store and ask for something to eat they would ask, "how many cars did you load?" They would give you that amount, no more. The company didn't help. We had to pay for our own lights and for our coal. A lot of us would go down to the arroyo and dig our own coal. There was a group of people that had money. They were involved with the company, bosses and town clerks, they were OK. . . It was worse during the depression than when they sold this place out. This was a dead place during the depression. No money coming in, grocery man wouldn't give you credit. We didn't get anything for free that's for darn sure. If we did, I didn't get any of it.

> Hell no! Not even when they were going full blast, they wouldn't give you nothing. Give you a lot of Hell if you weren't doing what they wanted you to do. A typical coal mining camp.[55]

ASARCO ruled Cokedale with absolute authority, a fact confirmed by the comments of resident and one-time oven worker Emilio Ferraro. "When it was working it was the best coal camp in Colorado but they [the company] had the law. The company officials, they had the law on hand. They would come to tell you something and you'd be obedient and go ahead with what they were telling you."[56]

Barton claims that because Cokedale workers were content, the town avoided the labor unrest of the 1913-1914 strike. While it is true that Cokedale maintained production during the dispute, evidence also suggests that Cokedale was affected by the strike. Production from the Cokedale mine slowed during the strike years. In the five years prior to 1913, the Cokedale mines produced an average of 316,000 tons of coal. During the strike production dropped to an average of 252,000 tons. More significantly, the average number of men employed in the mines fell from a high of 264 in 1911 to 114 in 1913. Figure 3-13 shows mine production and employment trends in Cokedale over the history of its operation. While these reductions in production and employment could have a variety of causes, the strike clearly played a role.[57]

Contrary to popular belief, Cokedale miners were organized during the strike. Historian Gary Lindsey notes, for example, that while miners did not strike against ASARCO, some did honor the strike in the wake of the Ludlow Massacre, "in sympathy for miners striking other coal companies." This is the only written recognition of union activity during the strike, but other evidence suggests that labor organization was present from the beginning and that ASARCO was a target for worker dissatisfaction. UMWA representatives from Cokedale were present at a convention held in Trinidad on September 16, 1913 when the strike was called. Cokedale's five representatives gave the community as large a voice in the strike vote as any community in the field. In fact, at a second convention held in Trinidad in September 1914, Cokedale exceeded its allotted quota of delegates, sending four representatives when it was only entitled to two.[58]

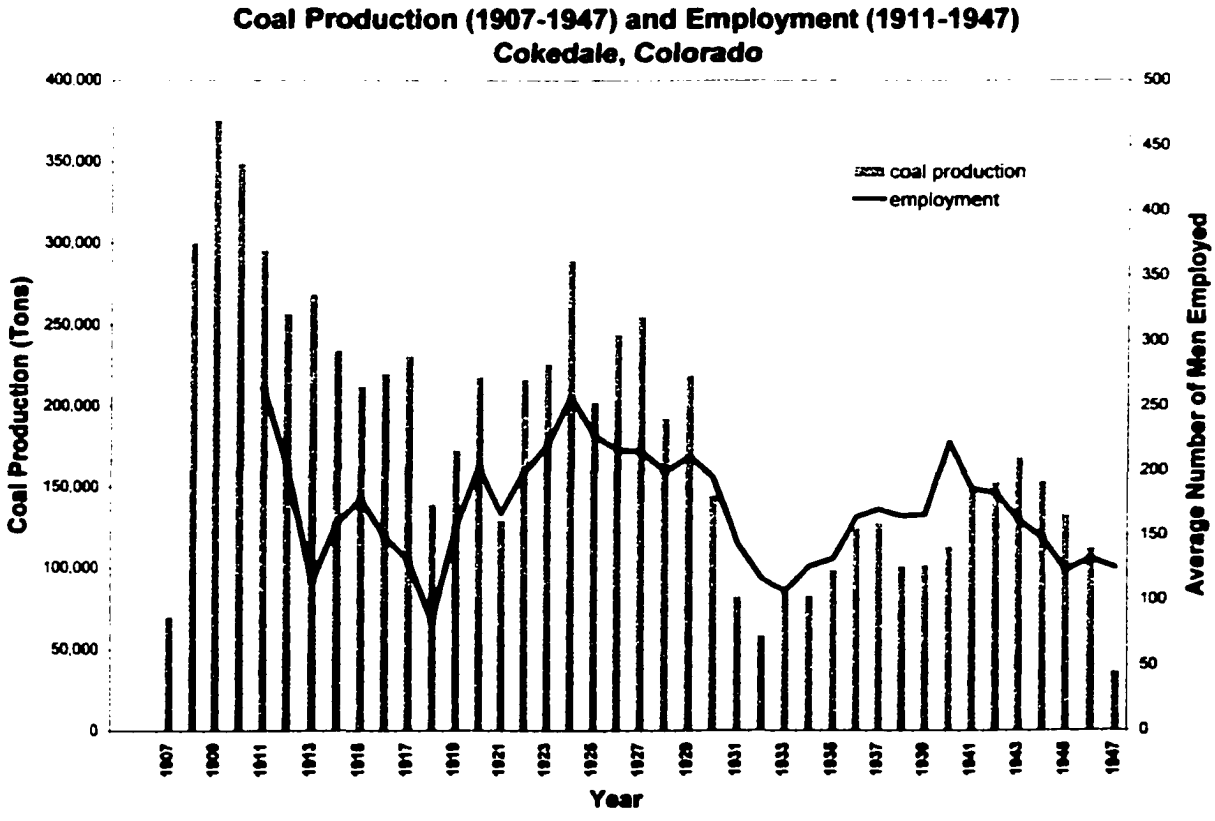


Figure 3-13

How Cokedale's delegates voted at the conventions is unknown, but testimony given by delegate Tony Lamont at the 1913 meeting suggests that they supported the strike. Lamont detailed the poor conditions that existed in the Cokedale mines: the unfair rates charged for supplies, the paltry pay scales, and the lack of pay for "dead" work (required maintenance work for which miners were not paid). According to Lamont, a living wage was not paid in Cokedale and the company's attitude to union organization was oppressive. Lamont states:

> Every man is closely watched and if the guards suspect him of belonging to the organization, he is discharged. . . .The boss said he would have me fired because I was a member of the union, and I told him he was behind the times; that everyone was a union man now, but he notified the superintendent to give me my time. . . I had 14 dollars for one month's work. They keep the miners very close in the camp. . . .They get very poor food and some of the children are dressed in clothes made of gunny-sacks and their fathers are working every day.[59]

Cokedale received some attention in the 1914 congressional investigation into living and working conditions in the coal camps. Held in the wake of the Ludlow Massacre, several miners

who worked in Cokedale were called to testify. Walter Macintosh, who had worked in numerous mines in the district, complained about a chronic short weighing of miners' coal loads in Cokedale and the lack of checkweighman (union employees who check the coal scales). Miner Jacob Game testified that he broke his leg in the Cokedale mine and that the company doctor failed to give him adequate treatment, leaving him permanently disabled. Game described the doctor, the same man Barton describes as a respected gentleman who provided the best of care, as "inefficient," and stated that his "specialty was booze." Also submitted in Game's testimony is a monthly pay-roll statement dated February 10, 1913 which provides a rare glimpse into the economic existence of Cokedale workers (Figure 3-14). Game was paid $29.15 for a month spent loading coal and brushing shafts; $16.00 was deducted by the company store. Following deductions for living and working expenses, Game was left with $1.70 in take home pay.[60]

Pay roll No. 293. February 10, 1913.

The Carbon Coal & Coke Co. in account with Jacob Game.

Work:		
1,301 hundredweight	**$ 26.15**	
3 brushing	**3.00**	
Total credit		**$29.15**
Deductions:		
Store	**16.00**	
Bath	**.50**	
Electric lights	**1.05**	
Coal	**2.00**	
Carbide	**.40**	
Hospital	**1.00**	
Rent	**6.00**	
Smithing	**.50**	
Total deductions		**27.45**
		1.70

Figure 3-14: Pay role figures, Jacob Game. Adapted from, Exhibit M47, U.S. *Commission on Industrial Relations: Final Report and Testimony, 1916.*

How many Cokedale miners were members of the UMWA during the 1913-1914 strike is unknown. However, the comments of resident Horace Hurtado, interviewed in 1978, suggest that union membership was standard. "If you came in here when they had a strike and you were not a

union man," Hurtado states, " more than likely you were in for trouble, especially during the 1913 strike." Furthermore, UMWA records show that in 1915, when union membership was at a low point in the Trinidad District, the Cokedale local maintained 98 members: more than half of its workforce as listed in the state coal inspector's report for that year.[61]

It is not certain how ASARCO managed to maintain coal production during the strike. However, it appears that the company may have hired non-union workers during the dispute. Mexicans and Hispanics were commonly used as strike breakers in the Trinidad Field and comparison of the ethnic make-up of Cokedale prior to and following the strike suggests that such workers were brought in by ASARCO. In 1910, only 20 percent of the miners in Cokedale were of Mexican or Hispanic descent. Following the strike, in 1920, Mexicans and Hispanics made-up 75 percent of the mining workforce. It is clear that some of the workforce walked out in Cokedale.[62]

Like other camps, Cokedale became a guarded military zone during the dispute. Johnson recalled that the state militia joined company guardsmen in patrolling the town, and that a militia camp was established somewhere near the mouth of Reilly Canyon. While downplaying its significance, Barton mentions that a fence was erected around the mining property and that a searchlight was installed on a cupola above the washery. Schafer mentions that ASARCO stopped its locomotive on the road crossing into town in order to block traffic in and out of the community, and that the company stockpiled arms during the dispute. These measures seem drastic for a community believed to have been a haven of labor peace. It could be argued that the company was protecting itself from outside strikers who were vandalizing mine sites and harassing non-union workers: an assault on Cokedale "scab" miners did take place on the interurban line during the strike. Given the prevalence of union activity within the camp, however, it is likely that the company's show of force was also aimed at controlling labor forces within the community. ASARCO's behavior during the strike is consistent with that of operators elsewhere in the district.[63]

Cokedale's utopian image has serious shortcomings. Excluding the earliest years of its operation, life in Cokedale differed little from that experienced in adjacent company towns. True, Cokedale held aesthetic advantages over neighboring mining towns, but it was not built as a humanitarian project. Beneath the veneer of its tidy appearance lay an industrial community whose reason for being was the efficient and profitable production of coal and coke. In most ways, life was as difficult in Cokedale as it was in other company towns in southern Colorado.

Reinterpreting the Utopian Myth

How Cokedale came to be portrayed as a utopian community, and the purpose this narrative serves, are important questions. Answers lie in exploring dominant societal perceptions of mining and company towns, the ways in which these have influenced the historical narrative, and the challenge historians like Barton faced in interpreting the complex internal meaning Cokedale held as a place.

Mining settlements and company towns are widely viewed as brutal and exploitive places. Clearly, this imagery has not been applied to Cokedale, but this package of preconceptions has still had a profound influence on local interpretations of the past, serving as a foundation on which Cokedale's utopian image has been built. As a utopia, Cokedale serves as a foil to the mining town metanarrative. In place of themes of resident hardship and industrial exploitation has been inserted a more favorable interpretation of place. This counter-intuitive narrative is legitimized by contrasting Cokedale and ASARCO with other company towns and operators, and it sets Cokedale apart as a unique community and helps explain the town's internal value and persistence. Unfortunately, just as a purely Dystopian image of these places has shortcomings, so, too, does Cokedale's utopian image. One only needs to explore the historical record more closely and engage residents in a discussion of the past to reveal the inaccuracies. By listening to resident views of community and working life, insight is gained into the true meaning Cokedale held as a place. Furthermore insight is also gained into why historians chose to portray Cokedale as a community set apart from other company towns in the Trinidad Field.

Without question, residents established a bond to Cokedale. For example, while claims of community cohesiveness have, in terms of ethnic and class relations, been overstated, it appears that residents were engaged in community life. Numerous church, school, and recreational organizations existed in Cokedale. The town had boy-scout troops and campfire girls' organizations, a PTA, a "Happy-Go-Lucky Club" (sponsoring dances at Carbon Hall), a "You and Me Club" (a women's organization), and a "Baseball Fans Association." On Sunday afternoons, baseball games were held at the Cokedale ballpark. The town fielded a team in a league comprised of mining camps in the Purgatoire Valley. Fierce rivalries existed between the camps and it is reported that virtually everyone in Cokedale turned out for the games. Social events such as the annual Fourth of July Field Day and Labor Day celebrations were also well attended.[64]

Longtime residents express considerable community pride, and they tend to agree that Cokedale was a good place to live. "It was just so pleasant to live here," stated Gertrude Ferraro in an interview conducted in 1978. "People were very friendly. . . we had a lot of doings. . . in those older days nobody had a lot of money but we had good times." In describing his family's tenure in Cokedale, Rollie Schafer states "families have a golden time when life falls into place into a proper and satisfying order." For the Schafer family, Cokedale served as that place.[65]

Most residents agree that Cokedale was a special place. Unlike Barton, however, they express ambivalent feelings about the camp. When I interviewed Johnson, for example, he first claimed Cokedale was a "model community," less like a mining camp and more like a "little town." As we continued discussing the details of community and working life, however, Johnson began describing how, in reality, Cokedale was a "typical coal mining camp." He explained that ASARCO was just as tough an operator as the CF&I, and that the hardships faced by workers and their families were great. Similar sentiment was expressed by Betty Arguello, whom I also interviewed in 1999. Arguello grew up in the CF&I camps of Segundo and Valdez and moved to Cokedale in her teens. She described how Cokedale was a better place to live and how she felt

great affection for the town. She also explained, however, that life in Cokedale could be unforgiving and that the work was as a hard as that in the CF&I camps. For Johnson and Arguello, Cokedale differed little as a place of work. Rather, its value lay in the role it served as a home. The ambivalent nature of their comments reveals an attempt to come to terms with competing sentiment: firsthand knowledge that Cokedale was a difficult place to live and their attachments to place. Life was by no means ideal, but the town became a valued home.[66]

A more accurate history would show that, like other company towns, life in Cokedale was difficult and yet residents established a community in this place and invested the town with value. Such a historical narrative would serve the community better than its utopian representation. In fact, many residents recognize that Barton's interpretation has serious shortcomings and contest her homogenous representation of place. Johnson, for example, told me that Barton was "a complete stranger," and he described her account of Cokedale as "incomplete." Interviewed in 1978, Horace Hurtado explained that Barton painted too rosy a picture of Cokedale and that the historian "didn't publish everything that was told to her." Too much of what went on in the town, he claimed, was left out of her book. It appears, that even in the heyday of the utopian myth, the difficult period following mine closure when Barton's research was conducted and published, an alternative vision of the reality of the mining way of life was present.[67]

It could be argued that Barton's history represents nothing more than a form of community boosterism. The fact that *Anatomy of a Model Mining Community* was produced for release on an important anniversary and celebration of the community's founding casts such suspicion. However, it is unfair to view Barton's romanticized representation solely as a fictional promotional construction. Such a conclusion ignores the challenges she and other historians have faced in trying to come to terms with Cokedale's past. Schafer, for example, was a longtime resident of Cokedale, and it is safe to assume that he knew the town intimately. Although an outsider, Barton interviewed many residents, and much of her research was based on information

derived from within the community. Barton was told that the town was a good place to live and that it was better than other camps. Certainly, negative details were omitted, but how was she to come to terms with the value Cokedale held as a place, or account for the fact that residents chose to stay following mine closure, without doing otherwise?

The only logical explanation Barton could find to explain these facts was to show that the community was in some way different or better than other company towns in southern Colorado. What she failed to recognize was the duality of the mining landscape: that despite significant hardships, despite being more, rather than less, like other company towns, Cokedale was a valued home. Indeed, the metanarratives that surround company towns and mining settlements leave little room for such an interpretation. Either Cokedale was a typical company town, despised by residents and subsequently abandoned when the mines closed, or it was a more humane and appreciated place that survived because it was a better community in which to live and work. Faced with the challenge of trying to make sense of this paradox, and unable to overcome preconceptions of the nature of the mining settlement and company town, Barton constructed what seemed like the only narrative that would explain the attachments residents expressed to the community and its persistence. A utopian interpretation served this role.

Cokedale's utopian image is not wholly inaccurate: it recognizes the town's internal value. However, the local historical discourse fails to communicate an authentic sense of the character and identity of Cokedale. Furthermore, when the details surrounding mine closure are explored, one finds that the utopian narrative cannot explain what is perhaps the most unique aspect of the community's past: its survival and persistence following mine closure.

Mine Closure

To date, the only explanations given for Cokedale's survival are those entwined in its utopian mythology. Historians have attributed community persistence to three factors: ASARCO's creation of a more livable and humane environment; the development of a unique community spirit and residents' subsequent refusal, to use the words of a *Denver Post* columnist,

to allow the town "to turn ghost"; and ASARCO's plan of disinvestment which reportedly allowed residents to stay in the community. Unfortunately, none of these claims provide an adequate explanation. In reality, Cokedale's survival is less romantic than has been portrayed. Again, the utopian myth contains an element of truth: a group of residents, displaying a commitment to place, played an important role in Cokedale's continuation. However, more than other factors, it was a last-minute business decision made by an independent salvaging firm, and Cokedale's favorable location, that facilitated community survival.[68]

Cokedale did not persist because it was a better place to live and work. What then can be said about the other factors involved in its survival? Was an attachment to community and place unique to Cokedale, and can this explain the town's persistence? Both Barton and Schafer highlight this thesis in their research, and it also appears elsewhere in the historical record. For example, two years after ASARCO abandoned the camp, the following description of Cokedale appeared in the *Denver Post*: "The lights are burning brightly again in this little community that refuses to be a ghost town . . . instead of folding up and moving away as a lot of other towns have done, the folks of Cokedale voiced a preference to remain; to buy their homes and to incorporate the town, and that's just what they have done." Similarly, in the National Register's 1985 inventory of Cokedale historical structures (a publication that will be discussed in detail shortly), a "cradle-to-grave" sense of contentment and loyalty to community are cited as the key reason for the town's persistence.[69]

On the surface, the bonds residents made to Cokedale seem unusual because mining settlements and company towns are widely viewed as temporary and exploitive environments. However, evidence suggests that such sentiment may have been common in area company towns. Historian Rick Clyne, for example, describes how life in the company town often facilitated the development of a powerful sense of community:

> The coal towns were isolated, populated largely by immigrants, and driven by a dangerous activity – mining coal. These characteristics colored all relations among camp residents and contributed to a shared sense of community. . . A

> sense of community could not be imposed from above. It was created and maintained by camp residents, who relied on it for defense against the company, against isolation, and against the traumatic nature of mining coal. . . The sense of community was one of the few elements of camp life that the residents themselves controlled.[70]

The fact that community attachment existed in other company towns is evident in the following statement provided by district resident Caroline Tomsic. "It's the closeness of the people, closeness of the miners. And something about camp life . . . after you moved out you miss what you had there, because people were so close."[71] Not only does this statement confirm the existence of community bonds beyond Cokedale, but it also suggests that a preference to remain following mine closure may have been widely prevalent. The comments of Cokedale resident Betty Arguello confirm that residents living elsewhere in the field also resisted abandoning their communities. Arguello moved to Cokedale from the CF&I town of Valdez in the early 1960s. However, her mother stayed in Valdez for as long as she could. Arguello explains:

> I left Valdez after the mines closed. They started selling houses and they took them to La Junta. My mother wanted to stay there and she wouldn't get out. Pretty soon the electricity was off and the water was off. They were moving houses and there were foundations all around and we were scared she would fall. Her eyesight wasn't that good and she was all alone. Finally I convinced her to move down to Cokedale. . . There's not much you can see in Valdez now.[72]

Cokedale would not have persisted without a commitment by some to stay. However, the likelihood that similar bonds to community and place existed in other area company towns makes this explanation of survival problematic. Residents' desire to remain in Cokedale was not as unique as historians have suggested, and Cokedale's status as the Trinidad Field's sole surviving company town cannot be fully explained by the ties residents established to place.

The remaining explanation given for Cokedale's persistence focuses on what Barton describes as the unique way in which ASARCO pulled out of the community. Unlike other operators, it is believed that ASARCO instituted a thoughtful plan of disinvestment focused on facilitating the community's continuation. However, ASARCO's behavior at the time of mine closure fails to support this claim. More significant in explaining the community's survival is

that for a variety of reasons, outright eviction and demolition did not immediately occur following mine closure. A window of opportunity existed for residents to stake claims to their homes.

ASARCO closed the Bon Carbo mine on May 9, 1947. In the final years of operation, profitability had been hindered by rising labor, production, and transportation costs, and ASARCO could no longer afford to supply its distant El Paso smelter with Colorado coke. ASARCO's pull out may also have been influenced by the temporary shut down of the Bon Carbo mine a week prior to closure: the state shut operations for several days due to unsafe working conditions. Five days after ASARCO abandoned the mine the company sold its Cokedale and Bon Carbo properties (land and buildings) to the Florence Machinery & Supply Company of Denver. That ASARCO sold its property to an independent salvaging firm, effectively washing its hands of the decommissioning project, was unusual. In other company towns operators salvaged what they could before quitting the camps. However, because ASARCO had no operations elsewhere in the district where infrastructure could be moved, and because the company could foresee no need to maintain ownership of mineral rights in the area, selling the properties made the most sense.[73]

The events that followed mine closure have become an important part of Cokedale lore, but this aspect of Cokedale's past has not been carefully analyzed. Florence Machinery bought the town and mining properties for a reported $225,000. The specifics of the transaction remain unknown, but Rollie Schafer writes that the deal ASARCO arranged with the salvaging firm included provisions for residents to purchase their homes. In a community profile written in 1983, historian Patrick Donachy also implicated ASARCO in assisting residents to stay: "When ASARCO closed its operations people envisioned another ghost camp beset with grotesque foundations where homes once stood. . . but the company allowed what most companies wouldn't – the camp would remain if people wanted to buy their homes."[74]

ASARCO has been credited with assisting residents to remain in Cokedale, but no firm evidence exists that such provisions were made at the time of the town's sale. To the contrary, once Florence Machinery gained title to Cokedale it immediately began dismantling the town. All of Cokedale's two-story homes, 17 in total, were demolished, significantly reducing the community's housing stock. Furthermore, the water system was pulled out, an act that suggests that the salvaging firm had no intention of leaving vital infrastructure in place. Had Florence Machinery been planning to maintain housing, it seems unlikely that the water system would have been removed: homes would be far more difficult to sell without this basic service.

Moreover, it is clear that great uncertainty existed among residents regarding the future of the camp. Contrary to popular belief, Florence Machinery was planning for Cokedale's complete demolition. "At first we didn't know what the company was going to do with the houses," explained resident Emilio Ferraro, "they first said they were going to tear them all down."[75] Johnson stated that mine closure came with little notice, and that the future of the town was very much in doubt:

> It was a very sad time. I was on the State Legislature at that time and the phone was ringing every day for me. People were asking what are we going to do, what are we going to do? I had no idea what to do. I was in the same shape that they were - wondering were in the Hell to go. A lot of the old-timers, especially the old-timers, were scared.[76]

When Bon Carbo closed, the majority of the community's approximately 800 residents left Cokedale. "A lot of people left, they had to go," states Johnson, "some went up to Valdez where the mines were still working. A lot went over to New Mexico to the York mine near Raton." However, a small number of residents, probably no more than 100, stayed in the camp. Those who remained were being employed in demolition work by Florence Machinery or were commuting to the Valdez mine several miles up the Purgatoire Valley. Those living in the two-story structures were probably given eviction notices, but other residents, now paying rent to Florence Machinery, were permitted to remain in their homes temporarily.[77]

Witnessing their community being torn down around them, this small group of residents began considering ways to save their homes. Few details are known, but it appears that a formal plan to preserve the town was formulated by Father Haller, priest of the Cokedale church. According to Barton, and confirmed in interviews I conducted with Johnson, Father Haller proposed pooling residents' resources into a cooperative fund to purchase Cokedale's remaining structures. The plan would have seen Cokedale remain as a Catholic co-op. Florence Machinery negotiated with Father Haller but their asking price of $32,000 was too high and the co-op plan fell through. However, Florence Machinery was willing to consider offers to sell its Cokedale properties, and although Haller's plan failed, his attempt to purchase the town appears to have strengthened residents' resolve to remain.[78]

Contrary to popular belief, ASARCO played no role in the decision to preserve the town: Cokedale's survival lay in the hands of Florence Machinery. Why the salvaging firm decided to sell the homes rather than continue tearing them down is uncertain, although it is likely that the company had determined that greater profit lay in selling remaining structures than in salvaging them. Clearly, if a suitable price could be negotiated, potential buyers existed in Cokedale. Furthermore, unlike most company towns, which were located in remote canyons, Cokedale was easily accessible by road to the city of Trinidad, where a market existed for cheap housing. These factors provided Florence Machinery with the option to sell its properties to the public. Had these economic and spatial factors not existed, residents' desire to stay would have been inconsequential: Cokedale, like other company towns in the Trinidad Field, would have died.

Florence Machinery offered Cokedale's housing for sale at a standard rate of $50 per lot and $100 per room. Although the Trinidad Public School District assumed ownership of the schoolhouse, other company structures – the Gottlieb Mercantile, mine offices, and bath, boarding, and ice houses—were put up for sale. By the end of 1947, Florence Machinery had disposed of approximately 30 Cokedale properties. However, the company was also allowing families to pay rent in their homes until such time as mortgages could be obtained. According to

land deeds, 50 transactions were made on Cokedale properties in 1948. It is unclear how long Florence Machinery served as landlord for renting residents but the company continued to sell properties in Cokedale for close to 40 years. The last properties sold by Florence Machinery were purchased in the 1980s.[79]

Community Persistence and Meaning in the Post-Mining Era

Information on the challenges residents faced following mine closure, and the meaning Cokedale held as place in the post-mining era, can be gathered from census data, town directories, newspaper accounts, and resident interviews. Once evident that housing would remain in place, residents began organizing to incorporate the town.[80] The first formal community meeting was held on October 3, 1947. Not only was incorporation discussed, but residents also began formulating plans for the organization of a volunteer fire department and PTA. One week later, an incorporation resolution was unanimously approved. Taking control of the town, however, would prove to be a daunting responsibility. Not only was the town quickly falling into disrepair, but having lived under paternal care, residents were ill-prepared for the difficult task ahead.[81]

Town maintenance ceased when ASARCO abandoned the community, and Florence Machinery's gutting of vital infrastructure compounded problems. "We had so much to contend with, we weren't prepared," states Johnson. "We had outhouses that were beginning to get bad. . . no telephones. . . we needed water for the schoolhouse and we had to create a schoolboard." The removal of the water system proved especially problematic and a concerted effort was required to reestablish water service. The State provided funds for new water pipes, and for a nominal fee the city purchased an obsolete water tank from the Sante Fe depot in Trinidad. The tank was transported to Cokedale by resident volunteers, where it was heroically dragged up the canyon wall and erected above the town site. Later, federal loans were used for new sewers. Again, residents provided much of the labor required to put the system in place.[82]

Paternalism left residents without the know-how to deal with the challenges of running Cokedale, but company town life had created a culture of hard work and a commitment to place

that made up for the lack of civic skills. With considerable effort, residents took control of the community, services were reestablished, and living conditions were brought back to mining-era standards. By 1950, three years after mine closed, Cokedale had a population of 214. Although significantly reduced in size—at its height Cokedale contained more than 1000 residents—the community was hanging on. In 1952, the *Trinidad City Directory* listed 72 residences, indicating that the majority of Cokedale's remaining homes were occupied five years after closure. Analysis of the surnames of those remaining also suggests that ethnic diversity was maintained. Surnames of 28 of the 72 residences listed were of Hispanic origin, ten were Italian. Moreover, whereas some of those who stayed moved to other homes in the community, many retained residences in or near the homes they had previously occupied. In this way, ethnic spatial divisions were maintained. In other ways, too, there was continuity to life in the post-mining era. The majority of single-family homes and community structures, although the later now lay vacant or had been converted to other uses, remained in place. Furthermore, the mining way of life in Cokedale had not been abandoned. Although Bon Carbo had closed, many continued to work in area collieries, namely the nearby Valdez and Allen mines operated by the CF&I.[83]

Although considerable continuity remained in the years following mine closure, a major transformation did occur in the social make-up of the community. Not only had the town dramatically decreased in population size, but an influx of newcomers was altering the community's identity. The exact number of residents who remained in Cokedale following mine closure is unknown, but a rough estimate can be calculated by comparing rural directories prior to and following mine closure. Comparing resident listings in 1935 (the last directory printed in the mining era), to that of 1948, reveals that 25 of the town's 64 homes were headed by families who lived in the community 12 years prior to ASARCO's pull out. By 1952, this number had fallen to 14. While these figures likely underestimate the number of families who stayed, they suggest that the majority of the population were new residents. The fact that more than ten longtime families left in the early years of town incorporation also suggests that for many, the hardships faced in

remaining were greater than the ties binding them to place.[84]

Prior to mine closure, outside journalists promoted Cokedale as a model mining town. However, this narrative weakened after ASARCO pulled out of the community. For the first time in its history, a non-mining population was residing in the community and people were flowing in and out of Cokedale with regularity. What's more, the town was taking on an unkempt appearance. Newcomers were attracted from Trinidad by Cokedale's cheap housing. In particular, students from nearby Trinidad State Junior College (established 1925) were finding that it was often cheaper to purchase a home in Cokedale for two or three years than to rent in the city. In a 1948 article entitled "4 Rooms and a Path," Joan Reese of the *Rocky Mountain Empire Magazine* described the transitory form of reoccupation occurring in Cokedale: "Four-room house and lot for $450! And 72 houses available, all for the price of $100 per room and $50 for the land." The bulk of Reese's article focused on the challenges experienced by those who were "trying to make something of this ghost town." Cokedale, she explained, provided only "adequate living." The town lacked indoor plumbing. Forty years of "hard living" had taken its toll on the woodwork, floors, and walls of homes. Fences and windows needed to be replaced, and "the abandoned smelter . . . rows of gaping coke ovens . . . and other useless equipment . . . still needed to be cleared away."[85]

"Cokedale is far from being the model town of its origin," Reese wrote only a year after the mines had closed. Indeed, reference to the community's struggles, and a detailing of the less than adequate conditions that existed in the camp, dominate the handful of outside accounts describing Cokedale in the early years of incorporation. With mine closure, ghost town imagery and accounts of dereliction and decay began to pervade outside perceptions of the local landscape. Despite the fact that Cokedale remained an occupied place, despite the fact that other than aesthetic deterioration, basic living conditions had not significantly changed, Cokedale was no longer viewed as a desirable place (Figure 3-15).[86]

Figure 3-15: Living conditions had not significantly changed in the post-mining era but Cokedale was no longer viewed by outsiders as a desirable place. Pine Street, 1998. *Photograph by the author.*

This transformation in outside perception can be explained in numerous ways. It is possible that because Cokedale was no longer serving the function for which it was built, it no longer held value as a useful place. For example, although it was obvious that living and working conditions in company towns were poor, their existence was often justified by the argument that they offered the only means to efficiently produce commodities from remote areas. Often viewed as necessary evils, it follows that if the primary function of these settlements disappeared then no justification remained for defending their existence. It could also be argued that perceptions of Cokedale changed because promotion of living and working conditions ceased with ASARCO's pull out. Most likely, however, negative accounts emerged as a result of relatively superficial changes that were occurring in Cokedale's appearance. Journalists had long been enamored of the tidy appearance of the camp, ignoring the details of life that existed underneath this aesthetic façade. Although basic living conditions remained the same, this veil was removed in the post-mining era, allowing more critical accounts of the town to emerge.

Cokedale's outside image was changing, and with each passing year the community deteriorated further. The initial optimism surrounding incorporation wore off as residents struggled to survive in an economy lacking employment opportunities. The Trinidad area had entered a period of deindustrialization. Jobs were scarce, and work in the mining industry was unreliable, as labor disputes and temporary shut-downs plagued the few coal mines still in operation. The Frederick Mine near Valdez closed in 1960, putting many Cokedale residents out of work. The last area colliery, the Allen Mine, struggled on intermittently until 1982.[87]

As the economy soured, Cokedale's population dwindled. After 1950, for example, the town fell out of the federal census record. It wasn't until 1980 that population figures reappeared, at which time only 90 permanent residents remained, and by all accounts, the town had succumbed to dereliction (Figure 3-16). "The 1950s and 1960s weren't kind to Cokedale," writes local historian Patrick Donachy, "people found it necessary to sell their homes and relocate. Empty houses were plentiful, and were being placed on the sale block for a proverbial song." Many homes fell into receivership with residents unable to pay mortgages. Beginning in the 1970s, a few of these homes were bought by distant outsiders (many from Texas), who were buying the inexpensive houses for use as holiday retreats. [88]

Cokedale was decaying and the town council struggled to maintain services on a limited budget: meager property and water taxes provided the bulk of municipal income. Doug Holdread, an art instructor at the Trinidad State Junior College, and one of the few to settle in Cokedale during this period, described what the town was like in the 1970s. I interviewed Holdread in 1999:

> When I first moved here, Cokedale was perceived as a dump and it *was* pretty dumpy. The places that were maintained stuck out like a sore thumb because they looked out of context. It really did look a lot like a ghost town. Of course it wasn't, there were just a lot of people sort of hanging out here. They were retired from the mines, or there were people like me who thought it was a cheap place to live and that it was kind of funky and OK. . . . I just felt that there were a lot of people who were kind of old, kind of tired and poor, who just wanted to be left alone.[89]

Figure 3-16: In the 1950s and '60s, many of Cokedale's company-built houses fell into disrepair. *Photograph by the author, 1998.*

Holdread's comments describe an external perception, widely held at the time, that Cokedale had become a run-down retirement community teetering on the verge of death. The comments of resident Richard Bell, whom I also interviewed in 1999, confirm this viewpoint. Bell was an outsider who moved to Cokedale in the mid-1980s. His wife, however, grew-up in Trinidad, and she held strong preconceptions of what Cokedale was like. Bell explains:

> The mine office in Cokedale was for sale and we looked it over. But Cokedale had a very dismal reputation as a place to live at that point in time. My wife in particular was very cold to the idea of coming to Cokedale even just to look at something, but I thought the house sounded interesting. It had a lot of character to it. She said you've got to be kidding. She grew up in Trinidad and since the coal mining days, since it had been closed, Cokedale was not thought of as an attractive place to live. Just a lot of old houses. At that time many were for sale.[90]

Lastly, the comments of area resident John Torres, who was born in the nearby town of Weston in 1943, confirm this negative view:

> It was off the main road coming into town [Trinidad] and there was really no reason to go into Cokedale unless you had relatives there. Over the years I heard that it had incorporated but as a teenager there was no reason for me to go there,

> nothing to attract me. I always thought it was more or less a little retirement community. I remember people talking about how they were so strict in there. If you didn't paint your house or cut your weeds the city council would give you a notice and they'd send a crew in there and give you a bill. My brother owned a house there, it was vacant, but finally he just gave up because they were always sending him notices to clean it up. I thought it was just older people, just the old time settlers who had decided that it was a nice little canyon to live in.[91]

To outsiders, Cokedale had become a derelict place. However, it is important to note that for those who remained, Cokedale was retaining significant value as a community and home. Residents were trying hard to maintain the town. Although internal factions continued to exist, on the whole Cokedale remained close-knit and residents were engaged in community life. "You could feel some of the tensions," stated Doug Holdread, "but as far as living here and relating to people I experienced it as a fairly friendly community. I had to pass muster with some of the old-timers but over-all I felt pretty accepted." Residents would gather at the post office, which became the town's most important public space. "The post office was the best place to find out what was going on in Cokedale," Holdread recalls, "it was the community meeting place. It had a wood stove and everyone would come in and sit around, wait for the mail, and talk." In other ways, too, residents remained engaged in community life. "We had people doing a lot of volunteer work," Johnson explains. "We were a small town and we didn't have a lot of money. People would help cutting lawns and trimming trees."[92]

Betty Arguello describes how Cokedale remained a "tight" community where residents continued to help each other out (Figure 3-17). "People would do anything for you," she states. That the town remained a cohesive and valued place in the years following mine closure is confirmed by the comments of Tony Massarotti. An oven worker who eventually moved to Trinidad to be closer to his work, Massarotti was interviewed in 1999: "it was great growing up in the camp . . . everybody was looking out for everybody else." Massarotti described how he would return often to Cokedale: "I used to go to Cokedale and reminisce about a lot of friends who are now gone. We'd talk about all the good times we used to have up there. Those were the good times, the good days with a lot of good people. That was the key. There were a lot of real

great people. Those were the happy days. I feel very fortunate to have lived them."[93]

Figure 3-17: Betty Arguello standing in front of her home on Elm Street, 1999. *Photograph by the author.*

Residents were also active in community politics. Everyone seemed to have an opinion on how the town should be managed, but finding necessary funds for community maintenance was a constant battle. Furthermore, the task of governing Cokedale was made more difficult by the fact that residents had little experience democratically managing community affairs, and municipal politics tended to bring community factions to the fore. Roads and public buildings, for example, were in constant need of repair, and despite considerable opposition the council passed strict maintenance ordinances (similar to those that existed under ASARCO's control) in an attempt to maintain aesthetic order. The most contentious of these ordinances related to the cutting of weeds and lawns. Fiercely opposed by newcomers to the community, who viewed them as too restrictive, yard maintenance laws were under constant challenge. "People wanted things done but the income we had wasn't enough," states Johnson, then mayor of Cokedale. "It was difficult to do anything and people were always hollering at me for not doing this or that."[94]

Not only did tensions develop between older and newer residents, but the longstanding north-south community divide also carried over through town incorporation. Politically, power remained in the hands of the historically more affluent northsiders: a small group of longtime residents, headed by Mayor Johnson, who came to be referred to as the "old-guard." Many believed that the old-guard, like the company, undemocratically enforced their will on others. Johnson served as Mayor of Cokedale for 25 years and opposition to his governance was fairly constant. Major disputes, for example, developed over water issues. Although a new water delivery systems had been built, the town was still relying on the original spring and reservoir system put in place by ASARCO, which was supplying neither a constant nor clean water supply. Periodically, Cokedale would run out of water. On one occasion, the National Guard was called in to bring emergency water rations to the community, and a permanent solution to the chronic water problem was required. The old-guard, who resided primarily on the rocky slopes on the north side of town, favored construction of a pipeline from the Purgatoire River. The scheme would be financed in part by a municipal water tax. Southsiders, however, were steadfastly opposed to this plan. Those living along the creek paralleling Pine and Maple streets recognized that shallow water wells could be dug on their properties and wanted to be exempt from paying water fees to the city. After a lengthy debate the old-guard's pipeline and tax scheme eventually won out and the dispute amplified tensions along the community's north-south divide.[95]

Much of the opposition the old-guard faced reflected longstanding ill will between individuals and families. Long feeling marginalized by the north side of town, first by company management now by the old-guard, south side residents continued to view the north as a meddlesome, governing elite. From the north side of town southsiders were viewed as unjustly critical and demanding. Johnson states: "The other side of camp was always opposed to every damn thing. They always objected to things that were good for the town."[96]

The negative legacies of the mining era—company paternalism, community factions, and the boom and bust nature of the mining economy—had a lasting influence on Cokedale.

However, economic depression, community cliques, and contentious politics, are common in many small towns, and in this respect Cokedale was not an unusual place. More importantly, as was the case in the mining era, residents were retaining an intimate attachment to the community despite its problems. Through good times and bad, they maintained a bond to place. It is also important to note, that while Cokedale's depressed physical and economic condition was tied to its company town and mining origins, old-timers were in no way eager to discard these legacies. To the contrary, the old-guard often resisted any changes that were perceived to significantly alter the town's character as a mining camp. Cokedale's company town and mining legacies were not viewed as obstacles to be overcome. Rather, Cokedale's past, and the landscape that reflected it, was viewed in a positive way.

This sentiment was so strong that management of the town was dominated by the desire to maintain Cokedale more or less as it was. Overall, the settlement had changed little in appearance since the mining era. In the mid-1970s, housing and community structures were in poorer condition, but in general, town infrastructure had not changed since Florence Machinery's salvaging operation had ceased nearly 40 years earlier. Some remodeling of homes had occurred, but economic stagnation had limited new construction. In addition, most residents continued to heat their homes with coal, and coal sheds and outhouses still stood in most backyards. After incorporation, descriptive names were given to Cokedale's streets but residents continued to use number/letter designations for their addresses: standard practice in company towns was for each row of housing to be identified not by a street name but by a number and letter designation (for example,10F is the tenth house on row F). Roads in the community remained unpaved. Dust, mud, and ice, were facts of life that were dealt with. Cokedale also continued to rely upon its antiquated system of hand-pulled hose carts for fire fighting. Small, red-roofed hose houses, containing original mining-era equipment, were conscientiously maintained (Figure 3-18).

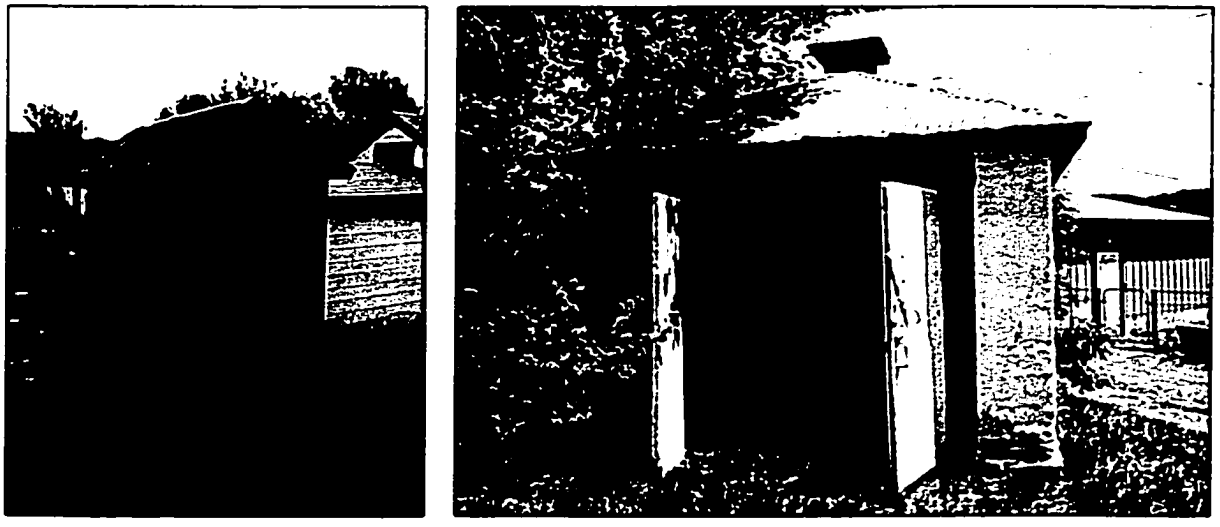


Figure 3-18: A coal shed (left), and hose house (right), remain a part of the Cokedale landscape. *Photographs by the author, 1999.*

One of the most common criticisms of the old-guard's governance, one that would grow as the number of newcomers increased in the late 1970s, was their resistance to change. Improvements in town infrastructure and services, for example, came slowly and were only implemented if believed to be absolutely necessary. Unquestionably, the town council was restricted by limited income, but for newcomers, the old-guard displayed little will to make improvements that would significantly change the town's appearance. "When I moved to the community the old-timers were still very much in control," explains Richard Bell. "I saw this as a community with so much potential and I thought I had all kinds of good ideas but I was met with resistance." Bell describes how he and several other newcomers struggled to implement relatively minor changes such as improving landscaping; bettering roads; placing playground equipment in the Cokedale park; and cleaning up the old tennis courts. "A few of us were able to get onto the town council but we encountered a great deal of resistance to anything new. . . the old-guard wanted to maintain everything exactly the way it was, they didn't want to see change - what we thought were improvements . . . they were able to get a handful of people together on the council who would all agree to vote the same way."[97]

A legacy of undemocratic governance, frugality, and resistance to innovation hampered community improvement, and Bell described how the old-guard was protective of certain public information, in particular the location of the prized water lines. "This all started back in the coal camp days when decisions were made by the company. They [the old-guard] didn't have the background or experience to implement change . . . they just saw this as a very poor community and they feared anything that would cost money, it was a very conservative viewpoint."[98] The comments of Pat Huhn, who moved to the town in 1990 and is the current Mayor of Cokedale (the first since John Johnson retired from the position in 1998), provide further insight on the protective attitude of old-timers. I interviewed Huhn in 1999. She stated:

> I lived in coal country before, in Pennsylvania and here, and it seems to be a common characteristic. There is too much of an emphasis on this one industry, coal mining. What I see is a fatalistic attitude. The idea that there can only be this one industry. That if we don't have one big industry we're nothing and we'll never get any better. There is this perception that we were good when coal was here and we will never get any better—things will stay the same. It's not true of course, but that's one of the sources of conflict between people coming in and people who have been here.[99]

The reluctance of old-timers to spend on community improvements may well have been influenced by an inability to envision a future beyond coal mining. Without question, company paternalism created an atmosphere where alternative viewpoints were resisted, especially from newcomers, whom Johnson described as "Johnny-come-latelies" who had no idea of what went on in Cokedale before." To be fair, however, it should be noted that the old-guard was not strictly opposed to improving Cokedale. For example, in addition to major improvements in water services, the town council had been enforcing ordinances designed to maintain the orderly appearance of the camp, a hallmark of its mining-era atmosphere. While these ordinances had little effect on the town's overall appearance, they reveal that the old-guard was open to improvement as long as it was viewed as appropriate to Cokedale's mining camp legacy.[100]

Clearly, the old-guard had another, more important reason for resisting the kinds of changes proposed by newcomers. Holdread's comments reveal that the landscape held different

meaning to old-timers, and that this contrast in perception underlay management conflicts:

> Some people had the mindset to build a better community. But the town was permeated with people talking about the old days, of what it was like when the mines were going. There was a lot of that. That was the character of the community. All these people hanging around remembering, and they didn't really have much of a view of the future it was more looking back. Probably this attitude was a little negative in the sense that you could see how run down the community was, but I don't think they saw that. That was one of the tensions. When I first came there were outhouses everywhere, some people thought that was fine but others didn't. Some people liked Cokedale the way it was, others saw possibilities.[101]

For the old-guard, the landscape provided a nostalgic venue for remembering the mining days, and they fought to retain control in order to maintain a sense of what Cokedale had been. They were protective of Cokedale's antiquated atmosphere because it provided a link to what Cokedale was as a community, and who residents were as individuals. Despite its dereliction and decay, the town was surviving. The landscape affirmed Cokedale's reason for being, and in turn, residents' place in the world. For these reasons, change was viewed as a threat. The future was uncertain but the past was secure and could be experienced in a landscape and an atmosphere that remained unaltered. Pat Shorr, who moved to Cokedale from Denver in the 1980s, and whom I interviewed in 1999, explains:

> The town was falling apart but they were trying to hold on to the idea that this was their little town. They were the ones who had hung onto it at first when the mines closed. . . They felt a kind of paternalism of their own for the town, they had hung onto it, they really wanted to stay, and I think that's a part of why they didn't want it to change. They were afraid that it would just get too much like anywhere else if they didn't hang on to some of these old thoughts for a long time.[102]

On the surface, little seemed to have changed in Cokedale. For those who ventured into town in the 1970s and early '80s, it appeared that the settlement had fallen asleep after mine closure: "Cokedale became a political entity, created a local government for itself, quietly turned over and went to sleep," wrote Arlene Levinson of *The Pueblo Chieftain* in 1976. However, this perception was not entirely true. The residents of Cokedale fought a difficult and heartfelt battle to maintain their homes and keep their town alive. True, Cokedale's economy was depressed and

town infrastructure had decayed. However, this situation was not a result of resident apathy. To the contrary, economic stagnation was a result of economic forces beyond residents' control, and change had not come to Cokedale, in large part, because residents resisted it.[103]

In retrospect, the old-guard's conservative ways proved to be a mixed blessing. Clearly, deindustrialization had taken a toll and little had been done to attempt to rejuvenate the local landscape. Cokedale developed a pitiful outside image, and by socioeconomic measures it was a poor place to live. Cokedale's population steadily declined in the years following mine closure, and by the 1970s those who remained were mostly elderly. The town operated on a limited municipal budget, housing stock was declining, and few opportunities existed for local employment. However, it is important to note, that in terms of the meaning Cokedale held as a lived-in place, the town retained considerable value. Even in the mining years, life in Cokedale had been difficult. Similarly, despite its economic and aesthetic woes in the post-mining era, residents were generally satisfied with their lives. For longtime residents, continuity with a past way of life was more important than rejuvenation. Moreover, in refusing to alter the character of Cokedale, not only had residents maintained the personal significance of the town, but they also preserved its historical integrity. In fact, stability and modest growth would come to Cokedale, and this revival was made possible by the fact that so little change had occurred in its company town atmosphere. In taking a cautious and protective approach to development following incorporation, the old-guard had maintained a physical and cultural uniqueness that would serve as the foundation for preservation efforts in the 1980s and '90s.

Preservation

Strolling through the quiet streets of Cokedale today, past its inhabited homes and its beautifully restored company store and schoolhouse, one is left with little sense of the town's industrial origins. Neither does Cokedale resemble the derelict place it was no more than 20 years ago. What the visitor experiences in Cokedale today, like what they might read in local community histories, tells only a part of Cokedale's story. True, Cokedale's company town

influences are clearly evident in the landscape. However, its quaint atmosphere fails to communicate, without considerable imagining, the way of life that existed in the mining era, or in the difficult decades that followed mine closure. The double row of crumbling coke ovens lying to the south of Cokedale, the impressive tailings pile climbing the canyon wall opposite town, and the ruined foundations of the tipple and washery, are significant landmarks, but they only hint at the extent of industrial operations that existed in the community (Figure 3-19). Furthermore, in the 1970s, most of Cokedale's housing and community structures were either vacant or in poor repair. Today, the reverse is true. Most significant, however, the town is rapidly losing its single most important tie to the past, its mining-era residents. With each passing year, fewer old-timers remain alive who can remember Cokedale as a mining town. As of 1999, the number of these individuals could be counted on one hand.

Much of what is experienced in Cokedale today is a product of recent development and preservation efforts. Without question, the town provides a rare opportunity, in a sense, to "step back in time," but Cokedale is a dynamic place that experienced a series of dramatic changes beginning in the late 1970s. The first major changes to occur were stimulated by the construction of the Trinidad Dam on the Purgatoire River five miles downstream of Cokedale. A recreation and flood control project completed in 1977, the dam impounded 4,500 acres of water, flooding the junction of Reilly Canyon with the Purgatoire Valley. At high water level, the Trinidad Reservoir comes within several hundred yards of the southern end of the Cokedale ovens. As a result, State Highway 12, which originally ran along the floor of the Purgatoire Valley, was re-routed. Prior to the dam, Cokedale was hidden from view a mile up Reilly Canyon and was accessible only by a gravel road from the highway. In the mid-1970s, however, the highway was routed through the southern end of the community. The thoroughfare now runs between Cokedale's residential area and the coke ovens, bringing increased exposure to the small community. Now more directly linked to Trinidad and the outside world, Cokedale lost much of its isolated mining-era character when the highway bisected the town.[104]

Figure 3-19: Two views from atop the tailings pile looking towards the Cokedale washery and powerhouse. The top photograph, circa 1910, shows the extent of industrial operations. The bottom photograph, was taken in 1999. To the left stand the concrete foundations of the larry bins. The conical structure on the right is the remains of the round bin. The shed at far right is a new structure. Highway 12 can bee seen cutting through the west side of the canyon at far left. *Photographs from Cokedale Miners' Museum Collection (top) and by the author.*

With dam construction, newcomers began to come to Cokedale in greater numbers. Some real estate speculation occurred: Cokedale was the closest community to the dam, which was promoted in local newspapers as "southern Colorado's answer to Lake Tahoe," and a number of houses were purchased for use as holiday homes. By 1985, 36 of the town's 101 house lots were owned by individuals whose permanent residency lay outside the Cokedale-Trinidad region (11 were from Texas). However, not all who came viewed the town as a holiday area. Cokedale's proximity to Trinidad, its low real estate prices, and above all, its quiet atmosphere and unique appearance, attracted a diverse group of outsiders. Cokedale continued to draw individuals employed in Trinidad, the economy of which was slowly improving. The town was also popular among faculty from Trinidad State Junior College, and retirees from elsewhere in the state (notably Denver). In addition, a few of what might be called "alternative-lifestylers," or "lifestyle refugees," mostly middle-class Anglos searching for a quieter and more meaningful rural way of life, also came to town. The Trinidad area, especially remote areas such as Bon Carbo, gained a reputation as a place of refuge for artists, members of alternative religious groups, and "hippies," a few of whom found their way to Cokedale.[105]

With this influx of newcomers, Cokedale's population began to grow. Between 1980 and 1990, Cokedale's population grew from 90 to 116. In 1997, the State of Colorado listed 132 permanent residents in Cokedale. While still a small community, this growth represented a 32 percent increase in population and newcomers dramatically altered the social character of Cokedale. However, no particular group of outsiders dominated the town. Cokedale did not become a "working-class" or "retirement" community, a "resort town" or an "artist's colony." Rather, the town evolved into a surprisingly diverse place. Slowly, the town changed from a community dominated by old-time residents and retirees to one with an array of old and young residents, including professional, working class, and retired persons.[106]

Again, as more newcomers came into Cokedale, changes occurred in social relations. The old animosities that existed between north and southsiders, for example, weakened. "There

are factions that I don't even know about because they go so far back into the history of the community, families that have had tensions" stated Holdread in 1999, "but I don't think at this point most people are very aware of it anymore. It's confused enough today that old-timers have to work pretty hard to maintain animosities." Many of the old-timers, Holdread explained, are gone or they just "don't have the fight left in them."[107]

Unfortunately, as old community divides faded, new tensions grew between longtime residents and newcomers. According to Holdread, this conflict had a variety of causes. As has been described, many newcomers were intent on improving conditions in the community and these changes were resisted by old-timers. However, the conflicts that arose were more than the result of differences in opinion regarding community improvements. Many newcomers, Holdread explained, refused to pay their dues to old-timers or in other ways recognize their authority. Holdread also believes that newcomers represented something that longtime residents had resented since the mining days: outside Anglo control. He states:

> I think outsiders, newcomers who were mostly Anglos, were identified with the company and the management. They were buying up the big houses, the mining office, the mercantile, and the other buildings that symbolized outside authority. There was a lot of resistance and resentment. Many of them were trying to do good things for the town but they weren't paying deference to the old-timers.[108]

In addition, new residents tended to be considerably more wealthy than the old and they were clearly altering the structures of power in Cokedale. Control of the community had remained with the old-guard since ASARCO's pullout, but a transition was underway that was threatening their ability to dictate the appearance and atmosphere of the town. As Holdread observed, especially threatening for old-timers was seeing the community's most notable and symbolically powerful structures—the Gottlieb Mercantile, mine office, doctor's house, superintendent's home, and bath and boarding houses—fall back into the hands of outside power.

As the old-guard became more elderly and fewer in number, their hold on municipal affairs weakened. Increasingly, newcomers were finding their way on to the town council and were having a greater say in municipal politics. However, despite their attrition, the old-guard

continued to exert a significant degree of control. Testimony to their influence was their continued ability to resist change, which frustrated newcomers to the point that several of the latter quit midway through their terms on the town council. It wasn't until 1998, when John Johnson finally retired after 25 years as Cokedale mayor, that control of the community finally passed into the hands of the next generation of Cokedale residents.

With the weakening of the old-guard's influence, Cokedale's appearance began to change. New residents were repairing and remodeling town structures. Unlike old-timers, newcomers had both the financial means and the desire to improve their properties, and there is little doubt that the aesthetic appearance of the camp improved. Slowly, vacant and run-down cottages received foundation work, new roofs, and fresh coats of paint. Yards were cleaned out, new patios were built, and driveways were graveled (Figure 3-20). Unfortunately, however, not all of the changes being made by newcomers were viewed as improvements. Not held back by a sense of what Cokedale was like during the mining era, and unaware or indifferent to the meaning and historical significance of the local landscape, many were altering the camp in intrusive ways. Siding and new color schemes were replacing the stucco finish and uniform trim of the company-built housing, and several homes were altered beyond recognition by large building additions. Moreover, most of the old unused maintenance structures—stables, sheds, and workshops–were torn down, as were several original company houses deemed too dilapidated to restore.

Like the old-guard's resistance to community improvements, development was a mixed blessing. While the town's general appearance was improving, its mining-era character was being lost. Johnson describes:

> People were changing the décor of the town and I didn't appreciate it. But they bought the house, you couldn't stop them, there was no zoning ordinance in town. We attempted to make building ordinances but we were never successful. People objected, they wanted to do what they wanted to do with their houses.[109]

The old-guard expressed concern over the direction of development, but with no zoning or building ordinances in place few means existed to fight these changes. Although planning

ordinances were a topic of continued debate in town council meetings throughout the 1980s and '90s, too much opposition existed from the majority of homeowners for even liberal restrictions to be put into law. A mobile home even appeared in Cokedale, a structure that the town council fought unsuccessfully to remove for many years. Increasingly, however, a number of newcomers also became concerned with preserving Cokedale's mining past, and they aligned themselves with what remained of the old-guard: an ironic alliance given the prior conflicts that had existed between the groups. At the same time as the town was being transformed by development, a counter-force developed that would attempt to preserve Cokedale's company town legacies.

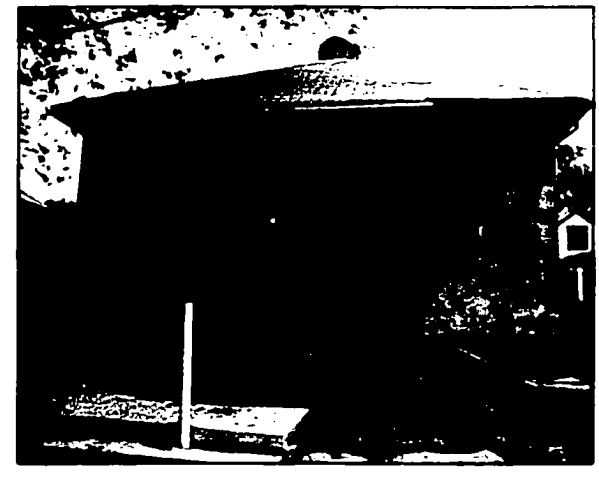


Figure 3-20: Two restored company houses. *Photographs by the author, 1999.*

It is generally believed that newcomers were the driving-force in preservation efforts. For example, in the same article that had accused old-timers of falling asleep following incorporation, *The Pueblo Chieftain* credited new residents with introducing a preservation ethic: "newcomers have recognized the value of Cokedale as a landmark of coal mining history. Now some of the old-timers are beginning to appreciate this too." This statement reveals a lack of understanding of the different ways old-timers and newcomers viewed the community, and the role both groups played in development and preservation initiatives. The old-guard held experiential knowledge of Cokedale's past, and it was they, more than anyone, who would be relied upon to raise awareness of the community's history. True, some old-timers appeared

indifferent to formal preservation efforts, the details of which became contentious issues. It is also true that newcomers would primarily spearhead formal preservation initiatives. However, this was not the result of the old-guard being ignorant of the historical significance of the town. It should be remembered that old-timers were comfortable with the community in its deteriorated condition, which to them, provided continuity to a past landscape and way of life. Formal preservation was not a prerequisite, as it was for newcomers, for a valuing of the landscape. Furthermore, the old-guard objected to elements of various preservation plans, not because they objected to preservation per se, but because they feared and resented outside interference and control. It should also be pointed out, that while the town had deteriorated under the old-guard's watch, on the whole it was the actions of outsiders – particularly their remodeling of homes and other structures—that were the greatest threat to Cokedale's historical integrity.[110]

Indeed, old-timers played a central role in raising initial interest in the town's mining history. On August 1976, a group of longtime residents came together to organize Cokedale's first reunion of old-timers. Held on the 69th anniversary of the community's founding, invitations were sent to approximately 300 former residents. The reunion was highlighted by an arts and crafts festival, a field Mass, and an exhibit of items illustrating the methods of coal mining. Johnson describes the event: "It was a terrific reunion . . . we had people come from all over the United States, who had lived here during the time the mine was operating. They came back to see what was going on." In a newspaper article promoting the reunion, *The Trinidad Chronicle News* also reported that advance sales were being taken for Holly Barton's, *Cokedale 1907-1947: Anatomy of a Model Mining Community*, which were to go on sale the day of the reunion. The reunion was an important event for it triggered outside interest in Cokedale's past. Moreover, with the release of Barton's book, the first formal historical narrative of the town was made available. Despite its discussed shortcomings, *Anatomy of a Model Mining Community*, was tremendously influential. Barton set Cokedale out as a special place. She showed that the town's past should be treasured, a point that was being overlooked by those intent on "improving" the

look of the community and increasing private property values.[111]

In the years that followed the reunion, interest in local history and preservation grew. Residents formed the Cokedale Historical Society, whose members included both old and newer residents. One of the organization's first orders of business was to place a historical marker in Cokedale's Commons Park. About this time, preservation officials from Colorado's Mined Land Reclamation Division and State Historical Society came to Cokedale, generating further interest in preservation. In 1980, officials from the Mine Land Reclamation office conducted a hazard survey of the old mine workings. They found that fires were burning in the tailings pile and that several mine portals were in need of closure, including one encased in the ruins of the Fan House. As a part of the abandoned mine land survey, a cultural resource inventory was also conducted. Focusing their attention only on those areas containing mining hazards (the town and coke ovens were not included in the survey), the state determined that the foundations of the aerial tramway located on the tailings pile and the remains of the Fan House were of historical significance as engineering artifacts. Although the initial hazard inventory had recommended a re-grading of the tailings pile, reclamation was not undertaken in deference to the feature's historical significance. Cokedale's impressive tailings pile remained undisturbed. The shaft in the Fan House was closed by the state in 1983 using a steel grate that was designed "to maintain the historical significance of the structure." In addition to this work, in 1992, two mine openings at the south end of the coke ovens were sealed.[112]

The reclamation office's cultural resource inventory represents the first official recognition of the historical value of Cokedale's remaining structures, and soon after, the Colorado Historical Society showed interest in the town. At a town council meeting held in November 1983, resident Gladys Davis, representing the Cokedale Historical Society, explained that state officials were urging residents to nominate the town to the National Historic Register. One month later, two state representatives, Loretta Pineda and Gloria Mills, met with the town council and fielded questions regarding National Historic District designation. Of local concern

were potential building restrictions that might accompany historic designation. Mills explained that unless individuals received federal restoration grants, historical status would not restrict remodeling (although residents were cautioned that if too pervasive, such action could result in a de-listing from the register).[113]

Before proceeding with nomination procedures, the community was required to show that local support existed for historic district designation. On 12 January 1984, the town council reviewed the results of a community polling and it was announced that the majority of property owners had consented to the proposal.[114] Holdread provides insight into residents' views of historical designation:

> The historical society group, particularly Larry Woodward and Gladys Davis, and some outside interests that I think might have had roots in the area, they were really involved. It was kind of funny. It was all driven by a sense of pride in the town but there was a lot of passivity about it as well. It was a combination of some people who thought it would be cool without really thinking about why it would be so cool: like why would we want more people driving through town? Others looked at it more in terms of whether it was going to cost us anything, is it going to impinge upon our rights? As long as they felt like it wouldn't do any harm they would go ahead with it. I don't think anyone really had any specific idea of how Cokedale would benefit.[115]

Although not overwhelming, enough local support existed for historic district status to get the nomination procedure underway. Within a year, funds had been raised to hire a preservation consultant to inventory community structures, and National Register nomination forms were sent to the National Parks Service in Washington, D.C. In 1985, Cokedale received National Historic District designation. In describing the town's historical significance the preservation consultant drew upon Barton's utopian narrative, and Cokedale's status as the Trinidad District's lone surviving company town, to justify its inclusion to the National Register. The nomination form reads:

> While most similar coal camps were dismantled as mines ceased operation in the Las-Animas-Huerfano district, Cokedale continued to thrive . . . The perception of the residents of Cokedale, and the entire Trinidad District, that the camp was a desirable place to live and work, coupled with a company philosophy differing from the theories prevalent in the area, created an environment in which Cokedale could remain intact. Pride in home ownership and no redevelopment

> pressure has prevented inappropriate intrusions or substantial alteration of existing structures. The town remains the best example of an intact coal camp in Colorado.[116]

As is evident in this statement, and in the list of sources used in the nomination form, Barton's *Anatomy of a Model Mining Community* was influential in obtaining historic district designation. That Barton's research served as the primary historical source in the nomination form should come as no surprise, for her work represents the only detailed history written of Cokedale. More than a lone source of information, however, Barton's utopian narrative explained the town's uniqueness and provided a rationale for valuing the community, setting it out as a special place worthy of formal preservation.

Despite Cokedale's listing to the National Register, preservation of town structures was in no way guaranteed. The town council's involvement in preservation efforts was hampered by its limited budget and by old-timer's frugality and continued resistance to outside control. As a result, efforts to protect and preserve Cokedale would fall into the hands of individuals. According to the National Register's 1985 inventory, at the time of listing, the majority of Cokedale's houses were in "good" condition. However, 28 of 90 homes were classified as only "fair," and 12 were listed as "deteriorating." While the condition of housing had improved markedly by the time the inventory had been conducted, much work was still to be done.[117]

National Historic District designation had a mixed effect on community rejuvenation and preservation efforts. Outside visitation to the community increased only marginally: no tourism-related businesses developed in the community, and Cokedale failed to become the tourist destination some had envisioned. However, tourism was a secondary motivation in seeking historic district designation, the primary purpose of which was to raise awareness of the importance of preserving historical structures in the town. Unfortunately, such awareness did not become pervasive. Johnson confirms, for example, that historical district status did not halt intrusive development:

> People kept extending their houses, building them differently. Originally, when we got appointed a historical district, they didn't want us to do anything like that, they wanted everything as it was. If they were to come back now and take a look they'd be disappointed. They came in and spread it on to us, told us all about it. They took pictures of every house and they warned us not to change their décor but they've been changed. It was a nice thing at first. Everyone was supportive and we thought it would also be good for tourism. This was one of the model coal camps and they wanted to keep it that way but it didn't stay that way. Everybody changed their houses.[118]

Many newcomers continued to remodel homes with little concern for their historical integrity. However, while the changes that were occurring were too great for some, especially old-timers, Cokedale's mining-era character was not obliterated. Historical designation did raise awareness among many of the importance of preserving Cokedale's mining landscape. Several of the larger community buildings, for example, remained largely unchanged, and a handful of residents seized the opportunity to restore them in ways that preserved their historical character. The mine office, boarding house, and doctor and superintendent's homes, were listed in good condition at the time of historic district designation. So, too, was the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary Church, which was owned by the Archdiocese of Pueblo, Colorado. Of these, the mine office and doctor's homes would be significantly modified by building additions, the latter to a degree that radically changed its appearance. However, the boarding and superintendent's houses would be remodeled by their owners with relatively little change to their original appearance (Figure 3-21).

In the 1985 historical inventory, the ice and bath houses were listed in "fair" condition and the town's two largest buildings, the mercantile and school, were categorized as "deteriorating." Excluding the icehouse, these buildings were either held in receivership by local banks or were owned by the town. In subsequent years the icehouse changed hands between several owners and was altered to the extent that its original function became difficult to recognize. However, only minor changes occurred to the bathhouse following its purchase, and today it stands in excellent condition. So, too, do the school and mercantile buildings, whose preservation, unlike most structures in the town, became issues of public debate.[119]

Figure 3-21: The restored Cokedale boarding house now serves as a private home. *Photograph by the author, 1999.*

Following mine closure, the Trinidad School District took over ownership of the school, but after only a handful of years of operation it was closed. In the 1960s the school district sold the structure to the town of Cokedale for one dollar. The town used the school for community events, but by the 1980s the structure was in disrepair, and talks surfaced on what should be done. Johnson describes the events that unfolded and the contentious debate that occurred over the building's future. In the wake of Historic District designation, sentiment existed to restore and preserve the school but it would not be an easy task. Johnson states:

> The school was sitting there doing nothing, deteriorating. Bats had moved in on it and were tearing it apart. I went to the council and said we got to get rid of that building its costing us money . . . I said let's sell it. We had a big town meeting about selling the schoolhouse and the opposition even hired an attorney to come to the meeting to stop us from selling it. They wanted to keep it as a landmark for the Historic District. I said the thought was well but how are we going to keep it up, how are we going to afford it? There were heated meetings.[120]

The old-guard was sympathetic to preserving the School but viewed city involvement as an unwise expenditure. Fortunately, a compromise was eventually reached and in 1989 the school was sold to Christ of the Canyon's Ministries, an interdenominational Christian Church. Under

terms of the sale, a provision was made that the Church repair and restore the building. By most accounts the transaction proved to be good solution. Today. Christ of the Canyon's Ministries maintains ownership of the schoolhouse, one of the town's most exquisitely and faithfully restored buildings (Figure 3-22).[121]

Figure 3-22: The Cokedale schoolhouse circa 1940 (left), and 1999 (right). *Photographs from Cokedale Miners' Museum Collection and by the author.*

After ASARCO abandoned Cokedale, the Gottlieb Mercantile, the town's largest and most impressive structure, was abandoned. A small portion of the building was leased from Florence Machinery for the post office, but otherwise, the mercantile lay unused for more than 20 years. In the mid 1970s, the building was purchased by Gary Coulter, a newcomer to Cokedale, who converted the interior space into a wheelwrighting shop and old-time buggy museum. After several years of operation Coulter declared bankruptcy, and the mercantile fell into receivership. In the late 1980s, Mayor Johnson negotiated with the Trinidad National Bank for the town to purchase the mercantile. The building was in poor condition and Johnson states that the town's primary interest in purchasing the structure was to maintain the post office, which had become the community's most important public meeting place. The town of Cokedale purchased the mercantile for $7,000.[122]

Soon after the town bought the mercantile, it was revealed that structural problems would need to be addressed to save the structure from condemnation. In 1989, Vernon Williams, who

had owned property in Cokedale and been a seasonal visitor since 1968, came forward with a proposal. Williams, a faculty member in the Department of History at Abilene Christian University (ACU), proposed a plan to restore the mercantile and create a mining museum. ACU would develop a history field course that would provide student and faculty assistance. The town council approved William's proposal in 1991, and he and his students have been coming to Cokedale every summer since. The museum remains an ongoing project, but an impressive collection of mining-era artifacts and photographs now stands professionally displayed in the building (Figure 3-23). Funds for the mercantile project were raised by the Cokedale Museum Commission, a group consisting primarily of newer residents. Current Mayor Pat Huhn, William Durland, Annette Dalton, and others spearheaded the project. Huhn was especially instrumental in obtaining grants, primarily from the Colorado Historical Society, to fund restoration work. The museum commission also began organizing the annual Cokedale Festival, that is held each June to raise funds for the museum project.[123]

Figure 3-23: The Cokedale Miners' Museum housed within the old company store building, 1999. *Photograph by the author.*

Not surprising given the degree of "outside" involvement in the mercantile project, the politics surrounding its implementation have been contentious. Not all in the community have been supportive. Although old-timers are proud of the museum—as Williams told me, most see the contribution it has made to the community–they are uneasy about having outsiders in charge of its operation. "I have mixed emotions about the museum," Johnson stated, "they've done a good job, don't get me wrong, but you can't show it just once a year." Johnson's comment refers to the fact that the museum is only open to the public during the summer months (although entry can be arranged at other times through the museum commission). Particularly frustrating to some old-timers, is their view that the mercantile now seems unavailable for community use. While the mercantile building was little used prior to its restoration and may have been demolished without the involvement of ACU and the museum commission, community access and control over the building are issues. Those spearheading the museum project are viewed as outsiders. Despite the fact that they have contributed enormously to preserving the history of Cokedale, this perception has weakened support for their efforts.[124]

Obtrusive development continues to occur in Cokedale today as homes are bought and sold, but enough of Cokedale's original homes and community structures have been saved from deterioration or inappropriate modification that the town has retained a sense of what it was. This is not to say that significant preservation challenges do not lay ahead, however, for several of Cokedale's most important historical structures have yet to receive attention. The future of the coke ovens, and the remains of the tipple, washery, and other industrial structures—elements of the landscape that more than others stand as reminders of Cokedale's industrial heritage—remain in doubt. These features are listed as contributing structures within the historic district, but all lie on private land beyond the control and influence of the town council, Cokedale Historical Society, and museum commission. As a result, there are no guarantees that they will remain a permanent part of the Cokedale landscape. The coke ovens are of particular concern. The largest and most intact set in the Trinidad District, the ovens are decaying. Ten years ago, many of the

beehive-shaped ovens still had complete roofs; today not a single one remains that has not collapsed (Figure 3-24).[125]

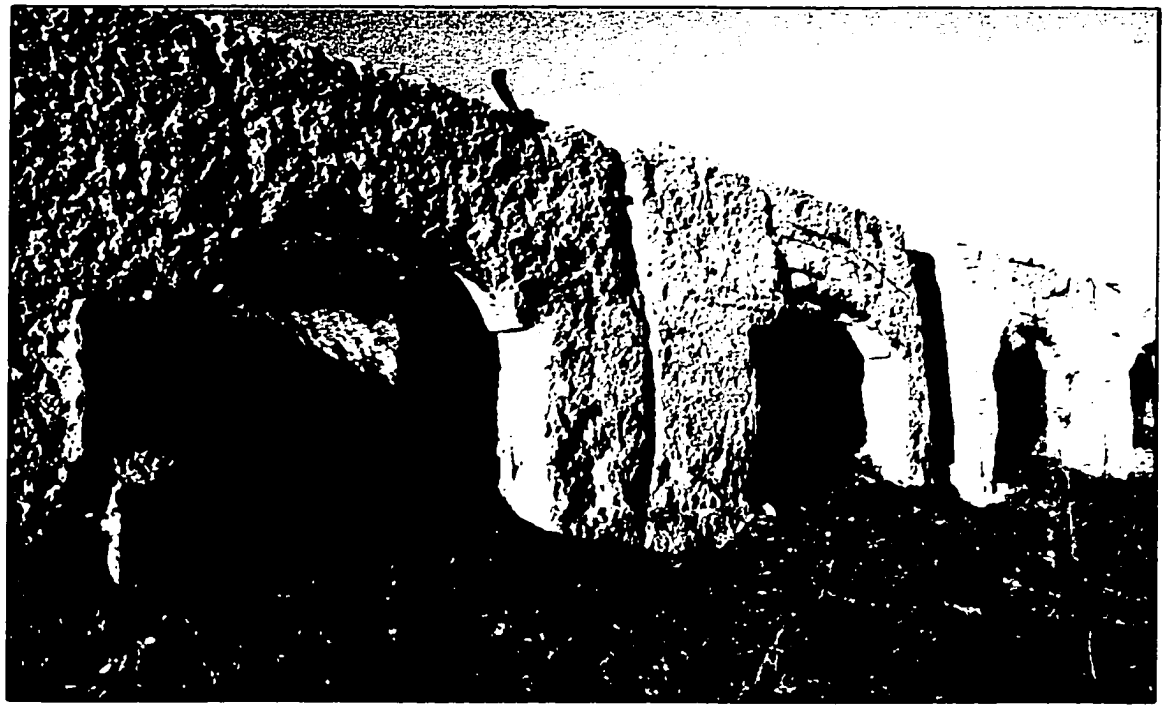


Figure 3-24: Little attention has yet to be paid to the preservation of Cokedale's coke ovens. *Photograph by the author, 1999.*

The comments of residents, both old and new, attest to the role the coke ovens and other industrial features play in maintaining the identity of the community. Johnson describes the sadness he feels in seeing the ovens deteriorate: "They are landmarks . . . the name of the town is "Cokedale" and it wouldn't be the same without them." Johnson also describes the significance of the tailings pile and tipple ruins, and he laments that there is little the town council can do to preserve these features. Holdread, who has painted the coke ovens often, describes their aesthetic symbolism: "They're a fascinating subject. For me they represent the tension between human industry and nature." Holdread also comments on the striking visual nature of the tailings. He describes how the waste is an asset that shields the community from the highway, and he explains how local "myths" have developed about burning fires and caverns in the waste pile.[126] The comments of Pat Shorr, who has lived in the community for seven years, show how the remnants

of the mining industry, in this case the slag pile and old maintenance shop, have taken on significant value. Her comments also reveal the pain felt in losing these community features or in having them threatened.

> When we first moved here there was not a spot of growth on the slag pile. It was just slick and black and shiny. They say there are still hot spots where it is burning and it amazes everybody to see that grass is starting to grow on it. My son would take his snowboard and go down the side of it. In the winter time it's beautiful with the snow sitting on it. There was some talk at one time about the county digging it out and using it for the roads, but that's a part of Cokedale!
>
> I just fell in love with the old maintenance shop we used to have. It was a huge tin building. I used to sit, especially when it was snowing, and just watch it. The snow changed the look of that building it was beautiful. I just loved to watch it change. It took a bulldozer most of the day to knock it down it was very sad. It was privately owned we couldn't do anything about it.[127]

Evident in these comments and in the long struggle that has taken place, first among old-timers to resist change, now among old and new to control it in a way that will protect the town's historical integrity, is that minings' landscape impress is of significant local value. However, it has yet to be proved whether transfer of control over Cokedale's mining and company town legacies, from the old-guard to the new, will result in the careful management of development. However, there appears to be reason for optimism. The town council is once again visiting the issue of building ordinances, and its ability to pass development restrictions is improving. In 1998, under Mayor Huhn, Cokedale passed its first building restrictions banning mobile homes on the basis that their presence threatened the town's historic district designation.[128] If the integrity of the coke ovens and other industrial features also becomes a priority, then today's residents will have earned the right to call themselves the "new-guards" of Cokedale.

Before the torch is passed, however, it would be wise for new residents to note their predecessors' commitment to the town, which enabled Cokedale to survive. Later on, the old-guard's resistance to change, driven by an intimate bond to a past way of life, allowed Cokedale to retain its mining-era features, landscape elements that today are the focus of preservation and rejuvenation efforts. As a result of the old-guard's protective ways, elements of its past were

preserved. However, historians such as Holly Barton should also be recognized, for it was they who provided the historical narrative, that while propagating an inaccurate view of company town life, was nonetheless influential in raising awareness of Cokedale's uniqueness. The utopian narrative explained why Cokedale's past should be valued and offered a rationale upon which historic district designation was based. It now lies in the hands of others to build upon Barton's research. A new historical narrative is needed, one that explains how Cokedale, despite its company town failings, served as a valued community. Indeed, in many ways, Cokedale's survival is made more remarkable by recognizing the hardships and challenges residents have faced. It also now lies in the hands of Cokedale's next generation to see that the old-guard's efforts to maintain Cokedale's links to the past have not been in vain. Effort now needs to be focused on preserving the less romantic elements of Cokedale's mining history: the industrial ruins that communicate, perhaps better than other elements of the landscape, Cokedale's reason for being.

No better statement exists of the value of the mining past, the lasting influence of the utopian mythology, and the contribution all residents have made in maintaining the community's uniqueness, than that written by resident Joyce Holdread. In an essay entitled "The Town that Wouldn't be a Ghost Town' lies both a fitting conclusion and a starting point from which to begin to build a new narrative of landscape meaning and community persistence in Cokedale:

> Cokedale was a town consigned to the scavengers of the coal industry's played-out holes, but in the spring of 1947 life emerged from its dark humus in the united cry of its inhabitants to save their town. . . . Because of the united refusal of its diverse populace to fade into history, Cokedale has remained one of the few "coal camps" preserved in the United States today, thus earning its listing on the National Register of Historical Places. The continual mosaic of people from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, united by shared concerns, make Cokedale one of the best and most unique American small towns.[129]

CHAPTER FOUR: PICHER

In no historic mining town in America do residents live amid a greater variety of environmental hazards than Picher, Oklahoma. In fact, when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) compiled its first list of Superfund sites in 1981, Picher was ranked as the agency's highest priority clean-up area. Picher was even regarded as a more serious threat to public health and the environment than "Love Canal," the nation's most infamous hazardous waste site. Officially named the Tar Creek Superfund Site after the stream that runs through the mining field, the affected area extends over 40 square miles. The entire municipality of Picher lies within the Superfund boundary.[1]

More than Toluca and Cokedale, Picher's meaning and the story of its survival are tied to issues of landscape dereliction. Therefore, the question of how Picher evolved into such a troubled place and how residents and outsiders have perceived and reacted to the town's plight is central to this discussion. Picher was the largest mining town in the Tri-State Mining District, once the world's most productive lead and zinc mining field. The first commercial mines in the area were developed near Joplin, Missouri, in the 1850s, but the district did not reach peak production until ore was discovered in Oklahoma at the present site of Picher in 1914. From 1920 to 1930, the district produced 70 percent of all U.S. zinc, 35 percent of the metal mined worldwide. Over its life span, 8.8 million tons of zinc and 1.7 million tons of lead, more than a billion dollars worth of metal, was produced from the Picher area.[2]

Picher was a quintessential boomtown. The first mines opened in 1915. By 1918, the town's population was estimated at between 20,000 and 25,000. During this time, visiting journalists portrayed Picher as one of the world's most important mining towns. New mines were opening at a feverish pace. Picher's streets were bustling with commercial activity and reporters were marveling at how quickly the mine derrick and ore mill, unquestionable symbols of prosperity, had come to dominate the landscape. Visiting journalists called the vista of development Picher's "Billion-Dollar Skyline" (Figure 4-1).[3]

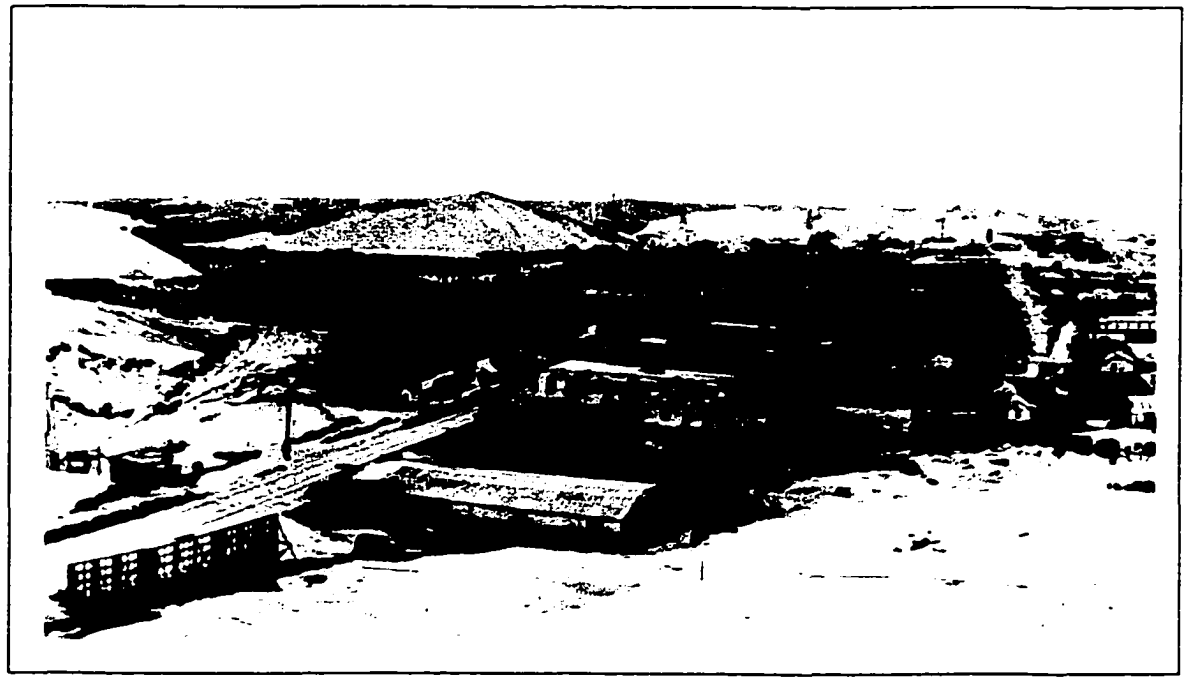


Figure 4-1: Panoramic view of Picher's "Billion Dollar Skyline," 1931. *Used with permission, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Within a few short years, however, public accolades began to wane. Early observers, infatuated with the area's industrial transformation, at first ignored the unorganized nature of development, the lack of basic civic amenities and schools, and the ramshackle quality of housing. But, once the novelty of the mineral discovery faded, Picher's dilapidated appearance came to dominate journalistic accounts. So, too, did descriptions of the difficult living and working conditions existing in the town. Although some would sympathize with the plight of Picherites, most outsiders simply voiced disdain for the community and its people. This negative perceptual legacy is one Picher has found difficult to discard. While the last of Picher's mines closed more than 40 years ago, the town continues to be perceived by the outside world as a thoroughly and hopelessly despoiled place.

In viewing Picher today, it is difficult to argue that its negative reputation is not deserved. Deindustrialization has devastated the Picher economy and decades of economic stagnation and out-migration have taken their toll. Fewer than 1,700 people remain in Picher, and indications of

poverty and depopulation are evident in the decaying condition of town infrastructure. The rundown condition of the built landscape, however, is made relatively trivial by the presence of mining-related features. Visually, Picher is dominated by enormous piles of tan-colored milling waste locally know as "chat." The chat piles cover more than 2,900 acres of ground in the Picher Field (Figure 4-2). The town developed amid the chat piles, many of which stand more than 200 feet tall. Streets wind around the towering obstacles, and homes, churches, and schools lie in their shadows. On hot summer days, the glare and dust rising from the crushed rock lend a desert-like atmosphere to this otherwise green corner of Oklahoma.[4]

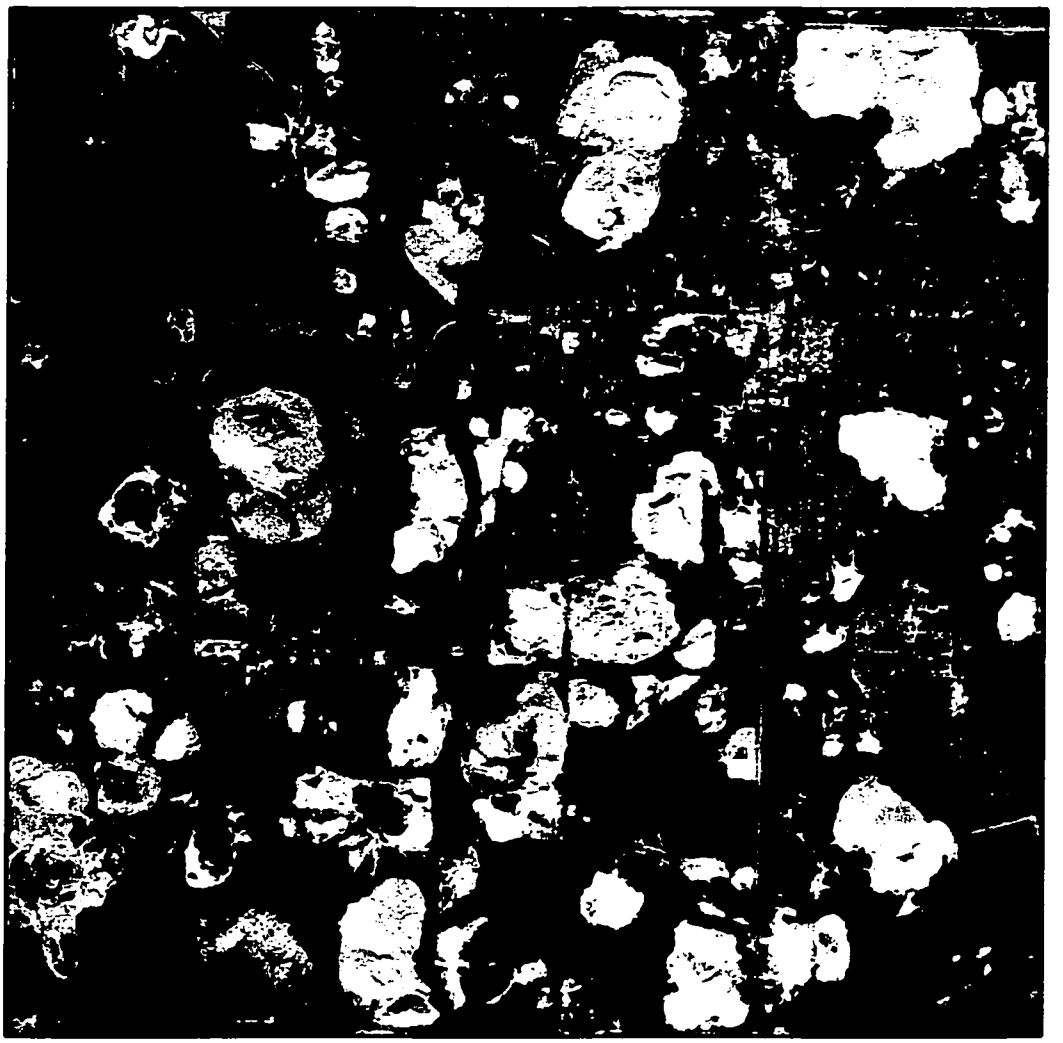


Figure 4-2: Chat piles dominate the Picher Field. The Picher town site is located center-right. The smaller town of Cardin is located center-left. *USGS, 1994.*

Picher was recognized as a hazardous place to live in as early as the 1920s. During this time, social reformers and labor activists published highly critical exposés documenting Picher's unsanitary housing conditions, the high rates of silicosis and tuberculosis among residents, and the notoriously dangerous working conditions in the mills and mines. Later, shaft and surface collapses caused by mine subsidence became a focus of concern. So great was the hazard that the threat of a collapse resulted in the abandonment of Picher's downtown in 1950. However, when initially given Superfund status in 1981, environmental concerns centered on water pollution caused by acid mine drainage. An acidic discharge had begun to flow from the hundreds of abandoned wells and surface collapses that dot the Picher area. The drainage killed aquatic life in Tar Creek and migrated into Picher's municipal water source, an aquifer underlying the mining zone. The EPA attempted to mitigate these problems by plugging contamination sources and diverting surface drainage away from Tar Creek, but the results were disappointing. Residents remain plagued by rust-colored drinking water, and, in 1994, the EPA concluded that contamination of Tar Creek was irreversible. No further action has been undertaken to clean up the polluted river.[5]

Water issues are a lesser concern in Picher today, but only because a more serious threat has been identified in the millions of tons of chat that lie in the community. In studies conducted in the mid-1990s, health researchers discovered that Picher had the highest incidence of juvenile lead poisoning in the nation. The source of contamination was the chat. Chat piles have long served as a playground for Picher children, but for more than 50 years, the milling waste has also been used as fill and surfacing material for landscaping and road construction. Lead is pervasive in the environment, and beginning in 1997, the EPA began a second phase of its Superfund program aimed at addressing the problem through residential soil remediation. Chat contaminated soil is being removed and yards backfilled with clean soil. As of April 1999, the agency had completed work on 700 of the approximately 1600 residential properties with hazardous lead levels. Unfortunately, while the program is having a positive effect on public

health, reclamation costs are increasing, and project implementation problems have eroded the public's trust in the EPA. Already, upwards of $40 million have been spent by the EPA at Tar Creek, an area agency officials call the most difficult and challenging Superfund site in the nation.[6]

Picher's future is insecure. Compared to toxic monuments such as Love Canal, the American public is largely unaware of the extent of environmental problems in the area. Furthermore, the fact that Picher's troubles have yet to be solved despite nearly two decades of EPA activity has left many residents believing that the outside world cares little for their fate. Unfortunately, Picherites have good reason to be concerned, for their misgivings are rooted in a history of external derision and neglect. Picher has long been viewed by outsiders in a way that has hampered efforts to recognize and address its problems. For most of its existence, Picher has been viewed as a spectacle of hopeless dereliction. And yet, despite this history of neglect and the severity of the area's environmental problems, Picher persists as a community and retains value as a home. Like many historic mining towns, Picher is a paradoxical place. Why residents remain attached to this troubled landscape is a phenomenon that can only be understood by gaining a sense of who Picherites are and by exploring what they and their community have come through.

The Social Character and History of the Picher Field

Extending over an area of 1,188 square miles, the Tri-State Mining District embraced portions of southwest Missouri, southeast Kansas, and northeast Oklahoma (Figure 4-3). According to historians, the Tri-State was a unique mining field.[7] The area's mining communities have been described as "poor man's" camps – distinctive mining economies where the poor man (miner) had an opportunity for upward mobility. It is believed that the shallowness of the ore deposits and the opportunities historically available to workers to acquire mining properties made it possible for wage earners to become operators. Historian Arrell M. Gibson believes that this "poor man's camp" characteristic was central to the district's identity.

However, labor historian George G. Suggs claims that, although class mobility was common among early miners, the "poor man's" character of the district dissipated as the field evolved. As the focus of mining turned to the deeper ore bodies in Oklahoma, larger and more heavily capitalized companies came to dominate production. Suggs argues that the Picher Field was not a place where the poor man could easily improve his economic status. To the contrary, more than most American mining districts, the Picher Field was a place occupied by desperately poor miners (Figure 4-4).[8]

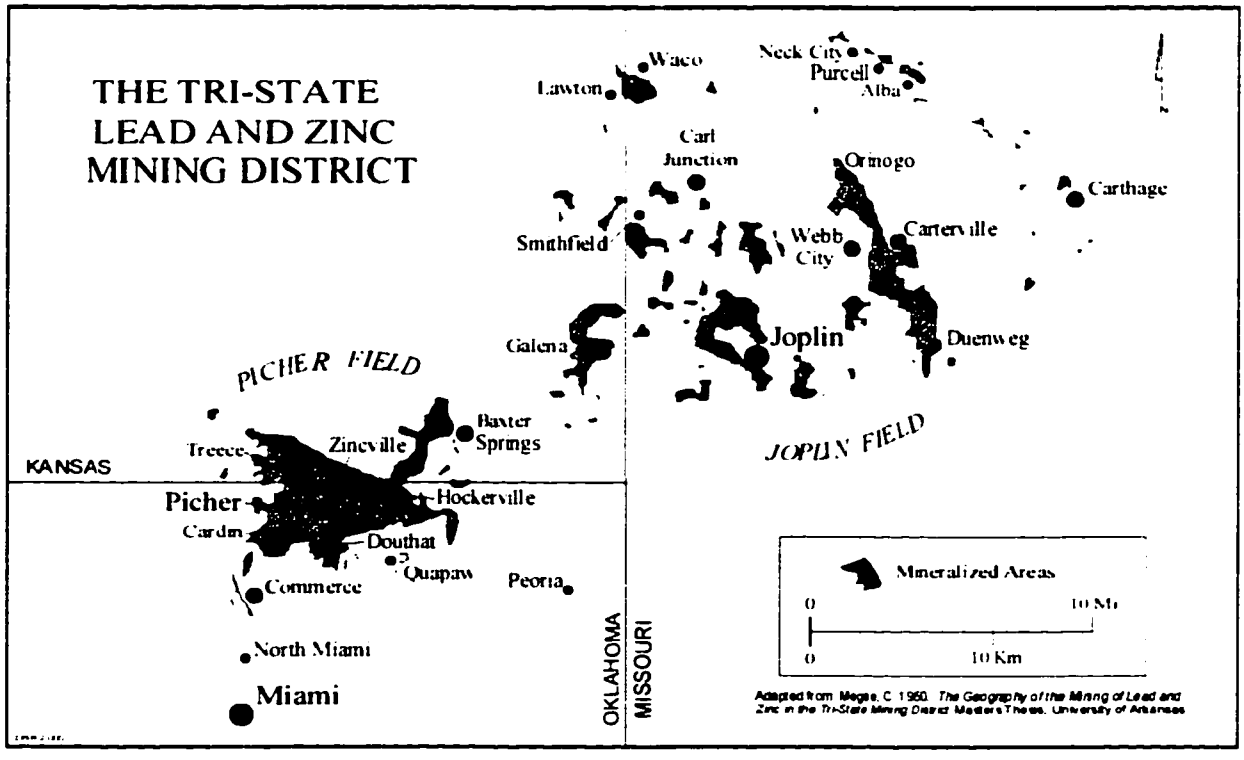


Figure 4-3

A more unique aspect of the Tri-State District was that, unlike most mining fields of the era, workers were drawn from a relatively homogenous local labor force. In the 1930s, for example, close to 40 percent of the population in the nearby Cherokee-Crawford Coal Field of Kansas (lying to the north of the Picher area) were foreign-born Europeans. In contrast, Tri-State workers were recruited from the adjacent Ozark Mountains of Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. American-born whites accounted for close to 98 percent of the district's population.

Indeed, Tri-State mining communities, Picher included, were widely known as "white man's camps," as the native-born Protestant miners tended to hold strong xenophobic attitudes towards outsiders, particularly foreign-born Europeans and African Americans.[9]

Figure 4-4: Zinc smelter worker, Picher, Oklahoma, 1936. *Arthur Rothstein, Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration-Office of War Information Photograph Collection.*

According to Suggs, Tri-State metal workers were an anachronism. Not only was ethnic diversity absent, but also missing was a strong labor movement. "Unlike their counterparts in the hard-rock camps of Colorado, Idaho, and elsewhere," writes Suggs, "workers rejected unionization as a panacea for their problems." Although Tri-Staters periodically organized—a violent strike shut down operations in the field in 1935—unionization was never widely accepted. A strongly supported back-to-work movement broke the 1935 strike. The Tri-State even gained a reputation as a "scab center." District workers were often recruited to cross picket lines in hard-rock mining regions elsewhere in the U.S. and Canada.[10]

Several explanations have been offered to explain why Tri-State workers resisted unionization. Early industry supporters focused on the "American" character of the district's population. Tri-Staters, it was believed, took pride in being an "American" workforce and were allegedly more individualistic and independent than workers in other mining areas. Unionization was viewed as an "un-American" concept by pro-industry observers, who often drew a correlation between the "Americanism" practiced in the Tri-State and labor peace. The fact that most workers came from the "backwoods" of the Ozark hollows also led to the frequent observation that Tri-Staters were more accepting of poor living and working conditions. Gibson believes that labor apathy in the Tri-State was a result of its "poor man's camp" character: that few workers were sympathetic to the union cause because many had, at one time or another, also been operators. However, Suggs points out that entrepreneurial opportunities diminished well before permanent union activities developed. According to Suggs, the independent attitude of district workers was a more important inhibitor to unionization.[11]

In other ways, too, the Tri-State District, and particularly the Picher Field, was a unique mining area. In addition to living in a mining region superimposed upon the boundaries of three states and five counties, much of the field also lay on Indian land. This condition led Gibson to assert that few mining areas in the world could match the Tri-State in complexity of land tenure and use. The fact that mines and associated settlement in the Oklahoma field were located on Indian allotments played a significant role in the development of Picher and in the physical character of the community.[12]

The Picher Field was developed on Quapaw Indian land. A branch of the Siouan family, the Quapaw were dispossessed of their ancestral homelands in Ohio in the 1700s. First moved to the Mississippi River Valley in present-day Missouri and Arkansas, the Quapaw were relocated to Indian Territory in the mid-1830s. In 1893-1894, the Quapaw Reservation was fragmented into individually owned allotments under the Dawes Severalty Act. The Quapaw Reservation was divided into 236 200-acre allotments, and 231 40-acres allotments. The allotments were deemed

"restricted lands" by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), a prohibition that prevented Indians from selling their property or using it in certain ways. Use by non-Indians was also restricted but the BIA maintained the right to lease allotments for farming, grazing, and mining.[13]

Small quantities of ore were extracted in the vicinity of the yet-to-be named Picher Field as early as the 1890s, but the extent of the deposit was unrecognized until August 1914, when the Picher Lead Company of Joplin dispatched a drill rig to Commerce, Oklahoma, to prospect for ore. Traveling across the roadless Quapaw Reservation in Ottawa County, the rig became anchored in mud in the vicinity of Tar Creek, several miles short of its destination. Realizing that there was no way to quickly extract the machinery, the company ordered the crew to occupy their time drilling a wildcat hole. When the drill cuttings showed rich ore signs at 270 feet, the Picher Lead Company immediately negotiated mineral leases from the BIA to 2,700 acres in the prospect area.[14]

By September 1914, the Picher Lead Company was sinking four shafts in Ottawa County. Most of the workers came from mining communities in the Missouri and Kansas portions of the district, and as more mines came into operation, the town began to form. While the Picher Lead Company constructed a few buildings, for the most part, the company played little role in the town's structural development. Hastily built shacks were erected by the workers, most of which were built from scrap materials. All development sat on Indian land leased to the mining companies by the BIA. Typically, operators purchased 40-acre mineral leases from the BIA. The mining company, in turn, divided the leases into small plots that were sub-leased to workers and others for housing and commercial purposes. These company-controlled sub-plots were subject to the priority of the mining interests and could be terminated on 30-day notice (Figure 4-5).[15]

Due to this unusual leasing system, the town site grew in a haphazard way. Most residents lived in shanties sited next to the mining operations. Because of the short-term nature of leases, and because houses and other structures were frequently being moved to make way for expanding mining operations, workers had few incentives to construct substantial housing. The

uncertainty of leases also affected the quality of commercial structures. After fire destroyed several commercial buildings in 1918, for example, the renamed Eagle-Picher Lead Company gave notice that no new structures were to be erected that could not be removed on 30 days notice.[16]

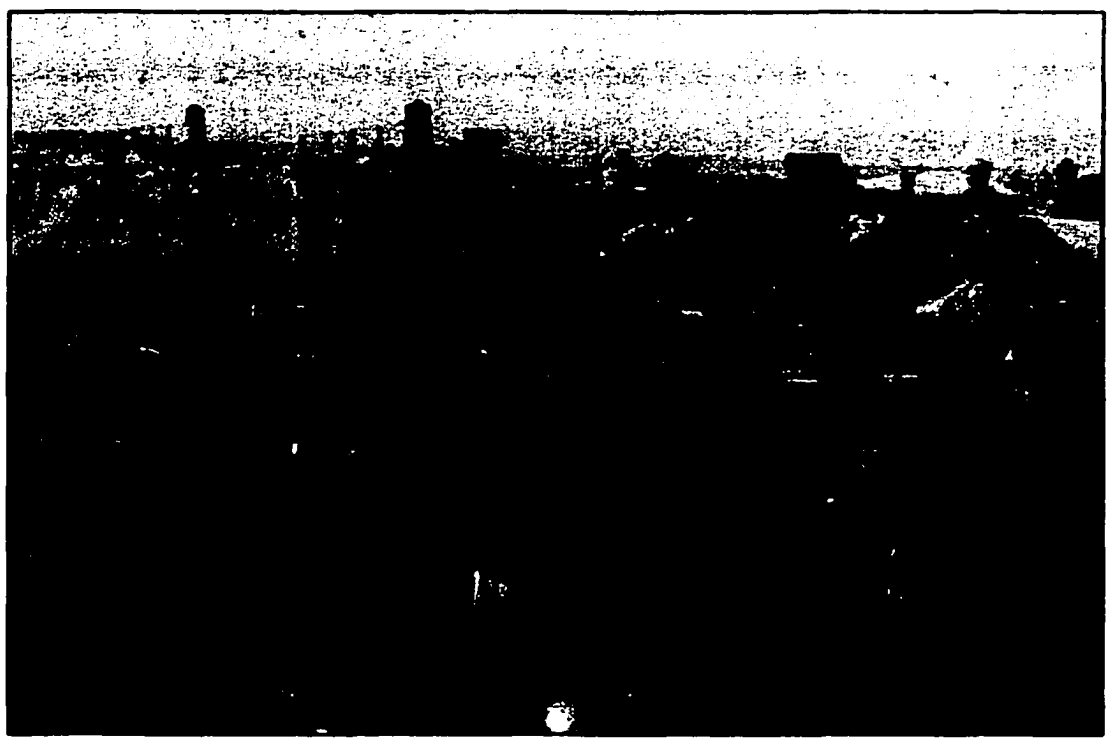


Figure 4-5: View of mines and shacks just west of the Big Chief mine in north Picher, circa 1920. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

Poor living conditions were not unusual in new mining camps; in the mining rush it was common for infrastructure development to lag behind population growth. However, the circumstances that forced the first Picherites to live in this manner, namely the temporary nature of leases and the lack of involvement of the mining firms in infrastructure development, did not significantly change as the town grew—and grew it did. The scattered mining encampments soon coalesced to form the Picher town site. While Eagle-Picher surveyors laid out a rudimentary grid, development remained unorganized and civic services were few. The only service Eagle-Picher provided was primitive water delivery. The first water well was drilled in 1916, but water was

only available through purchase from the company. Each home was equipped with a water barrel that the company charged 25 cents to fill. Later in 1916, the first water tank was erected in Picher. An inscription on the tank read "PICHER, OKLA. 10,000 in 1920," a population the town exceeded by 1917.[17]

In 1920, Picher's official census population was listed at 9,676. However, this number did not include the thousands of people living in unincorporated towns that lay on the community's margin (Douthat, Hockerville, Treece, and Zincville), or those residing in informal squatter camps. Population estimates for the Picher vicinity at this time range from 20,000 to 25,000. Like other Tri-State mining towns, Picher was developing into a predominantly Anglo working-class community, and its growth was remarkable considering the range of difficulties early residents faced.[18] Residents lived in dirt-floored, tin-clad hovels; roads were often mired in mud and were impassible; and there was a chronic lack of food and other supplies. Despite a 1917 population in excess of 10,000, there was no sewer system, garbage collection, public utility, schools, or city government. The town was not incorporated until 1918, and according to one Oklahoma City newspaper reporter, Eagle-Picher acted as a kind of "feudal" overlord of the camp. Add to these hardships the frequent fires that swept through the miners' shacks and the epidemics of pink-eye (1915) and smallpox (1917-1918) that ravaged the community, and one gains an understanding of the difficult world of Picher in its infancy.[19]

Despite the fact that Picher lay on allotted Quapaw land, few Indians lived in the town or worked in the mining industry. However, it appears that Picherites were more accepting of the Indian population than they were of immigrant Europeans and African Americans. Indians frequented Picher businesses, their children went to Picher schools, and intermarriage was common. However, the degree to which Indians were accepted in the mining community has not been fully explored. It is possible that, because mineral royalties had made some Indian allotees wealthy, they held a higher social status within the mining communities than other minority groups. As for the lack of African Americans and foreign-born Europeans, historians have

confirmed that racism and anti-foreigner sentiment was rampant. A customary law existed in Ottawa County that barred Europeans and African Americans from living and working in the region. Furthermore, in the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan was influential in local politics, and as recently as the 1950s, Picher remained a "sun-downer town" where African Americans were arrested if found in the community after dark.[20]

The economic history of the Picher Field has been well documented and only a summation is required here. Metal production and employment were closely tied to the price of zinc, the field's main product. Development of the field coincided with the outbreak of World War I and Picher was supplying a significant volume of ammunitions metals for the war effort in Europe (zinc was an important component in artillery shells and cartridge brass). Metal prices were high, and in the first five years of the field's operation (1915-1920), recoverable lead and zinc production rose from 21,125 to 350,365 tons. With the development of the Picher Field, Oklahoma became the nation's leading zinc-producing state, a distinction it held from 1918 to 1944. The field's peak mine production came in 1925 when 387,002 tons of recoverable zinc and 100,838 tons of lead were produced (Figures 4-6 and 4-7).[21]

Picher grew into a substantial city in the 1920s and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps detail the extent of development. Buildings were generally of low quality frame construction but the scope of development was extensive. The corporate limits of Picher extended over 12 square miles. The business district was located in a nine-square-block area centered on Main Street. The downtown core was surrounded on three sides by mines, mills, and chat piles. Residential areas spread out along a grid from downtown, but development was irregular due to the presence of mining operations. By 1920, Picherites were serviced by as many as 100 small businesses, including two banks and four funeral homes (undertaking was a competitive business due to the high fatality rates of Picher miners). For single miners, as many as 40 rooming/boarding houses were in operation as well as seven hotels and ten tenements. For recreation, Picher boasted four movie theaters, one dance hall, and ten billiard parlors. Not identified on the Sanborn Maps are

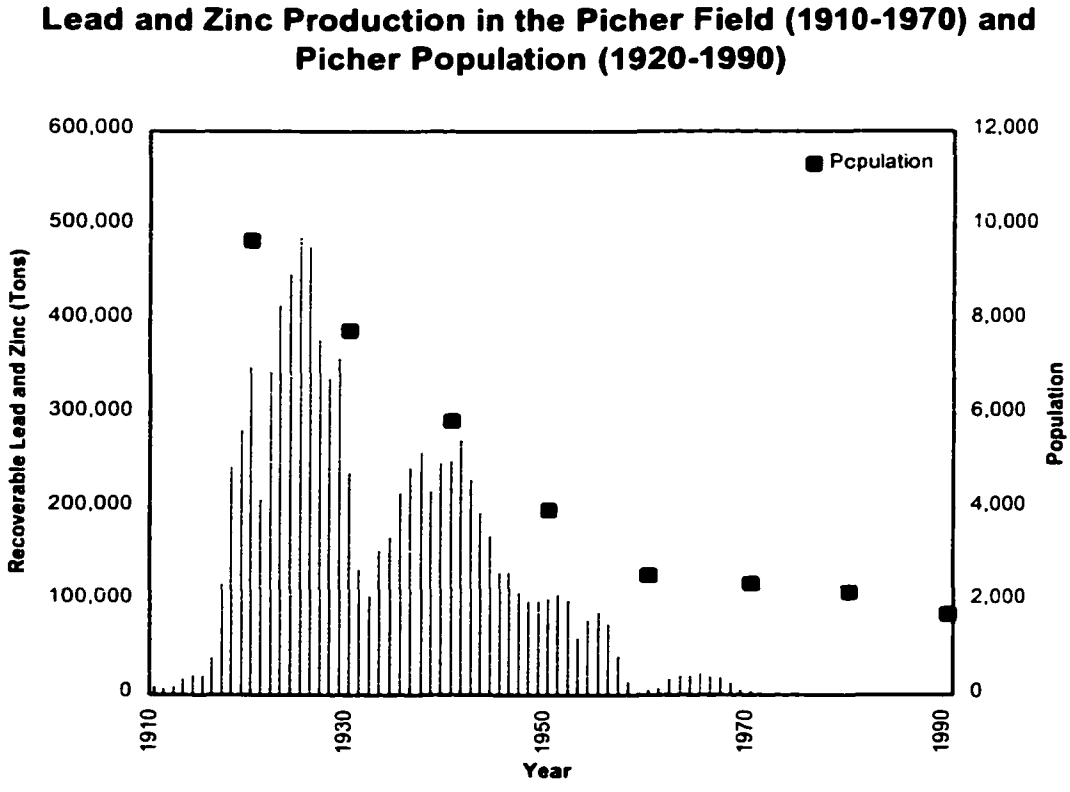


Figure 4-6

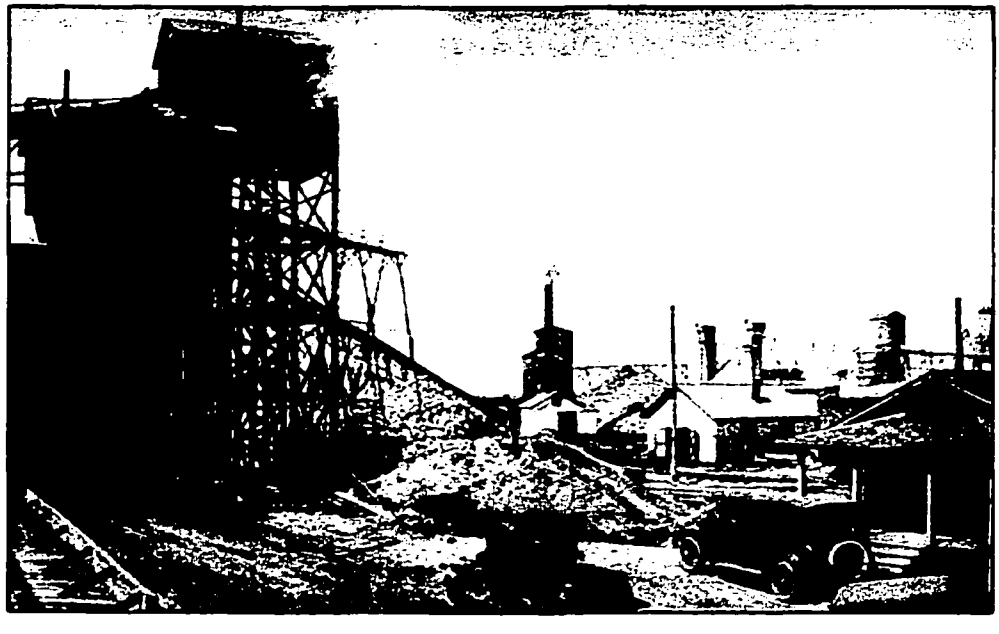


Figure 4-7: An early mining operation, Picher's Lucky Syndicate Mine, 1923. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

the other usual accoutrements of the mining town: the dozens of informal bootlegging establishments found throughout the community and the numerous bordellos clustered around West 4th Street. Picher had a vibrant underground economy. Allegedly, mining officials named many of Picher's streets after their favorite "girl downtown" (for example, Francis, Emily, Ella, Mabel, Gladys, and Pearl Streets). [22]

In 1929, more than 7,000 workers were employed in the Picher Field. Although down from 1920 census counts, Picher's official 1930 population was still an impressive 7,773. By this time, a mature industrial mining complex had developed. Close to 200 different companies were engaged in mining and milling, and derricks, mills, and chat piles dominated the landscape. Most of the zinc was smelted outside of the Tri-State District. Lead was smelted in-district at Galena and Joplin.[23]

The US zinc industry was negatively affected by the Great Depression. Between 1925 and 1932, the price of zinc concentrates plummeted from more than $50 per ton to less than $20, and by 1932, district zinc production had dropped to a low of 89,686 tons. As mines slowed production, thousands of workers lost their jobs. It was at this time that workers began to unionize. The 1930s would be a decade of labor unrest in the Tri-State District, culminating with the bloody Tri-State Metal Workers' Strike of 1935. Military intervention by the Kansas and Oklahoma National Guard and industry organization of a "company union" eventually broke the strike. Although zinc prices rose in the latter years of the 1930s, production never again reached pre-Depression levels. By 1940, Picher's population had fallen to 5,848.[24]

The Picher Field experienced a rejuvenation in the early 1940s. New technologies were needed to mill lower grade ores and to improve processing efficiency in the face of rising production costs and lower metal prices. The answer was central milling, a shift from small-scale mine-site milling to larger mills designed to process ore from numerous mine sites. The Eagle-Picher central mill was built to the southwest of Picher. In its day, it was the largest and most efficient mill of its kind in the world. In 1941, zinc production rose to 233,173 tons, however,

this represented only 60 percent of the annual production achieved in the 1920s. By this time, highly capitalized firms had come to dominate the mining industry, the Eagle-Picher Company being the largest and most efficient producer. Nonetheless, the district was about to enter a period of decline from which it would not recover. Although the federal government had paid subsidized premium prices for lead and zinc during World War II, the subsidies were lifted in 1947, a landmark year for mine closures. The 1950s were marked by further decline in metal production, which was primarily a result of the progressive depletion of the ore deposit. With a diminishing resource and depressed markets, the mining field died. The last large-scale mining operations closed in 1958.[25]

Landscape and Community Meaning in Early Picher

Resident accounts of early Picher are difficult to find. Few early editions of the Picher newspaper (first called the *King Jack*, later renamed the *Tri-State Tribune*) are available in public archives. However, an influential 1939 investigation of social conditions in the district, entitled *A Preliminary Report on Living, Working, and Health Conditions in the Tri-State Mining Area*, contains resident narratives of the camp. In the report, the wife of one old-time miner states:

> You should'a seen Picher in those days . . . The families would come down with a wagon load of furniture and keep a-drivin' over the dirt roads or through the mud till they found a clearin' where they could stay. . . they'd unload their things right in the open fields and start a-buildin' a house around them.[26]

In the same report, a resident identified only as "Mrs. B." elaborates on the challenges early Picherites faced. The following excerpt provides insight into how residents coped:

> In them days there was so much work that people rushed in here and started to git at it before they even had a roof over 'em, but the way they thought then was different than now altogether. Everybody that come here had to work hard but they didn't complain none. Watchin' the new mills go up and the new mines go down was excitin' as watchin' kids grow. Everythin' was growing over night, an' the people felt like they was part of it. . . The mud 'ud be so deep a person couldn't hardly get through it, but I'd put on my big rubber boots an' with the bucket in one hand an' the baby in the other, off I'd go. People come in so fast then that eats was always scarce in town an' lots of times we'd take the horse and buggy an' drive clear to Baxter Springs for groceries. That's how things was here, but nobody complained 'cause it was a new thing an' they felt like part of it.[27]

The comments of other early Picherites reflect a similar "make-do" attitude. Resident Ben Moody, for example, after detailing the hardship he faced growing up in Picher, wrote in the *Tri-State Tribune* in 1993: "We did not complain about these conditions, but would just make do with what we had." Similarly, in 1921, a Picher miner voiced his views on the housing dilemma: "Of course I can only want a shack," he stated matter-of-factly, "if the mining company wants to put a shaft under my front door, or a tailing pile on the kitchen stoop, then I've got to move."[28]

Contrary to the belief that the "Ozarkian" workforce was unaware that living and working conditions were particularly poor, residents appear to have been aware of their hardship. A case in point is the following poem written in 1918 by an anonymous Picherite:

> I'll tell you a town, a town known well
> The filthiest town known this side of Hell;
> A town where they mined for lead and jack
> And the boulders fall on your head and back,
> And they hoist you out in an empty can
> And the parson prays for the unlucky man;
> You are carried away by a man named Todd
> And planted far beneath the sod.[29]

Curiously, while hardship is recognized, a sentiment appears to have existed that survival through these difficult days was an enriching experience; the strong would survive and their struggle made them better people. Ben Moody wrote:

> I once saw a visiting Dignitary from the East looking over a group of young boys playing in Picher. They were ragged, had no shoes on although the weather was cool. This Eastern Dignitary made the remark that all the children of Picher seemed to be strong and healthy. His host, a Picher resident, replied that he was only seeing the strong survivors and that the weak ones had not made it. . . Some how we survived and each of us were made better men and women from the rigors we lived through in the Picher Mining Field.[30]

Acceptance of adversity in these early narratives could be interpreted as fatalism. However, while some Picherites may have viewed their predicament as beyond control, acceptance of hardship also reflects resident optimism that life in the new mining camp would prove better than what they had left behind. As "Mrs. B" stated, Picherites were caught up in the excitement of the mining rush. Despite the hardships, Picher provided hope for a better future.

Acceptance of harsh conditions also reveals the desperation of early residents. For those who had moved from other areas of the Tri-State where mining was on the decline, Picher provided a final opportunity for local employment. "When the mines opened up the people lived in boxes, any way they could," explains longtime area resident Grace Beauchamp, whom I interviewed in 1999. "All these people needed jobs and they would work anyplace they could get the work . . . what else could they have done?" (Figure 4-8)[31]

Figure 4-8: A one room miners' shack at Hockerville, a camp located on the margins of Picher, circa 1920. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

Early outside observers viewed Picher in a different light. Like Ben Moody's Eastern dignitary who saw only health and strength in the poor Picher children, most outsiders tended to see only economic progress in the town, ignoring the hardship residents faced. Some of the earliest written accounts of Picher can be found in the *Miami Record-Herald* (Miami, Oklahoma, is located 9 miles south of Picher). "Picher gives promise of being a famous camp," the newspaper observed on October 1, 1915. One week later the paper reported that the sight of the drilling rigs blanketing the area provided a "panorama of push and progress." The Miami newspaper followed industrial development in the area with unbridled optimism.[32] On November 15, 1915, the newspaper wrote:

> Cardin and Picher, the two husky mining towns, are putting on a continuous "watch us grow" performance to an audience that is growing larger and more enthusiastic every day. . . The restless, ceaseless activity of the people, the newness of all the houses, the maze of drills that circle each town about, the shafts that are headed "hell bent" for ore of great extent and high percentage, and the new concentrating plants being erected, is evidence to even a tenderfoot that mining enthusiasm is rampant. . . the zinc blende twins will live to a ripe old age before the vitality of their origin is exhausted.[33]

In an article entitled "Where Rainbow End Touches the Earth," the Miami paper exclaimed optimistically: "[Picher] is here in place and permanency . . . its prosperity is not a coincidence, nor temporary . . . the end of the rainbow will continue to rest on the northeast corner of Ottawa County." Even Oklahoma City's *Daily Oklahoman* followed the amazing growth of the far-off Picher mining field. Like local newspaper coverage, Oklahoma City reporters viewed the camp as a spectacle of industrial prosperity.[34]

This early coverage represents the most glowing assessments the town would ever receive from the outside world. The community's rapid growth, and the increasing volumes of lead and zinc that the field was producing, impressed journalists. In the early years, the transformation mining brought to the landscape of Ottawa County was viewed as wondrous. The *Miami Record-Herald* wrote in 1915:

> Busy mining towns and camps have taken the place of grazing herds, and gigantic tailings piles have taken the place of the prairie dog mounds of other days. Instead of Indian teepees there are modern concentrating mills producing enormous quantities of zinc concentrates, and now instead of being classed as an agricultural state, Oklahoma is entitled to a place of prominence among the mining states of the American Union.[35]

Such newspaper coverage served as promotional narratives designed to bolster the image of Picher and encourage its growth. However, as demonstrated in the above description, these accounts also reflect a sentiment, still widespread at the time, that the development of Indian land was an unquestionable good. Over the course of Anglo settlement, Indian land was widely viewed as unused land and native interests were almost always placed behind those of industry. Quapaw land was no exception. In *Pigs of Lead*, a silent newsreel produced by Eagle-Picher, panoramic scenes of early mining operations are contrasted to images of "primitive" Indian

agricultural settlement. The following text accompanied these images: "Picher, Oklahoma, in 1915 was a prairie earning its Indian owners fifty cents per acre a year for grazing. . . Today, the world's greatest lead and zinc field, produces almost $60,000,000 a year in ore!" (Figure 4-9)[36]

Figure 4-9: An idealized view of Picher's industrial landscape, circa 1930. The caption on the reverse side of the promotional postcard reads: "Northeast Oklahoma leads the world in the production of lead and zinc . . . the land on which these mines are located is owned by the Quapaw Indians, many have become wealthy through royalties they receive."

That most of the ore underlay restricted Indian land was no hindrance to mineral development. In fact, there is evidence that the "Indian land problem," as it came to be called, may have actually facilitated mining activity. The BIA was charged with protecting the interests of the Quapaw. Those Indians who owned ore-bearing land received BIA negotiated royalties from the mining companies (a percentage royalty of the gross mineral sales from the tract), and as the agency often pointed out, a number of Quapaw families amassed significant wealth. However, control of mineral leasing lay entirely in the hands of the BIA. Although it is likely that the Picher Field would have been exploited regardless of who had owned it, it is clear that the agency negotiated royalty agreements that heavily favored the mining industry. The degree to which the BIA's management of allotted land may have facilitated mineral development has not

been investigated. The agency's general policies regarding management of Quapaw allotments, however, were reflective of broader perceptions of Indian land. Prior to mineral development, the BIA viewed the Quapaw allotments as underutilized land. Such sentiment may well have facilitated mineral development. Without question, it stimulated favorable assessments of the field's industrial transformation.[37]

In comparing early accounts of Picher, several themes emerge that proved to be long-lasting. Most apparent is that residents and outsiders viewed the town in markedly different ways. Outside interpretations would soon change, but the contrast in meaning is worthy of note. Outsiders could only marvel at Picher's growth in the early years, and they failed to recognize the community's shortcomings or the struggles its residents faced. Evident in resident accounts, however, is that life in Picher was extraordinarily difficult. Residents were conscious of Picher's shortcomings, but they also displayed a tendency to focus on the fact that they were doing their best under trying circumstances. Indeed, a degree of pride was even developing among Picherites in their ability to endure. These were to become defining characteristics of community identity through the mining era and beyond.

"Sores Beyond Cure": Outside Views of the Maturing Mining Town

By 1920, Picher was the largest and most productive mining town in the Tri-State District. Despite its prominence, however, it did not take long for outsiders to begin focusing on the negative aspects of life in the maturing mining town. In 1918, for example, the *Miami Record-Herald* was focusing increased attention on housing, transportation, and sanitation problems. At the same time, the newspaper also began sensationalizing the seedier aspects of community life. A front page article appearing in 1918 reported the existence of a "white slave gang" that was operating from the Picher Hotel, an organization that was shipping young women out of the district "for immoral purposes." The newspaper also contained accounts of "vice rings" engaged in gambling, bootlegging, and prostitution. Frequent, too, were graphic descriptions of mining accidents.[38]

Coverage of the difficult and unlawful conditions existing in the town signaled the beginning of a shift in outside perceptions. This early redefinition of Picher was surprising given that the community was still experiencing population growth and industrial expansion. True, industrial progress remained a topic of outside interest, but such promotion was increasingly tempered by descriptions of the shabby nature of development (Figure 4-10). In 1917, for example, an unnamed correspondent working for the *Daily Oklahoman* wrote:

> The town of Picher has sprung up from the prairie. It has a population of about 8,000, almost as big as Miami itself. Its growth has necessarily been of the shack character. There it sprawls on the open plain, a gangling, awkward, disheveled creature hot as an inferno under its noon sun, and treeless as a desert. Up and down its main street the traffic of the district swings ceaselessly; taxis sweating in from Miami and Joplin or returning; motor trucks creaking under their loads of machinery; ore wagons lumbering slowly past; and clouds of dust swirling forever. Sanitary conditions are of course elementary. There is no public utility service. . . [the water supply] is pure and wholesome when delivered, but its method of storage is the primitive barrel. Mostly those barrels are covered but occasionally you see one with its top off, willingly receptive to whatever wandering germ or strolling bacillus comes its way.

The reporter went on to marvel at the wealth being generated from Picher's mines but he soon returned to the topic of living conditions. The Indian land problem, and the belief that poor living conditions were unavoidable in the mining town, are cited as the causes of Picher's problems.

> . . . it is impossible to get away from the water in the barrels and the utter lack of sanitary provisions. Yet the building of permanent towns on the sites of these mining camps doesn't seem practicable. First, this land is Indian land, and it is occupied and operated under the tenure of leases. Second, there is the potential mineral value of the town sites, which may at any time make it advisable to mine the land. The Netta mine is right now threatening to bite a big chunk out of Picher's main street, necessitating the removal of a good many houses, and inflicting acute curvature of the spine on the city's most fashionable boulevard . . . In the unavoidable conditions, the health of the people is continuously menaced. The standards of living, manifestly, can never be brought to a normal level.[39]

The Depression and strike years of the 1930s served to harden Picher's image as a hopelessly destitute place. During this time, the *Miami Record-Herald* paid close attention to the decline in metal production, but it also reported the plight of impoverished Picherites. In November 1931, the newspaper described how more than 1,650 free meals were served daily by the Picher Christian Army, and how the Legionnaires had shot 50 rabbits in a "relief hunt." By

January 1932, the *Record-Herald* was reporting that the Picher Emergency Relief Association, which was serving an average of 1,200 meals daily, had established a centralized food distribution station. The meager menu was pork, beans, and bread.[40]

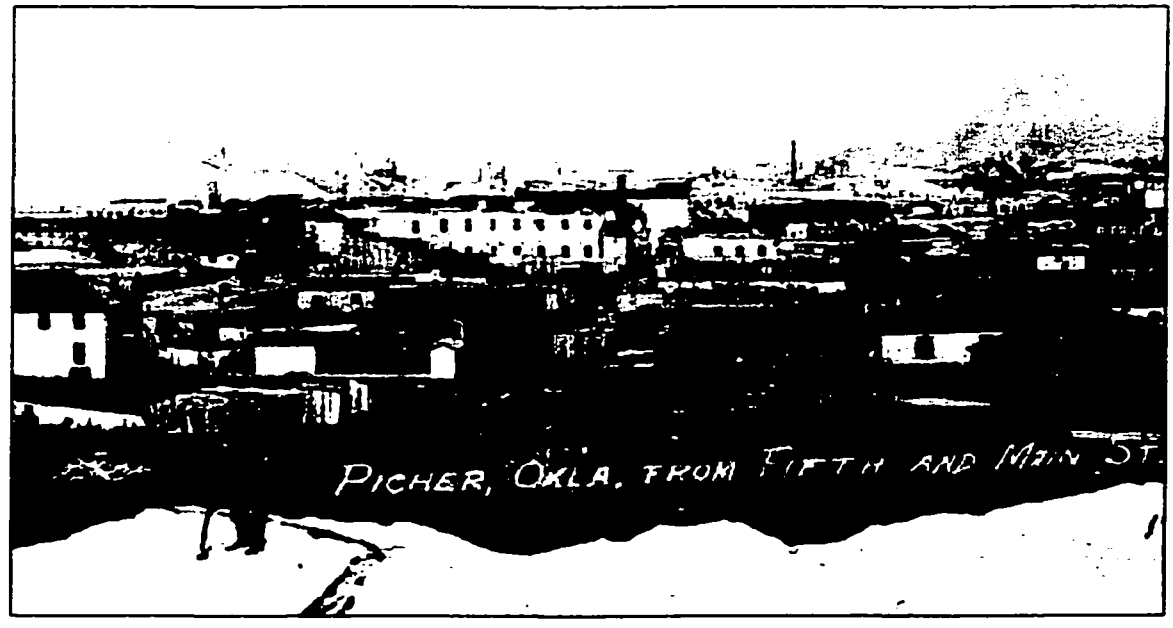


Figure 4-10: Looking north into downtown Picher from atop the Premier Mine chat pile, circa 1920. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

During the metal workers' strike of 1935, local and state newspaper coverage was highly critical of the union cause, and striking Picherites were portrayed in a disparaging light. Once the strike was settled, however, a degree of optimism returned to outside descriptions of the community. In November 1935, the *Tulsa Daily World* reported that prosperity had returned to the mining district. In 1936, the *Daily Oklahoman* published an article entitled "Happy Days in the Mines Again." Unfortunately, the optimism expressed in these articles was again tempered by descriptions of deplorable living and working conditions. "Although the situation is brighter . . . there is no boom in progress at Picher," wrote the *Daily Oklahoman*. "Don't go rushing up to Miami or Picher looking for a job in the mines. The communities still have plenty of idle workmen . . . there are about 2,000 men in Ottawa County on relief rolls."[41]

State and local newspapers were reluctant to unconditionally promote Picher even in times of economic improvement. However, newspaper journalists were not responsible for producing Picher's harshest appraisals. These came from social reformers and labor activists.[42] The first critical exposés produced on the town appeared in the labor magazine *The Survey*, in 1921. The article was written by Charles Morris Mills, an agent of the Industrial Relations Department of the Interchurch World Movement. The following excerpt details Mills' observation of the Picher landscape:

> Like many other mining communities, the centers of past and present productive activity set forth a Sahara-like panorama. Mammoth tailings piles, frequently 50 to 100 feet in height, marking the life and energy of a mining property, cover thousands of acres of formerly fertile land which can never be reclaimed for agricultural purposes. The soil, contaminated with the overflow from the mills, becomes barren. Everything has been sacrificed in the feverish scramble to get as much ore out in the quickest time possible and nature has consequently suffered abortions from which she can seemingly never recover. This distinctly hideous outlook seems to be a psychological factor in the line of both miner and operator; both tend to become dwarfed and stunted by the waste and barrenness of their environment.[43]

Mills' account represents one of the earliest descriptions of environmental problems in the Picher Field. However, the article focuses most of its attention on working and living conditions. Mills describes the dangers of underground mining, the high incidence of silicosis among the miners, and the operator's exploitive wage system (Figure 4-11).[44] He also describes the lack of quality housing and the inadequacy of sanitation systems, and he places blame on the mining companies for not addressing these issues. Mills writes: "Operators in the Tri-State area, with rare exceptions, have done nothing for the welfare of their employees. The whole industry stands in a Pre-Victorian period of social development."[45]

Citing the temporary nature of leases and the impermanent nature of the mining settlement, Mills claimed that a "feverish unsteadiness" was "warping the social instincts and ideals" of area inhabitants. Moreover, he wrote that both the miner and operator had become "dwarfed and stunted by the waste and barrenness of their environment." Because of their harsh surroundings, he explained, Picherites "lacked the commonest incentives for decency."[46]

Figure 4-11: Miners in the Denver-Miami Mine in Ottawa County, 1916. *Used with permission, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma.*

Mills' was attempting to expose industry exploitation and raise public awareness of Picher's plight. However, by portraying Picher as a place where nature had suffered "abortions" from which it could "never recover," his work conveys a sense of hopelessness. Indeed, such sentiment is evident in all of the social reform literature produced on Picher during the mining era. The most significant of these was the Tri-State Survey Committee's aforementioned *A Preliminary Report on Living, Working, and Health Conditions in the Tri-State Mining Area* (hereafter *Preliminary Report*). An organization founded by the New York-based National Committee for People's Rights, the Tri-State Survey Committee was charged with bringing attention to the area's social problems. In the introduction to the *Preliminary Report*, committee secretary Gifford Cochran described the region as a "death trap." He claimed that conditions needed publicizing because they "represented a denial of the basic rights of decent living to a whole community and therefore had to be considered as a matter of concern to the nation itself."[47]

The *Preliminary Report* contains more than 80 pages of descriptive text, photographs, family histories, and resident narratives. The family histories paint a particularly disturbing portrait of Picher life. The eight-child family of "Mrs. R," for example, came to the community from Arkansas in 1915. After working underground for 15 years, "Mr. R's" lungs began to hemorrhage and he succumbed to miners' consumption. A similar fate claimed the lives of the family's two oldest sons. A third son, who had not worked in the mines, contracted tuberculosis and died at age 18. This family's tragedy, one of many appearing in the *Preliminary Report*, left behind two widows and nine fatherless children.[48]

Also detailed was the degraded condition of the Picher landscape, the landmarks of which are described as "mountainous piles of useless mining waste." The *Preliminary Report* reads: "Chat piles loom up in the very heart of Picher. Every wind that blows across these piles raises a miniature dust storm of almost pure silica." The report explained that a blanket of hazardous dust covered the community, that children were swimming in chemical-filled millponds, and that "the chance was two-to-one that any particular miner lived in a home not fit for habitation." The house of disabled worker "Mr. U" is singled out as an example of Tri-State housing at its worst:

> It is a two-room shack in the outskirts of the town, reached by a rough and dusty chat road, and standing by itself on a desolate, sun-beaten plain. Mr. U has no garden and livestock. He uses about a barrel of water a day, which comes from Picher by truck without any inspection. The house is half a mile from the nearest store and a quarter-mile from the school, which is built on a chat pile.[49]

The Tri-State Survey Committee identified living conditions in Picher as the worst in the district and their findings were highly publicized. The *New York Times*, *Business Week*, and *Time Magazine* gave Picher national attention in the wake of the report's release (Figure 4-12). It also spurred Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins to sponsor a national conference on Tri-State conditions, held in Joplin, Missouri, in 1940. One positive outcome of this attention is that it stimulated a number of studies focusing on the control of silicosis, an issue in desperate need of address for Ottawa County had the unenviable distinction of having the highest tuberculosis fatality rate in the nation.[50]

Figure 4-12: Photograph from *Time* magazine publicizing the findings of the *Preliminary Report*. "Zinc Stink," *Time*, 4 December, 1939, 63.

A variety of other texts were also produced in the 1930s and '40s that critically publicized conditions in Picher. In the wake of the 1935 Metal Workers Strike, for example, two substantial works of non-fiction were produced that provided discouraging appraisals of life in Picher. Lallah Davidson's *South of Joplin: Story of a Tri-State Diggins'*, focused on the community's industry-derived social problems. So, too, did Malcolm Ross's *Death of a Yale Man*. Ross, a National Labor Relations Board investigator, wrote: " . . . some 300,000,000 tons of chat piles, high as skyscrapers, comprise the local scenery. The Oklahoma sun reflects hotly from their slopes. They add a new hardness to a physically unfavored country." Ross described how the Ozark Hills were "rich in hungry hillbillies," providing an unfailing reservoir of manpower for the mining industry. Although he sympathized with Picher's striking miners, he believed that their fight to improve living and working conditions was a hopeless cause: "Twenty years of silicosis, hillbilly recruiting by cowhorn, and the final depression disaster," Ross wrote, "have galled sores beyond cure."[51]

Famed Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographer Arthur Rothstein visited the mining area in 1936. On his visit, Rothstein shot a small collection of photographs that provide a powerful visual record of living conditions in Picher. Like other FSA photographers, it was Rothstein's goal to document the need for New Deal social programs. It is telling, that, in addition to Dust Bowl-ravaged western Oklahoma, Rothstein chose Picher as a place to record some of the worst living conditions existing in the nation (Figure 4-13).[52]

Figure 4-13: Zinc Miners' Home, Ottawa County, 1936. *Arthur Rothstein. Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information Photographic Collection.*

Operators made modest efforts to discredit these critical exposés. Industry promotion lay in the hands of the Tri-State Ore Producers Association. In the wake of the 1935 strike, Association Secretary M. D. Harbaugh responded with an article entitled "Labor Relations in the Tri-State Mining District." Appearing in *The Mining Congress Journal* in 1936, the article

represents the most determined effort made on behalf of industry to defend their cause. Harbaugh praised the independent, intelligent, "American" character of district workers. He claimed that a democratic relationship existed between management and workmen, and he lauded industry efforts to improve working conditions.[53]

Although a firm defender of the mining industry, it is interesting to note that even Harbaugh admitted that unsatisfactory living conditions existed in the field, namely, in Picher. However, Harbaugh claimed that operators could not be held responsible for its condition. He explained that, due to the short-term nature of Indian leases, the short life span of individual mines, and because no one could tell when mining operations might "require that dwellings be moved," no incentive existed for workers to construct permanent housing. Harbaugh made no apology for Picher's plight. First and foremost, Picher was a mining town, and it was natural for the interests of industry – the siting of mines, chat piles and millponds – to hold precedence over other concerns. Furthermore, he also deflected much of the responsibility for Picher's problems onto residents, who, he stated, "could live elsewhere if they chose, [but] prefer to live in close proximity to their work." Siting a longstanding prejudice, he also claimed that Picherites had low standards when it came to the quality of their environment.[54]

Area operators produced other publications but none matched Harbaugh's article in their resolve to defend the mining industry. An article appearing in the *Engineering and Mining Journal* in 1924, for example, released at the very height of the field's productivity, questioned the long-term viability of the ore deposits. The most detailed industry publication to deal with Picher, however, was a collection of articles appearing in the same journal in 1943. Also released at a time when mineral production was high, the lead article was nonetheless pessimistic about the future of the Picher Field, stating that the area could not be expected to maintain its dominant position in the nation's zinc economy. The general tone of the *Engineering and Mining Journal's* 1943 collection is that of a field on the decline. Like newspaper reporters of the era, even industry representatives had a difficult time unconditionally promoting Picher.[55]

Telling of the way industry representatives had come to view Picher's social problems is that, unlike Harbaugh's earlier analysis, the *Engineering and Mining Journal's* 1943 collection lacked any discussion of living conditions. Why these issues were not addressed is difficult to gauge. Operators may have concluded that little could be done to alter Picher's image. Perhaps such efforts were believed to be unnecessary because the field had a limited future. More likely, industry promoters may have simply given up trying to explain away Picher's most frequently noted shortcoming because the negative consequences of maintaining the status quo were negligible. Despite critical exposure, neither the state nor federal governments had demanded significant reforms aimed at improving living conditions. Operators had instituted few changes and their lack of addressing the issue even in print reveals that they were under little pressure to do so. In short, the work of social reformers and labor activists resulted in little public, industry, or government empathy for the community.[56]

The transformation in outside perceptions of Picher, from a place of industrial progress to a locale of hardship and dereliction, could be viewed as a sign that outsiders had become sensitized to the plight of Picherites. Unfortunately, however, this redefinition proved as insensitive to Picher's internal meaning as had earlier promotional discourses. Demands for improvement in living and working conditions did not generate action from the outside world, in part, because the critical exposés that were produced only served to create the impression that Picher was beyond help. As far as the world could tell, Picher was a hopeless cause, a place sacrificed to the interests of industry. Amplifying this perception, and further subduing public sympathy, was that Picherites were believed to have low expectations regarding the quality of their lives. Poverty and landscape decay were recognized as serious problems, but demands for reform were muted by the external perception that residents were accepting of their lot.

Resident Perceptions in the Mining Era

> Would you have the land as it was before the mines? There was only a dream then. It took strong men to shoulder that dream into railroads and highways and towns and libraries and hospitals and schools. Do not use the words waste, pain,

> tragedy and death. These are the words of failure. The era of King Jack was lusty, exciting, fearful, prodigious and cruelly strong. But it was not failure, not exploitation, not unbridled waste.[57]

As local historian Velma Nieberding explains above, looking only disparagingly at Picher's dilapidated appearance during the era of "King Jack" ("jack" is a colloquial term for zinc ore), outsiders ignored the town's function as a community and the value it held as a lived-in place. For those who called Picher home, the town was not a hopeless place. To the contrary, residents displayed considerable resolve in attempting to improve conditions in the town and create a more livable and lasting community. The first civic improvement implemented by Picherites came before the town was incorporated. In 1917, citizens formed the Commercial Club. Picher's first civic governing group, the organization set out to address the community's most pressing problems. The Commercial Club elected a Justice of the Peace and deputized three law officers. The Club raised $5,000 by popular subscription for the construction of Picher's first schoolhouse and raised money for fire-fighting equipment and street repairs. Donations and volunteer labor funded these early improvements as the Indian land on which the town sat was nontaxable.[58]

Arrell Gibson claims that Picher was a company town, an observation based on the fact that Eagle-Picher held control over most of the leases on which the town sat, thus dictating where structures could be sited and for how long they would stand. However, the town was neither built, maintained, nor governed by a single business firm, and while Eagle-Picher played a dominant role in community life, Picher was not, by definition, a company town. For the most part, residents built and managed Picher's civic infrastructure. In light of this fact, given the limited means of most residents and the paltry budget of the city government, the community's modest accomplishments were significant.[59]

Picher was incorporated in 1918. Soon after, a Chamber of Commerce was organized and a $250,000 bond issue was passed, providing funds for water works and sewers. The community also actively canvassed for donations to build schools. Although chronically under-

funded, close to 1,900 students were enrolled in the area school system by the late 1920s. In a history of the Picher schools produced in 1939, one-time resident Genevieve Stovall Craig wrote, "A personal visit to the various schools will open up to the outsider an amazing and dramatic panorama of public education typical of the American system."[60]

While many community services remained poor, resident apathy was not the cause. As local newspaper editor Frank D. Hills explained in the late 1920s, it was largely due to the efforts of residents that improvements had been made. Hills writes:

> Picher unblushingly presents no excuse or apology for its apparent delinquencies. Everything cannot be as one would have it and there are many things left to do to complete dreams of the future. The improvements of the past have been made by spirited sacrifice on the part of the citizens who have labored under nearly every conceivable handicap. . . . [Picher] sprang into existence as a necessity instead of the result of a blueprinted utopia of an idealist. The vitality was here; the resources were here and the people came before preparations were fully made to receive them.[61]

Clearly, residents recognized Picher's problems. However, unlike outside accounts showing a community languishing under hardship, Picher is shown as a place striving to improve.

While resident accounts frequently recognize the harshness of living conditions, it is important to note that the tone of their narratives differs from those produced by outsiders. The Tri-State Survey Committee's *Preliminary Report*, for example, includes resident descriptions of the community in an attached appendix. These provide a more personalized account of conditions in the town and they contrast in significant ways to the critical dialogue appearing in the main body of the report. In the following excerpt, "Mrs. C.," a 35-year-old Picher widow, comments on the condition of her home:

> The house stands on a single lot of Indian ground, the dollar-a-month rent for which has not been paid for several years. It is unpainted and has no foundation, and its yard is littered and in bad condition. It has holes in the sides, patched with tin, and holes in the roof. When asked about the latter Mrs. C replied with a laugh, "Does it leak! Look at that hole. You could throw a cat through it – and look up there; from every place you look inside you can see daylight coming through." But she regarded this as an advantage on a nice day, for it let a lot of light and air into the place; the window frames had all been filled up with tin to replace the broken panes.[62]

This narrative suggests that the "make-do" attitude prevalent among early residents continued on into the 1930s. "Mrs. C." found a way to view her predicament in a positive light. The comments of miner "Mr. Q.," reflect similar sentiment. "It's a pretty unhealthy place to live," he stated, "but the chemicals in the mill ponds fertilize the water and make the flowers grow."[63]

This ability to shrug off hardship is common in resident narratives. Iva Simpson, for example, in an article appearing in Picher's *Tri-State Tribune*, described in a most matter-of-fact way the events that led to the moving of her childhood home: "The Acme Mill chat pile had grown and spread across the length of more than a block of Ella Street; already it was knee deep in most yards. All the houses had to be moved. . . One day the movers came, jacked our house up on timbers, and pulled it up the hill." With only a hint of resignation she stated, "one phase of our life in Picher had ended." Such stoicism is also evident in the comments of resident Ben Moody. In an article appearing in the *Tri-State Tribune*, Moody recalled Picher's Depression years: " . . . there were so many hard times in the Picher Mining Field that when the Great Depression started in 1930 the people only knew there was a depression because there were just a little more of hard times than usual."[64]

Resident accounts lack the histrionics prevalent in external narratives. For Picherites, dilapidated housing, chemical-filled millponds, and expanding chat piles were a part of life coped with as best one could. Again, it is possible to interpret this sentiment as fatalism. However, given the effort residents were making to improve conditions in the town, it is difficult to believe that Picherites viewed their predicament as beyond improvement. Acceptance of these conditions was not driven by hopeless resignation. Instead, this was how Picherites coped with a life that was extraordinarily difficult.

An autobiography written by Mickey Mantle, the area's revered hometown hero (the baseball legend grew up in the town of Commerce and his father was a longtime Eagle-Picher miner), provides an example of how residents were making the best of their forbidding environment. Mantle writes:

> One summer we claimed a spot near an abandoned mine shaft. It made a perfect baseball field, smooth and firm. One bad feature, though, was the outfield. An endless plain of alkali. You couldn't see a ditch or a fence or anything that would slow the ball down. I guess it's the main reason I became an infielder . . . whenever the wind came howling in, it carried gray clouds of alkali dust, the gritty particles that swept over the field and burned into our eyes nearly blinding us. End of game. We'd cough all the way home.[65]

For residents, the mining landscape was used to advantage. Tailings ponds were converted into baseball fields, millponds became swimming holes, and chat piles were playgrounds.

Residents displayed an awareness of environmental hazards but they also viewed minings' physical legacy as unique, and, in some ways, valued aspects of their home. Recounting the panoramic view atop a chat pile, for example, Picherite Marion A. Parsons described his first visit to the town in 1925. He writes:

> I reached the top and stood in wonder – you might say awe and amazement at what I could see from this tremendously high vantage point in the sky. I could hardly believe my eyes! . . . I looked and looked; to the East, West, North and South, and then, as in a daze, slowly rotated a few degrees at a time, each time discovering new shapes, sizes, clouds of smoke, wisps of steam, movement of trains, trucks, horses and wagons – near and far. It was a veritable land of machines, buildings, tall and short and the movements were amazing. People seemed to be everywhere.[66]

Not only did Picherites find ways to adapt to the mining environment, but as noted earlier, a significant part of their identity was based on their ability to survive in this difficult place. A case in point was residents' use of the term "chat rat." A nickname used for Picherites, the term is complicated for it was often applied by outsiders in a derisive manner. However, the moniker was also used in a good-natured way by Picherites, showing that many took pride in residing amid the chat piles. Picherites made few apologies for their lifestyle, the condition of the town, or the nature of their work. In fact, central to the "chat rat" identity was the reputation the town held as a tough, hard-living place. While residents recognized that their lives were hard, this was *their* way of life.

One-time miner Orville "Hoppy" Ray, in an interview I conducted in 1999, proudly described these attributes of the town and its people. In a characteristically matter-of-fact way,

Ray describes the nature of the mining occupation:

> Most miners died before they was 45 years old but they were hard-rock miners – hard living. My dad and brother was miners, and I was a miner. It was just living for Christ sakes . . . You hear a lot of people say, "man those were the worst jobs in the world," but Hells-bells, the temperature was the same year round, you knew who you was working with, and you knew what you had to do—you just went down and done it.

For Ray, mining was an honest way of life, and a similar theme is evident in his description of Picher. Although the town had a negative outside reputation, Ray described how Picher held local value as a home. He took pride in being part of a cohesive community where people would eagerly lend a hand in times of need:

> We had 22 bars here at one time, at least every third building was a bar. You could walk down Main Street, or down Second or Connell, and you'd see four, five, or six fights. Old knockdown drag-out fights. Everybody stood around and watched. . . I'll tell you, there wasn't nothing like Picher. These old miners here, years ago, when there wasn't any hospitalization, no insurance, no nothing, if a family got down and out, they went and passed the paper. They'd go around different places, you'd sign your name and throw in a quarter. There was very few that wouldn't pitch in. . . that's the way people were around here. You didn't need to lock your doors, you didn't need to worry about anything. Oh, Picher had a rough reputation, everyone knew about Picher. We had a Hell of a reputation . . . bad asses could come to Picher and no one would bother them . . . but still, it was safe here.[67]

Longtime resident John Mott, whom I also interviewed in 1999, expressed similar sentiment:

> When I grew up, you never did here of anybody molesting a girl or a child or anything. I just never did hear of it in Picher. Kids would go to a show on Wednesday night, go downtown and come walk home at ten o'clock, everywhere. You just didn't have any problems at all and this was the high days of mining. But, on Saturday nights, the miners would go down to the bars and they were tough, hard-working people, and they drank and fought. Some of them would rather fight than eat. But the next day they would work together and never think a thing about it. . . Once in a while someone would rob somebody—rob a poker game—but as far as going in and breaking into someone's house we never locked our place, didn't even have a key to our house when I grew up.[68]

In *The History of Ottawa County*, Velma Nieberding described Picher as a place of "sludge ponds, tailings piles, miners' shacks, muddy streets, honky-tonk music, and bootleggers." Nieberding wrote that Picher, "was a world of a reckless breed," where the miner, "was as hard as the rock itself." She characterized the miner as an "optimistic, superstitious, daredevil," who

"drank his whiskey straight and settled disputes with bare fists."[69] While romanticized, her account reveals how many Picherites took pride in nurturing these images of place and personal identity. Such sentiment is evident in the comments of Hoppy Ray and John Mott. It is also displayed in the following poem written by Picherite Henry Craig. Appearing in a 1975 booklet celebrating Picher's bicentennial, the first and last verses read:

> The story of Picher is not told by date
> But by the wives and mothers who patiently wait
> In humble shacks, sans yards or gates,
> For the whistles to blow at the close of day.
> Wondering how long to count on pay.
> With a constant worry, a constant dread
> Of how the children will be fed
> If the mines close down Friday night;
> Uncertainty only in sight, they
> Wish for land to call their own
> To plant a rose bush, build a home
>
> The story is told by the spoilers, man,
> Removing life's riches can by can.
> When we've played the game of "put and take",
> God doing the putting, man claiming the stake,
> And removed the last pound of "jack" and lead,
> Then we're gone, place at our head
> A little stone with a simple verse,
> "It's bound to be better; it won't be worse;
> 'Though now we're poor some day we'll be richer.
> Here lies a man who loved Picher."[70]

After detailing how he managed to overcome the hardships of Picher life, Ben Moody wrote, "anyone who lived or worked in the Picher mining field is proud of it."[71] However, it is important to note that not all residents expressed an affinity for the town. The desire to leave Picher is also evident in resident narratives. Such sentiment is particularly prevalent in the accounts of Picher women. "It's a pitiful way of living," states the widowed "Mrs. I." in the *Preliminary Report*. She explains that, before her husband died of tuberculosis, she often pleaded with him to leave Picher. Unfortunately, her family was trapped by poverty and debt:

> "I always begged him to git out, but we never could put by enough money to take the risk of making a change. I never liked this mining business because, for one thing, we couldn't ever save anything . . . they'd work a month, then the mines would shut down, and there we were, in and out of debt all the time."

Also in the *Preliminary Report*, resident "Mrs. P." stated:

> "Ever since I came to Picher I wished I could leave the minin' country . . . Last year my husband died of the miners' con. One of my boys is away at the sanatorium tryin' to get well. Even so, I've got two boys left an' they're both well, an' now I want to git away from here more than I ever did 'cause I want to keep these last two out of the mines if I can."[72]

For Picher women, the mining life provided fewer rewards. Their place of toil, the miners' shack, lacked the romance and camaraderie of the mine.[73] With responsibilities focusing primarily on the family and the home, Picher was a lonelier and more menacing place. The comments of former residents Lawrence and Theo Barr, in an interview conducted by the Oklahoma State Historical Society in 1985, demonstrate the different ways men and women viewed the community. In characteristic fashion, Mr. Barr proudly detailed the hazards of the mining occupation and the boisterous nature of the community. He states, "I got a good education in Picher. I'm not ashamed of the town and I'm not ashamed for anyone to know I'm from Picher. . . Some day I may go back 'cause there's a lot of people up there I like." At several points in the interview, however, Mrs. Barr interjected with statements tempering her husband's fond recollections. After Mr. Barr described how many Picherites supplemented their income by bootlegging, for example, Mrs. Barr interrupted, "They never had any law and order up there. You could do anything you were big enough to do and that's the truth." While Mr. Barr remembered fellow Picherites warmly, Mrs. Barr stated, "Those people up there were mean and tough and rough . . . they got drunk and beat their wives and beat their kids and that's the kind of life they led . . . that's the way the miners lived."[74]

In contrast to outside accounts depicting Picher as a hopelessly destitute place, the residents of Picher viewed the town in a more complex way. Clearly evident in residents' attempts to better their lives and build a lasting community is a concern with quality of life issues. Unlike external accounts, resident narratives show that Picherites were trying to make the best of a life and a landscape that, while difficult, was also meaningful. Residents recognized the squalor

and environmental decay in which they lived yet many also found merit in the mining town. An identity had developed that was centered on the mining occupation, the harsh landscape, and the tough but honest nature of Picher life. To be sure, not all viewed Picher in this way. Just as it was shortsighted for outsiders to have ignored Picher's value as a community, it would be equally wrong to overstate the attachments residents established to place. For many, particularly Picher women, the town was a cruel environment where poverty kept them bound to a place they could not escape.

Resident narratives capture qualities of a landscape and way of life that were not communicated by outsiders, the majority of whom were unable to portray Picher as anything other than a spectacle, first of wondrous industrial progress, then of shameful destitution and industrial sacrifice. From the inside, Picher was a town that held far-ranging and often ambivalent meaning. Internal meanings were multiple and diverse and were at odds with the more homogenous and superficial views of outsiders.

Mine Closure and Community Persistence

Outsiders ignored Picher's function as a community and home throughout the mining era, and their impersonal representations had a negative impact on the community. Even the works of social reformers, although intended to draw attention to the community's problems, inadvertently contributed to the perception that Picher was little more than a sacrificial industrial landscape. Viewing residents as passive and apathetic, it became easy for outsiders to write Picher off, and such sentiments continued to dominate external perceptions in the post-mining era.

In many ways, the demise of the mining industry intensified hardships for those who stayed on in Picher. By the late 1940s, Picher's remaining ore body was of marginal quality and operators had become reliant on mineral price subsidies to maintain profitability. When these subsidies were removed at the end of World War II, many of the mines shut down (Figure 4-14). "Slow-down wasn't gradual," states Hoppy Ray, "this town supplied most of the bullets for two World Wars but in 1947 the subsidy was vetoed. It was a landmark year, everybody left." Picher

lost approximately one third of its population in the 1940s. By 1950, only 3,951 people remained. From 1950 to 1960, the population again declined by one third. By 1960, Picher's official population was 2,553.[75]

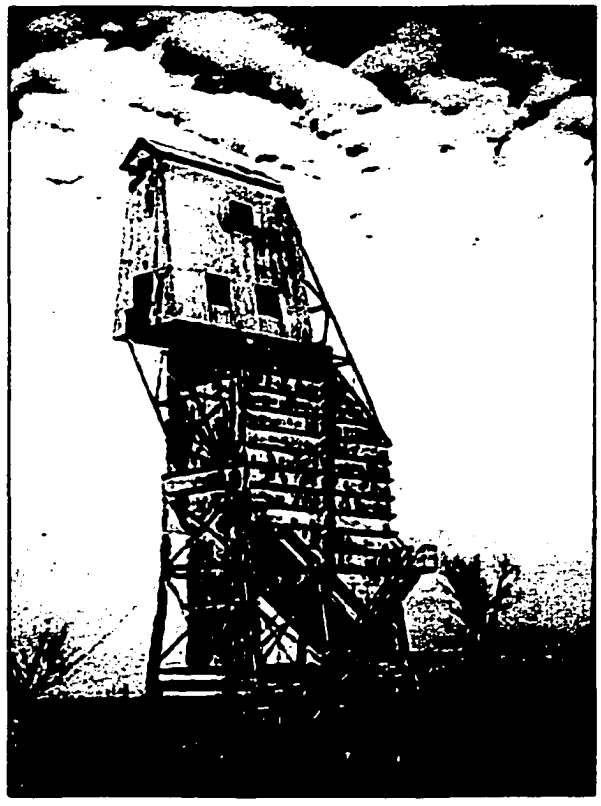


Figure 4-14: Abandoned mine derrick, the Goodeagle Number 2 Mine, circa 1960. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

Eagle-Picher began closing mining operations in the 1950s. By the early 1960s, the company continued to coordinate small-scale contract mining (locally known as gouging), and it maintained milling operations at its smaller Cardin ore mill, but the majority of its income was obtained from the sale of chat. Chat was sold for use as fill in road and rail construction. Slowly, the giant Central Mill chat pile, once estimated to contain more than 16 million tons of milling waste (so large it was used as a navigation landmark by airplane pilots), was disappearing.[76]

The final blow to small-scale underground mining came in 1968 when Eagle-Picher shut down the water pumps in the underground workings. Eagle-Picher's decision to shut down the

water pumps led the *Tulsa World* to declare that the Picher Field was dead, but outside newspapers had been focusing on the community's economic plight for some time. The most frequently noted obstacle to the town's viability was the continued lack of a significant municipal tax base. Most of the town site remained on BIA-leased land. Newspaper reports in the *Daily Oklahoman* focused on Picher's quieting streets. Town infrastructure was deteriorating and the City of Picher was broke, its police force frequently going without pay. One newspaper article even described how the Fire Chief was raising money to maintain equipment through community car washes, watermelon sales, and furniture auctions.[77]

In 1972, *Daily Oklahoman* reporter Phil Frey wrote a moderately optimistic description of the town entitled "Picher Rebounding from Played Out Past." Frey explained that the story of Picher's persistence was one of "bootstrap survival," where residents where drawing on "courage from their embattled past" to keep their town alive. He described how several developments had made residents confident in their ability to rehabilitate the community: Eagle-Picher had donated deeds to 455 acres of non-BIA land to the city; a $1.2 million public housing grant had been obtained to build low-income housing; and the city had passed a $700,000 bond issue to improve water and sewer systems. Unfortunately, like so many observers before him, Frey's optimism was obscured by a more powerful narrative of landscape dereliction. Unaware of the true nature of life in the mining era, Frey wrote, "the good life once flowed like sweet wine for the miners who dug the mines. Then the bottle ran dry . . . men without work; families facing hunger; the taste of life turned bitter for the few who stayed behind." Frey also commented on the physical appearance of the town:

> The land surrounding Picher is gray, dingy, depressing and soiled with the spoils from the mines. Gravel covers the landscape, supporting only the hardiest brush and weeds. The earth is pockmarked with cuts and gouges, many now filled with water that has seeped up through the crushed rock. Old mill towers stand stark and lonely, their tin skin hanging in ragged, rusted shreds. Concrete foundations that resemble small monuments show where other forgotten mills once stood. Most people who have been there call it the ugliest town in Oklahoma, the armpit of the northeast[78]

Frey was not speaking for Picherites when he claimed that most viewed Picher as the ugliest town in Oklahoma. Neither were the town's residents considered by geographer John W. Morris when he listed the town in his 1978 guidebook, *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma*. Morris' decision to designate Picher a ghost town (despite the fact that it retained a population in excess of 2,000), shows that not only were outsiders ignoring the perceptions of the local populace, but in some cases, their very existence was being denied.[79]

As was the case in the mining era, residents remained aware of the negative way Picher was portrayed and they were saddened by the fact that a more positive story of the community wasn't being told. "Every time a newspaper story comes out," stated Mayor Bill Koontz in 1964, "it means more negative publicity for the town. Everyone writes about how our water pumps broke down or how the chief of police has to buy gasoline out of his own pocket to run the patrol car. Why doesn't someone write about some of the gains were making?" After detailing the improvements made in community infrastructure, the mayor admitted that things were not perfect. However, like Picher newspaper editor Frank D. Hills had explained forty years earlier, residents had nothing to be ashamed of, the fact that Picher was surviving was a significant accomplishment. The mayor stated, "We're just trying to keep our heads above the water."[80]

Many of those who left Picher in the 1950s and '60s found work in other hard-rock mining areas. Some went to work for the government digging missile silos, and many ended up in the uranium mines of Grants, New Mexico. Those who stayed scrambled to find work in Picher's dying mining economy. In addition to gouging and chat processing, salvaging of industry infrastructure also provided employment. Many Picherites also found work at the B.F. Goodrich tire factory in nearby Miami. The plant closed in 1986 and has since been the focus of lawsuits filed by the state over the improper use and disposal of PCBs, asbestos, and heavy metals.[81] According to Ray, who left the mines in 1947 to work at the tire plant, working life remained difficult, both for those who left, and those who stayed. He recalled:

> There's a bunch of Picher people in Grants, New Mexico. . . Quite a few of the older ones came back to Picher but most of those dudes died of cancer from the uranium mining. That's another thing, I never realized that there were so many cancer-causing chemicals at Goodrich. I was there 28 years, and the whole tube line, I'd say 50-60 percent of those people I worked with, died of cancer. So hell, Goodrich was far worse than the mines.[82]

When asked why he chose to remain in Picher, Hoppy Ray stated, "I never wanted to live anyplace else," and it is clear that many were reluctant to sever the emotional ties they had established to the town. An article appearing in the *Miami News-Record* in 1986, for example, detailed the painful decision made by one Picher family, the Walkenshaws, to leave the community in 1958. "Mining was our whole life," stated Mrs. Walkenshaw, "but when the shutdown came there was nothing around here in the way of jobs." The article described the family's anguish in being forced to move to New Mexico. Like many, however, the Walkenshaws eventually returned to Picher, but in the decades they were away, the town had undergone a depressing transformation. Picher's commercial district had been decimated. "We could hardly believe Picher's downtown had vanished," Mrs. Walkenshaw stated. "In 1957 there were still crowds in Picher after work. We had clothing stores, a Safeway, a J.C. Penney, and three pharmacies." Despite Picher's obvious decay, however, the couple remained. Mrs. Walkenshaw explained, "My three daughters and my son don't understand why I stay here but I came to Picher in 1920 with my parents. All my children where born here. This is my home."[83]

In 1975, the Picher Bicentennial Committee produced a promotional booklet celebrating the town's 60th anniversary. A collection of short essays and poems, the publication provides further insight into how the community survived. In the introductory essay, entitled "Picher, Oklahoma: The Lead and Zinc Boom Town that Would Not Die," Genevieve Stovall Craig described why Picherites hung on to the community. Citing familiar themes of hard work and endurance, Craig described the sense of attachment that existed among Picherites, "They lived – and worked – and loved – and kept on working – and kept on loving their little slattern of a city. They would not give up!"[84] In the booklet's concluding essay, resident C. Allan Mathews

proudly described Picher's past accomplishments and provided a set of modest but optimistic predictions for the town's future. Mathews wrote, "We've a long way to go. On the other hand we've come a long way too!" The spirit of the town, and the community's will to survive, remained strong. Mathews wrote:

> Picher is 60 years old. She's not the lusty lead and zinc boom town of yester-year. She's put her roots deep. She's weathered those intangibles common to every boom camp. . . That has been the story of her past. Perhaps that, more than anything else, is her future. . . By every conceivable, logical deduction, these chat piles should have been her tombstone. But there was a human factor that can't be overlooked in the miracle that is Picher. A people who wouldn't give up.[85]

Again, it would be wrong to suggest that Picherites were unaware of the community's troubles. When I asked Hoppy Ray what effect the demise of the mining industry had on the community, for example, he stated, "Oh my God, it makes you sick to think about it. When I was a kid there was so many people here. The sidewalks were ten feet wide and you couldn't get up and down the street, it was just like a carnival." He shook his head and lamented, "There was just so many people here."[86]

The Cratering of the Picher Landscape

Picher's decline in the post-mining era was not simply the result of deindustrialization and population loss. Also amplifying problems was the mining industry's continued lack of concern for the well-being of residents. Standing amid the ruins of an old mill, resident John Mott recalled the devastating effects silicosis continued to have on the community in the 1950s. He also voiced his opinion of Eagle-Picher's treatment of residents and the local environment. Surveying the chat strewn landscape, Mott stated:

> When I was ten years old I started selling *Saturday Evening Posts*. . . I had six customers on Netta Street that I delivered them to. They'd sit out on their front porch just fighting to breathe. I talked to Dad about it and he said that they had worked in the mines and their lungs were gone. They were just waiting to die. . . I guess I'm kind of prejudiced against Eagle-Picher. I've seen so many things they done over the last 40 or 50 years. My Uncle worked for them all his life and never made but 60 or 80 cents an hour the whole time he worked for them. They never had any insurance and when he retired he got $112 a month. That's all the retirement they did. They took so many millions of dollars out of this field and never paid anyone anything, and just look at what they left behind.[87]

Picherites express considerable ambivalence toward their mining past. Residents have come to celebrate the fact that Picher owes its existence to lead and zinc mining but they are also aware of the industry's long-term costs. As John Mott's comments reveal, some have come to question whether they have received lasting benefits from the mining industry.[88] This holds especially true for the area's dominant landowners, the Quapaw. True, some amassed significant wealth through BIA-negotiated royalty agreements. However, the chat-covered mining tracts, once productive hay fields, now lie barren and useless. Moreover, the environmental problems that remain have proven extremely difficult to fix. Earl Hatley, Environmental Program Director for the Quapaw Tribe, told me that the costs of mining have been great. I interviewed Hatley in 1999. He explained that the tribe had not seen lasting benefits from mineral exploitation:

> There wasn't great wealth created for the Indians. Compared to their economic plight at the time, wealth was created, but it wasn't anything compared to what the mining companies received. . . The few families that did generate some wealth shared it with other tribal members. No one went hungry or without shoes or clothes. They took care of each other, they were a tribe. But that income, from the perspective of the tribe, didn't last very long. Some of those families are still better off, but are they wealthy? No.[89]

The mining firms exploited the environment, the Picher workforce, and the native landowners to the maximum extent possible, and companies such as Eagle-Picher are due further scrutiny for the role they played in amplifying community decline in the final years of the field's operation. In this regard, one event stands out among all others. In the 1950s, Eagle-Picher was struggling to maintain profitability and the company began "gouging" the last high-grade ore deposits lying in the supporting pillars of the mines. Gouging, also known as "high-grading," was the last mining job available in the Picher Field. One-time company miners who were desperate for employment, the gougers failed to consider the long-term consequences of this activity (Figure 4-15). Indeed, one of the greatest tragedies to occur in Picher was the greed-driven decision made by operators to remove these ore deposits. Gougers were highly vulnerable to accidents for pillar removal was dangerous work. However, more significant in terms of

community impacts was that removal of the supporting pillars resulted in massive surface collapses throughout the town. Indeed, the threat of such a collapse effectively destroyed the commercial center of the Picher town site, greatly hastening the community's decline. The debate that surrounded the event revealed continued contrasts in the ways residents and outsiders viewed the community.

Figure 4-15: Gougers preparing to blast a pillar in the Dobson Mine, Hockerville, Oklahoma. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

In February 1950, Eagle-Picher warned of an eminent cave-in in a five-block area of Picher's downtown. On February 9th, company officials met with the City Council and recommended that the area be closed to the public. The warning resulted in the immediate relocation of several Main Street businesses, but as the *Tri-State Tribune* reported, there was no mass exodus or unusual excitement. "The majority of residents affected," the newspaper reported, "feel that the matter will be taken care of in the normal course of events." Despite the unconcerned stance of the newspaper, however, as many residents were aware, "the normal course of events" meant that Eagle-Picher would soon cancel lease agreements in the affected

area. In fact, more than 200 residents and business owners in a five-block area of downtown were soon issued 30-day eviction notices by the company.[90]

Eagle-Picher claimed that a weakness had been found in an underground pillar supporting the area and eviction was necessary to protect Picher residents. However, many locals believed that the company's motives were less honorable. Previously, Eagle-Picher had been attempting to build a concrete supporting pillar in the mine, which according to company officials was designed to add extra roof support. According to one-time miner Lawrence Barr and others, however, the concrete support was being put in place so that the company could remove the pillar of ore, which reportedly measured 25 feet in diameter and stood more than 40 feet tall. Barr states:

> The mining companies got whorish. . . those pillars had ore in them, they wanted this ore, and the only way to get it was to shoot it out. I can remember when they set up a drill rig in front of the bank in Picher. They drilled a hole and they were supposed to have poured a concrete pillar there to catch it [the roof of the mine]. They took out the big pillar. I never seen it but I heard it was worth a million dollars in lead. Eagle-Picher pulled it out, they poured some concrete down but they never did hold it. The Eagle-Picher mining company did it.[91]

Another rumor that circulated was that Eagle-Picher condemned the downtown area because they had plans to open a surface mine in the area. The true motive of Eagle-Picher's actions may never be known, but reports that the company was attempting to gouge the deposit are consistent with the way the firm had always operated in the community; exploitation of the ore body was the company's primary concern.[92]

Residents and outsiders responded to the threat of the cave-in in characteristic fashion. The *Daily Oklahoman* and *Tulsa World*, for example, focused on the spectacle of the pending collapse, and how, surprisingly, Picherites were going about their business as usual. The *Tulsa World* reported that everyone, except Picherites, seemed tremendously concerned. The newspapers quoted residents such as Nona Welsh who owned a business in the affected area: "I've been around here a long time and I'm not any more worried than I was 10 years ago." In the *Daily Oklahoman*, another merchant reportedly stated that he would "stay in business as long

as the company lets me." The threat of collapse drew state-wide publicity and hundreds of curious spectators flocked to Picher. Many of these sightseers had a difficult time understanding the reaction of residents. "If it was up to me," stated one visitor, "I wouldn't stay around this place . . . when they get to thinking things over they'll get out." However, at least one outsider, reporter John Feen of the *Daily Oklahoman*, partially understood why residents seemed unfazed by the threat. Feen stated, "Sightseers couldn't understand because they had never lived or worked in the lead and zinc mines." For those who had faced minings' hazards on a daily basis, the threat of collapse was a part of life that would be coped with.[93]

Despite claims to the contrary, however, it should be noted that residents were concerned about the cave-in threat. Most occupants of the area held out until they were forced to leave, not because they were unconcerned, but because, in doing so, they put pressure on Eagle-Picher to provide financial assistance for relocation. Indeed, in February 1951, the company came forth with a modest compensation package and remaining business and home owners vacated the area. Unfortunately, although many merchants reestablished operations on Connell Avenue, others simply closed their doors for good. Eagle-Picher claimed that business had not been affected by the condemnation, but the economic impact was impossible to ignore. The *Daily Oklahoman*, for example, reported: "There's a ghost town right in the middle of Picher these days. Four square blocks that used to hold more than their share of the city's activity stand bleak and deserted" (Figure 4-16).[94]

Interestingly, in addition to supporting condemnation, the local *Tri-State Tribune* also downplayed its impacts. In April 1951, for example, the newspaper reported that the town was carrying on in its usual fashion. Although outsiders believed that the town was doomed, according to the *Tribune*, Picher had simply "shrugged her shoulder, pitched in, and emerged triumphantly." The paper declared, "Picher folk believe in Picher and in other Picher folk." Certainly, the local newspaper was correct in observing that outsiders viewed the cave-in threat differently than Picherites. However, its support for the actions of Eagle-Picher was a sentiment

that was not locally shared. Picherites could not ignore the lifeless streetscape lying in the heart of their community. As Hoppy Ray bitterly stated, "Eagle-Picher just ruined the whole damn town."[95]

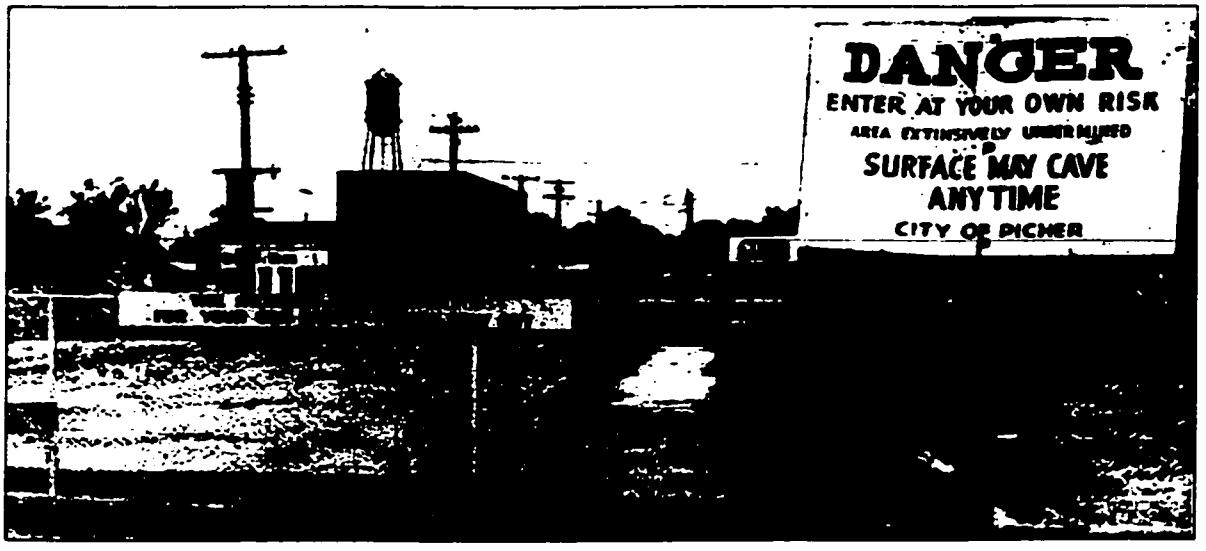


Figure 4-16: A seven-foot high fence surrounds condemned buildings in Picher's downtown. *The Daily Oklahoman*, 18 May, 1952, M3.

In 1975, Genevieve Stovall Craig wrote that the "killing blow" to Picher came when Eagle-Picher demanded the leveling of the town's "proudest buildings." Moreover, as Craig observed, the cruelest irony to result from the obliteration of Picher's downtown was that the affected area remained stable. Picher's demolished downtown was simply fenced off (curiously, the land was classified by the state as a "wildlife sanctuary"), and soon the crumbling streets and remaining building foundations became overgrown with tangled vegetation, a lasting and painful reminder for residents of the past vitality of their town. According to Craig, Picher's vibrant commercial district had been converted into a "high-fenced rubbish graveyard dense in weeds and cottonwood trees."[96]

Although the downtown area remained stable, gouging did result in cave-ins in other portions of the community. The worst event occurred on 22 July 1967, when 18 residents were left homeless after three houses slid into a 300-foot wide crater (Figure 4-17). Again, state

newspapers covered these events, sightseers flocked to the community to witness the spectacle, and outsiders were stupefied by the seemingly indifferent attitude of Picherites. Quoted in the *Tulsa World*, Mayor Harold McLain defiantly stated, "Little things like this don't shake us. It's just part of living." The mayor went on to voice his opinion that he couldn't understand "all the fuss in the news media," and he reportedly smiled when stating, "now that the houses are settled 35 to 40 feet down they will be secure. I'd kind of like to have one of those houses." The newspaper reported, "Picher seemed to be calm. People walked back and forth talking casually about the events of the day. The cave-in was just one of them."[97]

Figure 4-17: Mine cave-in, Picher, July 1967. *Used with permission, John Schehrer private collection.*

Outsiders were unable to understand local response to the literal and metaphorical "cratering" of the community. For Picherites, community decline, depopulation, and mine subsidence were tragic events, but at the same time, they were not surprising occurrences for those who had lived through the mining era. In fact, their reactions to the hardships of the post-mining era were consistent with the way Picherites had always dealt with animosity. They would

not be defeated by their troubles, and they took pride in the fact that they and their community were surviving. It should also be noted, that, like generations of impoverished Picherites before them, some residents simply had no choice but to endure. In a rare show of sensitivity to this fact, *Wichita Eagle-Beacon* reporter Jean Hays described the hardship caused by a 1972 collapse. Mary and George Foote and their ten children, escaped from their four-room house as it slid into a crater. Poor, uneducated, and saddled with debilitating health problems, the Footes lost everything in the cave-in. However, Hays described how the family chose to remain in the town. They stayed, in part because Picher was their home, but also because it was the only place they could afford to live. Hays describes how the family bought a new house – a tin-clad structure that once served as a grocery store – for $750. The rent on the BIA-owned land was $50 a year.[98]

Unlike Hays, however, most outside observers continued to view Picher's deteriorating landscape only as a spectacle of degradation. For outsiders, resident response to hardship was viewed as passive acceptance of dereliction. Moreover, this inability to understand the internal value the town held as a community and home grew with increasing awareness of the devastating extent of the area's environmental problems.

Environmental Problems and Picher's Contemporary Image

Picher showed few signs of rejuvenation in the 1980s and '90s. In 1980, 2,180 residents remained in the community, a number that fell to 1,714 in 1990. Few jobs were available in Picher and hundreds of residents were put out of work when Miami's B.F. Goodrich tire plant closed in 1986. By 1990, the largest employer in Picher was the public school system, the average per capita income was $6,875 (almost half that of the state average), and 30 percent of Picher's population lived below the poverty level.[99]

As deindustrialization progressed, Picher's already ailing infrastructure, most of which continued to lie on BIA-leased land, further declined. Renting, or without title to the land on which they lived, most Picherites remained reluctant to invest in home improvements. Despite government investment in housing projects, despite the fact that some were able to gain title to

land,[100] the general appearance of the community deteriorated as structures and homes were abandoned. By 1990, 152 of Picher's 864 housing units lay vacant. Of all houses standing in Picher in 1990, only 14 were valued at more than $50,000 (Figure 4-18).[101]

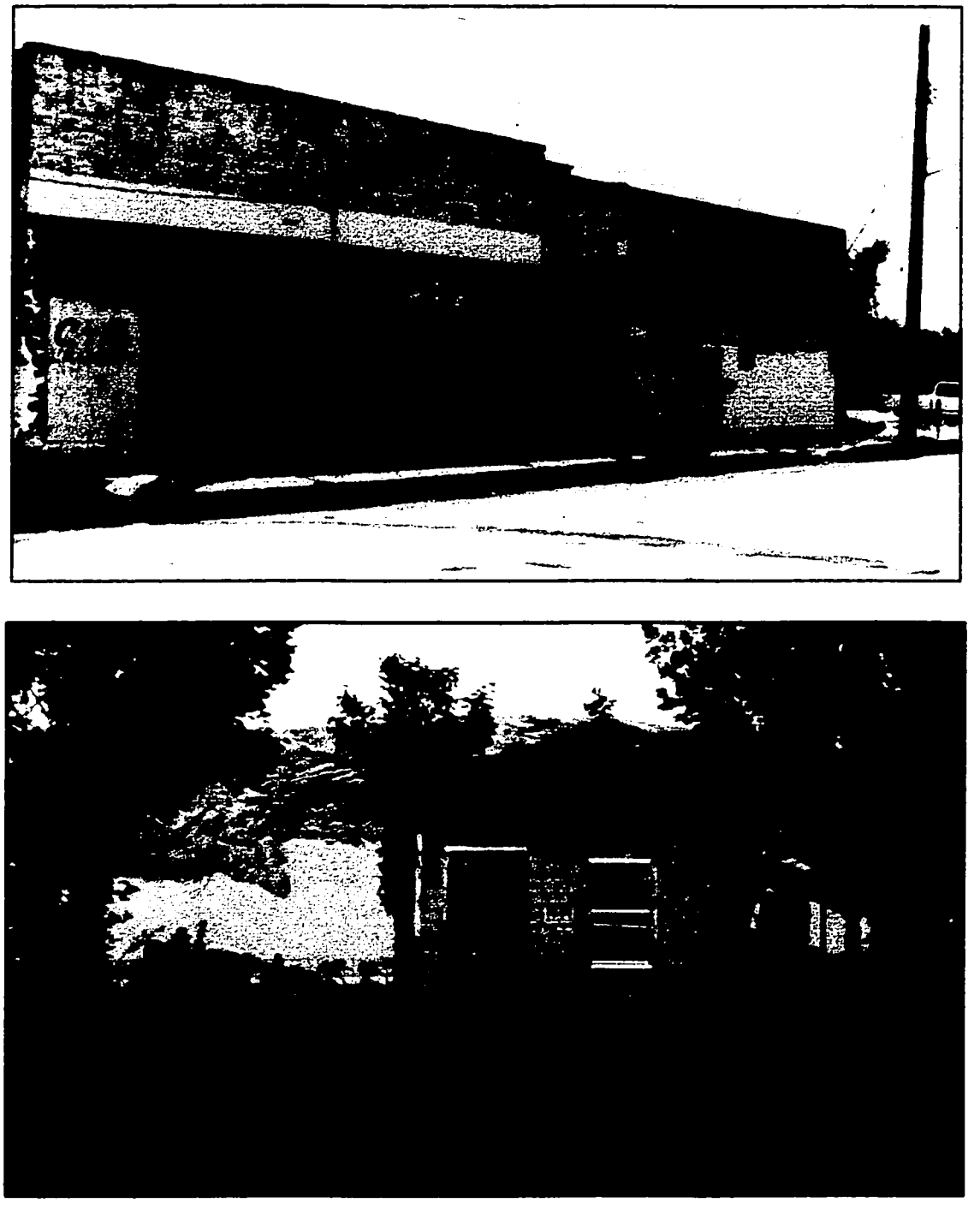


Figure 4-18: Boarded commercial buildings, Main Street (top), and Picher home (bottom), 1999. *Photographs by the author.*

Not surprisingly, in the 1980s and '90s, state newspaper coverage continued to detail problems with town financing and community services. The high 10.5 percent sales tax imposed in an attempt to reduce city debt (the highest sales tax in Oklahoma) and the chronically low test scores of students in the Picher-Cardin schools (which were under threat of losing state accreditation) received attention in the pages of the *Tulsa World* and *Daily Oklahoman*.[102] Amplifying the town's troubled image, state newspapers also began paying attention to Picher's environmental problems and, beginning in the 1980s, the environment became the dominant focus of outside interest.

Picher received substantial state-wide and national attention in 1981 when the EPA listed the Tar Creek watershed as the agency's highest priority Superfund site. However, it is naïve to think that the area's environmental problems were "discovered" in the 1980s. Environmental hazards had been documented as early as the 1920s. As has been described, early resident narratives often contained accounts of environmental decay. As Lawrence Barr stated in 1985, "We always had alkali water in Picher. Every open ditch and every pond was orange-red. . . Iron has always been there, and it always went into Tar Creek. In the 1930s, Tar Creek ran red with pollution."[103]

Mine operators had also been aware of the environmental damage mining was causing, a fact revealed in a report that appeared in the late 1940s in the *Tri-State Tribune*. Produced by the Tri-State Ore Producers Association, the report argued for the continuation of World War II price subsidies, based in part on the claim that cessation of mining would result in widespread environmental damage. The article noted that flooding would occur if the mines were shut down, resulting in the dissolution of "great quantities of soluble sulphates, metals, acids, and salts." In an observation that would prove prophetic, industry representatives predicted that flooding of the underground workings would produce widespread acid drainage problems and stream pollution.[104]

Clearly, environmental impacts were recognized well before Superfund designation. Prior to this time, however, few attempts were made to study or address the area's problems. The reasons underlying this lack of concern are numerous. Certainly, Picher's longstanding reputation as a hopelessly despoiled place had historically provided little incentive for outside intervention in quality of life issues, including those related to environmental quality. As will be discussed shortly, evidence suggests that such sentiment continues, even today, to dampen external resolve to address environmental issues. However, Picher was not the only mining town of its era to be impacted by mineral extraction and its condition also reflects dominant societal trends in environmental thinking during Picher's period of development. Prior to the 1970s, the environmental and health impacts of industrial activities such as mining, when thought about at all, were viewed as the acceptable costs of progress. Quite simply, environmental problems, particularly in industrial settlements such as mining towns, were not paramount societal concerns. As a result, few explored the environmental consequences of mining activity in Picher, and, with the exception of silicosis, minings' impacts on public health were largely ignored. Even into the 1960s, the toxicity of Picher's lead-laden chat piles remained unrecognized. In retrospect, it is difficult to understand why the milling waste was not viewed as a potential hazard, for lead was long recognized to be a toxic substance. Nonetheless, chat was viewed as little more than a benign construction aggregate, and until recently, the chat piles were even thought of as recreational and aesthetic resources. In 1964, for example, the *Daily Oklahoman* described how Picher's waste piles provided entertaining playgrounds for children.[105] In a 1967 article entitled "For Playing – a Chat Pile," reporter Wayne Mason of the *Tulsa World* wrote:

> The mountains of gravel make excellent testing grounds for hot rods and offer good spots for motorcycle climbs. How about a wiener roast on a small plateau halfway up the side? A lover's lane? You Betcha'. Your gravel driveway has a low place? Just drive a short distance for a pickup load of replenisher. As for beauty – more than one native has been heard to say they have seen wonderful patterns – such as the face of Lincoln – as the sun creates changing shadows. Water erosion creates unusual formations on the weather-beaten mounds . . . To the kids they were and are – playgrounds.[106]

The rise of environmental awareness in Picher in the early 1980s occurred at a time of growing national concern over hazardous waste issues, and without question, Tar Creek's Superfund listing awakened the public to minings' hazardous environmental legacies. Unfortunately, in terms of producing lasting concern for Picher's plight, and in terms of solving the area's environmental problems, government intervention at Tar Creek has been a story of limited achievements. To be fair, Picher's environmental problems are tremendously complex. Nonetheless, tens of millions of dollars have been spent at Tar Creek, efforts that have to date either failed to significantly improve the quality of the environment, or have been overshadowed by controversy.

As Tar Creek approaches its 20th anniversary as a designated Superfund site, Picherites continues to be plagued by a variety of environmental problems. Furthermore, the nation remains largely ignorant of Picher's woes. It is beyond the scope of this research to fully detail the extent of environmental issues facing the community, but a summary is in order if we are to understand how these troubles, and the ways in which they have been reported and managed, influence, and have been influenced by, the meaning Picher holds as a place.[107]

Environmental problems at Tar Creek were first brought to the attention of the state in 1979 after several area residents documented large volumes of acidic water flowing to the surface from the underground mines. It took ten years following the shut down of the underground pumps for the immense mine caverns to fill with water. Once filled, however, millions of gallons of acidic water emerged at the surface. The mine discharge entered Tar Creek, turning the river into a lifeless, rust-colored sewer (Figure 4-19). The contaminated water also migrated downward through the corroded well-casings of water wells, polluting the groundwater aquifer lying beneath the mining zone. Soon, resident complaints found their way to Oklahoma City, and in 1979, Governor George Nigh established the Tar Creek Task Force to investigate the problem. In July 1981, based on information supplied by the state, the EPA placed Tar Creek at the top of its newly created Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). In addition to ranking the area as the

nation's highest priority Superfund site. Tar Creek was the first mining-related site to appear on the NPL.[108]

Figure 4-19: Tar Creek as it runs through the mining area southwest of the Picher town site, 1999. *Photograph by the author.*

The initial Superfund remediation program at Tar Creek, Operable Unit 1 (OU1), began in 1984. Implemented by EPA Region 6 based in Dallas, Texas, OU1 focused on ground and surface water contamination. Groundwater solutions focused on the plugging of 83 abandoned water wells that were allowing mine water to migrate into the underlying Roubidoux Aquifer, Picher's source of drinking water. Pollution of Tar Creek was addressed by the construction of a series of diversion dikes designed to prevent runoff from entering mine caverns and resurfacing in the stream.[109]

With Superfund designation, Tar Creek received considerable coverage in regional and national newspapers. Unfortunately, this attention failed to arouse lasting interest. Part of the problem was that the media's attention was focused on Superfund implementation controversies rather than the area's environmental plight. While several early reports expressed optimism that

the EPA would be able to solve Tar Creek's water problems, receiving greater attention was the immediate dispute that developed over EPA involvement at Tar Creek, which had become the focus of a House subcommittee investigation ordered by the Reagan administration.[110] Anti-EPA forces and mining lobbyists in Washington argued that the agency was misusing funds in its clean-up activities. Concern lay with the use of Superfund money for mine reclamation. Leading the spirited but ultimately unsuccessful effort to block Superfund action was Eagle-Picher, one of 18 responsible parties targeted by the EPA to pay for clean-up costs.[111]

The EPA completed OU1 in 1986. In 1994, the agency released its *Five Year Review* of the project and the results were disappointing. The EPA determined that public water supplies were meeting primary drinking water standards. However, the water was failing secondary standards based on color, taste, and odor. The agency took pride in claiming that groundwater posed only an "aesthetic" impact but this was little consolation to residents who were left with foul-tasting drinking water, and whose bathtubs, sinks, and clothes continued to carry an indelible pink stain. As for Tar Creek, the EPA concluded that the diversion structures were operating as designed, but that mine water discharges into the stream had not been appreciably reduced. By the EPA's own admission, water quality in Tar Creek remained severely impacted.[112]

In the *Five Year Review*, the EPA expressed its support for a decision made by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to downgrade Tar Creek from its original designation as a "warm water aquatic community" to "unviable habitat." This ecological reclassification had important ramifications. The state decided that the designated uses of Tar Creek no longer included its use as a water supply, fishery, or primary contact recreation area. The agency also expressed the opinion that contamination of the stream was irreversible. The State's downgrading of water quality standards cleared the way for the EPA to recommend that no further actions be taken under Superfund to clean up the river. Not surprisingly, it appeared to many that the agency and state had conspired to exclude Tar Creek from further remediation work. "That same water they were so concerned about in the mid-'80s is still there, but suddenly

it's not important anymore." stated Miami Mayor Louis Mathia. "Why has it suddenly become invisible to the protectors of the environment?"[113]

Little attention was paid to environmental issues at Tar Creek in the late 1980s and early '90s. However, EPA Region 7, working on a separate Superfund site in the Kansas portion of the Picher Field, had identified hazardous concentrations of lead and cadmium in mining wastes during this time. Region 7 was addressing the chat problem, but, seemingly without reason, Region 6 was ignoring the existence of a similar threat in the Picher area. This situation changed in 1994 when the Indian Health Service released a study showing that 35 percent of Native children living in the Picher area had blood-lead levels exceeding federal thresholds for lead contamination. In a second independent study, conducted in 1996, researchers found that 38.3 percent of all children living in Picher had elevated blood-lead levels, giving the community the highest incidence of juvenile lead poisoning in the nation. This information led Region 6 to finally begin investigating the lead problem. In 1996, the agency concluded that lead contamination caused by the presence of chat in residential soils posed a significant threat to human health (Figure 4-20). In 1997, the EPA began work on a second Tar Creek operable unit (OU2) designed to address the lead problem.[114]

OU2 is an ongoing project. While primarily a soil remediation program, OU2 also includes educational programs designed to inform the public of the hazards of lead contamination. Unfortunately, complicating attempts to reduce this threat is the fact that the chat remains a significant economic resource. Not only does chat processing remain an important industry, but Picher also remains a popular destination for off-road vehicle enthusiasts. Concerned that chat posed a liability issue, in 1997, the BIA fenced off the Indian-owned mining lands and placed a moratorium on chat sale. However, the EPA and state ignored calls to place similar restrictions on privately owned land.[115] It was not until 1999 that the EPA began to aggressively restrict access to the chat piles, and in November of that year, the agency finally designated the waste a "hazardous substance," making users of chat liable for clean-up costs.[116]

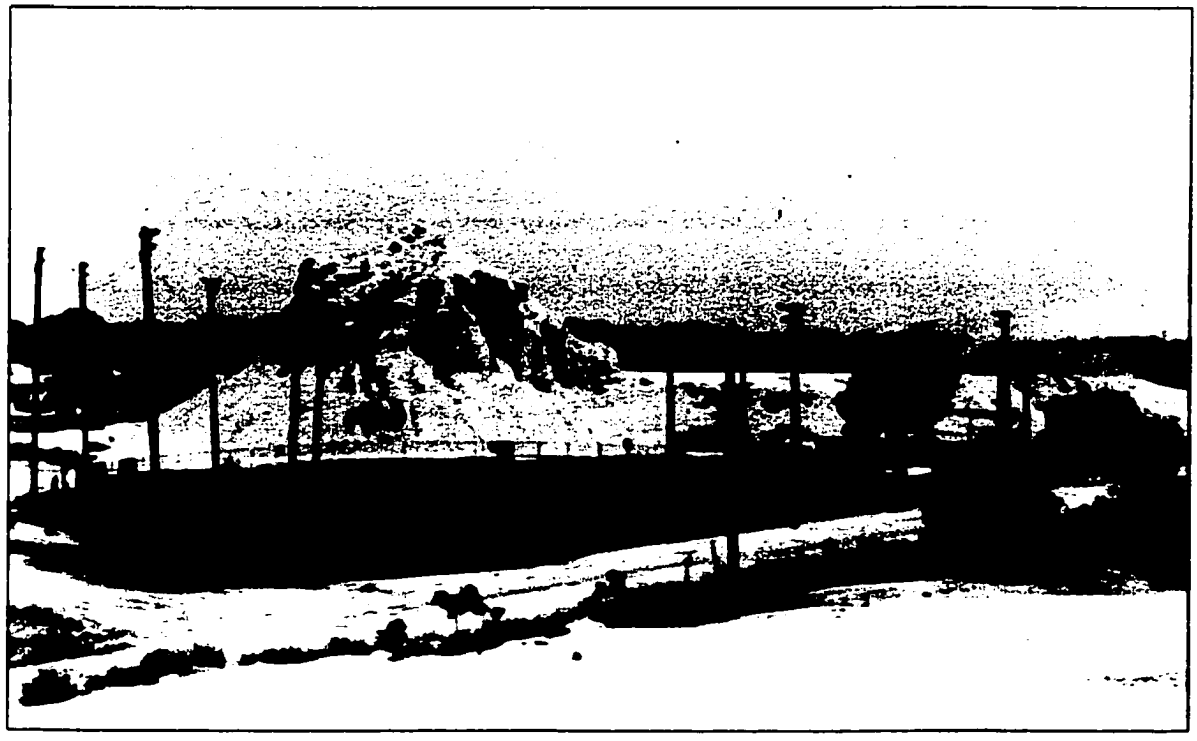


Figure 4-20: Chat is pervasive in residential areas of Picher. Chat piles surround the old Picher baseball field, 1996. *Photograph by the author.*

Under OU2, chat-contaminated soil is being excavated and backfilled with clean soil. High access areas, such as schoolyards, playgrounds, and other public areas received immediate attention, and the EPA is now focusing its work on the approximately 1,600 residential yards containing hazardous concentrations of lead. The scale of the project is enormous. For more than 70 years, residents have been using the chat for road and driveway surfacing and landscaping. Nonetheless, as of April 1999, 700 residential sites had been cleaned up. The agency estimates that, once completed, the program will cost close to $30 million.[117]

OU2 is successfully reducing the lead threat. From 1996 to 1997, blood-lead monitoring showed that rates of juvenile lead poisoning had been reduced by 20 percent. However, the soil remediation program has been controversial. Some have questioned the long-term efficacy of residential soil remediation on properties located adjacent to chat piles, noting that the threat of recontamination is great. Earl Hatley, Environmental Program Director for the Quapaw Tribe, states: "OU2 may not be worth a damn in the long run if you don't get rid of the chat. . . If all you

are going to do is clean up the yards and go back to Dallas [EPA Region 6 headquarters], then you've spent $30 million that will be wasted. In ten years, it will all be recontaminated." There are no easy solutions to the chat problem. Containing virtually no organic matter, revegetation of chat-covered land requires the complete removal of the voluminous waste. However, recognizing that as much as one half to two thirds of the area's chat has already been removed through chat sale, many are suggesting that a feasible way to eliminate the substance lies in subsidizing and carefully regulating the chat industry. Such a program would hasten chat removal and insure that the product reaches safe end-uses.[118]

Finding a long-term strategy to address the chat problem is an important issue, but it should not detract attention from the fact that the EPA's soil remediation program is reducing the incidences of lead poisoning among area children. Once again, however, project implementation controversies have distracted attention from this important achievement. In 1999, residents became aware that the replacement soil being used by the EPA had a high clay content. The use of this impermeable material resulted in drainage problems in remediated yards and substantial water damage has occurred to numerous houses in the community. The EPA has yet to admit responsibility for the pooling of water under homes and there is feeling that the agency has been insensitive to community complaints. In addition, questions were raised in 1999 about the misuse of funds by local contractors hired to implement the soil remediation program. In 2000, the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA were under investigation for lax oversight of the project.[119]

The EPA's denials of soil remediation problems and the negative press the agency has received over its management of the project have amplified tensions between the agency and residents. Sadly, it has also made some reluctant to have soil remediation work conducted at their homes. "The press has covered these problems," stated Earl Hatley, ". . . and they're driving people away. No one is on the other side saying the problems are small compared to the successes of this project, that the children have a problem here and that this is what it's all for—to protect the children."[120]

Ongoing water quality problems, the questioning of the long-term efficacy of soil remediation and chronic project implementation controversies have cast doubts on whether remediation activities in Picher have been worthwhile (Figure 4-21). The EPA's failures, for example, have led many residents to question the agency's resolve to remediate the Picher environment. Furthermore, many outsiders have concluded that clean-up efforts are a hopeless and prohibitively expensive cause. Although adamant that remediation is possible if enough pressure is placed on the government to search for effective long-term solutions, even Earl Hatley admits that, if the EPA were to leave following completion of OU2, the area would be little better off than before their arrival:

> What we would be left with is the mine water drainage problem from OU1 that the EPA doesn't want to address and chat piles that would still be here for decades. When they walk away from these operable units, will there be any visible change to Ottawa County? No, it will look exactly the same. Orange streams, chat piles 200 feet tall, moonscape all over the place. . . I wouldn't be here if I didn't think there was hope, but we have to push them. If you look at the history of Superfund, the sites that get cleaned up, like Love Canal, are places that have received attention, where local citizen groups have been pushing them and giving them bad press.[121]

Figure 4-21: Bumper sticker. Acid mine drainage and water quality remain ongoing problems in the Picher Field.

In interviewing other environmental and health professionals who have worked in the area, all agreed that maintaining awareness of the area's problems and combating sentiment that clean up is a hopeless cause are the most important challenges the area faces. Health researcher Bob Lynch, who conducted early blood-lead studies in Picher, told me, "There is an undercurrent

of opinion that the place isn't worth the money that has been spent to clean it up." Deborah McNaughton, one-time Tar Creek project manager for the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), stated in 1998 that she was not optimistic about the ability of the EPA to address the chat problem because "taxpayers are already getting tired of throwing money into Picher."[122]

That such doubts exist is a tragic situation. For far too long, the plight of area residents—first because of industry exploitation, now because of environmental degradation–has failed to ignite significant outside concern. The reasons underlying this chronic situation are multifaceted. Certainly, Picher's location—the town lies in the periphery of a state of marginal national status – has contributed to the fact that little attention has historically been paid to the town. So, too, the constant questioning of EPA activity at Tar Creek has distracted attention from the area's environmental problems. Not to be overlooked as well, however, is that reporting of environmental issues, as has historically been the case in coverage of the town's troubles, has failed to capture the meaning and value Picher holds as a place.[123]

Unlike hazardous waste sites such as Love Canal – a site listed on the NPL the same year as Tar Creek—coverage of Picher's environmental problems has failed to portray the town as a valued home.[124] Instead, Picher has been cast as a spectacle of dereliction. By maintaining historically-held sentiment that Picher is a hopelessly degraded place, outsiders have failed to provide an emotional justification for saving this troubled environment. A four-part special report on the Tri-State Mining District, published in *The Wichita Eagle-Beacon* in 1986, provides a good example. The report, entitled "A Legacy of Neglect," attempted to raise awareness of the area's problems, and in truth, it provides a good overview of the complexity of environmental issues facing the area. However, like the exposés produced during the mining era, the Tri-State towns are portrayed as hopeless places. The report states, "Death is a way of life in the Tri-State Mining District. So is poverty. What once was the center of the nation's lead and zinc mining is now an economic and environmental wasteland." Picher is singled out in the opening lines of the

report as a worst-case example of the area's plight:

> [In Picher] the rituals of mourning and dying are all too familiar . . . death is a way of life here. The people die at nearly twice the national rate from lung cancer. They are more likely to die of kidney disease, heart disease, stroke and accidents. . . [but] their grief does not end there. The mining companies that ripped the world's richest supply of zinc out of the ground and then left when mining was no longer profitable poisoned their land, wrecked their economy and robbed them of hope. The land is scarred and the water is contaminated. . . The air they breathe, the water they drink, the soil their children play in contain toxic metals. Their homes are built above abandoned mines that cave in without warning. . . The place is an environmentalist's nightmare . . . The story of the Tri-State Mining District is one of neglect. A story of people who have given up. Who are too afraid, too poor or too uneducated to fight back. Finally, it is a story of a problem so large that no one knows how to solve it. Many say it can never be solved.[125]

The *Eagle-Beacon* portrayed Picher as a spectacle of total, seemingly irreparable, environmental decay. Moreover, also evident in its coverage were continued reports of the seemingly unconcerned attitude residents held towards the area's problems. The investigation contained articles entitled, "Residents Handle Dangers with Stoic Acceptance," and "Families Accept Frequent Illness, High Cancer Rate as Facts of Life." These articles outlined alleged resident apathy to health threats and the frustration felt by government agencies to a perceived lack of interest in environmental issues. "With rare exceptions," states one reporter, "people have accepted with little protest living in the midst of the nation's largest environmental hazard." Similar observations are made in an article entitled "No. 1 Toxic Waste Site is Not Town's No. 1 Gripe," which appeared in *The New York Times* in 1981. The article focused on how residents were paying little attention to the area's Superfund status. "If this is the worst pollution we've got in this country," one resident is quoted, "then we're all in heaven and don't know it." Resident indifference again emerges as a dominant theme.[126]

Environmental quality became the focus of interest in Picher in the 1980s and '90s, so much so, that environmental decay has become the defining characteristic of the community's contemporary outside image. However, by continuing to portray the town as a hopeless spectacle of landscape dereliction and residents as unconcerned bystanders to their plight, such

exposure again failed to capture the sympathies of outsiders. In fact, such narratives have, in many ways, been detrimental to Picher's cause. True, the EPA and state have spent significant time and poured large sums of money into Tar Creek, but the results have been disappointing. Furthermore, government agencies appear to lack the resolve to find long-term solutions to the area's environmental problems. Perceptions that the area is an economic and environmental wasteland, that its problems are without solutions, and that residents are apathetic about environmental efforts, can be implicated as underlying causes.

The Town that Jack Built: Landscape Meaning and the Mining Past

If Picher's environmental problems are to be solved, ways must be found to increase outside awareness and interest in the area's plight. Fortunately, evidence suggests that this may be occurring. In the late 1990s, Picher began receiving increased national and regional media exposure.[127] In December 1999, for example, Tom Lindley of the *Daily Oklahoman* penned a three-part investigation of conditions in the Picher Field. The series represents the first substantial coverage given to Picher's environmental problems by the state's largest-circulating newspaper, and this scrutiny is placing pressure on the government to increase its commitment to the area. Shortly after the investigation appeared, for example, Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating created the Tar Creek Emergency Task Force (a reinvention of Governor Nigh's 1981 Tar Creek Task Force – the first government body to investigate environmental problems in the area). The ten-member panel is charged with the lofty goal of finally solving the area's myriad public health and safety problems. While one can question the need for yet another level of bureaucracy at Tar Creek, the state's commitment is welcomed by local environmentalists.[128]

Maintaining media exposure and state involvement is important, but it is unlikely that long-term solutions to the area's problems will be found without a fundamental change occurring in the way Picher is viewed. A 1998 exposé on lead contamination appearing on the front page of the *Tulsa World*, for example, was entitled a "A sad place," a simple and disturbing epithet that summarizes the external view of Picher. What must be considered is whether this imagery serves

the interests of Picherites? History shows that the answer to this question is no, for such portrayals have long failed to communicate the value the town holds as a place. Picher's value as a lived-in place has historically been ignored by outsiders. These qualities provide a powerful, but as yet unrealized rationale for outside care and attention. Picher needs a new narrative, one that consciously engages the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of its residents. In communicating this viewpoint, a new image of Picher emerges and the town is revealed to be less of a hopeless and valueless place, and more like a place worth saving.[129]

An enduring theme in external representations of Picher is resident indifference to landscape decay, and this characterization should be carefully scrutinized. By overstating the prevalence of this sentiment, outsiders have failed to capture the diversity of local landscape perception. Moreover, such a viewpoint casts doubt over the necessity of clean-up programs.

It is true that some old-timers, having lived long and apparently healthy lives amid the chat piles, downplay Picher's environmental problems. When asked about water contamination issues in 1981, for example, resident Adelia Hanna responded, "I don't pay no more attention to that than nothing. It's just our way of life here by the mines." Similar sentiment was also expressed by Hoppy Ray. When I asked Ray about the dangers of chat he stated, "I've been here since 1925 and I've never had any problems. I don't understand what the big scoop is on all that crap. These chat piles are supposed to be toxic, but for crying-out-loud, I played on those things all my life!" When I questioned Ray further, he admitted the chat was dangerous. However, he believed that if individuals looked after themselves and their children (washing regularly and keeping clothes and homes clean), they had little to worry about. "It's all about how you take care of yourself," he stated.[130]

Clearly, Ray is not ignorant of the lead hazard but his comments do reflect diminished concern. Such sentiment reflects the fact that many have become desensitized to the area's problems through lifelong interaction with the mining landscape. Residents have accepted a degree of environmental degradation as a fact of life in Picher. This observation is confirmed by

Kent Curtis, an environmental official for the Cherokee Nation. In 1999, Curtis wrote:

> For almost twenty years now people in the Tar Creek area have been painfully aware of the harmful legacy that mine wastes have brought to their lives. . . Although these problems are serious, people have shown a remarkable ability, or perhaps resignation, to live with them. People have lived with these problems for so long that they have become accustomed to them and may simply accept them as a part of life.[131]

While Picher's elderly are less likely to recognize the severity of environmental threats, not all display this tendency. John Mott, for example, has long been cognizant of the area's health problems, and he has played an important role in raising awareness of environmental quality issues. Mott states:

> Some people don't understand the lead problem: they've been here all their life and they don't understand what it's all about. But my grade school was built on a chat pile. The kids played in it everyday and I went to school with kids that just couldn't learn. Even then we knew something was wrong. They just passed them on, from the third grade on, to get them out of school. They were going to be adults in the third grade. I didn't understand but I knew something was wrong. There was just too many of them.[132]

As Mott's comments show, the notion that old-timers are ignorant of the area's environmental problems has been overstated. Moreover, the belief that this is the dominant viewpoint of the entire community is a clear misperception. In 1999, for example, Scott Thompson, Director of Superfund Operations for the ODEQ, told me that the health threat was being taken seriously by Picherites. Picher resident Steven Ray also confirms this fact. The grandson of Hoppy Ray, Steven is a reporter for the *Tri-State Tribune*. I interviewed Steven Ray in December 1999. When asked about the level of environmental awareness in Picher he stated, "After being presented with the facts, most have come to believe that the chat needs to be cleaned up. Sure, there are a few who say 'I've been here 40 or 50 years and I don't see a problem,' but that would be maybe one percent of the population." Ray states emphatically, "People in Picher understand heavy-metal poisoning."[133]

In 1997, a survey was conducted by the Tribal Efforts Against Lead organization (TEAL), a citizen group representing area tribes, that provides further insight. The survey

attempted to gauge the opinions of community leaders on environmental issues. Responses were received from 137 individuals, the majority of whom live within the Tar Creek watershed. Although not as high as Steven Ray's estimate, the report showed that 77 percent of area residents believed that lead contamination was a serious problem. In addition, 87 percent agreed that something should be done to address the lead issue.[134]

Further proof that residents are aware of the area's environmental plight is their participation in organizations devoted, in whole or part, to raising local environmental awareness. The Quapaw, Modoc, Wyandotte, and Miami Indian Tribes, for example, have all been active in this regard. The Local Environmental Action Demanded Agency (LEAD), a group of approximately 150 Ottawa County residents, serves as Tar Creek's leading community advocacy group. The most influential organization working in the area, however, is the Cherokee Volunteer Society, a student club from the Miami High School. Directed by counselor Rebecca Jim, the Cherokee Volunteers have, since 1995, been working to raise local awareness of Tar Creek's environmental problems. In March 2000, the Volunteers held their Sixth Annual Tar Creek Toxic Tour, a guided outing to trouble spots in the watershed (Figure 4-22). In 1999, Jim and her students expanded the event into an impressive two-day national conference that now draws nationally-recognized researchers to speak on clean up and community health issues. The Cherokee Volunteers were also instrumental in publishing the *Tar Creek Anthology* (1999), a collection of poems, songs, and essays compiled by area students. Several of the Cherokee Volunteers come from Picher, and in 1999, efforts were underway to establish a sister organization at the Picher-Cardin High School.[135]

Contrary to popular perception, Picherites are vocal in expressing their desire to live in a healthier environment. However, many recognize that this will be a difficult goal to achieve and their misgivings are multiple. In the 1997 TEAL survey, for example, residents were asked to list the major obstacles to preventing lead poisoning. Various concerns were cited, including worries over continued federal and state funding of the Superfund project and criticism of the

government's handling of clean-up efforts. "The government is not willing to go the extra mile to clean it up," wrote one respondent. Others wrote, "The EPA is not keeping their promises," and "The EPA should have addressed this 20 years ago." Resident skepticism of the government's commitment to the area is widespread, and much of this sentiment stems from the EPA's failure to remediate Tar Creek. A general feeling exists that the government has broken too many promises to the people of Picher. In the *Tar Creek Anthology*, Rebecca Jim writes:

> The people in the local communities trusted the officials, both the state and federal, to find ways to solve and resolve the environmental problems that surround the area they call home. . . . [But] it has now been nearly twenty years since the first orange, rust-stained water appeared . . . and no one has stopped its seasonal return.[136]

Figure 4-22: Rebecca Jim (left) and student member of the Cherokee Volunteers at a stop on the Tar Creek Toxic Tour, 1999. *Photograph by the author.*

Criticism of the EPA is also the result of past management controversies, the agency's shifting positions on clean-up issues, and its failure to establish good community relations.

Steven Ray states that the EPA was initially viewed as a "savior" when it came to Picher. Today, he states, only half-jokingly, the agency is viewed as the "Anti-Christ." While not all are as vocal in their criticism, Steven Ray's comments are reflective of general resident misgivings. He cites shifts in the EPA's stand on environmental problems as one area of concern:

> At first, the EPA said that the chat piles themselves are not a problem, that to remediate them would cost approximately $500 million. They said they could not possibly come up with the funds for that. They said, and I quote, "the people of Oklahoma and of the country will not pay that much money for the people of Picher." And yet, in their latest report, they say that the chat piles contain toxic materials. Now everyone is concerned about recontamination because they will not address the problem with the chat piles. . . Its always been back and forth, they contradict themselves regularly. . . It depends on who you talk too whether or not the chat piles are viewed as the biggest enemy in the town, or if they're nothing to worry about.

Ray also describes how the problems surrounding the current soil remediation effort have left many residents angry:

> They talked about all the various things they were going to do. It was wonderful. They were going to remove the lead and return the yards to the way they were with no problems. But at the center of a very heated debate right now is whether what the EPA is doing is helpful or harmful. For instance, they took out the topsoil but they put clay back in. This created an impermeable barrier to water. The water ran across this clay barrier and collected under the houses. There is a mold and mildew problem with almost every one of these houses and you have homes where floors are rotting through. . . Then they said that unless you allow your yard to be remediated you will never be able to sell your property. . . A lot of people are being strong-armed into the remediation work and there is a lot of resentment. The EPA says they are addressing this problem but I've yet to see anything done. They say they have had 20-30 complaints but I've comprised a list more like 140. . . . The EPA belittles people. Those who complain are being labeled as "chronic complainers."

Steven Ray has first-hand experience with the problems he describes. After having soil remediation work conducted on his own property, the walls in his house began to sink and crack. Soon, his bedroom carpet was saturated with water and the flooring in his kitchen rotted through, leaving a gapping hole in the middle of the room. These problems, and the EPA's denial of responsibility, anger Ray. He sees injustice in the agency's treatment of the community, stating that it is only a matter of time before the nation becomes aware of what is really going on in Picher:

> They [the EPA] used the same type of system that governments have used for incursions into other countries. They go in and try to win the support of the local populace. Here they came in and employed approximately 200 local people so that everyone has a friend or family member employed by the EPA. They go on about how they are such a vital force in the area, how they've boosted incomes, knowing all the while that this is a limited thing. This is not a career for these people, this is just a strategy to dump some money on them and keep them quiet. . . They've tried to win the support of the people by hiring them, but when there are problems and complaints they say "be careful or we will pull out." . . . The problems here are on the scale of Love Canal; eventually it will get national news, they can only hide it so long.[137]

Although critical of the EPA, it is important to note that, like most residents, Steven Ray is fundamentally supportive of efforts to clean up the environment. Picherites recognize, for example, that the soil remediation project is dramatically improving the appearance of the community. The landscaping of public spaces and yards has added a sense of tidiness to the built environment. Trash has been removed, chat-surfaced roads have been paved, and new fencing has been installed around open mine shafts and accessible chat piles (Figure 4-23). Also welcomed are the new recreational facilities that have been built by the EPA. A bandstand and park have been constructed on the site of the condemned zone where Picher's downtown once stood. Remaining evidence of the old commercial district—crumbling sidewalks and a few foundations—were removed and the area landscaped in 1999 (Figure 4-24). Adjacent, an impressive sports complex with baseball and soccer fields has also been erected.

Most significant, however, is the fact that the soil remediation effort has reduced the incidence of juvenile lead poisoning in the area. Ray states:

> As far as cleaning up the lead contaminant, the work has been great. . . . Most people don't want the EPA to leave; they just want things to be done properly. I myself don't want them to leave. I've been an advocate of removing the lead for some time because of the children. But, if I give you a dollar for something, I expect a dollar worth of value. We're not getting that. . . Its been trial and error with the EPA and they're making more errors as they go through their trial and they're not fixing their mistakes. At this point, they're upset with the press they have received and I believe they would just like to get out – the EPA, the ODEQ, the contractors, the Corp of Engineers – it's pretty crazy. But blood levels *are* dropping and that's a wonderful thing.[138]

Similar views were expressed by John Mott. When asked about the EPA's soil remediation effort, he told me:

> Some people think it's a bunch of baloney, a waste of money that's what they say. And a lot of what has been done was. There are just so many problems that the EPA is not going to be able to do everything. But, they have made a difference. All of this *will* make a difference. Maybe not in my lifetime but later—for those kids who are out in their driveways getting that lead and zinc into them.[139]

Like environmental awareness issues, residents' views of remediation are complex. Despite mixed feelings, however, most believe that, if given proper attention, the area's environmental problems could be solved. Moreover, Picher is clearly viewed as a place that *should* be saved, a sentiment that lies in contrast to the views of outsiders, many of whom are questioning the necessity of clean-up efforts.

Admittedly, it is easy to look at the money that has been spent at Tar Creek and the failures of remediation efforts, and conclude that it would have been wiser for the government to have facilitated an end to Picher's existence. Indeed, a community buyout and relocation plan was considered by the EPA early in its involvement at Tar Creek, and it is informative to speculate on the costs and benefits such a proposal would have incurred. A buyout was rejected because the agency believed it had a feasible plan to remediate the area, one that would prove more cost effective in the long-term.[140] In retrospect, the agency underestimated the difficulty of finding solutions to the area's problems. Moreover, an immediate relocation would have prevented lead poisoning in hundreds of area children. However, as a point of argument, chat was not a recognized hazard at the time of Tar Creek's listing on the NPL. Furthermore, experience at other hazardous buyout sites in the nation (Love Canal; Times Beach, Missouri; and Centralia, Pennsylvania), reveals that this strategy often comes with unforeseen costs. As the EPA recognized, after a buyout, the state and federal governments would still be left with the responsibility of remediating Tar Creek. Furthermore, even though they may face considerable hardship by remaining, residents are rarely unanimous in their support of community relocation.

Figure 4-23: The EPA has erected fencing around some of Picher's most accessible chat piles. *Photograph by the author, 2000.*

Figure 4-24: Reclaimed portion of the Picher town site, 1999. The grassed area in the foreground is located within the old condemned zone. *Photograph by the author.*

How Picherites would have reacted to a buyout package is difficult to predict. Steven Ray told me that the rebuilding of the community in a safer area would have been "one more chapter in the rich history of the mining town." It is likely, however, that Picherites would have been compensated only for their assets and moving expenses, and that they would have had a difficult time reestablishing themselves, given the modest cost of living and low property values in Picher. More significantly, given the community's long history of persistence in the face of adversity, it seems unlikely that Picherites would have been united in their support of a buyout option. In fact, in response to a recommendation made by the state's Tar Creek Emergency Task Force in September 2000, to revisit the relocation issue, residents in the adjacent mining town of Cardin voted not to move should the state pursue this option. [141]

Cardin's residents were opposed to relocation because of the value their community holds as a place. Despite the chronic economic and environmental problems that exist in the area, place-based attachments remain strong. As has been described, beneath the impersonalized external discourses of economic hardship and landscape decay lies another view of place: the internal value the town holds as a community and home. Testimony to this fact is that Picherites are maintaining efforts to make the town a more livable place. Pride continues to be taken in the community, however modest its accomplishments may appear. Occasionally, accounts of such sentiment surface in outside media coverage.

In November 1987, for example, an article that appeared in the *Daily Oklahoman* described teenager Jerry Coach's efforts to raise money to buy Christmas decorations for the town. It also described how, one year earlier, Coach had organized a Christmas parade, Picher's first in 30 years. Coach stated, "I love my town. The people over in Miami say, 'Oh, Picher is nothing but a ghost town. When we ride through, we lock our doors.' But we've got good people here and I want the world to know." What Coach wanted outsiders to recognize is that Picher is a valued place. In 1993, for example, *The Daily Oklahoman* reported that residents had opposed a proposal to site an inmate work center in Picher. Although in desperate need of tax revenue and

jobs, residents feared the negative impacts such development would have on the community. In the 1990s, the *Tulsa World* reported that community toy drives had been organized for needy children; that residents had opened their homes to assist victims of a severe storm; and that Picher's oldest church, the Union Church, had been kept alive by a small congregation of devoted residents, one of whom stated, "I don't feel like I should be anyplace else."[142]

These stories deserve attention because they show that a sense of community cohesiveness exists in Picher. Furthermore, an attachment to place is revealed by residents' desire to better their town and by their statements of affection for the community. Again, it should be noted that Picherites are aware of the problems their community faces. Ambivalence has long existed in resident conceptualizations of the community, but awareness of the town's shortcomings rarely tempers their attachment. Picher teenager T.J. Green, for example, whom I interviewed in 1999, stated, "People call Picherites chat rats but they don't like it. They're proud of the town. Sure, Picher is a rough town but people are trying to keep it going. There's a new coffee shop, a new diner. Oh, there's still a lot of bad places where I can't believe people still live, but the town looks a lot better" (Figure 4-25).[143]

The irresolute nature of resident views is powerfully communicated by Steven Ray. When I asked Ray to comment on Picher's future, he expressed considerable pessimism. He cited the contaminated water, high sales taxes, land ownership problems, and the town's negative reputation as serious obstacles. "I hope I am wrong," he told me, "but Picher has so many things going against it." However, Ray also explained how, despite these problems, Picher remains a valued place.

> Most people look down on Picher as a socially unacceptable place and economically it is very depressed. . . Its negative reputation also comes from the miners rough reputation. The miners were tough but honest and that social legacy remains. They meant what they said, family names were long, and problems were taken care of with fists. Sure, it's a different way of life here, not the social norm, but people stand up for each other, and for what they believe in. Aesthetically the town is really bad, but as far as the people, I grew up here, and the people are really good.

Figure 4-25: Picher's commercial strip on Connell Avenue remains a viable location for a handful of small businesses. *Photograph by the author, 2000.*

Ray was honest in his assessment of why residents remain in Picher. "What's keeping people here," he stated, "is memories and economics." Ray explained that some remain because they are too poor or uneducated to leave, while others stay due to emotional and familial attachments:

> Picher's a very cheap place to live. You have those who are locked in because they can't afford to live anyplace else, or who don't know how to seek out an education and have been told, "you're just a chat rat, you can't go to college." Unfortunately, some of then believe it. . . .Myself, I moved off but came back because of family and memories of good things. My family did the same thing. A lot of people don't move away because of family ties.[144]

Ray's comments reveal the varied factors involved in the community's persistence and entangled in his views are both positive and negative perceptions of place. For Ray, Picher is a paradox, a place that, in some ways, repels him, but in other ways retains a strong attraction. This contradiction in meaning creates a dilemma for Ray, as it does for many faced with the decision to remain. Ray was noncommittal when asked about his future, stating that he would like to stay in Picher but that he also had to consider what was best for his family.

It is common for the young to leave rural communities and Picher is no exception. T.J. Green told me, for example, that she would probably be forced to leave due to limited opportunities. Citing family ties, she stated that she "wouldn't go too far away," but her willingness to consider relocation contrasts with the feelings of most of Picher's old-timers, who generally communicate a desire to remain. In preparation for our interview, Green asked her grandparents why they remained in Picher. She stated, "My grandma said it's because everyone knows each other and helps each other out. She got all sentimental. Then I asked my grandpa. He rolled up his sleeve and said, 'See these veins? There's lead in those veins and that's why I'm here.'"[145]

The comments of Green's grandfather are somewhat alarming. The notion of "land in blood" is a metaphorical statement commonly used to express place-based attachments. It takes on darker meaning in Picher, however, when set against the spectre of lead poisoning. Do residents consciously cherish their poisoned condition as a significant aspect of a place-based identity? Or, does this statement reflect an attachment to the mining culture and, in this sense, communicate metaphorically the "land in blood" theme? I found no other evidence suggesting that lead-poisoning holds cultural meaning in Picher. I believe that Green's grandfather was explaining his attachment to Picher, and that his statement reveals how this troubled town retains value.

Confounding the fact that minings' social and environmental legacies are the cause of Picher's problems is that the community maintains an identity based on its mining culture. It is this contradiction that produces ambivalence in the meaning Picher holds as place. This ambivalence also has expression in the Picher landscape. For example, although residents are aware that minings' impacts threaten the viability of their community, they are highly conscious of the fact that Picher owes its existence to the lead and zinc industry. Evidence of this fact can be seen on the community's welcoming signs, which read: "TOWN THAT JACK BUILT, WELCOME TO PICHER" (Figure 4-26). Picherites recognize the historical significance of

mining and actively draw attention to their mining past. Picher has two mining museums that house impressive collections of mining-era photographs, rock specimens, tools, and machinery. Ore cans—once used to haul rock and men in and out of the mines—decorate the sidewalks of Connell Avenue. In addition, in a nearby park, the supporting structure for the children's slide has been fashioned to resemble a mine derrick. The large hoisting structures that stood over the mouths of the mining shafts, mine derricks were once a common site in the field.

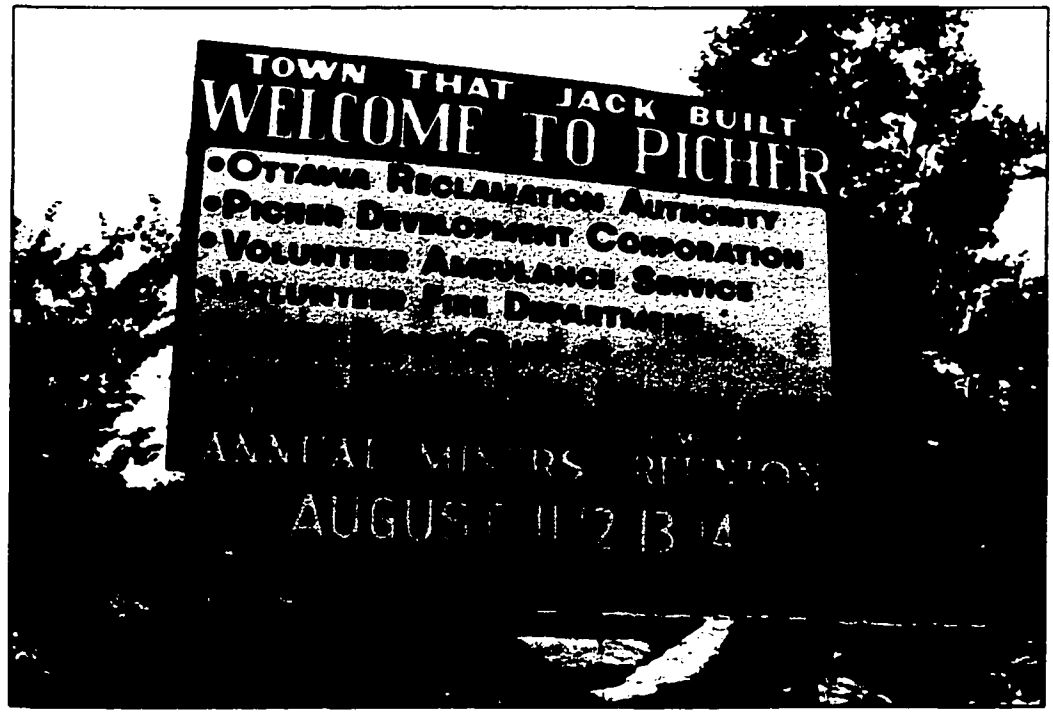


Figure 4-26: Picher's welcoming sign. *Photograph by the author, 2000.*

Picher also has an impressive collection of public murals that depict scenes from the mining era. Painted by residents, the murals portray scenes of everyday life: miners seated around the dining table at Ma's Boarding House; the Follies at the Mystic Theater; children tobogganing down snowy chat piles; and panoramic scenes of mine derricks and ore mills. However, testimony to minings' contradictory meaning, also displayed are less lively and more disturbing images. One mural, for example, depicts the aftermath of a mine accident. Two men carry the lifeless body of a miner. Nearby, the deceased's grieving wife is consoled. A second

miner, his arm bloodied, is attended by a physician. The survivor sits slumped on a bench holding his face in his hand (Figure 4-27).

Figure 4-27: Mining murals, Connell Avenue, Picher. *Photographs by the author, 2000.*

Clearly captured in the mural is the tragedy of the mining way of life and it is significant that many of the town's public art works have disquieting qualities. Most of the murals depicting the mining environment, for example, convey a bleak, unpopulated grayness that accurately captures the appearance of the chat-dominated landscape. In terms of providing insight into the complexity of local perception, however, the town's most interesting mural is its most abstract. On a wall facing Connell Avenue is an image, painted by Picher high school students, of an ore can. The can is filled to the rim with glinting ore and two faces are superimposed on its sides. The faces, painted in profile, are those of two miners, one of which is laughing, the other crying (Figure 4-28). The mural can be interpreted in a variety of ways. It may represent Picher's economic history, the miners' expressions reflecting the cycles of boom and bust. Perhaps it also represents awareness of the simultaneous joys and hardships of the mining era. Regardless of how they are interpreted, the faces represent minings' ambivalent meaning.[146]

Figure 4-28: Ore can mural, Connell Avenue, Picher. *Photograph by the author, 2000.*

Picher's welcoming signs, mining museums, murals, and other landscape features, reveal that the legacy of mining remains central to the community's identity. At no time is this fact more evident than during Picher's annual Miners' Reunion. Begun in 1979, the reunion draws thousands of old-timers and visitors to the community. With parades, amusement rides, concerts, story-telling programs, and cookouts, the reunion returns a mining-era energy to Picher's streets. However, while of obvious economic benefit to the town, the reunion also serves less-tangible functions that are equally significant to the community's well-being.[147]

The reunion stimulates an outpouring of historical reminiscing. By drawing attention to the past, the event maintains Picher's identity as a mining town. The *Tri-State Tribune*, for example, publishes an annual Miners' Reunion special edition containing resident submissions that are rich in local history and mining lore (Figure 4-29). Treasure troves of landscape memories, these narratives show how mining remains central to local identity. In characteristic fashion, residents detail both positive and negative aspects of life in the mining era. Living and working conditions are remembered as hard but also communicated is the fact that reward was found in the honest nature of life and the solidarity and kindness residents displayed towards each other. Positive assessments of the social legacies of mining—cohesiveness, honesty, a sense of mutual caring, and a belief in the benefits of hard work—are common in these texts.

Also revealed in these narratives are positive and negative assessments of minings' physical legacies. Residents have long viewed the mining landscape as a valued aspect of their home and such perceptions remain in evidence in the reunion editions of the *Tri-State Tribune*. In "Wearers of the Old Hard Hat," for example, a poem written by resident Jimmie Etheridge, the chat piles are described as monuments to those who died in the Picher Field. The poem reads, "Remaining are the memories and remnants of what was there before. Mountains of chat reaching toward the sky, Picher's monument to the ones that died." In other articles, the mines, mills, and chat piles are remembered fondly. "Who can forget," writes one resident, "the willow trees and silver maples around the sludge ponds and damp sand piles . . . sledding down snowy

chat piles . . . the smell of ore on damp overalls?" In another article, Frank D. Woods writes, "I remember snow on the chat piles giving them the appearance of snow covered mountains . . . [and] good quail and pheasant hunting around the mines." With pride, Woods also recalls the names of Picher's numerous mines. For residents, the chat piles have colorful names derived from the defunct mines that created them: The Netta, Blue Goose, Wesah, and Rialto are good examples. This local knowledge lends a sense of order to Picher's chaotic collection of mine dumps and provides an historical context for the landscape's features.[148]

Figure 4-29: Welcoming message, *Tri-State Tribune Miners' Reunion Special Edition*, June 10, 1999.

Outsiders see the Picher landscape as an untidy and disordered assemblage of mining waste but Picherites perceive the land in a more intimate and knowledgeable way. This is not to say, however, that residents ignore landscape decay. Residents have long been conscious of the land's plight and such awareness continues to be expressed even in their romanticized reminiscences. In the same article in which he proudly lists the names of the old mine sites, for example, Frank D. Woods recalls with sadness the condemning of Picher's Main Street, the

ruining of the landscape by chat piles and mine cave-ins, and the pollution of Tar Creek.[149]

Ambivalence is a fundamental, historically-held characteristic of the Picherites' conceptualization of place and it may seem puzzling that residents simultaneously admire and scorn the mining landscape. However, the positive and negative legacies of mining are acknowledged by residents because this is the duality of place that defines who Picherites are. Since the early days of mining, residents recognized that this rough, unpretentious, worked-out landscape was reflective of their lives. Proof of the lasting nature of this sentiment is provided by resident Dean Sims. In an article entitled "Remembering the Trials of Life in the Mining District," Sims explains that Picher was both the "kindest" and "meanest" town in the Tri-State District. He describes both these facets with equal pride, stating, "I am pleased to recall the good with the bad, [for] the bad was just normal for the people who had to be as hard as the hard rock they mined."[150]

By bringing residents together to remember the mining past, the reunion helps maintain Picher's meaning as place. It also allows Picherites to retain a sense of pride in their community. The reunion is a time when Picherites can be proud of their history and celebrate their community's accomplishments. It provides an opportunity to forget that the social and physical legacies of mining, qualities central to community and personal identity, are also the sources of their problems. The reunion quells this contradiction and allows residents to focus their attention on the value of their mining past. How Picherites will deal with this paradox in meaning in the long-term, however, is a more complicated question.

It is possible that, if the area's environmental problems receive the attention they deserve, minings' hazards will no longer complicate the landscape's local value. In a clean, safe, and unblighted environment, residents could unconditionally celebrate their mining culture and its influences and legacies. Of course, if long-term solutions to Picher's environmental problems are realized—if the chat piles are removed and the land rehabilitated—an important part of Picher's identity will also be lost. Picher has never been esteemed for its refinements or its ability to

sustain wholesome and healthy living. On the contrary, Picher's value as a place has long been tied to the area's ruggedness and on the ability of residents to survive and thrive in this difficult setting. Although it remains uncertain whether chat pile removal will take place, already some residents are lamenting the changes that have occurred. Chat piles continue to dominate the Picher landscape, but decades of chat sale have already removed large quantities of the material and most of minings' surface structures have disappeared. Gone is Eagle-Picher's Central Mill chat pile, and many old-timers regret the slow disappearance of these features. Area resident Grace Beauchamp, for example, in an interview I conducted in 1999, stated, "You saw chat piles in other places but none were as big as those in Picher. The Central Mill pile was huge, the biggest one, but they're all down now compared to what they used to be." She stated with regret, "The chat piles looked like mountains before, but now they just look like piles. We were so used to seeing them, someday they will all be gone." Also remembered sadly by many is the night high winds blew over the derrick at the Wesah Mine. The Wesah derrick was the last hoisting structure standing in the Picher field (Figure 4-30).[151]

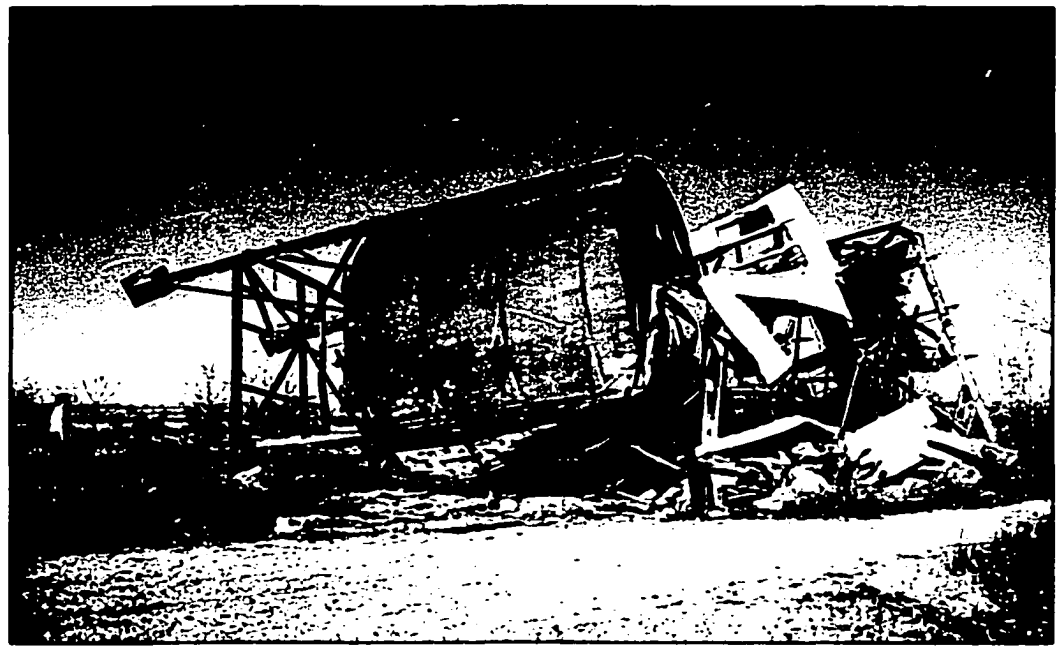


Figure 4-30: Toppled remains of the Wesah derrick, the last hoisting structure to stand in the Picher Field. *Photograph by the author, 2000.*

In discussing the significance of the chat piles, Hoppy Ray expressed a desire to see one or two of the features preserved as monuments to the mining era. "75 percent of the chat is already gone and I'd like to see of few of them stay, they're a part of the community's history." However, because the mining waste is a health hazard, such a proposal is probably unviable. In questioning environmental organizer Earl Hatley about the possibility of chat pile preservation, he stated emphatically that the chat piles had to go. For Hatley, who spent the better part of the 1990s trying to convince the government that the waste was a hazard, any discussion of preservation only served to distract attention away from the more important goal of protecting public health and the environment (Figure 4-31).[152]

Figure 4-31: Mill ruins and chat piles near Picher. *Photograph by the author, 2000.*

If Picher is to have a long-term future, it will be necessary for residents to forgo their search for meaning and identity in chat piles and mill sites. Ultimately, the health and future viability of their community is dependent on the success of environmental clean up. This is not to say, however, that reclamation would necessarily destroy public memory of mining, and in turn

the meaning Picher holds as place. As equally important to the community's identity as the physical remains of mining, for example, are the industry's social legacies. The spirit of community cohesiveness, the honest and unpretentious nature of the mining way of life, and endurance in the face of adversity are qualities of place not essentially dependent upon preservation of the mining landscape for their continuance. Picher's murals, mining museums, and its annual Miners' Reunion, provide evidence that the past can be kept alive in the landscape in other ways. Besides, as a new generation of Picherites replaces the old, romance for the land's ruggedness is likely to diminish. Without first-hand experience of the landscape that once existed in Picher, as time passes, fewer will view the elimination of the chat piles with a sense of loss. Historical accounts of a landscape and way of life will provide substitute meaning for future Picherites, and minings' physical expressions will become less significant to the community's identity. True, museums, reunions, and community histories do not provide as authentic a reminder of the mining past. However, given the strength of meaning Picher holds as a place, and given that Picherites seem committed to keeping memories of the past alive, it seems likely that, if given the opportunity to survive, Picher will remain, in spirit, a mining town.

Whether Picher will be given that opportunity is, of course, the biggest question facing the community. In fact, the state of Oklahoma has recently reopened the debate on a possible community buyout and relocation. Clearly, any discussion of place preservation is irrelevant if the community is to be obliterated, or if ways are not found to address the area's environmental problems. It is clear that Picher's survival will be a challenge, for the town is still viewed by outsiders as a hopelessly degraded and valueless place. However, this perception is unjust, for it discounts the internal meaning of the town and oversimplifies the challenges involved in addressing its problems.

Many outsiders continue to believe that ignorance lies at the root of Picher's persistence, that the town survives only because residents are unaware of the hazards they face or because they expect no better quality of life. Some even believe that money spent to clean up the town

would be better used condemning this forsaken community. However, whether Picher is a place worth saving is a question better left to Picherites. From their perspective, Picher remains a rough and ramshackle mining camp. Of this they are proud. They view themselves as a people who have overcome significant obstacles and hardships and built a lasting community. Contrary to outside perception, Picherites were, and are, aware of their plight. At the same time, however, their problems are a part of their community's complex identity, helping to define who they are as individuals. Picher should not be discounted as a hopeless and valueless place. For Picherites, this troubled town continues to hold value as a community and home.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

In "Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania," Ben Marsh explores the evolution of the split between what the mining landscape means to its residents and what it provides to them. Marsh's central point is that a broad concept of place includes consideration of both the physical support a landscape provides as well as its less tangible meanings. He describes this as the duality of the place concept. In Marsh's coal towns, the landscape, while in a visible state of decay, remains a locally valued element of place, and I revisit his research in order to highlight its salience to this study. In Pennsylvania, strong communities remained amid destroyed landscapes, and Marsh viewed this phenomenon as a product of the same historic circumstance. "The same history that so degraded this countryside," he writes, "has solidified this society." Marsh's observations are reinforced in Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher, and it would appear he was correct in suggesting that a common set of experiences exist in historic mining towns that provide lessons about the poor and powerless in other places the world has passed by.[1]

This commonality is remarkable given the differences that exist in physical and cultural geographies, and deindustrialization outcomes, of the case studies. Each of these communities evolved in a different time and place, and each was built and occupied by people of different cultural backgrounds. In terms of the outcomes of deindustrialization, Picher most closely exhibits the type of physical and economic decay associated with defunct mining regions. Toluca, in contrast, has proven to be economically resilient, although it was subject to the hardships of deindustrialization. Only time and a productive agricultural economy have largely healed these wounds. Cokedale lies somewhere in between. Its population plummeted following mine closure, and the community deteriorated. Although Cokedale remains reliant on an outside economy to maintain its existence, today the town is showing signs of modest rejuvenation.

And yet, despite their physical, cultural, and economic variability, there exists a common attachment to place that has survived amid landscapes that either have or continue to provide little

in the way of material reward. How is this explained? Cultural geographers have attempted to answer a range of questions through place analysis, but why place attachments develop to seemingly undesirable landscapes, and the challenges this paradox produces, are questions that have not been widely explored. This oversight may be due to the fact that place attachments are most often studied in the context of the positive aesthetic and sensual emotions people hold for the landscape. However, attachments can be cultivated to all types of locales. Moreover, sense of place encompasses all feelings—both positive and negative—and by investigating the complexity of landscape meaning in an environment believed to be of little emotional or physical value, this study fills a void in place research. Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher show that the meaning of place is not necessarily wedded to aesthetic attributes or to the physical and economic support a landscape provides for survival.

As detailed in the case studies and summarized in the following pages, the explanation for this phenomenon lies in understanding the duality of place experience. Despite an inability to provide for their residents' means, despite the severe limitations these locales place on quality of life, mining landscapes hold important meaning. The mining past enriches place experience, creates emotional bonds to the land, and provides a context for local existence. Residents take particular pride, for example, in their ongoing ability to endure in the face of hardship. In fact, significant local value is found in many of minings' physical and social legacies. Personal and community identities, and bonds to place, are entwined in the mining landscape.

The case studies also reveal that, contrary to conventional wisdom, community persistence is a common outcome of deindustrialization in mining areas. Although a range of factors contributes to the survival of historic mining towns, a commitment to place is central. These place attachments are rooted in the past and are strengthened by community solidarity. Conditions of stress—the hardships of the mining way of life, the sharing of a mutually uncertain future, and the unclear function of community in the post-mining era—serve to draw people together, creating cohesive social environments that encourage residents to remain following

mine closure. The formation of strong ethnic communities is particularly important in this context. Moreover, by sorting out those for whom the bonds to place are weak, deindustrialization serves to produce post-mining communities characterized by a deep commitment to place.

The mining landscape draws residents toward a past that gives place its meaning. However, if we are truly to capture the perceptual complexity of the mining community, variations in place experience must also be addressed. In fact, the case studies show that historic mining towns are perpetually evolving and highly complex perceptual places. Length of time since mine closure and eradication of minings' physical legacies influence place conceptualization, but significant differences can also be found in internal and external views. An opposing insider/outsider dichotomy exists in place perception that illustrates the vested interests these groups have in representing the mining town in a certain light. In simplified form, residents tend to find value in the mining landscape whereas outsiders tend to see dereliction and impermanence. However, the reality of life in these towns is more complex than this simple dichotomy suggests, and only by recognizing this fact can a new narrative be produced that moves away from abstracting representations, revealing better ways of dealing with the range of problems these communities face. Interpretation of the landscape's perceptual complexity is used to explain not only why residents remain loyal to place, but also to highlight the importance of preserving the physical legacies of the mining way of life.

Place and the Mining Past

Mine closure severed the economic ties Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher had to the mining industry, but it did not cut the emotional ties that bound their residents to the mining way of life. The mining past remains central to the production and maintenance of a local sense of place in all of the study sites. For example, residents remain highly conscious of the fact that mining represents their community's reason for being. In many ways, the mining era represents a time when life had a clearer purpose. This is especially true in Cokedale and Picher, where no new

industries have filled minings' void in the local economy and the present function of community is unclear. Mining is central in the stories residents tell of their places. Even in Toluca, which began as a farming village, mining is placed to the fore in local historical narratives.

The mining past also reinforces more broadly the character of community. The past serves as a reminder that these locales have experienced and endured the hardships of mining. Residents exhibit a near universal pride in the realization that they and their communities are survivors. They are aware, for example, that those who came before them fought tooth-and-nail to establish lives in these places. While mining was a tough and often brutal occupation, it nonetheless provided a meaningful way of life, and in many ways, residents see themselves as facing similar challenges in the post-mining era. The hardships of deindustrialization have produced different obstacles but conditions have remained difficult. Residents take pride in knowing that they have, as a community, responded with the same resolve to endure mine closure that their predecessors showed in their daily descent into the mines.

Hardship serves as a bonding force in the historic mining town, but the fact that residents show a determination to endure adversity does not mean that they have passively accepted their plight. To the contrary, in all of the study areas, residents have fought a constant battle to improve their lives and better their communities. In all, labor organization and community mobilization to various civic causes provide proof that residents have not been fatalistic about the future. Because they faced common hardships, residents learned to turn to each other for support. In this way, the ordeals of life served to strengthen community and solidify place attachment. As geographer John Agnew observed, mining communities are marked by a strong sense of communal identity based upon the hazards of work and a history of common fate in the face of adversity.[2] Everyday difficulties, including meager pay and dangerous work, drew working-class residents together, creating an atmosphere of mutual reliance. Prevalent in all of the study areas, for example, are resident accounts of community solidarity and altruistic behavior. Considerable pride is taken in the fact that doors were kept open for neighbors, that hats were passed to collect

donations for families impacted by mine accidents, and that everyone looked out for the safety of the community's children. True, in the saloon or clubhouse miners often treated each other with disregard. However, away from the alcohol, down in the mine or in the home, mutual respect and care ruled the day.

Particularly important to community cohesion in Toluca and Cokedale was the development of strong ethnic communities. Because ethnicity is often brought out most powerfully under conditions of stress, ethnic group formation is common in immigrant mining settlements. Sharing a common cultural background, including language and religion, Italians, Scandinavians, Germans, Hispanos, and others, banded together. In both Toluca and Cokedale, ethnic groups occupied distinctive neighborhoods, held similar occupations, and generally interacted within bounded social networks. In this way, ethnicity served to strengthen community. True, tensions often developed between ethnic groups and their formation sometimes divided populations along cultural lines. In Cokedale, for example, animosities existed between Anglo-Europeans and Hispanic and Italian workers. Nonetheless, ethnic group formation ensured that almost everyone had a nurturing community they could turn to in times of need. Moreover, as Marsh has recognized, ethnic cohesion not only assisted residents in coping with the problems of mining, but it also continued to protect them from the problems of mine closure.[3] There remains, in all of the study sites today, a strong feeling of unity. While not always evident at the broadest scales, solidarity and support continues in the ethnic sub-populations that survived mine closure. Cokedale's closely-knit Hispanic population and Toluca's highly visible Italian community provide excellent examples.

For residents, the mining past provides a context for local existence and offers answers to the question, "why are we here?" However, in addition to providing a foundation upon which to understand the "whys" of local existence, the mining past plays a central role in defining personal identity. In the mining past, residents also find answers to the question of "who" they are. In all

of the case studies, personal identity is rooted in the mining way of life: residents view themselves as honest, hardworking members of tough and enduring societies.

To some extent, the view that mining has a positive influence on personal character can be explained by the fact that residents tend to imbue its hardships with redeeming qualities. In early Picher, for example, a view existed that adversity strengthened character. In addition, although recognized as a dangerous and low-paying job, mining was viewed as a noble and rewarding occupation. As miners in both Picher and Cokedale stated, mining provided advantages not found in other occupations: freedom to work at one's own pace, freedom from supervision, and worker solidarity. Also observed was the existence of what folklorist Kent Ryden has called a "rambunctious fraternity," where pride was taken in the rough-and-tumble nature of the mining life.[4] Viewed in this way, the toil and hazards of the mining occupation, the raucous nature of the miners' social life, and the rawness of the landscape, added a sense of color and candor to existence. This sentiment was strong among males in Toluca and Picher. In Cokedale it has been repressed somewhat by the town's utopian mythology, but it is still evident in the narratives of those who recall the mining era firsthand.

Although the historic mining town holds significant meaning for residents, they do not ascribe universal and unconditional value to place. The internal view is complex and ambivalence in place meaning was commonly observed. Even those who held strong emotional bonds to place frequently exhibited a degree of antipathy. The coexistence of opposing feelings reflects the difficult physical and economic realities of the mining way of life. The mining town is a paradoxical place. In some ways it attracts residents but in other ways it repels them, and in this sense they are conscious of the duality of place. Indeed, locals tend to be realists when it comes to evaluating their lives. While they tend to look to the mining past to cultivate a sense of place, the hardships of the past and present are not ignored.

Given the hardship they have endured, it is not surprising that Picherites display the strongest degree of ambivalence in place perception. The meaning of place is tightly bound to the

mining past in Picher, but residents are also aware of minings' long-term environmental, social, and economic costs. This tendency to simultaneously admire and scorn the mining landscape seems contradictory, and such ambivalence could be interpreted as a sign that a weak sense of place exists in the town. However, residents acknowledge the negative legacies of mining because they help to define who they are. Since the earliest days of mining, Picherites have recognized that this rough, unpretentious, worked-out landscape is reflective of their lives. Confounding the fact that minings' social and environmental legacies are the cause of Picher's problems, is that the community maintains an identity based on the totality of its mining heritage. In truth, the coexistence of opposing feelings is evidence that a vigorous sense of place exists in Picher.

Place is also entangled with positive and negative perceptions in Cokedale. Most longtime inhabitants believe, for example, that Cokedale was a unique and rewarding place to live. In this sense, internal perceptions support elements of the town's utopian mythology. However, residents also express darker feelings toward their community; that is, most recognize that working life was as difficult and oppressive as that of other company towns in the Trinidad Field. In contrast to Picherites, however, residents have had a more difficult time coming to terms with these competing sentiments. Standing in the way is Cokedale's utopian mythology. Unlike Picher, externally generated myths inhibit the ability of residents to recognize the range of experiences that comprise an authentic sense of place. Internal ambivalence in place meaning exists, but at a more hidden level.

In contrast to Picher and Cokedale, relatively little ambivalence is expressed in internal accounts of Toluca. Without question, life in the mining era was hard, but few remain alive to communicate this fact, and the length of time that now separates the mining past from the present has facilitated a more romanticized interpretation of history. In addition, community recovery following mine closure has also aided in the construction of a more favorable view of Toluca's past. In fact, when the study sites are compared, ambivalence in place meaning appears to be

related to the length of time that has passed since mine closure, and the outcomes of deindustrialization. In Picher, where many remain alive who can remember the hardships of mining, and where life remains impacted by minings' legacies, ambivalence in place meaning is strong. In Cokedale, where only a small number of mining-era residents remain, and where modest recovery is now occurring after decades of decay, the landscape's means and meanings remain locked in a battle for preeminence.

Place and the Mining Landscape

Although considerable differences exist in the nature of minings' physical legacies, in all of the case studies, the landscape serves as a mnemonic device stimulating remembrance of the mining era. Industrial structures such as crumbling coke ovens, mill foundations, or collapsed mine derricks, provide tangible expressions of the mining past. This holds true even for the wastes of mine production: the gob, spoil, and chat piles that stand as integral parts of the cultural landscape. Even when posing a significant threat to public health and the environment (Picher's chat piles), even when sanitized of much their mining-era authenticity (the reclaimed Jumbo), these features remain as valued reminders of an industry that was vital to the growth and development of community. In addition, minings' role as *raison d'être* is reinforced in countless ways including in and through mining-based community celebrations and the public display of mining artifacts, icons, and artwork. Community welcoming signs also provide a clear expression of minings' continued significance. Welcoming signs communicate the same message in each study site, namely, that in the imagination of their inhabitants, these are mining towns.

A sense of endurance is also reinforced by the mining landscape. Although most of minings' physical legacies appear useless and blighting, for residents, the piles of mining waste and ruined industrial structures represent the labors of generations of men who worked beneath the earth, sweltered in mills, or toiled aside smoking coke ovens, in order to provide for their families. Their ancestors did not give up and the landscape reflects their determination. Residents also recognize that many died in pursuit of the mining life and the landscape reflects

their sacrifice. This sentiment is particularly strong in Toluca and Picher where gob and chat piles stand as memorials to those who perished underground.

In the built landscape, decay and obsolescence also seem dominant, but again residents choose to see something different. Run-down infrastructure represents high points of community rather than decay. Dilapidated houses represent the homes of family and friends, and their continued occupation is another sign of endurance. Furthermore, redevelopment, however modest, is emphasized rather than dereliction. Defining the landscape's character in their own terms, these are communities that have always found a way to get by with less, and residents draw a degree of solace from the fact that this is the way life has always been. They take pride in their ongoing ability to make something of their lives, and the landscape reflects their fortitude.

Because it is reflective of the mining past, the landscape also plays a major role in reinforcing a local sense of self: "without the Jumbos we would all feel lost," Tolucan Jack Gerardo stated. Moreover, in the mining landscape's rough and unadorned appearance residents sense the same hardiness that defines who they are: "the Jumbos are a part of us," Toluca mayor Larry Harbor told me. In Picher, residents view themselves as being as hard as the hard-rock they mined, and in Cokedale, old-timers have resisted landscape improvements, in part because they feared that by losing the roughness of the mining landscape they would in turn lose a part of their individual character.

The External View of the Historic Mining Town

Internal perceptions of the historic mining town are complex, but what can be said of external perceptions? Do variations also exist in outside perceptions and what differences exist between internal and external viewpoints? In reviewing popular and scholarly accounts of mining areas, a metanarrative emerges whereby these locales are commonly defined as derelict and temporary environments, and these abstractions are evident in external views of Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher. However, although outsiders have tended to portray the study sites in simplifying ways, the mining town metanarrative has not been universally applied. It should also

be noted that its themes are not completely inaccurate, for in many ways, these *are* places of limited means.

In the earliest years of their existence, Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher were portrayed as symbols of prosperity and industrial progress. Promoters used this imagery to encourage growth and the mining town metanarrative was absent during this promotional stage. However, evident in these early external narratives is a reluctance to consider the internal experience of place, a shortcoming that is a hallmark of the outsider gaze. Outsiders have tended to define the mining town only in terms of its industrial function. That it also served as a valued community was largely ignored. Of all of the study sites, outside views of Picher demonstrate this fact most clearly. The era of promotion ended prematurely in Picher, and images of dereliction and impermanence soon solidified themselves in the outside imagination. So, too, did a sense of unavoidable hardship. While outsiders showed concern for the plight of Picherites, the stories they recounted of resident anguish were dominated by such an overwhelming sense of hopelessness that they failed to generate lasting sympathy for the community. Picher was seen, first and foremost, as a place of mining, and the concerns of its citizenry were viewed as secondary to the production of lead and zinc.

During the mining era, Picher was viewed as an utterly despoiled place, and this outside perceptual legacy remained with the community following mine closure. In fact, the hardships of deindustrialization–depopulation, infrastructure decay, and poverty—only served to harden these images. So, too, did Picher's seemingly unsolvable environmental problems, which in the 1980s and '90s became defining characteristics of the town's external identity. Despite the fact that close to 2,000 dedicated residents remained in Picher, to the outside world the town continued to have little identity as a community or home. Externally, Picher remained a hopelessly despoiled place. With mining gone it was also functionless, and to outsiders the only resolution to Picher's problems lie in allowing the community to die.

It would appear that the mining town metanarrative has no relevancy to Cokedale, a town that has had greater success in projecting a favorable image of itself and has long been represented by outsiders in a positive light. In fact, the dominant external view–Cokedale's utopian mythology—represents a set of images that lie in opposition to the ideologies of decay and temporariness. However, this counter-intuitive depiction should be viewed suspiciously, for it, too, ignores the internal complexity of place. Moreover, in the precision of its opposition to these ideologies is revealed the utopian mythology's connection to them. Cokedale's utopian myth serves as a foil to the mining town metanarrative, relying on accepted beliefs that mining towns are necessarily derelict, temporary, and valueless environments for its validity. In Cokedale, outsiders were unable to explain the fact that despite hardship and oppression, the town served as a valued home. The duality of place was ignored and a view of the past was manufactured that focused only on the town's favorable qualities. The mining town metanarrative serves as the foundation upon which this representation is constructed.

Cokedale's approving external image has proven persistent over time. Early on, Cokedale was portrayed as a model company town, and the utopian myth propelled this imagery into the era of deindustrialization. Today, the utopian myth remains the dominant theme in external views, but this is not to say that outsiders have been uniform in their praise of the community. In a small number of accounts appearing after mine closure, external narratives emerge that reflect the limited means of the landscape. Cokedale appeared to be dying and this led some to question the town's future. However, while images of dereliction and impermanence appear in outside accounts, a sense of community value remained. Even in its decay, Cokedale retained a seeming quaintness that was appealing. The town outwardly reflected a sense of its historical significance and was seen as a curious relic of a past industrial age.

Although external representations vary in Picher and Cokedale, they remained fairly consistent over time. This is not the case in Toluca, however, where a transformation occurred in outside representations following mine closure. Like Picher, Toluca was represented as a

quintessentially rough and disheveled mining community, a settlement built for a single purpose, to produce coal. Moreover, filled as it was with immigrants, Toluca was viewed as a transient place lacking the kind of Anglo-American ethnic stock deemed necessary to give a lasting and orderly tone to society. As with Picher, outsiders also focused their attention on the seedier aspects of community life. Represented as a boisterous and unlawful place, a highly sensational portrait of Toluca was put forth.

However, a transformation in outside views occurred following mine closure that saw Toluca emerge from deindustrialization as a more likeable place. Economic recovery played a major role in facilitating this reconceptualization: Toluca rebounded from mine closure avoiding the physical and economic decay that characterized the post-mining era in the other study areas. In addition, negative perceptions also faded as mining town associations became less apparent in the landscape. As it evolved back into a farming town, Toluca's economic function was redefined. No longer burdened by minings' negative legacies, a rural aesthetic was applied to the landscape. Outside representations, once critical of minings' influences, began to revere the industry's vanishing remnants. In particular, the Jumbos came to serve as curious relics of the mining past. With the passage of time, nostalgia set in and Toluca's industrial detritus came to be thought of as reminders of the town's history.

External perceptions show variation over time, and the mining town metanarrative emerges as more significant in some case studies than in others. However, in one way or another, themes of dereliction and impermanence are evident in the outsider gaze, revealing that an opposing internal/external dichotomy exists in place perception. Generally speaking, residents tend to find lasting emotional value in the mining town, whereas outsiders tend to see dereliction and impermanence. How is this explained? Such a dichotomy suggests that internal conceptualizations of place emphasize landscape meaning, whereas the external gaze is focused on the more tangible means a locale provides for survival. While there is a degree of truth to this claim, the distinction that exists in resident and outsider accounts is not quite this simple to

explain. As has been discussed, residents are apt to include both positive and negative aspects of life and landscape in their conceptualizations, suggesting that both means and meanings play a role in formulating a local sense of place. True, lacking intimate experience with the landscape, outsiders tend to focus their attention on the landscape's economic viability, environmental quality, and appearance. However, while they may be less inclusive of the range of landscape experiences, outsider accounts do communicate an actuality that cannot be ignored: namely, that these are highly troubled locales.

Both narratives communicate the complex realities of place, and their disparate nature is explained by the fact that they are rooted in the vested interests of insiders and outsiders; that is, they represent a perceived need to represent the mining town in a certain light. Outsiders, for example, have a vested interest in narrating the mining town as a derelict and temporary environment in order to support rational planning interests; to draw attention to the economic and environmental plight of mining areas; or simply to publish and sell interesting accounts of the mining landscape. At the same time, insiders have a vested interest in adhering to the idea that the mining town is a meaningful and rewarding place for the purpose of self-preservation and to retain pride in community. The result is the formation of two opposing place perceptions that produce conflicting visions of the future, and make effective management of the mining landscape a difficult task. However, as the case studies show, the reality of life in the historic mining town is more complex than either viewpoint suggests, and by recognizing this fact, a better understanding of the challenges these places face is revealed.

Community Persistence

While the mining town is widely portrayed as ephemeral, Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher prove otherwise. Despite the considerable hardships that confront residents, mining settlements can, and often do, survive mine closure. In fact, community persistence in the midst of physical and economic decay is a common outcome of deindustrialization.

Although established to serve a particular utilitarian function, to extract and process minerals, the mining town often develops another role, one that is ultimately longer lasting: it comes to serve as a meaningful home. In all of the study areas, a sizeable portion of the population chose to stay following mine closure, in large part, because they held strong emotional bonds to place. Indeed, that many chose to stay despite the fact that mine closure initially amplified hardship, is testimony to the strength of place attachment.

Due to its productive agricultural setting, it is likely that Toluca would have survived mine closure even had residents not developed a bond to place. After all, Toluca was initially established as a farming town and its recovery reflects a return to its original reason for being. It is likely, however, that Toluca would have a smaller population (many of its residents descend from families who arrived during the mining era), and that it would be a less colorful and unified community, had fewer decided to confront deindustrialization's hardships. Toluca's character is tied to its mining history. Without its vibrant Italian community, its sense of cohesiveness, and the pride that is taken in the town's past, Toluca would be a poorer place.

The same holds true in Cokedale and Picher, but unlike Toluca, these towns would almost certainly have disappeared following mine closure, had residents not developed strong place-based attachments. In Toluca, many unemployed miners were absorbed into other sectors of the economy, but far fewer such opportunities existed in Cokedale and Picher. Yet many remained because they were willing to make sacrifices and to find the means, however meager, to survive. Despite the hardship they knew they were facing, persistence was viewed as a better option than leaving the places they called home.

Cokedale and Picher show how important place attachments can be in facilitating community survival. It should be noted, however, that emotional ties alone are not enough to insure community persistence. A variety of factors influence community survival, and mining towns do sometimes vanish. For example, dozens of Cokedale's neighboring company towns have disappeared leaving barely a trace, and in the Picher area, the ruins of numerous mining

camps lie scattered amid the chat piles. In the case of southern Colorado, company policy determined, first and foremost, the future of the mining town. Owned outright by mining firms, these towns had no future once company decisions were made to salvage, move, or demolish town infrastructure. In addition, in all of the case studies community survival was dependent upon residents being able to find some basic means to support themselves. In both Picher and Cokedale, residents commuted to neighboring communities to work. It is clear that, had a company decision been made to obliterate town infrastructure in Cokedale, or had either town been more isolated, the future of these settlements would have been bleak.

It should also be noted that not all residents were willing to sacrifice their economic well-being for the sake of community. For every inhabitant who chose to stay in Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher, an equal or greater number chose to leave following mine closure. For those who left, the ties they held to place were either weak, or they were lesser concerns when compared to the need to provide for one's family. For these residents, the mining town *was* a place of work, and with employment opportunities gone it was time to move on. A significant portion of the population in all of the study areas had moved from mining towns before, and relocation was a fact of life. In this sense, there was a degree of transience to the mining community.

However, although a range of factors played a role in community survival, and not all had a desire to stay following mine closure, place attachment was still a significant part of community persistence. Attachment to place is recognized, for example, as the driving force in virtually every recorded case of resident persistence. It is also cited in instances where people have returned after exploring employment opportunities elsewhere. Moreover, the fact that many left following mine closure reveals that better opportunities were available if one chose to pursue them. Temptation to leave was great, but stronger forces kept many in place, a point that highlights the importance of community attachments among those who stayed. Moreover, by weeding out those for whom the bonds to place were weak, depopulation may have served to amplify community cohesiveness and place value in the post-mining era. Clearly, while place

attachment is not the only factor that facilitates community persistence, it is a central one. Lacking such attachments, these communities would have either disappeared, or at best would remain shadows of what they are today.

Preservation

In Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher, sense of place is rooted in the mining way of life but it is not reliant upon the mining industry's continuation to be maintained. Mining may be gone, but its physical and social legacies remain, and it is through these that the internal value of place is sustained. For this reason, preservation of minings' physical legacies is important. Unfortunately, however, negative outside perceptions of the mining landscape, and the very real social and environmental problems mining causes, often diminish outside awareness of the sentimental and historical value these landscapes hold.

Dealing with the problems caused by mining and deindustrialization present significant challenges that are only made more complex by the fact that from the perspective of residents, these landscapes may contain elements worthy of preserving. Confronting this issue is difficult. Government agencies charged with addressing minings' problems, for example, correctly hold the health and economic well-being of residents, and environmental quality, as primary concerns. From this perspective, the landscape's sentimental and historical qualities seem inconsequential, but they are not, for sense of place is an indispensable aspect of the human experience. At the same time, however, quality of life issues cannot be ignored for the sake of preserving minings' physical legacies, for doing so threatens the very habitability of place. As Picher clearly demonstrates, residents have little hope of maintaining their community if economic decay and environmental problems are not addressed. For this reason, sense of place should be viewed as something to be protected and managed alongside more tangible quality of life concerns. If this is to occur, a fundamental change in the way society evaluates mining landscapes is required.

In both Toluca and Picher, environmental quality concerns pose a threat to minings' physical legacies. In these communities, reclamation and remediation activities have come into

direct conflict with local desires to maintain minings' landscape impress. This conflict is most clearly evident in Toluca, where residents have fought to protect a single set of landscape features, the Jumbos, against a variety of threats. The most recent of these was a state reclamation plan that would have resulted, as far as residents were concerned, in the obliteration of the features. Only after a concerted community effort, and willingness on behalf of the state to recognize the historic and sentimental value of the mining landscape, was a reclamation plan devised that satisfied both internal and external concerns. Both parties made compromises, and in so doing, reclamation succeeded in meeting the goals of environmental remediation, and the desire of residents to see the Jumbos preserved. Toluca shows how the experiential value of mining landscapes can be effectively incorporated into reclamation planning. It also shows the folly of applying original contour reclamation practices when other, more socially meaningful outcomes can be obtained. An effective reclamation alternative emerged in Toluca because the state was willing to consider resident needs and desires in the planning process.

Some Picherites have also expressed a desire to preserve the piles of mining waste that dominate the cultural landscape. However, this sentiment is not overwhelming, and Picherites have not rallied to save these features. To the contrary, because of their health hazards, residents have largely accepted the fact that the chat piles must be removed. Although locals generally support environmental remediation activities that, in effect, are obliterating many of minings' physical legacies, they still exhibit a desire to maintain minings' landscape impress. Instead of chat pile preservation, residents are focusing their attention on maintaining an even more important element of the mining landscape, Picher itself. With continued talk of a possible government buy-out and community relocation, this threat represents the most fundamental challenge of all to the viability of place. It is not yet known whether the town of Picher will survive future remediation initiatives. However, given the strength of resident attachments to place, and the historical willingness of Picherites to overcome the many difficulties that have come their way, it seems likely that they will fight to preserve their town.

While few outsiders have questioned the possible demolition of Picher, for residents the mining landscape and the history it reflects play central roles in maintaining a sense of place. The town's impressive collection of mining murals, its two mining museums, and its Miners' Reunion, are testimonies to this fact. Indeed, all of the study sites contain similar heritage landscapes—museums, historical markers, town welcoming signs, and other celebrations of the mining heritage–and in all cases, these represent an important way by which the meaning of place is reinforced. In Picher, however, such mining-related images and activities take on special significance. Picherites have expended considerable effort constructing a more benign kind of mining landscape that, by necessity, serves as a substitute for the real thing. Recognizing that minings' physical legacies are harmful, and that the mining landscape must, for the sake of community habitability, be allowed to change, residents have constructed a representative landscape that captures and maintains their mining past.

The preservationist might overlook the value of such reconstructions because they lack historical authenticity. Furthermore, as remediation activities continue in Picher it is likely that the mining landscape will increasingly lack the kind of historical integrity considered a rationale for protection. For residents, however, the fragmented physical remains of industrial activity, and the heritage landscape replete with historical reconstructions, hold considerable value. In fact, as cultural landscape preservationists recognize, authenticity and integrity are problematic measures of landscape significance, for the value a landscape holds as a historical resource lies in its ability, whatever its form, to communicate a sense of the past. Viewed from this perspective, the Picher landscape remains highly significant, and prior to considering any type of community relocation plan, it would be wise to recognize that in losing their connection to the land residents will likely suffer additional hardship.

Unlike Toluca and Picher, Cokedale provides insight into formal preservation planning in the mining landscape. Cokedale stands as a significant accomplishment in the context of industrial preservation and represents one of the best-preserved company coal mining towns in

the American West. However, although the town's historical significance is widely acknowledged, preservation of the mining landscape has still proven to be a difficult task. Two issues arise in Cokedale that reflect traditional preservation challenges: landscape decay and development. Of these, inappropriate development has stirred up vigorous local debate. Conflict exists between those with development interests (mostly newcomers intent on improving community infrastructure) and those who view such changes as an affront to the town's historical character.

Because the mining past is held in high regard in Cokedale, it might be assumed that old-timers have stood firmly behind preservation initiatives, but this has not been the case. While not opposed to preservation *per se*, since taking control of the community the old-guard has resisted most alterations to Cokedale's company town atmosphere, and this includes formal preservation activities. For old-timers, preservation was not necessary to maintain the landscape's sentimental or historical value. The mining landscape was meaningful in its decayed condition and most saw little need for change. In support of the old-timer's position, an argument could be made that Cokedale actually reflected a more genuine sense of its mining-era character prior to the widespread undertaking of preservation initiatives.

There are numerous reasons why Cokedale has received formal preservation attention, whereas Toluca and Picher have not. Certainly, the lack of mining-related environmental problems in Cokedale has made landscape appreciation an easier task. The town's striking mountain setting also gives it an aesthetic advantage over the other study areas. There is also a sense of uniqueness to Cokedale that is more readily apparent to the outsider gaze: unlike Toluca and Picher, Cokedale is the only surviving mining town in its region. The most significant factor in stimulating preservation interests in Cokedale, however, is the town's utopian mythology. From the earliest days of its existence, Cokedale was set apart as an exceptional mining camp and the utopian narrative facilitated external recognition of the town's historical significance. Testimony to this fact is the central role the utopian representation played in the National

Register's decision to assign the town historic district status, which was based largely on its alleged uniqueness as a model company town.

In terms of landscape preservation, the utopian myth has been a mixed blessing. On the positive side, preservation may not have occurred in Cokedale had the myth not facilitated outside recognition of the town's historical significance. On the other hand, the utopian narrative fails to communicate the complexity of place, and the preservation initiatives it has stimulated exhibit the same deficiency. Utopian interpretations recognize Cokedale's value as a community, but they do not communicate the toil and difficulty of the mining way of life. As a result, these realities have little expression in Cokedale's heritage landscape. No attempt has yet been made, for example, to preserve or interpret any of Cokedale's industrial remains, landscape elements that represent the town's reason for being. Even its coke ovens, which generated the product from which the town took its name, lie in a state of decay. In addition, little attention has been paid to the fact that what remains of Cokedale today reflects only part of the town's original infrastructure and character. Cokedale is presented as a living history museum where time has stood still. There is no recognition that dozens of crowded tenements once existed in the community; no sense of the hardship and oppression under which Cokedale's diverse ethnic communities lived; and no sense of the population loss and decay that occurred following mine closure. The utopian myth ignores the duality of place and so, too, have preservation efforts.

Despite these shortcomings, however, one must not be over-critical of preservation initiatives in Cokedale, which have proven vital to the retention of town infrastructure. In its decayed condition, the mining landscape may have retained meaning for old-timers, but it likely would not have outlasted them. Moreover, the landscape's historical significance must be evaluated on its ability to maintain place significance, and in this regard preservation has been a success. Cokedale has been sanitized of much of its mining-era character, but important aspects of its past have been retained. As proof of this fact, community and personal identities remain intimately bound to the landscape, which still has the opportunity to communicate a truer sense of

its history. If the shortcomings of the utopian myth are realized, and if these can be translated into more careful landscape interpretation, then future visitors will be presented with an opportunity to truly experience a twentieth century company mining town.

While challenges lay ahead in all of the study sites, in one form or another maintenance of the mining landscape is sustaining place meaning in Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher, and several lessons emerge from the case studies that provide insight into preservation planning in mining areas. First, if a preservation ethic is to be applied to the mining landscape it is necessary to discard the devaluing notions of dereliction and impermanence by which these environments are commonly defined. Recognition that minings' physical impress can hold significant experiential value is a prerequisite to preservation, and such an understanding can only be achieved by learning to listen to resident views. The case studies show that effective landscape planning in the historic mining town requires community participation. Second, an awareness of the duality of place experience is necessary if ways are to be found to manage effectively both quality of life issues and preservation desires. Only by finding common ground, developing solutions that address both landscape means and meaning issues, can mining areas be effectively managed. Lastly, it is important to resist measures of integrity and authenticity when evaluating the historical significance of mining landscapes. The worth of the mining landscape should be determined by those who live within it. Even fragments or reconstructed elements of the mining landscape have historical value if they reflect and reinforce the mining past.

Enduring Places

As deindustrialization continues to reshape the North American landscape, defunct industrial settlements like the historic mining town will become more numerous. Depletion of local mineral deposits and changing patterns in world production and consumption of mineral resources has already caused the demise of many historic mining areas.[5] The residents of these places are burdened by the hardships of mine closure, which are often compounded by isolation, limited economic diversification, and by the environmental problems that accompany mining

activity. Despite these problems, however, as Toluca, Cokedale, and Picher show, mining settlements often survive mine closure. Population loss and economic decline follows, but residents frequently find ways to adjust. For this reason, it is important that society learn to deal with the problems experienced in mining regions, for as deindustrialization continues, so, too, will the production of defunct but persistent industrial settlements.

A genuine scholarly concern exists for the problems caused by deindustrialization and for those whose lives this process is disrupting. However, the experiential qualities of defunct industrial areas have received little academic attention. Geographers, for example, have produced a significant body of work on mining communities but their character as places has not been widely explored. If the depiction of places is one of geography's founding traditions, if geography, at heart, serves to satisfy human curiosity of unknown places, then this research fills a void in our geographical knowledge.[6] More significantly, however, by describing how the mining town functions as a place and by giving voice to the needs and desires of its inhabitants, this research shows the importance of broadening our analysis of this locale and the need that exists for democratizing the decision-making processes that shape its future.

The scientific purview provides important insight into the mining town but it does not provide all of the information required to adequately attend to the range of challenges its residents face. Natural and social scientists, for example, have largely ignored place experience—the most intimate aspect of the human-environment relationship—and have come to assume that the mining landscape is a derelict and impermanent environment, a wasted landscape of little value. As has been shown, however, such ignorance hinders effective management of the problems that exist in mining areas, as is evident by the fact that the most common strategy for addressing landscape decay is to obliterate any evidence of minings' offending features. Such strategies often overlook the internal value of these landscapes and are resisted at the local level. The meaning the industrial landscape holds for those who call it home, and for whom restorative action is intended to benefit, has largely been ignored. Place analysis fills this void and produces

information of significant practical value. Gaining an insider's perspective of the historic mining town improves our understanding of these places and leaves us in a better position to equitably address their plight.

This research challenges preconceived notions of the nature of the industrial landscape and shows that historic mining towns pose unique challenges, both for residents who live within them, and for those charged with addressing their myriad social and environmental problems. The mining landscape holds value as a center of human experience, but minings' legacies also impact—in tumultuous ways—local economies and environments. Clearly, attention must continue to be trained on the lack of means these landscapes provide for survival. However, it is important that outsiders find ways to document landscape dereliction, economic decay, and population loss with a greater sensitivity to the meaning mining towns hold as lived-in places. This can be accomplished by engaging residents and by recognizing that all types of landscapes, even those plagued by the impacts of deindustrialization, can serve to nurture their inhabitants

Mining is the cause of much hardship, but it is in the mining past that residents find a context for existence. Additionally, while the boom and bust cycles of the mining economy pose serious threats to the long-term survival of these settlements, the mining past also creates cohesive and nurturing communities. For these reasons, preservation of the mining landscape is important. Without an ability to communicate its mining history, the landscape is robbed of one of its most important life-supporting traits: a capacity to reinforce and maintain a local sense of place. Resident attachments to a degraded landscape produce challenges that are difficult but important to overcome, an observation that applies to the mining settlement and to the scores of seemingly derelict, post-industrial communities of urban and rural North America which, like the historic mining town, are attempting to survive as communities and homes. Weak and forsaken in many respects, but strong and abiding in others, the historic mining town is a complex entity whose past, present, and future deserves careful attention, for these are enduring places.

ENDNOTES

Chapter One : Introduction Notes to Pages 1-5

[1] Deindustrialization refers to a sustained decline in traditional industrial activity, especially primary (resource extraction) and secondary (manufacturing) industries. It may involve the absolute and/or relative decline of industrial output and employment. See, Roger Lee, *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, R. J. Johnston, Derek Gregory and David M. Smith eds. (Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford, 1994), 123.

[2] Ben Marsh, "Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77:3 (1987), 337-352.

[3] Ibid, 337-338.

[4] Kathleen Stewart, *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1996), 11.

[5] Kathleen Stewart, "An Occupied Place," in *Senses of Place*, Steven Feld & Keith H. Basso, eds. (School of American Research Press: Sante Fe, 1996), 137.

[6] Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (University of Iowa Press: Iowa City, 1993), 152.

[7] Ibid, 103.

[8] Marie Price and Martin Lewis, "The Reinvention of Cultural Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83:1 (1993), 1-17. For additional information on debates over the definition and practice of cultural geography see: Denis Cosgrove, "On "The Reinvention of Cultural Geography" by Price and Lewis," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83:3 (1993), 515-522; Peter J. Hugill and Kenneth E. Foote, "Re-reading Cultural Geography," in *Re-Reading Cultural Geography*, Kenneth E. Foote, Peter J. Hugill, Kent Mathewson and Jonathan M. Smith, eds. (University of Texas Press: Austin (1994), 9-23; James Duncan and David Ley, "Representing the place of culture," in *Place/Culture/Representation*, James Duncan and David Ley eds. (Routledge: New York, 1993), 1-21; and, David Ley, "Cultural/humanistic geography," *Progress in Human Geography*, 9 (1985), 415-423.

[9] Bret Wallach, *At Odds with Progress* (University of Arizona Press: Tucson, 1991), vii.

[10] Hugill and Foote, "Re-Reading Cultural Geography," 9-23.

[11] Edmunds V. Bunkse, "Humanism: Wisdom of the Heart and Mind," in *Concepts in Human Geography*, Carvill Earle, Kent Mathewson and Martin S. Kenzer eds. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: London, 1996), 355-381.

[12] William Cronon, "In Search of Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, William Cronon ed. (W.W. Norton & Co.: New York, 1995), 35.

[13] Hugill and Foote, "Re-reading Cultural Geography," 17; Paul Cloke, Chris Philo and David Sadler, *Approaching Human Geography: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Debates* (The Guilford Press: New York, 1991)57-92.

[14] See e.g.: David Ley and M.S. Samuels eds. *Humanistic Geography* (Maaroufa: Chicago, 1978); Anne Buttimer, "Grasping the Dynamism of the Life-World," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66 (1976), 277-292; J.N. Entrikin, "Contemporary Humanism in Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66 (1976), 615-632.

[15] Hugill and Foote, "Re-reading Cultural Geography," 11-12.

[16] Lester B. Rowntree, "Orthodoxy and new directions: cultural/humanistic geography," *Progress in Human Geography*, 12 (1988), 582.

[17] Fay Gale, "A View of the World Through the Eyes of a Cultural Geographer," in *The Student's Companion to Geography*, Alisdair Rogers, Heather Viles and Andrew Goudie eds. (Blackwell: Oxford, 1992), 22.

[18] Richard H. Schein, "The Place of Landscape: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 87:4 (1997), 660-680.

[19] Carl O. Sauer, 1925, "The Morphology of Landscape," in J. Leighly ed., *Land and life: selections from the writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1974), 315-350.

[20] As geographers Denis Cosgrove and Peter Jackson have argued, this later emphasis is rooted in "Berkeley School" research, whose practitioners began, many years ago, to show that landscapes were cultural constructions that structure and give meaning to the external world. See: Denis E. Cosgrove and Peter Jackson, "New directions in cultural geography," *Area*, 19 (1987), 99.

[21] Schein, "The Place of Landscape," 660.

[22] James Duncan, *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, R. J. Johnston, Derek Gregory and David M. Smith eds. (Blackwell Publishers Ltd.: Oxford, 1994), 442-443.

[23] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1977).

[24] Entrikin describes how geographers have used natural/cultural history, humanism, theoretically informed Marxist and structurational approaches, and multi-perspectival post-modern approaches to studying place. See e.g.: J. Nicholas Entrikin, *The characterization of place*, Wallace W. Atwood Lecture Series No. 5, Graduate School of Geography, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1991. See also: Schein, "The Place of Landscape."

[25] David Seamon, "Phenomenology and Environment-Behavior Research," in *Advances in Environment, Behavior, and Design*, G.T. Moore and E. Zube eds. (Plenum: New York, 1987), 10.

[26] Peirce Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, D.W. Meinig ed. (Oxford University Press: New York, 1979), 11-32. The term "topophilia" was introduced into geography by Yi-Fu Tuan. Literally, topophilia means love of place. See, Yi-Fu Yuan, *Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitudes and values* (Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1974).

[27] Keith H. Basso, "Wisdom Sits in Places," in *Senses of Place*, Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso eds. (School of American Research Press: Sante Fe, 1996), 83.

[28] Peirce Lewis, "Defining a Sense of Place," *The Southern Quarterly*, 17:3 (1979), 29. See also, E. Relph, "Modernity and the Reclamation of Place," in *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, D. Seamon ed. (SUNY Press: New York, 1993).

[29] Douglas Porteous, *Planned to Death: The annihilation of a place called Howdendyke* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1989), 212.

[30] Jonathan M. Smith, Andrew Light, and David Roberts, "Introduction: Philosophies and Geographies of Place," in *Philosophies of Place*, Andrew Light and Jonathon M. Smith eds. (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.: New York, 1998), 6.

[31] Porteous, *Planned to Death*.

[32] See, e.g.: R.T. Bowles, *Little communities and big industries* (Butterworths: Toronto, 1982); J.H. Bradbury and I. St. Martin, "Winding down in a Quebec mining town: a case study of Schefferville," *Canadian Geographer*, 27(1983), 128-144; A. Gallaher and H. Padfield eds., *The dying community* (University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque, 1980).

[33] Homer Aschmann, "The Natural History of a Mine," *Economic Geography*, 46:2(1970), 171-190.

[34] For a detailed discussion of mine closure and its impact on rural economies, see: Thomas Michael Power, *Lost Landscapes and Failed Economies: The Search for a Value of Place* (Island Press: Washington D.C.: 1996).

[35] Porteous, *Planned to Death*, 227-230.

[36] See, e.g.: Neil C. Tykklainen and J. Bradbury eds. *Coping with Closure: An International Comparison of Mine Town Experience* (Routledge; New York, 1992); Bradbury and St. Martin, "Winding Down"; Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council, *Canada's Single Industry Communities: A Proud Determination to Survive* (Ottawa, 1987); John Sewel, *Colliery*

Closure and Social Change: A Study of a South Wales Mining Valley (University of Wales Press: Cardiff, 1975).

[37] Tykklainen and Bradbury, *Coping with Closure*, 19.

[38] For a detailed discussion of preservation issues in mining environments see, *America's Mining Heritage*, Cultural Resource Management, 21:7 (1998), U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, Washington, D.C. In exploring preservation issues in American mining areas, Richard Francaviglia has identified four threats to the mining landscape: neglect, inauthentic preservation, reclamation, and renewed mining activity. See, Richard V. Francaviglia, *Hard Places: Reading the Landscape of America's Historic Mining Districts* (University of Iowa Press: Iowa City, 1991), 184.

[39] See, e.g.: R.T Hester, "Process can be Style: Participation and Conservation in Landscape Architecture," *Landscape Architecture*, 73:3(1983), 49-55.

[40] M.C. Comerio, "Community Design: Idealism and Entrepreneurship," *Journal of Architectural Planning Research*, 1(1984), 227-243.

[41] John Brinckerhoff Jackson, "Goodbye to Evolution," *Landscape*, 13:1 (1963), 2.

[42] Kevin Lynch, *Managing the Sense of a Region* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976), 3-4.

[43] Mine site reclamation is federally mandated in the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA). Although return to approximate original contour reclamation is not specifically required by federal law, a survey of 16 state reclamation offices conducted by the author in 1996 showed that original contour reclamation was the dominant strategy applied to abandoned mine lands.

[44] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Surface Mining and our Environment*, (GPO: Washington, D.C., 1962), 51-52.

[45] Lewis, "Defining a Sense of Place,"42. See also: E. Relph, "Modernity and the Reclamation of Place."

[46] Dolores Hayden, "In Search of the American Cultural Landscape," Foreword to *Preserving the Cultural Landscape in America*, Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick eds. (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2000), VII.

[47] Alanen and Melnick, "Why Cultural Landscape Preservation," in *Preserving the Cultural Landscape in America*, Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick eds. (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2000),5.

[48] See, e.g.: David Lynch, *What Time is This Place?* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972); Christopher S. Davies, "Wales: Industrial Fallibility and Spirit of Place," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 4:1 (1983), 72-86; and, M. Mulrooney, *A Legacy of Coal: The Company Towns of Southwest Pennsylvania*, National Parks Service, Washington, D.C. (1989). For information on industrial archaeology and industrial preservation, see: A Bernard Knapp, Vincent C. Pigott, and Eugenia W. Herbert eds. *Social Approaches to an Industrial Past: The Archaeology and Anthropology of Mining* (Routledge: New York, 1998); Robert B. Gordon and Patrick M. Malone, *The Texture of Industry: An Archaeological View of the Industrialization of North America* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1994); Judith Alfrey and Tim Putnam, *The Industrial Heritage: Managing resources and uses* (Routledge, New York, 1992).

[49] Alanen and Melnick, "Why Cultural Landscape Preservation," 20.

[50] Edwin Dobbs, "Pennies from Hell," *Harper's Magazine*, October, 1996, 41.

[51] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (The MIT Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995).

[52] Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 9.

[53] See, e.g.: David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1985); and, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge University Press: New York, 1996).

[54] Alanen and Melnick, "Why Cultural Landscape Preservation," 16-20.

[55] Richard Francaviglia, "Selling Heritage Landscapes," in *Preserving the Cultural Landscape in America*, Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick eds. (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2000), 67-68.

[56] Catherine Howett, "Integrity as a Value in Cultural Landscape Preservation, in *Preserving the Cultural Landscape in America*, Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick eds. (The Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2000), 207.

[57] George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature, physical geography as modified by human action* (Charles Scribner: New York, 1865).

[58] Randall Rohe, "Man and the Land: Minings' Impact in the Far West," *Arizona & the West*, 28 (1986), 299-338.

[59] See, e.g.: Raymond E. Murphy, "A Southern West Virginia Mining Community," *Economic Geography*, 9:1 (1931), 51-59; John C. Weaver, "Silver Peak and Blair: Desert Mining Communities," *Economic Geography*, 15:1 (1939), 80-84; Robert L. Carmin, The Coal Mining Industry of Guernsey County, Ohio," *Economic Geography*, 19:3 (1943), 292-300; and Trevor M. Thomas, Wales: Land of Mines and Quarries," *Geographical Review*, 46 (1956), 59-81.

[60] Homer Aschmann, "The Natural History of a Mine," *Economic Geography*, 46:2 (1976), 171-190.

[61] Raymond E. Murphy, "The Geography of Mineral Production," in *American Geography Inventory & Prospect*, Preston E. James and Clarence F. Jones, eds. (Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1954), 279-290.

[62] See, e.g.: Earl W. Kersten, "The Early Settlement of Aurora, Nevada, and nearby Mining Camps," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 54:4 (1964), 490-507; E. Willard Miller, "The Southern Anthracite Region: A Problem Area," *Economic Geography*, 31:4 (1955), 331-350; Alex Himelfarb, "The Social Characteristics of One-Industry Towns in Canada," in *Little Communities and Big Industries*, R.T. Bowles ed. (Butterworth & Co.: Toronto, 1982); John H. Bradbury and Isabelle St-Martin, "Winding Down in A Quebec Mining Town: A Case Study of Schefferville," *Canadian Geographer*, 27:2 (1983), 128-144; Randall E. Rohe, "After the Gold Rush: Chinese Mining in the Far West, 1850-1890," *Montana*, 32:1 (1982), 2-19.

[63] Randall E. Rohe, "The Geography and Material Culture of the Western Mining Town," *Material Culture*, 16:3 (1984), 99-120.

[64] Francaviglia, *Hard Places*.

[65] Christopher S. Davies, "Wales: Industrial Fallibility and Spirit of Place," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 4:1 (1983), 72-86 and "Dark Inner Landscapes: The South Wales Coalfield," *Landscape Journal*, 3:1 (1984), 36-44; William Wyckoff, "Postindustrial Butte," *The Geographical Review*, 85:4 (1995), 478-496.

[66] Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.: New York, 1962), 73.

[67] Francaviglia, *Hard Places*, 214.

[68] John Jakle and David Wilson, *Derelict Landscapes: The Wasting of America's Built Environment* (Rowman & Littlefield: Savage, Maryland, 1992), 9.

[69] Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1967).

[70] For example, a search conducted on the national library database *WorldCat* [http://www.oclc.org/home/], retrieved 1,559 English language records under the descriptor heading "mineral industries – environmental aspects." See, e.g.: M. Sengupta, *Environmental Impacts of Mining: Monitoring, Restoration, and Control* (Lewis Publishers: Boca Raton, Florida: 1993); Earle A. Ripley, Robert E. Redmann, and Adele A. Crowder, *Environmental Effects of Mining* (St. Lucie Press: Delray Beach, Florida, 1996); Jose M. Azcue, *Environmental*

Impacts of Mining Activities: Emphasis on Mitigation and Remedial Measures (Springer: New York, 1999).

[71] Sociologists and anthropologists have produced a critical literature on class, gender, and ethnicity, and minings' impacts on indigenous life-ways. See, e.g.: Carol S. Holzberg, Anthropology and Industry: Reappraisal and New Directions," Annual Review of Anthropology, 10 (1981), 317-360; Ricardo Godoy, "Mining: Anthropological Perspectives," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 14 (1985), 199-217; and, Malcolm Cross and Geoff Payne, eds., *Work and the Enterprise Culture* (Falmer Press: New York, 1991).

[72] A search conducted on the national library database *WorldCat* [http://www.oclc.org/home/], retrieved 2,088 English language records under the heading "mining-labor"; 1,218 records under "mining – economic conditions"; and, 541 records for "mining – population."

[73] See, e.g.: Stephen Voynick, *Leadville: A Miners' Epic* (Mountain Press Publishing Co.: Missoula, 1984); Duane A. Smith, *Mining America, The Industry and the Environment, 1800-1980* (University Press of Kansas: Lawrence,1987); Priscilla Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, A History of America's Bloody Coal Industry (Paragon House: New York, 1989); Larry Lankton, Cradle to Grave. Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines (Oxford University Press: New York, 1991). Excellent mining history bibliographies are available through the Mining History Network [http://www.ex.ac.uk/~RBurt/MinHistNet/] and the Mining History Association [http://www.lib.mtu.edu/mha/mha.htm].

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As it was often more difficult to gain direct access to outsiders who had experience with the mining landscape, I used phone interviews or other forms of correspondence to contact individuals. More frequently, I used documentary sources to represent their views.

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Chapter Two: Toluca

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[3] For the location of waste piles in the Longwall District, see, Susan Carol Bradford, "Mining Methods, Geology, and Sampling Procedures used to Study Colliery Waste from the Historic Longwall Mining District, North-Central Illinois," in *Geologic Study of Longwall Mine Sites in Northern Illinois* (Urbana: Illinois State Geological Survey, 1983).

[4] S.O. Andros, *Coal Mining in Illinois* (Urbana: State Geological Survey of Illinois, 1915),1-49, 68; Harry M. Dixon, "The Illinois Coal Mining Industry" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1951), 78-79. For a discussion of the history of coal production in Illinois see also, A. Bement, *Illinois Coal* (Urbana: Illinois State Geological Survey, 1929).

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[8] S. O. Andros, *Coal Mining Practice in District I (Longwall)* (Urbana: State Geological Survey of Illinois, 1914), 7, 12-38.

[9] Population figures based on U.S. census data for 32 communities where longwall mines were in operation. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Population of the United States in 1860: Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C. 1864); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Statistics of the Population of the United States: Ninth Census* (Washington, D.C. 1872); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census*,(Washington, D.C. 1883); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census* (Washington, D.C. 1895); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900* (Washington, D.C. 1901); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*, (Washington, D.C. 1913).

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[30] *Toluca-100 Years*, 128.

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Society, "Toluca Built on Devlin's Coal," *Heritage Sampler No.2* (Lacon: *Henry News Republican*, 1965); Marshall County Historical Society, *History of Marshall County*, 33.

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[94] Ibid.

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[97] Anna Mae Terrell, personal correspondence, September, 2000.

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[13] Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines*, 305-308, 320-323; Upton Sinclair, *King Coal* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917) and, *The Coal War: A Sequel to King Coal* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1976); U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, *Final Report and Testimony*, Senate Doc. 415, 64th Cong., 2d Sess., Washington, D.C., 1916; U.S. Congress, House Subcommittee on Mines and Mining, *Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado*, Pursuant to H.R. 387, 63rd Cong., 2d Sess, Washington D.C., 1914.

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[15] Rollie Schafer, Jr., *The Schafers of Cokedale a Century in America*, (Trinidad, Colorado: privately published, 1993), 40; Gary L. Lindsey, "Creating Presence: The Early Twentieth Century Company Store in Three Coal Mining Towns in Southern Colorado," (M.A. thesis, Abilene Christian University, 1998), 193; National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form*, 7.

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[31] Guitterman, "Mining Coal in Southern Colorado," 1009-1015; Lloyd, "The Cokedale Mine," 152-156; *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Riley Canon," 4; Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 19, 17-18; Schafer, *The Schafers of Cokedale*, 40, 57.

[32] Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 43-44.

[33] Ibid, 43.

[34] Schafer, *The Schafers of Cokedale*, 40; Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 19.

[35] Barton, Cokedale 1907-1947, 19-23; Schafer, The Schafers of Cokedale, 91.

[36] Rick J. Clyne, *Coal People: Life in Southern Colorado's Company Towns, 1890-1930* (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1999).

[37] *Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Rockefeller Jr. and Party at Sopris," 22 September, 1915, 1. For information on the "model" company town phenomena see, John S. Garner ed., *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4; Anne E. Mosher, ""Something Better than the Best": Industrial Restructuring, George McMurtry and the Creation of the Model Industrial Town of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, 1883-1901," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 85:1 (1995), 84-107; and, John S. Garner, *The Model Company Town: Urban Design through Private Enterprise in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

[38] Mosher, "Something Better than the Best," 86; Garner, *The Company Town*, 4-5; Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines*, 209-210, 248-249

[39] *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Riley Canon," 3.

[40] U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, *Final Report and Testimony*. Even the pro-industry *Engineering and Mining Journal*, once referred to ASARCO's Bingham, Utah copper camp as "the most repulsive mining camp in the United States . . . a sewer four miles long." *Engineering and Mining Journal*, "The Bingham Strike," 94:15 (1912), 676

[41] Harvey O'Connor, *The Guggenheims: The Making of an American Dynasty* (New York: Covici Friede Publishers, 1937), 316-322 ; U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, *Final Report and Testimony*. Denver architect James Murdoch was responsible for the design of the camp. Prior to his Cokedale commission, Murdoch had been hired to design Guggenheim Hall on the campus of the Colorado School of Mines. Following his Cokedale work, Murdoch designed the Guggenheim Law Building on the University of Colorado campus. Both buildings were funded by donations from Simon Guggenheim and it is obvious that Murdoch had connections to the Guggenheim family. However, no information exists regarding what dialogue occurred, if any, between Murdoch and Daniel Guggenheim in the planning of Cokedale and in the ideology underpinning its design. See Lindsey, "Creating Presence," 216.

[42] Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines*, 308-323; Scamehorn, *Mill & Mine*, 57-67.

[43] Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 30; Trinidad Chronicle News, "Riley Canon," 3; Leifur Magnusson, "Company Housing in the Bituminous Coal Fields," *Monthly Labor Review*, 10:4 (1920), 215-222; Scamehorn, *Mill & Mine*, 84.

[44] Interview transcript, Horace Hurtado, 24 May 1978, Eric Margolis Collection, 14-3, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries.

[45] Leslie K. Beck, and Mike Kirchereds, *Down Home in Bon Carbo: Memories of a Dream* (Trinidad: Paperworks Inc. 1988), 29-60; John Johnson, interview with author, Cokedale, 26 July, 1999.

[46] See, Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 94-95. Clyne, *Coal People*, 42-62.

[47] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920*, Colorado: Larimer and Las Animas Counties.

[48] Clyne, *Coal People*, 49.

[49] Resident interview with author, Cokedale, Colorado, 1999.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*; *Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines*, 1911 through 1929, Denver, Colorado.

[52] *Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Gas in Entries of Cokedale," 15 February, 1911, 1; "Report on Cokedale Explosion," *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines 1911-1912*, Denver, Colorado, 26-30; *Trinidad Chronicle News*, 10 February 1911, 1.

[53] "Mining Prices Paid at the Various Coal Mines in Colorado, January 1, 1917," *Fourth Annual Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines, 1916*, Denver, Colorado, 14-17.

[54] Johnson, interview.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Interview Transcript, Ferraro, May 22, 1978, Cokedale, Colorado, Eric Margolis Collection, 9-8, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries.

[57] *Biennial Reports of the State Inspector of Coal Mines*, 1911-1914. Denver, Colorado.

[58] Lindsey, "Creating Presence," 189; Edward Lawrence Doyle Collection, Western History Department, Denver Public Library, Folder 10, Envelope 9.

[59] Testimony of Tony Lamont, Doyle Collection, Folder 10, Envelope 9.

[60] U.S. Congress, *Conditions in the Coal Mines*, 878-879, 1106-1112, 2582.

[61] Interview Transcript, Hurtado, no date, Eric Margolis Collection, 14-3, Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries; Doyle Collection, Folder 10, Envelope 9.

[62] See, Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 94; Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines*, 253. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States 1910*, Colorado: Larimer and Las Animas Counties; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920*, Colorado: Larimer and Las Animas Counties.

[63] Johnson, interview; Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 19-22; Schafer, *The Schafer's of Cokedale*, 40; *Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Strikers Who Held Up Street Car and Attacked Occupants Get Small Fine," 18 November, 1913, 1.

[64] Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 46-60, 70-76.

[65] Interview transcript, Ferraro; Schafer, *The Schafers of Cokedale*, vii.

[66] Johnson, interview; Betty Arguello, interview with author, Cokedale, Colorado, 15 June, 1999.

[67] Johnson, interview; Interview Transcript, Hurtado.

[68] John O'Connor, "Lights Burn Bright in Cokedale as Town Refuses to Turn Ghost," *The Denver Post*, 14 September, 1949. n.p.

[69] O'Connor, "Lights Burn Bright," n.p.; National Park Service, *National Register*, 3.

[70] Clyne, Coal People, 42-43.

[71] Ibid, 42.

[72] Arguello, interview.

[73] Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 20-23; *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Cokedale Coal Mines Operation to be Abandoned," 10 April, 1947, 1; *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Cokedale-Bon Carbo Properties Sale is Reported," 16 May, 1947, 1.; *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Las Animas County Coal Mines Closed as Unsafe," 3 April, 1947, 1.

[74] Schafer, *The Schafers of Cokedale*, 91; Patrick Donachy, *Coal the Kingdom Below*, Trinidad: The Inkwell, 1983, 16.

[75] Interview transcript, Ferraro.

[76] Johnson, interview.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Johnson, interview; Barton, *Cokedale 1907-1947*, 23.

[79] Index to property deeds, town of Cokedale, 1947-1983, Trinidad Abstract & Title Company, Trinidad, Colorado.

[80] Cokedale appears to be the only company town in the Trinidad Field to be immediately incorporated following mine closure.

[81] *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Cokedale Folks Hold First Town Meeting," 4 October, 1947, 1; *The Trinidad Chronicle News*, "Cokedale Plans Incorporation," 10 October, 1947, 1.

[82] Johnson, interview.

[83] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventeenth Census of the United States 1950*, Washington, D.C.; *Trinidad City Directory 1952*, Rocky Mountain Directory Co., Colorado Springs; Johnson, interview.

[84] *Polk's Trinidad City Directory 1935*. Vol. XVII, R.L. Polk Directory Co; *Trinidad City Directory 1948*, Rocky Mountain Directory Co., Colorado Springs.

[85] Joan Reese, "4 Rooms and a Path," *Rocky Mountain Empire Magazine*, 23 May, 1948, 4.

[86] Reese, "4 Rooms and a Path"; O'Connor, "Lights burn Bright in Cokedale."

[87] Scamehorn, *Mill & Mine*, 201.

[88] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twentieth Census of the United States 1980*, Washington, D.C.; Donachy, *Coal-The Kingdom Below*, 17.

[89] Doug Holdread, interview with author, Cokedale, Colorado, 15 July, 1999.

[90] Richard Bell, interview with author, Cokedale, Colorado, 13 July, 1999.

[91] John Torres, interview with author, Trinidad, Colorado, 16 July, 1999.

[92] Holdread, interview; Johnson, interview.

[93] Arguello, interview; Doc Leonetti, "Cokedale holds history for Massarotti," *Trinidad Plus Hometown Spotlight*. [http://www.trinidadco.com/plus/spotlight99/massarti.html].

[94] Johnson, interview.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Holdread, interview; Bell, interview; Johnson, interview.

[97] Bell, interview.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Pat Huhn, interview with author, Cokedale, Colorado, 14 July, 1999.

[100] Johnson, interview.

[101] Holdread, interview.

[102] Pat Shorr, interview with author, Cokedale, Colorado, 14 July, 1999.

[103] Arlene Levinson, "Cokedale Awakening After 29 Year Nap," *The Pueblo Chieftain*, 1976, 3A.

[104] U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, "Lakeside Recreation Resources," [http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/recrea.htm].

[105] National Park Service, *National Register*, 2-4; Levinson, "Cokedale Awakening," 3A. See also, Beck and Kirchereds, *Down Home in Bon Carbo*.

[106] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twentieth Census of the United States 1980*, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twenty First Census of the United States 1990*, Washington, D.C.;

State of Colorado, *Population Estimates Program, Cokedale. 1997,* Demography Section of the Colorado Division of Local Government.

[107] Holdread, interview.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Johnson, interview.

[110] Levinson, "Cokedale Awakening from 29-Year Nap," 3A.

[111] Johnson, interview; Davis, "Cokedale Reaches 69th," 4.

[112] State of Colorado, Dept. of Natural Resources, "Close-Out Report: Cokedale Project," Denver, n.d.; State of Colorado, Dept. of Natural Resources, "Colorado Inactive Mine Inventory Problem Area Date Forms: Cokedale Problem Areas," Denver, 1980; State of Colorado, Dept. of Natural Resources, *Their Silent Profile: Inactive Coal and Metal Mines of Colorado,* Denver, 1982.

[113] Minutes, Town Council Meeting, Cokedale, Colorado, 11 November and 8 December, 1983.

[114] Minutes, Town Council Meeting, Cokedale, Colorado, 12 January, 1984.

[115] Holdread, interview.

[116]National Park Service, *National Register*, 4.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Johnson, interview.

[119] National Park Service, *National Register.*

[120] Johnson, interview.

[121] Johnson, interview; Bell, interview.

[122] 191Johnson, interview; Lindsey, *Creating Presence*, 225; Kit Miniclier, "Coulter Reviving Romance, Practicality of Horse-Drawn Vehicles," *The Denver Post*, 20 October, 1980, 2.

[123] Vernon L. Williams, personal correspondence. 8 December, 1999; Huhn, interview.

[124] Williams, personal correspondence; Johnson, interview.

[125] National Park Service, *National Register.*

[126] Johnson, interview; Holdread, interview.

[127] Shorr, interview.

[128] Cokedale Town Ordinance No. 44, "Ordinance Concerning Mobile Homes Within the Town Limits of the Town of Cokedale," passed 10 June, 1998.

[129] Joyce Holdread, "The Town that Wouldn't be a Ghost Town," personal essay, n.d.

[1] Hearing of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, *Tar Creek: Implementation of Superfund*, Serial No. 97-155, 97th. Cong., 2nd. Sess., Washington, D.C., 1982, 7, 16.

[2] Arrell M. Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 3; Samuel Weidman, *The Miami-Picher Zinc-Lead District, Oklahoma*. (Norman: Oklahoma Geological Survey Bulletin No. 56, 1932), 1; Richard S. Thoman, "The Changing Occupance Pattern of the Tri-State Area Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma." (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1953); Edwin T. McKnight and Richard P. Fischer, *Geology and Ore Deposits of the Picher Field, Oklahoma and Kansas* (Washington, D.C.: Geological Survey Professional Paper, No. 588, 1970), 89-90; "Mining Waste: Tar Creek Superfund Site," EPA Region 6 Fact Sheet, November 1999.

[3] Velma Nieberding, *The History of Ottawa County* (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1983), 33.

[4] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C. 1991): "Mining Waste," EPA Region 6 Fact Sheet, November 1999, 1; Kenneth V. Luza, *Stability Problems Associated with Abandoned Underground Mines in the Picher Field, Northeastern Oklahoma* (Norman: Oklahoma Geological Survey, Circular 88, 1986), 1, 16.

[5] "EPA Announces Release of Five Year Review," EPA Region 6, Tar Creek Superfund Site Update, 15 April 1994, 1-3. See also, EPA, "Superfund Record of Decision: Tar Creek Site, OK," Washington, D.C., 1984.

[6] "Tar Creek Superfund Site," EPA Region 6 Fact Sheet, April 1999, 3-7; Lorraine Halinka Malcoe, Community Health Action and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), Final Report, July 1996-June 1997, draft: Tom Lindley, "EPA Site Due Scrutiny," *Daily Oklahoman*, 6 January, 2000, n.p.

[7] Three substantial historical studies of the Tri-State mining area have been produced: Arrell M. Gibson's, *Wilderness Bonanza: The Tri-State District of Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972); George G. Suggs' *Union Busting in the Tri-State: The Oklahoma, Kansas, and Missouri Metal Workers' Strike of 1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986); and, Richard Thoman, "The Changing Occupance Pattern of the Tri-State Area: Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1953). Gibson provides a regional history of the field. Much of his work focuses on changes in mining technologies, but he also attempts to summarize social conditions, labor relations, and the nature of Tri-State society. Gibson's work is less critical than that of Suggs, who focuses on area labor conditions in the 1930s. Thoman provides detailed data on the district's physical and economic evolution.

[8] Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*; Suggs, *Union Busting*, 18-21.

[9] William E. Powell, "European Settlement in the Cherokee-Crawford Coal Field of Southeastern Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* (1975), XLI:2:151-165; Charles Morris Mills, "Industrial

Conditions in the World's Greatest Zinc Center," *The Survey*, (1921), 45:657-664; Suggs, *Union Busting*, 15-16.

[10] Suggs, *Union Busting*, 7-10.

[11] M. D. Harbaugh, "Labor Relations in the Tri-State Mining District, *The Mining Congress Journal*, June, 1936, 19-24; Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*, 205; Suggs, *Union Busting*, 20-22.

[12] Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*, 127, 249; Mills, "Industrial Conditions," 62.

[13] Luza, *Stability Problems*, 5; W. David Baird, *The Quapaws* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989); Arrel Gibson, "Leasing of Quapaw Mineral Lands," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Autumn 1959: 338-347.

[14] Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 39-40; Ben Moody, "Yester-Year in the Picher Mining Field," *Tri-State Tribune*, 11 August, 1994, 4.

[15] Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*, 254.

[16] "Zinc Blende Twins are Growing Fast," *Miami Record-Herald*, 5 November, 1915, 1; "Picher's Progress in 1918 to Reach Highest Mark Despite Unusual Conditions Confronting Citizens," *Miami Record-Herald*, 4 January, 1918, 6.

[17] Frank D. Hills, "A historical sketch of Picher, Oklahoma and the area," *Tri-State Tribune*, 10 June, 1999, 1, 5; "A Different Picher Last Week; Still Different Next," *Miami Record-Herald*, 19 November, 1915, 8.

[18] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1920 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C.): John W. Morris, *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 147; Mills, "Industrial Conditions," 659; Suggs, *Union Busting*, 15-16, 29-31. A survey conducted of 8,000 workers examined at the Picher Clinic between 1927 and 1928 reveals that 99 percent of workers on the clinic register identified themselves as "native-born Americans." Only 58 individuals identified themselves as foreign-born; only 8 were listed as Indian; and, no African Americans existed on the clinic register. 1930 census data for Ottawa County confirms the absence of a significant foreign-born (.07 percent) and African American population (.005 percent). Few mine owners or managers lived in the town, choosing instead to reside in near-by cities such as Baxter Springs, Kansas or Miami, Oklahoma

[19] Hills, "A historical sketch," 5; "Deposits of Miami Area Pronounced Richest in World," *Daily Oklahoman*, 12 August, 1917, 2B.

[20] Suggs, *Union Busting*, 10-11. John Mott, interview with author, Picher, Oklahoma, 15 December, 1999; Steven Ray, interview with author, Picher, Oklahoma, 14 December, 1999.

[21] See, Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*; Thoman, "The Changing Occupance Pattern"; McKnight and Fischer, *Geology and Ore Deposits*, 89, 94-101; James H. Jolly, *U.S. Zinc Industry* (Baltimore: American Literary Press, Inc., 1997), 69-70.

[22] Sanborn-Perris Map Co. New York, fire insurance maps for Picher, 1920, 1928; Mott, interview.

[23] Thoman, "The Changing Occupance Pattern," 70; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1930 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C.).

[24] McKnight and Fischer, *Geology and Ore Deposits*, 99-101; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1940 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C.).

[25] McKnight and Fischer, *Geology and Ore Deposits*, 99-101.

[26] Tri-State Survey Committee, *A Preliminary Report on Living, Working, and Health Conditions in the Tri-State Mining Area* (New York, 1939), 14-15.

[27] Ibid, Appendix B, 15-16.

[28] Moody, "Yester-Year," 4; Mills, "Industrial Conditions," 662;

[29] Nieberding, *The History of Ottawa County*, 75.

[30] Moody, "Yester-Year," 4.

[31] Grace Beauchamp, interview with author, Miami, Oklahoma, 14 December, 1999.

[32] "Picher Gives Promise Being Famous Camp," *Miami Record-Herald*, 1 October, 1915, 1; "Picher, Panorama of Push and Progress," *Miami Record-Herald*, 8 October, 1915, 2; "Its a Pretty Picher is this Growing Town," *Miami Record-Herald*, 16 June, 1916, 1.

[33] "Zinc Blende Twins," *Miami Record-Herald*, 1.

[34] "Where Rainbow End Touches the Earth," *Miami Record-Herald*, 19 November, 1915, 1; "$3,000,000 Worth of Lead and Zinc Ores Being Mined," *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 November, 1915, 1,3.

[35] "Ore Piles Succeed Prairie Dog Mounds," *Miami Record-Herald*, 12 November, 1915, 2.

[36] *Pigs of Lead*, News Reel, Prod. Rothacker Industrial Films Inc., Chicago, Illinois, n.d.

[37] Baird, *The Quapaws*, 83-93; Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*, 154-159; Gertrude Bonnin, Charles H. Fabens, and Matthew K. Sniffen, *Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians* (Philadelphia: Office of the Indian Rights Association, 1924).

[38] See *Miami Record-Herald*: "Picher's Progress in 1918 to Reach Highest Mark Despite Unusual Conditions Confronting Citizens," 4 January 1918, 6; "White Slave Gang Operating in the Mining District," 18 January 1918, 1; "Uncover Big Spy Plot at Picher," 10 May 1918, n.p.

[39] "Deposits of Miami Area Pronounced Richest in World," *Daily Oklahoman*, 12 August, 1917, 1-2B.

[40] See *Miami Record-Herald*: "Mining Costs in September," 29 November, 1931, 1; "Netta and Short Horn Plants Close Down," 29 November, 1931, 15; "Calls for Free Food Increase in Picher," 6 January, 1931, 2; "Legionnaires Bag 50 Rabbits in Relief Hunt," 22 November, 1931, 15; 6 January, 1932, 2.

[41] For a full discussion of the strike and the attention it received see, Suggs, *Union Busting*. H. B. Hutchison, "Prosperity Plays Encore in Mining District," *Tulsa Daily World*, 3 November, 1935, 12; "Happy Days in the Mines Again," *Daily Oklahoman*, 31 May, 1936, D1.

[42] The first detailed survey of conditions in the Tri-State District was conducted in 1915, the same year as ore was discovered in the Picher Field. Although not providing direct insight on Picher workers, the works of Dr. Anthony J. Lanza, who documented poor hygiene and sanitary conditions in the area and the high incidence of silicosis among miners, stimulated interest in the welfare of Tri-State workers. See, Anthony J. Lanza, *A Preliminary Report on Sanitary Conditions in the Zinc-Lead Mines of the Joplin, Missouri District and Their Relation to Pulmonary Diseases Among the Miners*, Washington, D.C. U.S. Bureau of Mines, 1915; and, *Miners Consumption: A Study of 433 Cases of the Disease Among Zinc Miners in Southwest Missouri*. U.S. Public Health Service Bulletin No. 85, Washington D.C., 1917.

[43] Mills, "Industrial Conditions," 657.

[44] For further discussion of working conditions see also, Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, ""The Streets of Walking Death": Silicosis, Health, and Labor in the Tri-State Region, 1900-1950," *The Journal of American History*, September 1990, 525-552.

[45] Mills, "Industrial Conditions," 658-653.

[46] Ibid, 657-658, 664.

[47] Tri-State Survey Committee, *A Preliminary Report*. n.p.

[48] Ibid, 16, Appendix, 24.

[49] Ibid, Appendix, 26.

[50] See Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*, 179-195, 82; "Silicosis Program in $ States Scored," New York Times, 27 November, 1939,19; "Silicosis: Tri-State Dust Storm," *Business Week*, 9 December, 1939, 51-52; "Zinc Stink," *Time*, 4 December, 1939, 63.

[51] Lallah Davidson, *South of Joplin: Story of a Tri-State Diggin's* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1939); Malcolm Ross, *Death of a Yale Man* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939), 184-185, 204.

[52] It is unknown whether Rothstein's images of Picher were ever formally published. For a discussion of the role played by FSA photographers in documenting the Great Depression see, Pete Daniel etal, *Official Images: New Deal Photography* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987).

[53] M. D. Harbaugh, "Labor Relations in the Tri-State Mining District," *The Mining Congress Journal*, June 1936: 19-24.

[54] Ibid, 19-21.

[55] Various articles, *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 144:11 (1943): 68-122. Karl L. Koelker, "Has the Miami-Picher District passed its Zenith?" *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 117:4 (1924):168-170. See also, Evan Just, "Living and Working Conditions in the Tri-State Mining District, " *Mining Congress Journal*, 25 (1939): 44-45;

[56] Safety reforms and silicosis prevention in the work place was legislated in the wake of the Tri-State Survey Committee's *Preliminary Report*. However, the effectiveness of these reforms in reducing the hazards of mining has been questioned. See, Markowitz and Rosner, "The Streets of Walking Death," 525-552.

[57] Nieberding, *The History of Ottawa County*, 82.

[58] Hills, "A historical sketch," 5.

[59] Ibid; Gibson, *Wilderness Bonanza*, 255.

[60] Genevieve Stovall Craig, "The Story of Picher Schools," *Tri-State Tribune*, 10 June 1999, 5.

[61] Hills, "A historical sketch," 1.

[62] Tri-State Survey Committee, *A Preliminary Report*, Appendix, 34.

[63] Ibid, Appendix, 29.

[64] Iva Simpson, "Ben Osborne, Entrepreneur," *Tri-State Tribune*, 11 August, 1994, 15-B; Moody, "Yester-year," 4.

[65] Mickey Mantle and Herb Gluck, *The Mick* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1985) 3, 9.

[66] Marion A. Parsons, "I Got Lost in Picher," *Tri-State Tribune*, 11 August, 1983, 2.

[67] Orville "Hoppy" Ray, interview with author, Picher, Oklahoma, 14 December, 1999.

[68] Mott, interview.

[69] Nieberding, *The History of Ottawa County*, 74-75.

[70] Picher Bicentennial Boosters Committee, "Picher, Oklahoma," booklet (publisher unknown, 1975), n.p.

[71] Moody, "Yester-year," 4.

[72] Tri-State Survey Committee, *A Preliminary Report*, Appendix, 25, 34.

[73] It should be noted that women were engaged in economic activities outside of the home, including to a small degree, mining. For a more complete discussion of the role women played in the Picher Field see, Nieberding, *The History of Ottawa County*, 91-93; and "A Tribute to the Wives of Miners," *Tri-State Tribune*, 12 August, 1993, 18.

[74] Lawrence and Theo Barr, interview by Joel L. Todd, Videotape, Tulsa, 1985, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives and Manuscript Division, Oral History Program, Oklahoma City.

[75] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1940, 1950, and 1960 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C.); Hoppy Ray, interview.

[76] Ralph Marler, "Picher Mine Field Destined to Die," *Tulsa World*, 28 July, 1968, 1.

[77] Ibid; Picher Penniless; Fire Chief Washes Cars to Buy Equipment," *Daily Oklahoman*, 10 November, 1963, 16.

[78] Phil Frey, "Picher Rebounding from Played Out Past," *Daily Oklahoman Orbit*, 27 December, 1972, 6-7.

[79] Morris, Ghost Towns, 147-149.

[80] Francis Thetford, "Things Are Looking Lots Brighter in Picher," *Daily Oklahoman*, 26 February, 1964, 5.

[81] Pam Keyes, "Firms Due Talk About Clean Up," *Tulsa World*, 17 January, 1996, 9.

[82] Hoppy Ray, interview.

[83] Ibid; Pam Keyes, "Picherite recalls mine closing exodus," *Miami News-Record*, 9 March, 1986, 1

[84] Genevieve Stovall Craig, "Picher, Oklahoma: The Lead and Zinc Boom Town that Would Not Die," in *Picher, Oklahoma*, booklet (Picher Bicentennial Boosters Committee, 1975), n.p.

[85] C. Allan Mathews, "What's in the Future," in *Picher, Oklahoma*, booklet (Picher Bicentennial Boosters Committee, 1975), n.p.

[86] Hoppy Ray, interview.

[87] Mott, interview.

[88] See, e.g. Harlan Snow, "Final tally on cost of mining still out," *The Joplin Globe*, 5 January, 1986, 22.

[89] Earl Hatley, interview with author, Quapaw, Oklahoma, 16 December, 1999.

[90] See *Tri-State Tribune*: "Eagle-Picher Claims Five Block Square is Dangerous," 9 February, 1950, 1; "Picher Carries on in Usual Manner," 16 February, 1950, 1. Gilbert Asher, "Picher Calm Despite Mine Cavein Threat," *Tulsa World*, 9 February, 1950, 1; John Feen, "Here's What Hold's Picher From a Disastrous Cave-In, " *Daily Oklahoman*, 12 February, 1950, 1.

[91] Barr, interview by Joel L. Todd, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[92] Allegedly, mine maps and other company documents that might have proved, among other things, Eagle-Picher's involvement in blowing out the pillar, mysteriously disappeared from where their place of storage in the Picher Miners Museum. The company documents were lost at the time Superfund litigation was occurring on the Tar Creek Superfund site.

[93] "It's Business as Usual Over Picher Pits," *Daily Oklahoman*, 12 March, 1950, 15; Asher, "Picher Calm," 1; Feen, "Here's What Hold's Picher," 2.

[94] Paul Hood, "Picher Finally Has Abandoned Its Doomed Business Center," *Daily Oklahoman*, 11 February, 1951, 2.

[95] "Picher Business Firms Re-Locating Still here as Time Marches On," *Tri-State Tribune*, 12 April, 1951, 1; Hoppy Ray, interview.

[96] Genevieve Stovall Craig, "Picher, Oklahoma," n.p.

[97] Charlotte Cox, "18 Homeless, but None Badly Hurt in Cave-in," *Tulsa World*, 23 July, 1967, 1; "Thousands Flock to Cavein," *Tulsa World*, 24 July, 1967, 1-2; "Cave-In: You Wake Up Standing, But Not on Floor," *Daily Oklahoman*, 23 July, 1967, 1. See also, John Feen, "Still on the Level," *Daily Oklahoman*, 18 May, 1952, M3.

[98] Jean Hays, "Cave-In of Home Just Another Bad Break for Foote Family," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 27 April, 1986, H3.

[99] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1980* and *1990 Census of Population* (Washington, D.C.).

[100] A locally managed government trust organization known as the Ottawa County Reclamation Authority gained title to large tracts of Eagle-Picher mining property. Some of this land has since been sold to residents.

[101] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1990 Census of Population, Summary of Population and Housing Characteristics, Oklahoma* (Washington, D.C., 1991).

[102] See e.g.: Manny Gamallo, "Small Town Has Big Tax," *Tulsa World*, 31 March, 1996, A1; "The Too-High Tax," *Tulsa World*, 2 April, 1996, 10; "Oklahoma town's shoppers take business elsewhere to beat taxes," *Dallas Morning News*, 16, June, 1996, 41; Jim Killackey, "Picher-Cardin Academic Audit Sought," *Daily Oklahoman*, 16 December, 1994, 25; "School Saving Pushed," *Tulsa World*, 16 December, 1994, N1; "Six State Schools Placed on At-Risk List," *Daily Oklahoman*, 28 July, 1995, 1; "Missouri Officers Seek to Question Oklahoma Murder Suspect," *Daily Oklahoman*, 27 August, 1996, 18; "Picher man guilty of murder," *Tulsa World*, 20 December, 1991, 5; "Dog carcasses prompt two arrests," *Tulsa World*, 14 May, 1992, 4; "Two Men Charged in Illegal Tire Storage," *Tulsa World*, 6 January, 1995, N11.

[103] Barr, interview.

[104] Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association, "Why Conservation of Marginal Lead and Zinc Ores Means so Much to Our National Economy and Security," *Tri-State Tribune*, 1947(?).

[105] "Big Dipper for Bike Riders," *Orbit Magazine, Daily Oklahoman*, 26 January, 1964, 12-13.

[106] Wayne Mason, "For Playing – a Chat Pile," *Your World Magazine, Tulsa World*, 23 July, 1967, 10-11.

[107] For a detailed account of environmental problems in the Tar Creek Superfund site see: U.S. EPA, *Superfund Record of Decision : Tar Creek Site, OK* (Washington D.C., 1984); U.S. EPA, *Superfund Record of Decision: Tar Creek (Ottawa County), OU 2* (Washington D.C., 1997); U.S. EPA, "Fact Sheet: Mining Waste, Tar Creek Superfund Site" (1999).

[108] See, Richard E. Meyer, "Acid Water Drowns Tar Creek as Clean Up Delayed," *Daily Oklahoman*, 6 February, 1983, n.p.; Glenn Titus, "John Mott's Search for the Underground "Monster" Goes On," *Daily Oklahoman*, 14 March, 1982, n.p.; U.S. EPA, "Tar Creek Superfund Site Fact Sheet," April 1999, 1-2.

[109] U.S. EPA, "Tar Creek Superfund Site Fact Sheet," 1-2.

[110] See e.g.: Gerald Breeden, "Tar Creek's dismal rating 'good news' to Nigh, Task Force pair," *Miami News-Record*, 25 October, 1981, A1; "How soon solution?" *Miami News- Record*, 15 November, 1981, 8; "Tar Creek report optimistic; few surprises," *Miami News-Record*, 6 April,

1983, 1; UPI, "Three-State Waste Site Called Nation's Worst," *The New York Times*, 14 November, 1981, Sec.1, 8.

[111] See e.g.: "Congressmen Denied EPA Tar Creek Documents," *Tulsa World*, 12 January, 1982, D1; U.S. Congress House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Subcommittee on Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism, *Tar Creek : implementation of Superfund : hearing before the Subcommittee on Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism of the Committee on Energy and Commerce*, 97th Cong., 2nd, Sess., June 14, 1982; Jean Hays, "Eagle-Picher Dominated Fight to Block Clean Up," *The Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 30 April, 1986, 1, 14.

[112] U.S. EPA, *Five Year Review: Tar Creek Superfund Site Ottawa County, Oklahoma* (Washington D.C., 1994)

[113] Ibid; Laksham D. Guruswamy, "Environmental Justice: Does Tar Creek Apply?" Paper presentation, The 5th Tar Creek Fish Tournament and Toxic Tour – National Conference, April 15, 1999, Miami, Oklahoma; Gary Garton, "EPA gives up on Tar Creek clean up," *The Joplin Globe*, 1 March, 1997, n.p.

[114] U.S. EPA, "Tar Creek Superfund Site Fact Sheet," 3; Lorraine Halinka Malcoe, Community Health Action and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), Final Report, July 1996-June 1997, draft.

[115] See, Joe Robertson, "Piling up: Rules barring sale of Indian chat create hardship," *Tulsa World*, 23 May, 1999, 1,3.

[116] The chat contains "hazardous substances" as defined by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). These substances, primarily lead, arsenic, cadmium, and zinc are not considered "hazardous wastes" under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) the main federal hazardous waste management regulation. See, "Mining Waste," 5. See: U.S. EPA, "Fact Sheet: Mining Waste, Tar Creek Superfund Site," November 1999.

[117] U.S. EPA, "Tar Creek Superfund Site Fact Sheet," 3-6.

[118] Renee Ruble, "Task force votes to continue soil remediation,: The Associated Press, 30 March, 2000; Hatley, interview; Robertson, "Piling up," 3

[119] Steven Ray, interview; Mott, interview; Hatley, interview; Steven Ray, "EPA says the problems are already there," *Tri-State Tribune*, 12 August, 1999, 1; Steven Ray, "Area plagued with flooding," *Tri-State Tribune*, 6 May, 1999, 1; Steven Ray, "Picher City Council looks at problems caused by M-K," *Tri-State Tribune*, 16 September, 1999, 1; Tom Lindley, "EPA Site Due Scrutiny," *Daily Oklahoman*, 6 January, 2000, n.p.; The Associated Press, "Coburn questions Tar Creek contractors," 31 March, 2000.

[120] Hatley, interview.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Bob Lynch, interview with author. Oklahoma City, 26 October, 1998; Deborah McNaughton, interview with author, Oklahoma City, 10 November, 1998.

[123] See, Angelia Herrin, "Why Superfund Hasn't Worked: Uncertain Funding, Internal Problems Shift Focus," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 28 April, 1986, n.p; "Clean-up Efforts Reflect Failure Of Superfund," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 28 April, 1986, n.p.

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[126] Judith Cummings, "No.1 Toxic Waste Site is Not a Town's No.1 Gripe," *The New York Times*, 9 December, 1981, A16; Ramona Jones, "Residents Handle Dangers with Stoic Acceptance," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 30 April, 1986, A14; Sharon Hamric, "Families Accept Frequent Illness, High Cancer Rate as Facts of Life," *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, 27 April, 1986, H2.

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[128] See the three part series by Tom Lindley in *Daily Oklahoman*: "Who will save the children of Ottawa County?" 9 December, 1999, 1; "Scars of lead poisoning," 10 December, 1999, 1; and, "Another broken promise," 11 December, 1999.

[129] Robertson, "A sad place," 1.

[130] Cummings, "No.1 Toxic Waste Site," n.p.; Hoppy Ray, interview.

[131] Kent Curtis, The Legacy, in *Tar Creek Anthology*, Concerned Youth and Citizens of Miami, Oklahoma (Tahlequah, Oklahoma: Talequah Daily Press: 1999), ix-x.

[132] Mott, interview.

[133] Scott Thompson, interview with author, Oklahoma City, 6 November, 1998; Steven Ray, interview.

[134] TEAL Project, Community Leader Survey: Ottawa County Area, unpublished document.

[135] Rebecca Jim, interview with author, Miami, Oklahoma, 13 December, 1999; *Tar Creek Anthology*, Concerned Youth and Citizens of Miami, Oklahoma (Tahlequah, Oklahoma: Talequah Daily Press: 1999).

[136] Rebecca Jim, Introduction, in *Tar Creek Anthology*, Concerned Youth and Citizens of Miami, Oklahoma (Tahlequah, Oklahoma: Talequah Daily Press: 1999), iv.

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[138] Ibid.

[139] Mott, interview.

[140] Ed Curran, EPA Region 6, correspondence to U.S. Rep. Tom Coburn, 3 September, 1997, unpublished document. See also: U.S. EPA, *Superfund Record of Decision : Tar Creek Site, OK* (Washington D.C., 1984)

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[142] "Good Kid Determined To Make Difference," *Daily Oklahoman*, 28 November, 1987, 29; "Picher Council Rejects Inmate Work Center," *Daily Oklahoman*, 16 April, 1993, 10; "Student Plays Santa To Needy Children," *Tulsa World*, 28 December, 1990, A2; Pam Keyes, "Uninsured Take Brunt Of Storm," *Tulsa World*, 2 May, 1996, A7; "A Small but Mighty Spirit: Church Lives in Devotion to the Power of 10," *Tulsa World*, 21 April, 1992, C1.

[143] T.J. Green, interview with author, Miami, Oklahoma, 16 December, 1999.

[144] Steven Ray, interview.

[145] T.J. Green, interview.

[146] See, "Mural depicts history of mining field," *Tri-State Tribune*, 11 August, 1994, 1.

[147] See, Teresa Bland, "James and Sandra Graves to serve as Grand Marshals," *Tri-State Tribune*, 12 August, 1993, 3.

[148] *Tri-State Tribune*, Special Edition, Miners' Reunion #20, 10 June, 1999. See articles, Jimmie Etheridge, "Wearers of the Old Hard Hat," B11, Beverly B. Walker De Santo, "Memories to last a lifetime," A8. Frank D. Woods, "I Remember Picher," *Tri-State Tribune*, 10 August, 1989, A2.

[149] Woods, "I Remember Picher"

[150] Dean Sims, "Remembering the trials of life in the Mining District and other mining areas," *Tri-State Tribune*, Special Edition, Miners' Reunion #20, 10 June, 1999, 11.

[151] Beauchamp, interview; Hoppy Ray, interview; Gerald Breedson, "Wesah derrick stands alone," *Miami News-Record*, (1982?), 3; Hoppy Ray, interview.

[152] Hoppy Ray, interview; Hatley, interview.

[1] Ben Marsh, "Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 77:3 (1987), 337-352.

[2] John Agnew, "Devaluing place: 'people prosperity versus place prosperity' and regional planning," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1 (1984), 36.

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[5] Numerous factors underlie the slackening production of minerals in Developed countries. First, industrial economies have grown more slowly since the oil crisis of 1973. Second, industrial nations are experiencing a relative decline in primary industries with the growth of the service sector economy. Liberalization of mining industries in the Developing World has also resulted in a shift in mineral production away from the Developed World. Third, recycling has reduced the demand for many metals. Lastly, new materials such as plastics, ceramics, and high-technology composites (the materials revolution) are now competing with metals in many applications. See, John E. Young, "Mining the Earth," in *State of the World 1992: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society* (W.W. Norton and Co.: New York, 1992).

[6] See, Fred B. Kniffen, "American Cultural Geography and Folk Life," in *American Folk Life*, Don Yoder, ed. (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1976).