

SOUTH PARK SENTINEL

SOUTH PARK - A BRIEF HISTORY

In the center of Colorado, at an elevation of 8,500 feet, lies a beautiful valley, surrounded on all sides by majestic mountain ranges. The valley, lush with vegetation and supplied by water for the North, Middle and South forks of the South Platte River, supported huge herds of game and colonies of smaller animals, such as beaver, muskrat, otter and bobcat. In the midst of this bounty, the Ute Indian made his summer camp. He successfully battled Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Comanche for exclusive possession of his domain.

Colorado was explored in the late 16th and early 17th centuries by the French and Spanish, who established outposts for the purpose of trade with the Indians. The Americanized name of South Park was derived from "parc," the French word for game preserve.

In 1803, the United States acquired the vast wilderness of Colorado as a part of the Louisiana Purchase. Zebulon Pike was dispatched by President Thomas Jefferson in 1806 to explore the new territory. In an attempt to map the area, Pike's party penetrated South Park, but only marginally. Finding evidence, in the form of fresh campsites, that Spanish troops were still in the area, they elected to track the offenders and drifted further and further south, only to be captured in the San Luis Valley and taken to Santa Fe.

Following Pike's release and return to the United States, reports of his explorations and the abundance of game drew the attention of hunters and trappers. Fur-trading became the first economic endeavor of the period, and was followed in the mid-19th century by the development of cattle and sheep ranching. The first ditch rights for agricultural purposes were recorded in 1861. By 1876, South Park was known as one of the principal hay producing regions of the state.

In 1859, gold was discovered in Tarryall Creek, and the rush was on. Hordes of gold-seekers spilled into the Park. Mining camps sprang up in every gulch and gully. Soon, the hills were dotted with towns bearing such colorful names as Tarryall, Buckskin Joe, Eureka, Horseshoe, and Mudsill.

Latecomers to the Tarryall diggings found themselves locked out. Disgruntled, they referred to the place as "Graball" and moved to the junction of Beaver Creek and the South Platte. They called their camp Fair Play and vowed to offer the same in good measure to all comers. The camp prospered, but soon the lone prospectors' stakes gave way to larger and more stable placer and hard-rock mining operations, which flourished for the next thirty years. During this time, the trades and professions moved in to provide goods and services to the denizens of South Park.

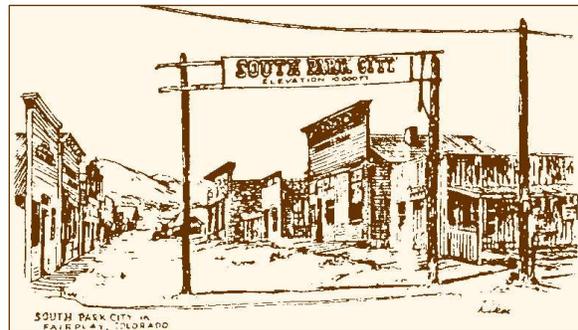
When the era ended, most of the camps were abandoned to the ravages of time and weather. Only a few, such as Fairplay, Alma and Como, with their more diversified economies, survived. Later, hydraulic and dredge mining, along with improved milling methods, were introduced and these communities prospered again. Down through the years, other minerals such as silver, lead,

zinc and the concentrates were discovered and provided the impetus for subsequent mining "booms." Today, only a few working mines are in existence, but the importance of mining to South Park is evident all along the South Platte, from the tailings left by the dredges to the weekend prospector with his gold pan.

SOUTH PARK CITY - GENESIS

During the early part of the twentieth century, a member of a rare breed of humanity slipped, unobtrusively, into the South Park scene. He was one of those people who had the foresight to see value in the relics of the past - the things that the less astute discarded as "junk." The man was Leon H. Snyder, attorney from Colorado Springs, and he would leave an indelible mark on the area. His reason for coming was recreation. For some forty years, he found respite from his work schedule fishing the Park's many streams. During that time, he became keenly aware that time, neglect and vandalism were taking their toll on the remains of the mining era.

After discussing the dilemma with Everett Bair, the unofficial historian of the Park, he decided that the best way to preserve that history was to move representative period buildings to a single site where they'd have benefit of police and fire protection. He contacted other individuals who were of like mind, and in 1957, the South Park Historical Foundation was organized. The site selected was on the outskirts of Fairplay. The area was steeped in history and was in close proximity to many of the abandoned camps. Land and buildings still standing there were purchased, and an inventory of other available buildings was made. Rights to the most appropriate of these were secured by donations or purchase.



In the summer of 1957, the move was on! A professional mover was hired, and a volunteer labor force was charged with laying foundations. By the end of that summer, six buildings had been moved to Fairplay. Together with the seven already on the site, they formed the beginnings of Colorado's newest mining town.

The summer of 1958 was a busy one. Additional buildings were moved in, and restoration work was in full swing. Various civic groups took on the responsibility of collecting artifacts and furnishing the buildings. The families of Park County embraced the project and scoured their attics, basements and barns for appropriate artifacts. Roughly 40,000 items were donated.

In 1959, exactly 100 years from the first gold find, South Park City was opened to the public as an endorsed project of the Colorado "Rush to the Rockies" celebration. For thousands of visitors, the reconstructed mining town turned back the clock to a lustier time.

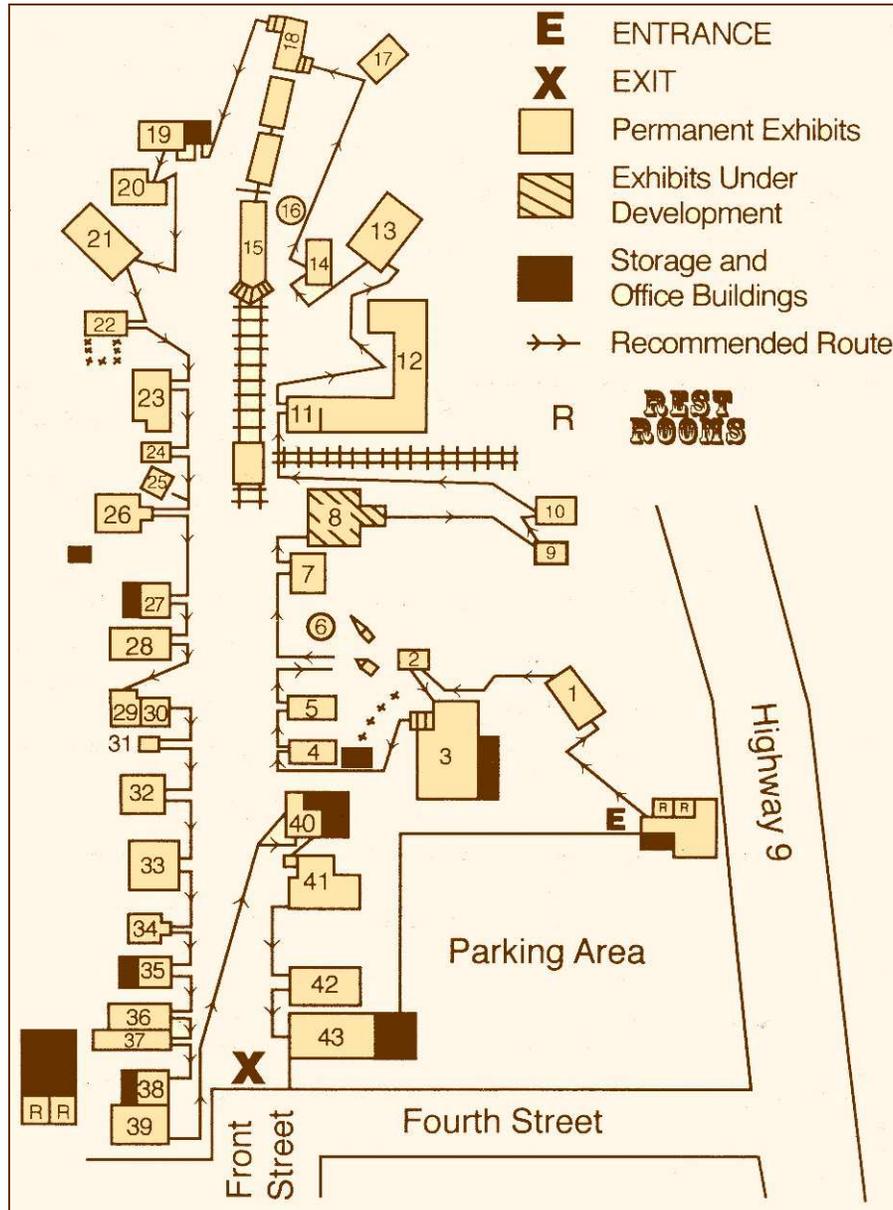
During the ensuing years, other representative and sometimes endangered structures have been moved to the museum site. Additional artifacts have been donated and new exhibits developed.

Today 35 original buildings stand in tribute to the Colorado Goldrush and to the men and women who lived it. Fairplay's "ghost town" recalls for the visitor, the romance of a by-gone era.

The South Park City Museum is administered by a non-profit corporation. Admissions and donations are used for the restoration and maintenance of exhibits and buildings. The Museum is open every day, including Sundays and holidays, from May 15th to October 15th. Information may be obtained by calling the Museum office (719) 836-2387, or logging on at

www.southparkcity.org

MAP & GUIDE TO BUILDINGS & EXHIBITS



1. **DYER MEMORIAL CHAPEL** Dedicated to the memory of John L. Dyer, this building is a tribute to those men who provided spiritual guidance in the early mining camps. Father Dyer, known as the "Snowshoe Itinerant," was a Methodist circuit rider who served in South Park from 1863 to 1877.
2. **SMOKEHOUSE** During the late 1800's one of Leonhard Sumner's several business interests was a grocery and butcher shop. The bacon, hams and sausages were smoked here.
3. **SOUTH PARK BREWERY** Built in 1879, the Summer Brewery produced South Park Lager beer. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Through a grant from the national Endowment for the Humanities, it now houses exhibits which serve as an introduction to the museum and the South Park area.
4. **GARO CABIN** Built in Garo in 1895, this building has been restored as a wash house. Equipment, familiar to every pioneer housewife, was used in the care and cleaning of family wardrobes.

5. **PARK COUNTY COURT HOUSE** This log building was constructed in 1862 in what was then the county seat, Buckskin Joe. In 1867, a county election declared Fairplay the new county seat, and the structure was moved. In 1874, it was replaced by a stone building which now serves as the Fairplay branch of the Park County Library.
6. **ARRASTRA** This early ore crusher consisted of two large rocks positioned in a stream bed. The bottom one is stationary; the top one is attached to a horizontal pole so that an ox or burro pulling on the pole could slowly revolve it. The grinding action of the two stone surfaces pulverized the ore, and the water running through the arrastra washed away unwanted gravel and rock. Also featured are two "Hydraulic Giant" nozzles Used to dislodge ore- bearing materials from stream banks.
7. **ASSAY OFFICE** This small log building, c.1890, came from the North London Mine, located west of Alma in Mosquito Gulch. Here a miner could find out the grade and value of his ore. Typically, mines that produced large quantities of ore did their own on-site assaying, thus avoiding loss of time in ore production.
8. **MINING DISPLAY** Equipment in the mining building includes a steam engine, a stamp mill, a crushing mill and Wilfley separating table.
9. **GALLOWS FRAME** The wooden frame at the top of the hill is the head frame from the Phillips Mine, located in Buckskin Gulch, two miles west of Alma. Miners rode the bucket down into the shaft, then loaded it with ore to be pulled up with winches.
10. **HEAD HOUSE** Originally a blacksmith shop in Leavick, a mining camp on Four Mile Creek, this log building has been restored as a dry. A "locker room" for miners, the dry was a facility provided only by large underground operations.
11. **BURRO ROOM** Located on the original site, the offices of the Longenbaugh Ice and Coal Company now house photographs and artifacts commemorating the role of the burro in early mining operations.
12. **TRANSPORTATION SHED** The storage areas of the Longenbaugh Company have been converted into a display area for early vehicles, including a horse-drawn hearse from Como, a shepherders wagon, Conestoga Wagon and early fire-fighting carts.
13. **WAGON BARN** A camp wagon, used for hunting excursions, and a rare Abbot-Downing and Co. "Mud Wagon" are displayed in the Longenbaugh Company's ice storage building.
14. **SOUTH PARK CITY DEPOT** Originally the Buffalo Springs School, c. 1900, the depot contains memorabilia of the railroads which serviced South Park.
15. **NARROW GAUGE TRAIN** The locomotive, built in 1914, is a Porter Mogul #6 and of the basic type used by the DSP and R It was purchased from the United Fruit Co., of Guatemala. The rolling stock came from the Rio Grande Railroad.
16. **WATER TOWER** The water tank came from Ophir and was used by the Colorado and Southern line during the late 1880's.
17. **TRAPPER'S CABIN** This simple, one-room dwelling, set apart from the main, helps to portray the modest and solitary life of the mountain man, whose existence revolved around his beaver traps and infrequent trips down-river where he could trade his winter's cache of pelts for money or supplies.
18. **CABOOSE** Purchased from the Rio Grande Railroad, the caboose is a self-contained home and office on wheels for railroad personnel.
19. **ROST BARN** Originally located in Fairplay, this log barn provided shelter for the family's small dairy herd. It houses examples of tack, farm machinery, and agricultural tools.
20. **HOMESTEAD** This ramshackle building was moved from Leavick and depicts the self-sufficiency of the early pioneer family. Small and cozy, it was able to accommodate all the activities necessary for survival in untamed country.
21. **STAR LIVERY** Originally located on the corner of 6th and Front Streets, this building is said to be the first livery in Fairplay. Here, horses and rigs could be rented, or a traveler could board his horse for the night.
22. **STAGE BARN** Although small, there was ample room in this shed to curry and feed stage teams while passengers ate and rested.
23. **STAGE COACH INN** Bought from Mosquito Pass, this hand-hewn log structure served as a halfway house from 1879 to 1890 during the rush to Leadville. A night's rest and a hot meal provided a brief respite from a long and tiring journey. The distance between Fairplay and Leadville, via the pass, is a rugged 23 miles.
24. **HOFFMAN BROS BLACKSMITH SHOP** Herein is contained many of the implements used in the blacksmith's trade — from bellows to horseshoe

- nails. The smith not only shod horses, oxen and burros, but repaired mining equipment, wagons and sleighs.
25. **DIORAMA BUILDING** Dioramas by Hank Gentsch depict various mining operations.
 26. **SCHOOL HOUSE** Built in 1879, this building was the original school at Garo, located nine miles east of Fairplay.
 27. **MORGUE AND CARPENTER SHOP** This building served this dual purpose in Fairplay during the 1880's. It contains early day woodworking tools which were used in the construction of the Park County Court House and the Sheldon Jackson Memorial Chapel.
 28. **SUMNER COLLECTION** The building that houses this museum within a museum was one of the early homes erected in Fairplay. Through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Sumner, of Lake George, many examples of trapping, mining, and Victorian curiosities are displayed.
 29. **BARBER SHOP** Constructed in Fairplay in the early 1870's, the miners made this establishment their first stop on Saturday night. After a long week in the hills, a hot bath and a shave were welcomed beginnings to the evening's festivities.
 30. **DENTIST'S OFFICE** This office, along with it's opulently furnished waiting room, depicts Victorian trends in dental care. Much of this equipment was used by the late Dr. McKenna of Breckenridge.
 31. **COVERED WELL** Before the days of running water, a hand-dug well in close proximity to one's house or business establishment was a real luxury. 32. **RANGER STATION** Often headquartered in isolated areas, the early U.S. Forest Ranger was, of necessity, a rugged, self-sufficient individual. The Ranger Station provided living quarters as well as office and storage space.
 33. **MAYER HOME** Located on its original site, this house was once owned by Colonel Frank Mayer, Civil War soldier, buffalo hunter, and author.
 34. **DOCTOR'S OFFICE** This pioneer doctor's office and examining room includes various kinds of surgical equipment and medical instruments used by the early day physician.
 35. **SOUTH PARK SENTINEL** Once a one-room schoolhouse in Lake George, this building contains a complete newspaper office typical of those found in early mining towns. It was furnished largely by the International Typographical Union.
 36. **SIMPKIN'S GENERAL STORE** This two-story building brought from Dudley, a ghost town north of Alma, contains the post office equipment from Garo, as well as an extraordinary stock of general merchandise to meet the needs and whims of the 19th century community.
 37. **OLD LODGE HALL** The lodge room over Simpkin's Store has been furnished by the Masonic Lodges of Colorado and contains a replica of the Master's Chair used by the Grand Lodge of Colorado in 1861.
 38. **BANK OF ALMA** Founded in the 1870's by E. P. Arthur, an Englishman, the bank contains many of the original fixtures. It was the scene of a dramatic holdup in 1935 and it survived the Alma fire in 1937.
 39. **J.A. MERRIAM DRUG STORE** While the building has been moved from Alma, almost the entire collection of drugs and remedies was purchased at an auction in Westcliffe, Colorado and donated to South Park City. It is reported to be one of the most complete collections of patent medicines in the United States. The soda fountain is from the Kleinknect Store in Hartsel.
 40. **SUMMER SALOON** Built of native sandstone in 1879 and renovated in 2000, the building is listed on the National Register. Each season a temporary exhibit is featured. A mammoth exhibit is also housed here.
 41. **PIONEER HOME** On its original site, this house is furnished with items belonging to many of the pioneer families of Park County. A dressmaker's shop in the front parlor is an example of how women combined business with home life.
 42. **RACHE'S PLACE** Here is a bustling, booming saloon and gambling house which operated in Alma during the mining era. Large sums of money changed hands in this establishment. The bar and gambling equipment are examples of Victorian saloon decor.
 43. **COMPANY STORE** The museum store is the last stop on your tour and features an interesting selection of antique reproductions, books, prints, postcards, and souvenirs.