

Winter Quarters Mine
Scofield
Carbon County
Utah

HAER No. UT-44

HAER
UTAH,
4-SCOF,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Winter Quarters Mine

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Location: Scofield, Carbon County, Utah
North 1/2 Section 6, Township 13 South, Range 7 East;
North 1/2 Section 1, Township 14 South, Range 6 East
Quad: Scofield, Utah, U.S.G.S. 7.5'

Date of Construction: 1894. First used in 1875-1876. Abandoned in 1928.
The mine was briefly reopened during World War II.

Present Owners: North of Drainage: Euray Allred
South of Drainage: Helen Nick and Koula Marakis

Present Use: Not in use.

Significance: The mine is significant as possible the first coal mine in Utah. The May Day disaster of 1900 killed 200 miners and prompted the development of organized labor in Utah.

Historian: John A. Senulis
Senco-Phenix
Salt Lake City, Utah

I. HISTORY

Coal has always been an important commodity in Utah. Brigham Young extolled the value of coal over wood and wrote to the New York Herald in the 1870s, soliciting capital for its removal and use in manufacturing. In 1854, the Territorial Legislature offered a reward of \$1,000 for anyone locating abundant sources of coal that could be shipped to Salt Lake City (Utah Mining Association: 1955). Coal was first discovered in Coalville in 1849. James Gunnison, on an exploratory mapping mission for the U. S. Corps of Topographical Engineers, discovered coal in Castle Valley (Doelling and Smith: 1982).

Even though coal was readily available, it was very difficult to transport to populated Salt Lake City. Packing by mule or by wagon, when roads were available, was a costly and time-consuming effort. The Fairview Coke and Coal Company opened a seam in Huntington Canyon in 1874, but poor transportation facilities caused the company's failure in 1878 (Doelling and Smith: 1982).

The true development of the coal industry in Utah coincides with the development of the railroad industry. In 1870, the Union Pacific Railroad, in need of coal for operation, opened mines in Green River and Rock Springs, Wyoming, and in 1884 in Coalville, Utah. The Union Pacific Railroad, which generally followed the route of modern-day Interstates 80 and 84 into Ogden, Utah, had easy access from its mines to the urban market to Salt Lake Valley. With a competing railroad from other coal sources, this created an immediate monopoly on the coal supply for Salt Lake City, which persisted for a decade (Union Pacific Coal Company: 1940).

Pleasant Valley, in central Utah where the Jones Mine is located, was the scene of some early and ambitious coal development undertakings in the 1870s. Coal was first discovered in a canyon at the southern end of the valley in 1875. John Nelson and Abram Taylor supposedly spent the winter of 1875-1876 in this canyon to protect the claim, hence, the name Winter Quarters (Zehnder, 1984).

In 1876, the Pleasant Valley Coal Company was founded by Milan Packard and Myron Crandall, who began work in Winter quarters that same year (Zehnder, 1984). As with the Fairview Company, transportation was their biggest problem. Coal was taken by wagon to Springville and Provo, where it sold for four to five dollars a ton. The round trip took four days and could not be made in the winter (Denver and Rio Grande Western Magazine, 1926). In 1879, Springville merchants and the residents of Pleasant Valley obtained a large supply of dry goods from a bankrupt eastern company. They used these dry goods in lieu of cash to finance the construction of a narrow gauge rail road from Tucker in Spanish Fork Canyon to Pleasant Valley. The road was called the "Calico Road" (Denver and Rio Grande Western Magazine, 1926).

In an attempt to break the coal monopoly held in Salt Lake City by the Union Pacific, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad began a line from Denver to Salt Lake City. Originally scheduled to run through Castle Valley and Salina Canyon, the company revised the route of the railroad to take advantage of the coal resources of the Wasatch Plateau (McElprang et al, 1949). During the time the main line was under construction, the Denver and Rio Grande Western built a narrow gauge line up Fish Creek Canyon from Colton, a small junction on the main line, to Pleasant Valley that had double the capacity of the Calico Road. The main line was completed in 1882, the same year that Winter Quarters Mine was acquired by Utah Fuels, a subsidiary of the Denver and Rio Grande. The route from Colton was upgraded to standard size in 1884.

While Union Pacific was concentrating on developing its Wyoming coal resources, Utah Fuels acquired the Sunnyside and Castlegate Mines, thereby gaining the monopoly once held by Union Pacific. In 1900, Utah Fuels was the leading producer of coal in Utah, and Carbon County was clearly the center of production (Alexander, 1963).

The period of 1879-1880 witnesses a flurry of development in Pleasant Valley, with the railroad and mining activities sharing center stage with a number of immigrants who came to Pleasant Valley for the lush grazing pastures. The town of Scofield, at the southern end of the valley, was founded at this time.

In an attempt to gain back some of the business lost to the Denver and Rio Grande, the Union Pacific Coal Company bought the Pleasant Valley Mine on the east side of Pleasant Valley from the Utah Central Coal Company in 1890. The Union Pacific found that hauling the coal from the new mine, renamed the Union Pacific No. 1, to be an expensive proposition, as they had to use the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. The excessive costs kept production down to 600 tons of screened coal per day (Union Pacific History, 1940). The company leased its interest to the Scofield Coal Company in 1917.

Pleasant Valley was rocked with disaster on May 1, 1900, when an explosion and fire occurred in the No. 4 Entry of the Winter Quarters mine. Two hundred miners lost their lives in what was probably a preventable accident. Gomer Thomas, Utah State Mine Inspector at the time of the explosion, stated:

"I inspected the mines here on March 8, 1900, and found them in fair condition. The ventilation system was good and the mine, free from gas. In my estimation the disaster was caused by a heavy shot of giant powder or loose powder exploding" (Dilley, 1901).

The tragedy had a profound effect upon Pleasant Valley and the surrounding area. Much has been written on the disaster and the mine owner, Pleasant valley Coal Company, even commissioned a book on the subject (Dilley, 1901).

The cemetery in the town of Scofield, two miles east of the disaster site, gives testimony to the disaster and is on the Utah State Register of Historic Places. One hundred and forty-nine of the men killed were buried in the Scofield cemetery by a special crew of men brought in from Provo. Those not buried at Scofield were taken by special train to other parts of Utah and surrounding states (Powell, 1972). The Pleasant Valley Coal Company responded to the tragedy by cancelling \$8,000 of company debts, providing caskets and burial clothing, and providing each family with \$500 (Dilley, 1901). The disaster's magnitude was unusual, but poor working conditions and individual deaths were commonplace. The shock of the disaster did much to stimulate organized labor in Utah during the first decade of this century (Powell, 1985).

Wintsr Quarters' demise, following the accident, was less a result of the tragic event than of Utah Fuel's move to develop the superior coal reserves of Clear Creek to the south. Coal taken from Winter Quarters after 1900 was used to power the company's locomotives.

Because of its more open location, Scofield became the main center of population, and the first public school was located there in 1901. As with all coal areas, Scofield had its economic ups and downs. The boom caused by the stimulus of World War I was followed by the decline of the 1920s, which saw the closing of the Winter Quarters in 1928. The introduction of natural gas to Utah in 1929 caused great competition for the coal industry, as natural gas gained in use in both commercial and domestic applications. The following decade of the Deprsssion saw only further decline.

World War II saw a renewed interest in coal production, because large amounts of energy were needed to mobilize an industrial country at war. Scofield and Winter Quarters did not profit from this boom as much as the Clear Creek mines, because the Scofield area's coal deposits were of inferior quality.

Wintsr Quarters occupies a narrow east-west canyon at the south end of Pleasant Valley. As previously mentioned, the name "Winter Quarters" is most often attributed to stories of various mines who either stayed to protect the claim or were trapped by early snows and had to spend the winter in the canyon. The name "Winter Quarters" was also given by the Mormon pionerss to a town in Nebraska during their westward trek.

The Pleasant Valley Coal Company's efforts at Winter Quarters worked only the No. 1 opening on the south side of the valley, where production was limited to 250-300 tons per month. After takeover by Utah Fuels in 1882, the Pleasant Valley Coal Company, infused with new capital and access to superior transportation, increased production at Winter Quarters. By 1885, Winter Quarters was producing 7,000 to 8,000 tons per month out of the No. 1 mine. Production dropped to 2,700 per month in 1886, then began to climb again when the No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4 mines were opened in 1887-1888 (Denver and Rio Grande Western, 1926). When the mine closed in 1928, 10.8 million tons of coal had been produced (Doelling, 1972).

The mines at Winter Quarters contain coal of generally inferior quality, and it was extremely difficult to extract. Faults in the coal seams are prevalent and necessitated the use of no less than five openings. The No. 1 opening on the south side of the valley allowed for early successes of the Pleasant Valley Coal Company. With the arrival of the railroad and the increase in demand, it became necessary to open the other four mines. In 1923, mine No. 1 was still open on the south side of the valley, and the shaft ran 2.3 miles south to another opening in Eccle's Canyon. The No. 2 mine was an opening on the north side of the canyon that ran northerly one mile into Woods Canyon (not operational in 1923). The No. 3 mine opening was a relatively short drift on the south side of the canyon that was plagued by faulting. The fatal No. 4 opening, also on the south side of the canyon, was constructed to avoid a fault-hindering production in the No. 1 mine and eventually connected with the No. 1 mine. The No. 5 opening was on the north side of the canyon and ran westerly. All operating mines were connected by conveyor to a tippie in the center of the canyon (Spieker, 1931 and Doelling, 1972).

The narrow canyon in which Winter Quarters was located severely limited the layout of the town. With stream, railroad and road occupying the center of the canyon, structures were placed wherever possible, as long as they did not interfere with mining activities.

The hub of activity was the Wasatch Store, built near the turn of the century at the east end of the canyon. The store provided the miners with their everyday needs and, after 1903, housed the town's post office. The store, as well as masonry buildings now long gone, were built by immigrant stonemasons from Italy and Greece. In 1903, Winter Quarters had a population of 181 English, 126 Finnish and 74 Italians (Notarianni, 1979).

When the mines closed at Winter Quarters in 1928, the town was scavenged and lumber and other materials taken for reuse elsewhere. Many of the homes were relocated to Scofield (Harvey, 1986). Little remains of

Winter Quarters today, other than the partial remains of the store, some crude concrete powder houses and foundations, and the collapsed portals of the mines.

II. FEATURE DESCRIPTIONS

Feature 1

- A. Concrete building.
- B. Reinforced concrete walls, floor and roof. Building is partially built into the earth.
- C. The building is 12 feet long by 12 feet wide by 6 feet high.
- D. Building was probably a power storage house.

Feature 2

- A. Concrete pad with water channel, sheet metal pieces, and rock and wood rubble.
- B. The pad is reinforced concrete. Wood framing lines the channel. The remaining material is rubble.
- C. The pad is approximately 20 feet long by 5 feet wide by 6 inches thick.
- D. The structure is too badly deteriorated to determine its exact use. It may have been a loading device associated with a narrow gauge railroad.

Feature 3

- A. Concrete and rock buildings. This structure is badly deteriorated. It consists of a standing wall to the south and a collapsing wall to the north. The standing southern wall supports the hillside.
- B. The structure is primarily reinforced concrete with some masonry.
- C. The building is approximately 33 feet long and 10 feet high.
- D. Possible powder house or general storage facility.

Feature 4

- A. Concrete retaining wall and building ruins.
- B. The wall is reinforced concrete.
- C. The wall is approximately 165 feet long, 8 to 15 feet high and 18 inches thick.
- D. The wall is obviously a retaining structure, but it may have been part of a larger structure associated with stream diversion.

Feature 5

- A. Masonry ventilation portal.
- B. Stone and mortar construction with wood framing near the portal.
Mortar is badly deteriorated, and the structure is collapsing.
Evidence of machinery mountings in front.
- C. The structure is 40 feet by 35 feet. The walls are 8 feet high and two feet thick.
- D. The structure was some type of shelter for the ventilation portal.

Feature 6

- A. A concrete building.
- B. Reinforced concrete construction which is deteriorating badly. The ceiling is unetable.
- C. The structure is 26 feet long by 13 feet wide and 8 feet in height.
The walls are 10 inches thick, and the ceiling is 8 inches thick.
- D. The building is near the No. 4 portal and is probably an associated powder house.

Feature 7

- A. A wood frame dugout.
- B. A dugout structure protected by wood framing and sheet metal roof.
- C. The structure measures 6 feet long by 3 feet wide and 6 feet high.
- D. The facility appears to be a root shelter or similar storage facility.

Feature 8

- A. An underground concrete building foundation.
- B. The foundation is reinforced concrete. It is partially filled by a collapsed concrete floor.
- C. The foundation is 18 feet long by 8 feet by 6 feet deep.
- D. The building was basically underground. There is evidence of a chimney which may indicate occupation.

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