

SUPERIOR HISTORIAN

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2003

APRIL 25, 2003

WELCOME

The Superior Historical Commission welcomes you to the first of what is to be a regular addition to the Superior Newsletter. We call it Superior Historian. We plan to publish a quarterly paper containing historical accounts of Superior's past, photos of the old days in the area, and telling you what the Historical Commission is doing. We hope you find this first edition enjoyable and informative. Our hope is that this newsletter adds to your knowledge of our town and its history! The Commission is extremely thankful to the Town of Superior for its cooperation in bringing you the story of the town's past and keeping you abreast of news relating to the Historical Commission.

SUPERIOR'S BEGINNINGS

BY LARRY DORSEY

Modern day residents of Superior may wonder how and why their town, one of the fastest growing in the United States during the 1990's, first came to be. It is difficult to look out over the expanse of subdivisions, mega-malls, box stores, and fast food joints of the twenty-first century and imagine a valley of just hundreds of people living a simple life of subsistence in the Coal Creek Valley in the 1860's.

The name of the Valley tells us much about what led to the earliest influx of pioneers into the Superior area. Coal Creek, the same creek that runs through old Superior today, drains through what is known as the Northern Coal Field of Colorado, an area of deep seams of coal valuable for use in the hard rock mines in the mountains to the west, fuel for smelters and railroads, and other industrial uses of that time. The coal field ran from Marshall (just a few miles west of Superior) in a northwest diagonal beneath the present day towns of Superior, Louisville, Lafayette, Canfield, Erie, Dacono, Firestone and Frederick. Eventually over 195 mines were opened in the Northern fields, including many in and around Superior.

William Charles Hake and his wife Emmaline came into the Coal Creek Valley around 1860. Mr. Hake was a farmer from Missouri whose goal was to provide agricultural supplies to the mining towns in the mountains of Boulder County. He set out right away establishing his farming operations by planting crops, apple trees, and raising livestock. After a mere four years of living along the banks of the creek, a spring flood exposed a vein of coal. In spite of this revelation, Hake simply farmed for nearly another thirty years before deciding to exploit the coal. Always the farmer, he contracted with Mr. Jim Hood in 1892 to sink a shaft that would tap the coal seam. From that time on, Hood was the engineer and manager of the mine and Hake its owner.

The mine was named the Industrial and was active until 1945. During the years it existed, over four million tons of coal were extracted from the Industrial Mine. The location of the mine is visible to the west of McCaslin Boulevard on the

DO YOU —
WANT A HOME
OR ...
OPERATE A COAL MINE?

IF SO

Call on or Address

WILLIAM C. HAKE,
SUPERIOR, COLO.

MR. HAKE is sole and perfect owner of the Finest COAL LAND and COAL TOWNSITE PROPERTY, under United States patent, having lived on the property for thirty five years. This is the Investor's and Homeowner's opportunity. Superior lies twenty miles from Denver and ten miles from Boulder, on the line of the Union Pacific Railway.

How Can You Help?

The Superior Historical Commission welcomes any donations you might have to help in the cause of preserving and understanding Superior's past. Examples are old photographs, papers, documents, and artifacts from the old days in Superior or Boulder County. Photos and documents can be scanned so the owners can keep the originals. If you have any artifacts or want more information, please contact Errol Waligorski at 303-499-1657

south side of Superior on the hillside above the irrigation ditch. A second important mine, The Enterprise, was located to the east of McCaslin in the direction of US 36.

Hake then set out to promote the town becoming a sort of one man chamber of commerce. He advertised in regional publications encouraging people to migrate to Superior where they would find "lovely, cheap homes," the best coal in the state, an "elegant climate and water pure." He also predicted that the population would balloon to 600 in two years from that writing in 1896.

The name of Mr. Hake's new town was to become Superior. Why that name? There are at least three tales of the origin of the name all of which have varying degrees of credibility. One story is that on his way from Wisconsin, Mr. Hake became broken down and stranded in Superior, Nebraska. He was overwhelmed by the generosity and helpfulness of the citizens of that town and vowed to repay their efforts by naming any town he might found in their honor.

As appealing as that tale sounds, there isn't much verification available for it. The other stories are intertwined and more credible. A second and more glaring misconception is that the Hake's hailed from Superior, Wisconsin. Family records held by Hake descendants prove that the pioneers trek west took them through southern Wisconsin but never close to the city of Superior. The family also feels strongly that the source of the town's name is linked to W.C. Hake's advertising slogan that coal from the Industrial Mine "had no superior in the state."

The town was founded in 1896 and the majority of workers in Superior were involved in mining and around 135 people lived here in 1900. After an election to that effect, the town was formally incorporated in 1904 and in the early 1900's boasted of a general store, candy and fruit shop, several saloons, the Miner's Trading Company, a boarding house for unmarried miners, and a house along the road to Marshall for "working girls" who apparently were kept quite busy plying their trade.

Superior Historical Commission

Chair – Errol Waligorski

Vice Chair – Doreen Ruffe

Secretary – Karen Waligorski

Treasurer – Bob Morgan

Superior Historian Editor – Larry Dorsey

So, we have the town of Superior established and in future editions we will continue to track the story of a small yet unique and important town in the history of Colorado.



Industrial Mine in Superior looking west.

Superior Historical Commission News

Since its inception in 1999, the Superior Historical Commission has been busily at work taking steps to preserve and enhance Superior's past. The Commission meets on the third Friday of every month at the Superior Town Hall at 10:00 am. It is comprised of volunteers who live in Superior or who once lived here. We are privileged to have a number of folks who grew up in Superior or who have at least lived here for a long time on the Commission and their perspective is extremely valuable. The meetings are open to anyone and all are welcome to attend.

Here is a sketch of what has been accomplished over the past few years with the cooperation of the Town of Superior:

- ~development of the Grasso Historical Park
- ~historical survey of the existing homes in old Superior
- ~steps to preserve the historical Mayhoffer Barn
- ~building of a new iron fence around the Superior Cemetery and an extensive program to exclude prairie dogs in the Cemetery grave sites

Sources and Thanks for this Newsletter:

Superior: A Folk History by Cynda Collins Arsenault

Once A Coal Miner by Phyllis Smith

Coal Mining in Colorado's Northern Field by Carolyn Connor

Carol Gleeson and the Louisville Historical Museum