

SUPERIOR HISTORIAN

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Here is the Superior Mercantile in the horse and buggy days. Not only is there a horse and wagon to the left of the building, but a hitching post and buggy in the lower right. The store was listed in the 1904 Boulder County Directory.

Photo courtesy of Louisville Historical Museum

FORMER MINE CAMP HOUSE REHAB UNDERWAY

A house that was once a part of a collection of company owned houses around Superior's Industrial Mine was recently moved from Broomfield to the old ball fields in original town. The Town of Superior will construct a foundation, remove exterior additions, and then place the house on the new foundation.

The Town and the Superior Historical Commission will work to obtain grants to restore the house to the way it appeared in the 1930's and 1940's.

Once the rehabilitation is completed, the house will become a local history museum and reflecting a typical company house of the time period. The resulting museum will be open to the public and for special groups, such as school tours.

SHOPPING 100 YEARS AGO: SUPERIOR'S COMPANY STORE

Locals Didn't Need to Leave Town for General Merchandise

Located at the southwest corner of 3rd and William Street, Superior's general store dated back to at least 1904. It provided local residents with groceries, dry goods, clothing and a butcher shop in the rear of the store.

It was known as the Superior Mercantile, Miner's Trading Company, and eventually the Rocky Mountain Store after the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company bought the Industrial Mine. The connection with the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company meant the enterprise was a company store and with that came all the advantages and disadvantage of the interrelationship.

To their advantage, residents of the Industrial Mine camp and the town of



The staff of the "General Store" consisted of William Young, manager; Rudy Bednar, deliveries; Edith Green, bookkeeper; and Harry Abbott, butcher. The Bell Telephone sign in the upper right indicated a pay phone was available there. According to the sign in lower right, Corn Flakes were also for sale.

Photo courtesy of Town of Superior



This wonderful photograph is of Rudy Bednar. One part of his job as store clerk was to drive to the Industrial Mine camp and take orders from residents. He would later deliver the order to the homes. Snow sticks to the tires of the Model T delivery truck. The mine camp boardinghouse is in the background.

Photo courtesy of Laurel Bednar Russell

Superior had easy access to the daily necessities and locals had an option for employment in a field outside the dangers of coal mining.

However, as a company store, workers were often at the mercy of the owners. At one time, miners were paid in scrip, which amounted to company money, redeemable only at the company store. In some cases, scrip took the place of U.S. currency and the miner was either only paid in scrip or extended credit at the company store in lieu of actual pay.

This, of course, increased the possibility of the miner always being in debt to the company for which he worked, and perhaps never being in the black financially in spite of working 60 hours per week. The old folk song "Sixteen Tons," popularized by the performer Tennessee Ernie Ford, contained the lyrics "I owe my soul to the company store," and the truth of the words is based on the experiences of workers in any industry typified by the company store experience.

Fortunately for miners in Superior, the president of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company was the benevolent Josephine Roche who shunned the practice of making industrial workers indentured to their employers. (See [Superior Historian](#), Volume 3, Issue 3)

In spite of her attitude, Denzil Acklin remembers that miners were threatened with firing if they did not buy their goods at the store. Miners were virtually powerless to resist unscrupulous mine owners. They used the phrase, "We've got a barefooted man waiting for your job" to counter any miner's complaint concerning his wages. Denzil also recalls that whenever possible, people from Superior slipped into Louisville or Boulder to buy necessities.

Bob Morgan and Herb Morrison recall the main attraction of the general store being the candy counter, an enchanting allure to a child. Herb also remembers a pickle barrel located just inside the door, and that memory certainly fits the image of the general store.

Eventually the company installed two gas pumps in front, one for regular and the other for "high test" or ethyl. The pumps were coded as "white" or "bronze" and had a clear, 10 gallon reservoir on top. The gas was pumped by hand up into the reservoir and when the handle was squeezed, the gas drained down into the car's tank.

In addition to the usual general merchandise, the store once housed Superior's first post office. In 1940, the post office was moved to a building that still exists at 211 William Street.

Exactly when the store ceased business is not certain. The building was used by the Nazarene Church for a while, then torn down. The date of its demise is also unknown, but apparently it happened around 1940.



Here is the general store under the name State Mercantile Co. It faced east on Third Street. William Street is to the right and the Boulder foothills are in the background.

Photo courtesy Louisville Historical Museum

An era ended with the passing of the general store. Not only was it no longer possible for children to pine for penny candy, but there was virtually no commercial activity in the town until its revival in the 1990's. Along with penny candy, the small town general store is lost to the ages.

Sources: Superior Historical Commission, [Lost Superior](#); Cyda Arsenault, [Superior: A Folk History](#); web site, Fortune City: "Sixteen Tons;" Personal Interviews: Alice Morrison, Laurel Bednar Russell, Denzil Acklin, Herbert Morrison and Robert Morgan.

STEEL'S MKT. (A-G STORES) 380 Arapahoe Phone 380

MEATS for Delicious MEALS

CHUCK ROASTS Lean	Pound	49c
SIRLOIN STEAK	Pound	65c
CORNED BEEF BRISKET	Pound	58c
SLICED BACON Swift's Premium, 1/2-lb. pkg.	Pound	89c
FULL CREAM LONGHORN CHEESE	Pound	58c
LARD Top Brands 1/2-lb. pkg.	29c	BOILED HAM Ideal for Lunches 1/2-lb. 63c

Small Sunkist Oranges, lb. . . 8c
 Cinch Cake Mix, pkg. . . . 37c
 Blue Winner Apricots, No. 2 1/2 22c
 Miracle Whip Salad Dressing, quart size 59c
 Marco Hominy, No. 2 can, 2 for 25c

Ocean Spray Cranberry Sauce can 23c
 Kraft Pimento Cheese, 1/2-lb. pkg. 30c
 Borden's Eagle Brand Milk . 28c
 Robb Ross Gelatin Dessert, 4 pkgs. 25c
 Rockwood Chocolate Bits, pkg, 25c

FEEL THE FRESHNESS TOWN TALK Stay Fresh Longer 13c and 17c Cigarettes Any Brand Carton \$1.45 FRESH VEGETABLES UNDER REFRIGERATION

The 1947 prices at Steel's Market in Boulder are quite striking compared to today. Groceries at Superior Mercantile would more than likely have been slightly lower during its heyday.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION HAPPENINGS

The Superior Historical Commission has been very busy over the past few months. In addition to the important task of acquiring and moving the mine camp house, it sponsored an evening program on "The Civil War in the West" in April. Bob Moulder's account of the role of Colorado volunteers in the Battle of Glorietta was well received indeed.

The fourth program in the series will be October 26, featuring ghost story teller Ann Alexander Legett sharing scary tales from Boulder County's past.

The Commission was also involved with the Superior Days and Fourth of July celebrations. Look for our booth at the Chili Fest in September.

In June, officers were selected for the upcoming term. Larry Dorsey will now be the Chair of the Commission supported by Denzil Acklin as Vice-Chair, Treasurer Bob Morgan, and Karen Waligorski as Secretary. After eight years at the helm of the Historical Commission, Errol Waligorski has stepped aside. Wally's leadership will be missed, to say the least. Larry Dorsey will continue to edit the [Superior Historian](#).

CORRECTION

Having essentially never worked on a farm, the [Superior Historian](#) wrote that which he has always heard others say in his account of the piece of machinery now in our collection. He was appropriately reminded that the machine used to harvest grain is a thresher, not a thrasher. The [Historian](#) apologizes for the error and thanks the