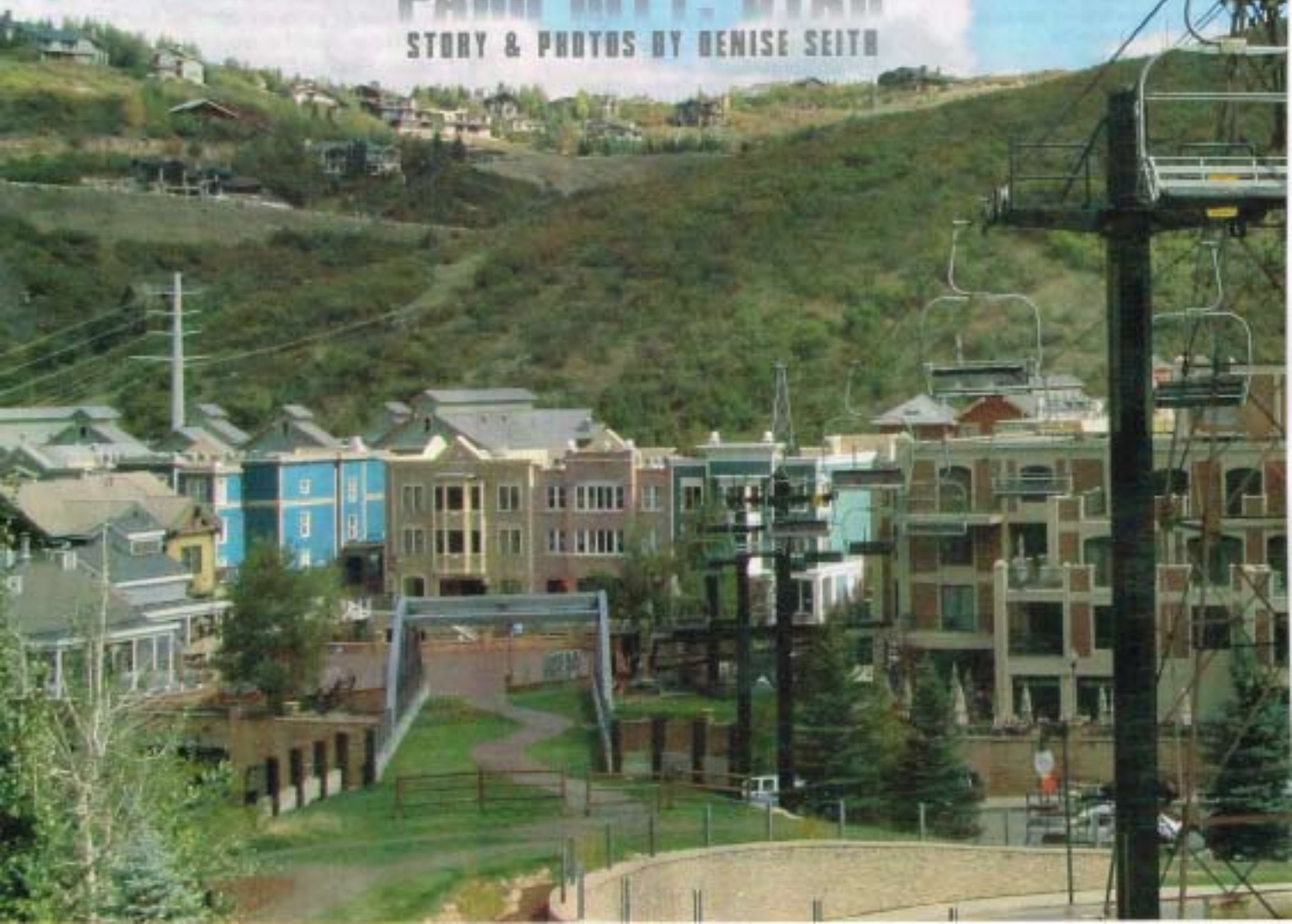
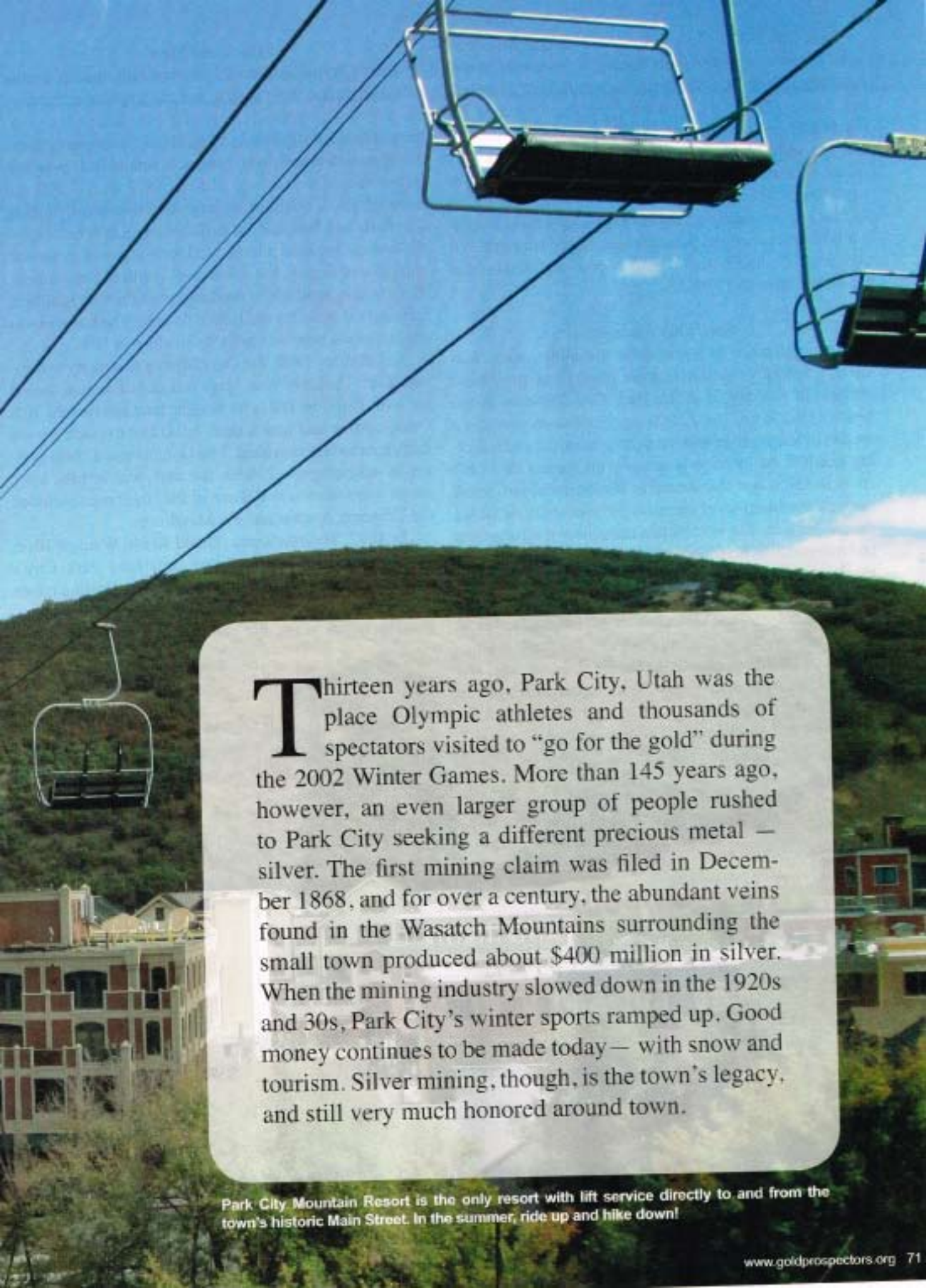


SILVER, GOLD AND SNOW

MINING THE RICHES OF
PARH CITY, UTAH

STORY & PHOTOS BY DENISE SEITH





Thirteen years ago, Park City, Utah was the place Olympic athletes and thousands of spectators visited to “go for the gold” during the 2002 Winter Games. More than 145 years ago, however, an even larger group of people rushed to Park City seeking a different precious metal — silver. The first mining claim was filed in December 1868, and for over a century, the abundant veins found in the Wasatch Mountains surrounding the small town produced about \$400 million in silver. When the mining industry slowed down in the 1920s and 30s, Park City’s winter sports ramped up. Good money continues to be made today — with snow and tourism. Silver mining, though, is the town’s legacy, and still very much honored around town.

Park City Mountain Resort is the only resort with lift service directly to and from the town’s historic Main Street. In the summer, ride up and hike down!

Park City's 300 silver mines were among America's most productive and longest lasting. Even during the financial panic of 1893 when the bottom fell out of the silver market, Park City weathered the crash because the mines had been doing so well. Thirteen ounces was the average yield of silver per ton of ore from all Park City mines in their 100 years of production. But, there was more than silver in them thar hills. Heavy deposits of lead and zinc also were found around Park City, and in combination with copper and gold, the mining industry generated a total of a half billion dollars in precious metals from the 1870s through 1970s.

Park City Museum

The best place to learn about the mines, men, machinery, working conditions, town history, and prominent citizens of the day, is at the Park City Museum in the heart of Old Town. The 12,000-sq.-ft. museum provides a wealth of knowledge, and has both permanent and traveling exhibits. Its location is actually the former City Hall (built in 1885) that also served as the territorial jail. Stroll through the multi-level museum on your own, or take a docent-led tour. The world-class collection of information and memorabilia acquaints you with every phase of silver mining, in addition to explaining how the equipment was used. The fabulous two-story Mega Mine display allows you to see the intricate underground workings of a typical mine. There's also an original Park City fire truck, a Kimball Stagecoach, rail cars turned into a skier subway, and much more. After spending an hour or two here, you're sure to come away with an even greater appreciation for modern day mining methods!

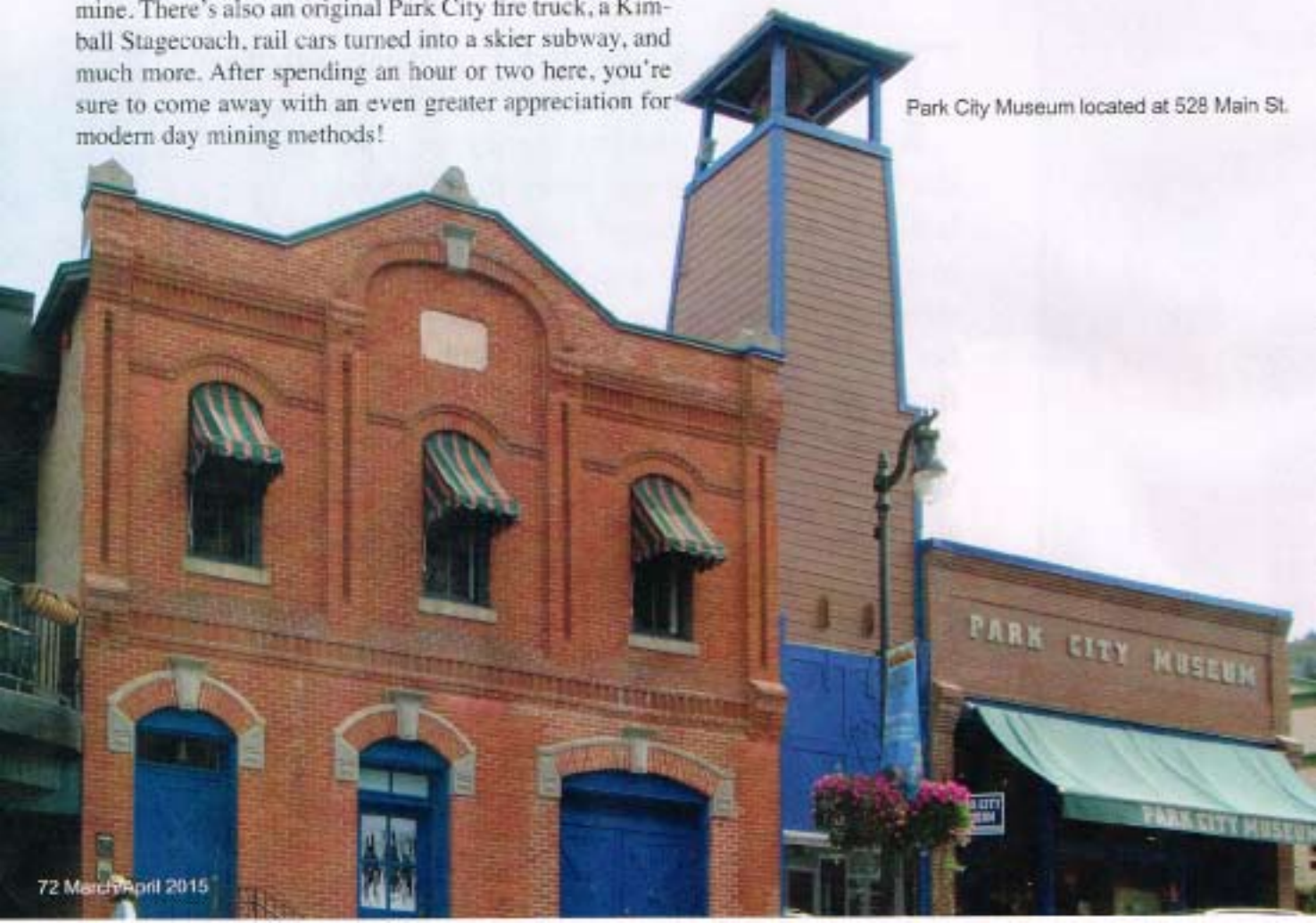
Mines and Men

Park City turned out 23 mining millionaires during its boom years; their photos and biographies are among the museum's displays. George Hearst, father of newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst, was one of those fortunate individuals who became tremendously wealthy. Hearst bought the Ontario Mine in 1872 for \$27,000 and turned it into a complex underground operation. Sinking six shafts and hundreds of drifts nearly 3,000 feet below the surface required a huge workforce, tons of dynamite, and piles of money, but it was well worth his investment. The Ontario went on to produce more than \$50 million, forming the basis for the Hearst fortune. The Ontario was the last silver mine in Park City to close in 1982.

In February 1880, the Daly Mining Company was established. The Daly West Mine was one of several owned by John Daly. In 1881, he bought land next to the rich Ontario Mine and sunk a shaft 2,100 feet to reach the ore that extended underground. The Ontario was a silent partner in the enterprise. Within the next year or two, more mines were established. Some of the larger ones included the Crescent, Anchor and the Mayflower.

In 1892, Thomas Kerns, David Keith, Windsor Rice, Albion Emery and John Judge organized Park City's most productive mining company by consolidating mines and claims — the largest being the Silver King Mine. For almost 60 years, the company employed the latest

Park City Museum located at 528 Main St.



technology, following veins to find new and greater ore bodies. The Silver King continued to grow over the years by purchasing neighboring mines and claims. Kearns and Keith were both born in eastern Canada but made their fortunes in Park City. They also became partners in other businesses, including the *Salt Lake Tribune*, which they purchased in 1901. They died within six months of each other in 1918.

Although business at the time was mostly a man's world, Susanna "Susie" Bransford was known as Utah's Silver Queen. She married the local postmaster Albion Emery in 1884, and the couple invested \$8,000 in the Mayflower Mine. They really struck it rich when it merged with the Silver King. Susie outlived four husbands, including a Russian prince. By 1894, it was rumored that she was earning \$1,000 a day from her interest in the Silver King. With her fortune and flamboyant lifestyle, she was a darling of the nation's magazines and newspapers for much of her adult life. Most single women back in the day were not so lucky and made their living as "ladies of the night." Prostitution was a source of income for Park City. Court records show that prostitutes and their "business managers" were regularly arrested, fined,

and released. Sadly, suicide by arsenic was a common means to retire from the red-light district.

Life of a Miner

Most early hard rock miners worked for wages, earning \$2.75 to \$3.50 per day, depending on the job. Many of the miners in Park City in the late 1800s and early 1900s lived in tents. Because times were rough and tough, they usually carried guns and often had cause to use them. Although some men saved enough money to start their own venture such as a butcher store or blacksmith shop, it was mostly the mine owners and investors who got rich.

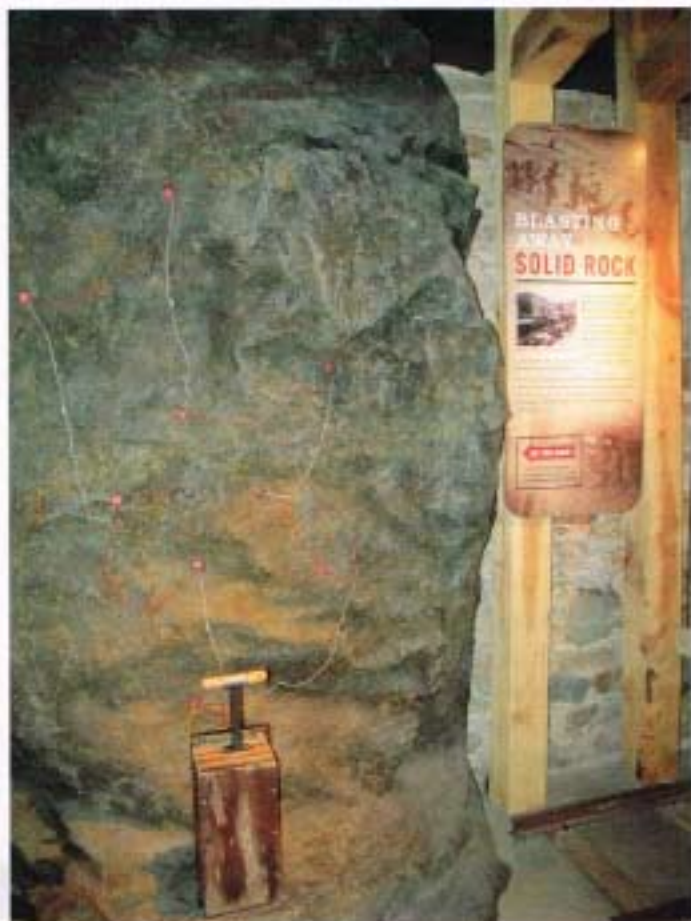
Although a 19th century hard rock miner's pay wasn't bad for the time, it meant long hours working in wet, dark, loud, and often dangerous conditions. Very few safety measures were in place. Miners were below ground their entire shift so they brought all their meals with them and ate in the "doghouse" which was a warm, dry room within the tunnels. Some of the early machinery was impressive, but it was basically human and animal muscle that was responsible for the mines' success. Some beasts of burden spent years underground. Horses were affectionately called "hay burners" by the miners. Horses



Electric mine train at the Park City Museum carried skiers three miles into the mountain where a hoist then lifted them 1,800 feet to the surface.



Drill and blasting exhibits at the museum



were treated well because, unlike miners, it was expensive to buy and train another horse. Oilskin slickers and pants were supposed to keep out moisture, but could do only so much. Even mules wore slickers to stay dry in the Ontario drain tunnel. Cats lived underground, too, keeping the mouse population under control.

Electricity arrived in Park City in the 1880s, but it was a luxury many could not afford. In 1889, it took almost half a day's mine wages to pay the monthly power bill for a single light. Light bulbs were very expensive and in short supply. To discourage theft, the Silver King Mine stamped their bulbs "Stolen from the Silver King Mine."

Another interesting tidbit you'll learn at the Park City Museum includes how to clean up with pig fat. A large mercantile at the time, Smith & Brim sold 50 and 100 pound buckets of rendered pig fat (lard). It could be used for cooking or combined with lye to make soap. Thrifty customers made their own soap, often using the same bar to do the laundry, wash the floors, and take a bath! The MEATS sign you'll see hanging in the museum was the first electric sign along Main Street. It used 80 light bulbs!

Mining Technology

Mining companies adopted technology to boost production and cut jobs, with the sole purpose of producing

more profit. A side benefit was the increased health and safety of underground workers. The invention of blasting caps and mechanized drills were two such improvements. At first, black powder or dynamite was detonated using a burning fuse. Blasting caps, when used with an electrical detonating system, eliminated dangerous open flames and made timing more precise. Miners originally used hand tools to drill holes for the dynamite into the rock face. Single-jacking was done by one miner holding a drill steel in one hand and swinging a four-pound hammer with the other hand. To double-jack, one man held the drill steel, while his companion hammered with an eight-pound sledge. A good team could deliver 60 blows and drill two inches into the rock per minute. In 1890, Park City mines replaced hand drills with mechanical drills powered by compressed air. Silica-bearing rock dust wreaked havoc on miners' lungs, but that hazard was later reduced by injecting water through the drill tip, which cut down on the amount of dust that was inhaled.

Think you can handle a drill? Want to push a blasting plunger? The museum's hands-on dioramas give you the chance to feel the ground shake!

As in most underground mines, water was a constant obstacle. One solution was to use pumps. Another approach was to dig drain tunnels. The Ontario Mine installed a Cornish Pump in 1883. The machine was 30 feet

high with a 70-ton flywheel and was imported from Philadelphia by freight wagon. The pump weighed 486 tons and had a capacity of almost four million gallons a day. Later, drain tunnels replaced pumps.

The Marsac Mill processed ore from the very first Park City mine — the Flagstaff. The Marsac was a 20-stamp mill. Stamping is a process of crushing ore with huge weights. With 20 stamps operating, the mill could turn out 60-70 tons per day. Because of the long distance the ore had to be hauled to the mill and the technical problems associated with the crude stamp machinery, the Marsac was not necessarily a steady or satisfactory producer, and was only one of such stamping machines that deafened anyone in the vicinity.

Before a prospector knew if he had struck it rich, an assayer had to confirm the value of silver in the claim. The Main Street assay office was where miners got the good or bad news. Taking representative core samples, assayers crushed and weighed the ore before pouring it into fireclay crucibles and melting it in the furnace. After cooling, the hardened metal was transferred into a cupel made of bone ash and placed in the furnace once more. The porous cupel absorbed everything but pure silver. The assayer weighed the silver on his delicate scale and calculated silver per ton based on the original ore weight.

Unionization

Don't miss the museum's "dungeon," where you'll find old walk-in jail cells along with exhibits on the Miners Union Hall. Mine owners, like all employers in

the 19th century, were not held responsible for injuries or deaths. In 1902, an underground explosion at the Daly West Mine killed 34 men. Poison gas spread through tunnels to the Ontario Mine. Accidents like these didn't happen every day, but they certainly were not rare. Lacking protection, workers organized unions and joined fraternal orders. Both organizations helped their members in difficult times and aided families whose breadwinners were killed or maimed. In 1904, a Miners Hospital was built for \$5,000. Funds for the hospital were raised by local businessmen and the Western Federation of Miners Local #144. In the first year, 6,000 miners were treated for silicosis.

Tramways

When the mines first opened in the Park City area, most ore was hauled in horse-drawn wagons. Eventually, more modern devices like the Silver King Tram replaced the wagon teams. Using buckets to haul ore to the mills was an economic success, lowering transportation costs to 22 cents per ton from \$1.50 per ton when hauled with teams and wagons. Men could ride to work in the ore buckets from the lower terminal up to the mine. Processed ore was then brought down the mountain and loaded into railroad cars.

Another engineering marvel, the Crescent Tramway, was not an overhead tram but a narrow-gauge railroad. In 1885, Shay locomotives (geared steam engines originally developed for the logging industry) pulled ore cars up steep 12 percent grades. Winding down the

Mega Mine display at the Park City Museum shows the intricate underground workings of a typical mine.



mountain for five miles from the Crescent Mine, the ore eventually reached the system's depot and concentrator near Main Street where the ore was refined. Although used until 1900, deep snow covering the tracks rendered the engines useless in winter. Steep grades and heavy downhill loads made for frequent derailments. A winding paved walkway, open to the public, is all that remains of the Crescent Tram. Take a short uphill walk and try to imagine how the narrow gauge trains could possibly traversed the steep terrain.

The Greatest Snow on Earth

Prior to the 1920s, snow wasn't given much thought in terms of making money or even for having fun. After all, snow caused cave-ins and train derailments and generally got in the way of mining. But, skiing gradually became more widespread around Park City as some miners and other workers began regularly taking the mine train to the top of a mountain and skiing down. The first ski jump was built in 1930, and in 1936 Park City hosted its first winter carnival. Five hundred skiers arrived at what is now Deer Valley Resort, making the event a great success. The first ski lift went into operation in 1946, and the frozen white stuff began to be seen as

a real treasure. The foundation was in place to market what would later be called The Greatest Snow on Earth.

During this same time, the local mining industry slowed down. The Stock Market crashed in 1929, plummeting the Silver King's stock from \$12.87 to \$6.50. Mineral prices continued to drop, and in 1949 most of the mines shut down, putting 1,200 men out of work. Stores closed. People left. The population dropped to 1,150 souls from a peak of 10,000. Within a couple of years, Park City went into ghost town status.

In an effort to diversify, United Park City Mines Company opened a ski resort in 1963. The old Spiro Mine drain tunnel was converted into an underground ski lift. This electric mine train, which you will see in the museum, carried skiers three miles into the mountain where a hoist then lifted them 1,800 feet to the surface. Since it took an hour to transport skiers, the Spiro tunnel wasn't all that popular, but word spread about the great snow, and people started moving to the area. Over the next few decades, world-class ski resorts and high-speed chairlifts were built, annual art and film festivals were established, and in 2002 Park City hosted many of the XIX Winter Games.

Park City today is a good exam-

ple of a boom-and-bust mining town booming again — revitalized in grand style as a year-round mountain resort and international tourist destination. In 2008, *Forbes Traveler* magazine named Park City as one of "America's 20 Prettiest Towns." More than 60 of Park City's buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, many of which are located along the town's Main Street alongside restaurants and plenty of shops and boutiques. Two years running — 2008 and 2009 — Deer Valley Resort was named the number one ski resort in North America by SKI magazine. Whether you like to ski, shop, eat, hike, mountain bike, or just take in the scenery, a visit to Park City is a great place to treasure America's mining heritage. And, if you really want to follow in the footsteps of the old-timers, check the pages of your *GPAA Claims Club Membership Mining Guide* to find out what lands and GPAA claims are open to you as a prospector. You never know what *you* might dig up!

Denise Seith is a freelance travel writer and treasure hunter in Salem, Oregon. She and her husband Larry are GPAA members and own www.GoldRushTradingPost.com, an online treasure hunting equipment and supply store.

IF YOU GO:

Park City Museum

528 Main St.

Park City, Utah 84060

Phone: (435) 649.7457

<http://parkcityhistory.org>

Adults: \$10

Seniors 65+, Students, Military: \$8

Children: \$5 (age 7-17); 6 and under are free

Museum hours: Monday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
and Sunday: Noon-6 p.m.

Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas. If you will be visiting in April, May, November or early December, please call the museum to double check off-season hours.

From Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends, the Park City Museum also offers walking tours of Historic Main Street Monday-Friday at 2 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person.

MINER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

(Courtesy of Park City Museum)

Many a long winter's night was spent composing verse on the walls of a lonely miner's cabin or bunkhouse. One of the most common poems found was the Miner's Ten Commandments:

I. Thou shalt have no other claim but one.

II. Thou shalt not take unto thyself any false claims, nor shalt thou jump one.

III. Thou shalt not go prospecting again before thy claim gives out nor shalt thou take thy hard-earned dust to the gaming tables in vain for the more thou shalt put down, the less thou will take up.

IV. Thou shalt dig or pick only six days for on the seventh thou shalt washeth thy dirty clothes and darneth thy socks and choppeh the whole weeks wood.

V. Thou shalt not think more of the gold than thy father's blessings or thy mother's love.

VI. Thou shalt not kill thy body by working in the rain nor by getting stewed or three sheets to the wind from drinking down whiskey punches, rum toddies or brandy slings.

VII. Thou shalt not grow discouraged nor go home before thou strikes it rich lest in going home thou will work for fifty cents a day while thou might strike lead and make fifty dollars a day by staying.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal a pick or shovel nor take thy neighbor's tools nor borrow those he cannot spare and return them broken nor remove his stakes to enlarge thy own claim.

IX. Thou shalt not tell false tales about thy diggings in the hills nor salt thy claim to deceive thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife nor trifle with the affections of his daughter but if thou truly love and covet each other, thou shalt pop the question like a man.

A paved path now winds through neighborhood backyards, marking the route of the original Crescent Tramway that used to carry ore from the mines.

