USGS
science for a changing world

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Historic Trail Map of the Trinidad 1°×2° Quadrangle, Southern Colorado

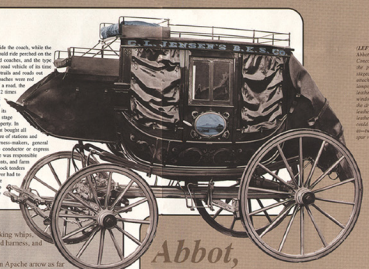
By Glenn R. Scott
2001

Geologic Investigations Series I-2748
Pamphlet accompanies map

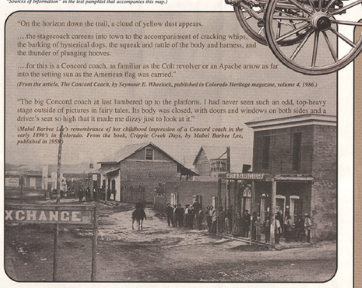
Prepared in cooperation with
The Denver Public Library
Western History and
Genealogy Department

The Concord Stagecoach

The Concord stagecoach had a capacity of 12–13 people—as many as nine passengers sat inside the coach, while the driver and several other passengers rode on top of the stage. For short distances 10-12 people could ride perched on the top of the stage, making for a total of over 20 people. There were various models of Concord coaches, and the type used in the Old West weighed about 2,500 pounds. It was considered by many to be the finest road vehicle of its time and the finest coach the world has ever known. Probably most of the coaches saw use on the trails and roads in the West. No two coaches had the same color scheme; however, the favorite colors used on the coaches were red for the body and yellow for the trim. Depending on the steepness, roughness, and condition of a road, the Concord could travel from 5–12 miles per hour. Under favorable conditions it could travel from 8–12 miles in 24 hours, and did it nearly every time in 4 minutes. The change took place when a pin-like device attached the team's harness to the wagon tongue was pulled, the old team was led away, a fresh team was hooked into place, and the pin was re-inserted, making the stage ready to continue its journey. The stage normally traveled 8–10 miles an hour. For each 200-250 miles of road, a stage company had a Division Agent or Division Superintendent who had charge of all company property. In addition to having charge of all the property belonging to the stage company, the Division Agent bought all the hay and grain. He looked after the stock, the scheduling of the stages, and checked on the care of stations and the performance of their keepers. He hired the drivers, stock tenders, blacksmiths, harness-makers, general superintendents, attorneys, paymaster, conductor, express messengers, and other employees. The conductor or express messenger rode on the stage and had complete charge of the passengers, mail, and baggage. He was responsible for the passengers' welfare, and he had to see that passengers were comfortable and that nothing was lost in shipment. He usually sat beside the driver and he carried a shotgun loaded and ready to use. Stock tenders cared for the teams and made sure the horses were ready when a stage pulled in. The stage driver had to be expert, fearless, sober, and reliable. Drivers were feared to make quick decisions about the horses, the roads, and the passengers. When the driver was in his box he was superior to everyone on the stage. *(Information from McCullough, 1998, and other references listed in the "Sources of Information" in the text pamphlet that accompanies this map.)*



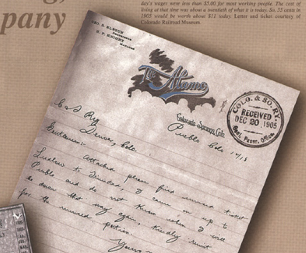
(LEFT) A brand new Concord stagecoach photographed at the factory of Abbot, Downing, and Company in Concord, New Hampshire. Most of the Concord coaches that were built saw service on the dusty trails throughout the prairie and mountains in the western United States. The new stagecoach some with adjustable leather iron curtains, leather boot attached to the back of the stage, top deck seat, hand-operated brakes, lamps, and finely hand-painted ornamental scales. In this view, the shiny leather side curtains are rolled down over the front and back side windows. The "Concord Boy," which consisted luggage, was kept under the back seat. Mail and baggage was carried in the front and rear boots and leather boot at the back of the stage. Inside, two passengers shared three leather-covered seats; one for them distinguish as many as 18-12 people could ride perched on top of the stage. The coach was beautiful to look at—two hand-rubbed coats of paint were applied, followed by two coats of spar varnish. Photographic unknown. Between 1890 and 1900. (CA1979)



Trinidad in 1907. Looking east on Main Street from Beech Street. The walls of some of the buildings are constructed of adobe brick. Photograph by O.E. Aultman. (X-1878)

Abbot, Downing, and Company

(BELOW) Unused passenger ticket for a round trip from Ludlow to Trinidad on the Colorado & Southern Railway and a letter from a customer requesting a $1-cent refund for the ticket. Fifty-five cents was a lot of money in those days, especially when you consider that an entire day's wages were less than $3.00 for most working people. The cost of living at that time was about a twentieth of what it is today. So, 55 cents in 1905 would be worth about $12 today. Letter and ticket courtesy of Colorado Railroad Museum.

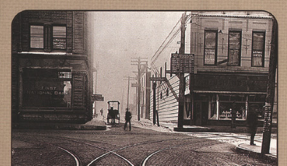


San Luis Valley Southern Railway 1L1.X.X. 80-ton steam engine number 106 crossing Rattlesnake Gulch near Blanca, Colorado, in the San Luis Valley. Photograph by Otto Perry, 1955. (OP-1F-24)

Trolleys in Trinidad

The Trinidad Street Railway was established in 1882 when horsecars began operating in town. By 1888 it had a mile and a half of track, two cars, and eight mules; for 1891 an additional mile and a half of track was in-use, six cars were running, and the mules had been replaced by 20 horses. The horsecar system was abandoned in 1908, and a new electrical system was installed. On April 28, 1904, the Trinidad Electric Railway & Gas Company opened with 5 miles of track and five city cars in town and 9 miles of interurban track with three interurban cars. Trolleys visited the county fairgrounds, East Main Street, a loop line by way of Baca, San Juan, Pine, and Adams Streets, and also a line west to Central Park. The interurban line extended east through the countryside to reach Starkville in the south and Sopris to the north. In 1908 the interurban line was extended to Colorado and southward and track was added to the line. In 1911, Forbes Light & Traction took over the company and the name then became Trinidad Electric Transmission Railway & Gas Company. By 1920 the Colorado & Southern Railway had purchased the company and the name changed to Trinidad Electric Transmission, Railway & Gas Company. In Memorial Day 1922 permission was received and in March the local lines were closed. However, the interurban continued for another year until September 15, 1923, when it was abandoned. Streetcar fare in town was five cents; interurban fare to the three coal camps was 15 cents. Two-way fare to the coal camps every hour. *(Information from Emry, 1963; Wilkie, 1974; Fletcher, 2002; Eau Fletcher, written communication, 1999; and other references listed in the "Sources of Information" in the text pamphlet that accompanies this map.)*

Brand new trolley car number 2 of the Trinidad Electric Transmission Railway & Gas Company. Electric trolley cars such as this one saw service on the lines that extend. From Trinidad to the nearby communities of Colorado, Sopris, Piedmont, and Starkville. Photograph by O.E. Aultman probably in 1904 or 1905, courtesy of Colorado Railroad Museum.



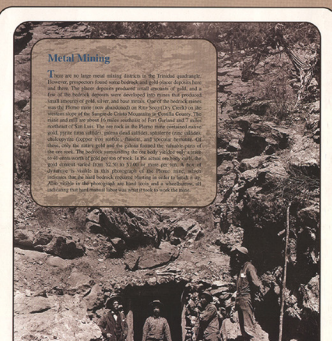
Trinidad Trolley System

(ABOVE) Trolley tracks at the intersection of Main and Commercial Streets in Trinidad, sometime between 1904 and 1922. Photograph by O.E. Aultman, courtesy of Colorado Railroad Museum.

(RIGHT) Electric trolley cars of the Trinidad Electric Transmission Railway & Gas Company. The car here for the trolley is visible in the open doorway and the car behind is visible in the window in the background. The number of trolley lines operated by the company during the 1904–1922 period varied from 3 to 14 miles of track between 1904 and 1922. courtesy of Colorado Railroad Museum. Photograph of trolley token courtesy of Colorado Railroad Museum.

Metal Mining

There are no large metal mining districts in the Trinidad quadrangle, although there are small districts in the Apishapa area, at Cuchara, and at Red Rock. The largest deposits produced small amounts of gold and silver. A few of the bedrock deposits were developed into mines that produced small amounts of gold, silver, and base metals. One of the bedrock deposits was the Flume mine (not abandoned on Rito Seco Dry Creek) in the northern slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in Huerfano County. The main and adit are about 1½ miles southeast of Fort Garland and 7 miles northeast of San Luis. The vein rock in the Flume mine contained native gold, pyrite (iron sulfide), native lead, galena, sphalerite (zinc sulfide), chalcopyrite (copper iron sulfide), pyrrhotite, and bismuth minerals. Also, only the native gold and the galena formed the valuable parts of the ore. The ore was mined from 1880 to 1881 and from 1900 to 1901. The gold-bearing ore contained 0.2 oz per ton of gold and 0.1 oz per ton of silver. The gold mined netted from $2.50 to $3.00 per ton. A 50-ton mill was built at the mine in 1881. A photograph of the Flume mine, taken sometime during the mid bedrock mining, showing in order to reach it, an ADIT, which is the photograph was hand hewn, and a windlass/hoist, indicating that hand-mined lode was mined enough to work the mine.

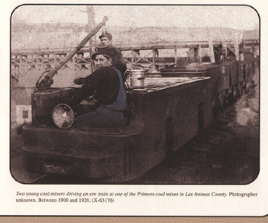


Four miners, one pushing a wheelbarrow full of dump rock, pose near the entrance to the Flume gold mine on Rito Seco Creek near San Luis in the San Luis Valley. A box of dynamite, hammer, shovel, and miner's pails are also visible. Photograph by G.T. Bacca, 1894. (X-4720)

Coal Mines

Coal mining in southern Colorado started about 1864. However, very limited amounts of coal were mined as early as 1861, when the first wagon load was shipped out by Kenney Greene and others, 1996). The earliest miners were at Starkville and Sopris (just west Trinidad and the Walsen, Berwind, and Cameron areas near Weehawken). Between 1887 and 1951 new mines were opened at Sopris, Berwind, Rouse, Hastings, Sunts Creek, Forbes Canyon, Primero, Pinchon, and Broadhead. Branch lines and spurs of the Colorado and Southern and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroads were built to the new mines. The coal deposits along the Purgatoire River were made accessible by the Colorado and Wyoming Railroad, and mines were then opened at Primero, Burns, and other sites. The northern part of the coal field was opened by the extension of the Walsenburg-Pryor branch of the D. & R.G. to Stonia, Engle, Primo, Sunnyside, and other mines. Kirkpatrick (1918, p. 437) considered the mining conditions in the Trinidad quadrangle to be quite favorable. The climate was equable, the water supply was ample, and the coal was easily mined. Timber was locally available and easily worked. However, over the years since Kirkpatrick wrote about the coal industry, other developments have occurred. Strip mining has replaced underground coal has become much larger than it was the past. Many of the small mines that produced coal mined many of the mines to close down. As a result, all of the coal mines in the Trinidad and Walsenburg fields are now closed. The last mine to close was the Colodro Eagle mine (formerly the Maxwell mine) which opened in 1976, but closed on Friday, April 30, 1998. It formerly was owned and operated by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation.

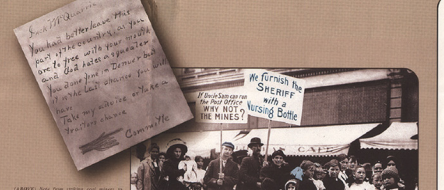
Coal deposits crop out from the breakaways area of the Purgatoire River eastward to Trinidad, then northwestward past Wahsenburg. The majority of the old mines are along this trend. Most of the coal mines had small settlements associated with them. These settlements were connected to each other by roads, and many were connected by railroads, which facilitated hauling coal to market. The communities had stores/saloons, sanitary facilities, electric lights, and other amenities of that time. In addition, each community had churches, schools, and clubhouses. Some of these communities are still active and have post offices and schools. *(Information from references listed in the "Sources of Information" in the text pamphlet that accompanies this map.)*



Two young coal miners driving an ore train at one of the Primero coal mines in Las Animas County. Photographer unknown. Between 1906 and 1920. (X-4170)

The Ludlow Massacre

In 1913, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) attempted to organize the coal miners of John D. Rockefeller's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I). Rockefeller was opposed to unions, and the CF&I management action to shut coal fields. The workers in the Ratos Rosa coal field were an ethnically diverse group which had been galvanized by the murder of a labor organizer. They overcame barriers of language and culture and voted to strike together. Their demands included recognition of their unions, a ten percent increase in wages, enforcement of the Colorado eight-hour law, health and safety regulations; and the right to select their own living quarters, eating houses, and doctors. The strike was called for September 23, 1913, after none openers had refused their demands. Throughout the winter of 1913 and the spring of 1914 striking miners and their families, union officials, organizers, and sympathizers stayed near the mines and were evicted from company housing and forced to live in tent colonies. The mine-supported colony worked off rollbreakers and the armed security of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. At the request of county officials of Las Animas and Huerfano Counties, Colorado Governor Elias M. Ammons sent units of the Colorado National Guard to the Ludlow area and declared martial law. A military camp was established, and despite the appearance of the National Guard, the miners refused to give up their demands. On the morning of April 20, 1914, guards began firing on the people in the tent village. Five miners and one militiaman were killed and tents were burned. Later it was discovered that a steel dugout was burned that fourteen women and 11 children who apparently died of suffocation. The Ludlow Massacre touched off a bloody guerrilla war between the miners and managers of the C.F. and I. Corporation The Ludlow massacre was followed by about 10 days of hostages, dynamitings, and murders throughout the coal fields. Finally, Governor Ammons appealed to President Woodrow Wilson for intervention by the United States Army. By April 30, 1914, the Army arrived and replaced the National Guard. Negotiations finally were completed that ended the strike in December 1914. The goals of the miners finally were realized in improved conditions of work, better hours, and higher pay. *(Information from references listed in the "Sources of Information" in the text pamphlet that accompanies this map.)*

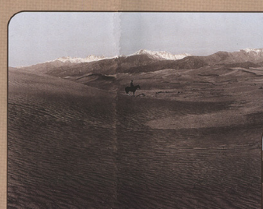


(ABOVE) Note from striking coal miners to Undersheriff Jack McQuarrie in Walsenburg during the Ludlow coalstrike strike. Note written in 1913 or 1914. (X-20375)

(RIGHT) A protest march of men, women, and children in Trinidad in 1913 or 1914 in support of striking United Mine Workers coal miners during the strike against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation. Photographer unknown. (X-6043)

Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve

The towering dunes occupy about 40 square miles of the eastern part of the San Luis Valley, Colorado, at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The western edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains between Mosca Pass and Music Pass. The first sand in the dunes has been piled up face maximum depth of over 700 feet, making them the tallest sand dunes in North America. The major source of the sand is the boreal alluvial fan deposited by the Rio Grande, which brings sediment out of the San Juan Mountains and deposits it in the San Luis Valley. Prevailing westerly winds pick up sand from the alluvial fan, but are unable to lift the sand over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, so it is deposited in the great dunes at the foot of the range. Johnson (1967) described some different types of dunes that resulted from different processes that operated to different places within the dune field. Over time, the apparent net movement of the dunes has been very slow to the northeast. Deposition of sand in the dunes started about 13,000 years ago and continues today. *(Information from Johnson, 1967.)*



(ABOVE) Horseback riders among the giant sand dunes that are now part of Great Sand Dunes National Monument, which was established in 1932 by. I-william Herbert Pioneer High peaks of the Sangre De Cristo Mountains are in the background. Photograph by UL. Bell, Jr. between 1937 and 1920. (CH-1956)

(RIGHT) View of the great sand dunes and Sierra de los Cristo Mountains in 1950 before establishment of Great Sand Dunes National Monument. (U.S. Geologic) Survey Photographic Library, C.E. Sutherland-57.)

Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve

Mexican Land Grants

The Mexican government in the 1830's was concerned about threats from Texas to acquire the land between the Arkansas River and the Rio Grande, so they began to consider filling up that region with settlers. They also were interested in protecting their northern border along the Arkansas River, so they authorized part of New Mexico to establish colonies and grants in those northern areas. They awarded grants of land to petitioners who would bring additional settlement to the lands. At one time or another, parts or all of the present-day counties in the southeastern Colorado counties of Alamosa, Archuleta, Bent, Conejos, Costilla, Huerfano, Las Animas, Otero, Pueblo, Rio Grande, and Saguache were involved in the land grants. The people from Mexico City to Santa Fe to Abiquiu to Taos and Rayado