

Way We Were
August 14, 2013
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The Photographic Exploits of Dick Steinheimer: Part Two

This is the second in a series of articles on Dick Steinheimer's visit to Park City in February of 1953. The first article featured the Silver King Coalition Mine tippie, while this article discusses the economic conditions of Park City and the aerial tramway (tram) that served the tippie.

When Dick took this photograph he was looking across Park Avenue standing by today's Caledonian Condos. From the shadows we can determine that it was mid-morning on a beautiful sunny day.

Before construction of the tram, horses and wagons transported ore down the Mine Road. This was expensive, time consuming, and dangerous. Construction of the gravity-operated tram took place in 1901, and featured state of the art technology for the time. The opening of the tram dramatically improved the mine's operating efficiencies, and for 51 years it carried ore down from the mines. However, in 1971 the cables and ore buckets were dismantled.

Originally there were close to 40 towers, but today only 32 remain standing in their original location. The best way to view the remaining towers is to hike Park City Mountain Resort's "Sweeney Switchback Trail," or to take the town lift to the Silver King Mine and hike down. You'll need to look closely as many of the towers are overgrown with trees and brush. You may already recognize that the houses on the right hand side of the picture no longer exist. When the Park City Ski Area cut the Town Lift Run they offered the homes for free to anyone willing to relocate them.

While it's obviously a sunny day, Dick's photo reveals dark times for Park City. Notice the rundown condition of the buildings and the inoperative tram. Labor troubles had interrupted mine production, and Park City had been declared a "ghost town." According to Editor Colleen Whitley, "Though local residents had no way of knowing it, after August 1952 the Silver King aerial tramway would never deliver another bucket of ore to the turn-of-the-century tippie on Park Avenue." Difficult times indeed.

If you are interested in the availability of Dick's prints please email Shirley Burman at railwomen@earthlink.net.



Caption: Looking up towards the Silver King aerial tramway, today the Town Lift Ski Run is located here.

Credit: Richard Steinheimer, S. Burman Collection.