

Way We Were
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Past, Present, and Future
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In this final piece of our series covering the history of Deer Valley, we'll see an overview of its six distinct areas – Smith's Field, Deer Valley Meadow, Deer Valley, Park Con, Frog Valley, and Snow Park – each used for distinct industrial and recreational purposes. Climb aboard the cab of this ore train heading north toward town from the Park City Consolidated Mine loading station sometime in the 1930s. Ignite your imagination as the engineer takes us on the two mile journey while he reminisces.

Our timeworn guide explains that he's been working the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad's Salt Lake to Park City line since 1900, when the Deer Valley spur to the Ontario and Judge loading stations was completed. Tracks first reached the western end of Deer Valley in 1916 when rails were extended to serve the Judge Mining Company's zinc plant at Smith's Field, today's Deer Valley Plaza. The zinc plant was dismantled in 1929 and the property converted to a series of ball fields. Summer softball leagues are very popular with games played most nights and weekends. The engineer remembers the area before the ball fields and zinc plant when George Smith, Sr. operated a feedlot and slaughterhouse. A section of the spur serving the Ontario and Judge loading stations was adjacent to Smith's property.

Rails to the eastern edge of Deer Valley were completed in 1930 to serve the Park City Consolidated Mine, or Park Con, known locally as the area's "hard luck" mine. It operated from 1929 to 1942. In this picture, you can see the spur curving around Deer Valley Meadow in front and to the left of the engine. The roadbed became the foundation for today's Deer Valley Drive. Around the curve directly in front of us (and out of sight in the photo) is Deer Valley - site of the Queen Esther Mine. Our driver explains that the Queen Esther only ever produced heartache for its investors and closed in 1934. The local American Legion Hall repurposed this area to build a rifle range.

Across the tracks from the Park Con is Frog Valley, a marshy area known for its abundant population of frogs and secluded springs. While the gondolas this train is pulling were loaded with ore at the station, the engineer and fireman took a break, enjoying a refreshing drink of water.

Directly south of Frog Valley and just beyond the end of the Deer Valley spur is Snow Park. On this hot summer day the engineer fondly recalls the winter excursions held here. His train brings patrons from Salt Lake to Park City's Winter Carnival. These events, co-hosted by the cities' Chambers of Commerce are popular, with upwards of 600 tickets sold. The train requires two engines to transport the revelers.

We arrive at the Silver King Coalition terminal building, bid our farewells and express our appreciation for the tour. The engineer prepares his train for the journey down Parley's and we walk to the Oak Saloon for a cold one.



Photo ID: 1990.36.5

Credit: Park City Historical Society and Museum, Park Con Mining Company Collection

Caption: The ore train leaves the Park City Consolidated Mine Company, pulling its loaded gondolas first to Park City then to a smelter in Midvale.