



*The Life of a Park City Miner & His Family Script*  
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**Note to Teachers:** This script was designed to read to your students. Feel free to modify as needed based on your students grade level and needs.

**Page 1 Introduction**

Today we are going to talk about mining in Park City. Mining started in the late 1860's and went through the 1930's when it started to decline because silver prices dropped so dramatically. In the 1950's Park City was becoming a ghost town (where there are no people living there because jobs don't exist and money is not being brought into the town to help it survive) and by the 1960's the mine companies were looking towards skiing and setting up the first ski resort. What people see today is a resort area with skiing and snowboarding in the winter and hiking and biking in the summer. But, what some people don't know is that Park City wouldn't be where it is today if it didn't start out as a silver mining town.

**Page 2 Where did miners come from?**

Miners came from all over the world to work in Park City. Some of the countries included: England, Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Mexico, Italy, Germany, and others. The miners came by boat to the United States and then came to Utah by wagon or train depending on what was available at the time. Some came with families, some left families behind and joined them later when miners were settled, and some were single when they left their countries. Mining was not an easy job, so due to the attitudes of the time, miners in the late 1800's and early 1900's were all men. The women were responsible for the taking care of the home, children, cooking, cleaning, and washing.

### Page 3 What were miners looking for in the mines?

Miners were looking for a rock called galena which is a mixture of lead and silver with additional metals sometimes including iron, copper, and zinc. Ore is a mineral that is available to transform into a metal.

Page 4 Graph This is a graph of what came out of the mines. (The gray area not listed is just regular rock).

### Page 5 What did the miners do in the mines?

Each miner was trained to do a particular job in the mine. All the jobs together made the mine work effectively. Some of the best known jobs in the mine were:

- Assayers - Miners who determined the value of the ore samples.
- Drillers- Miners who made holes in rock for dynamite.
- Hoistmen -Miners who operated the cage (elevator in a shaft) and worked in the room that housed the elevator machinery.
- Muckers- Miners who shoveled ore into the ore cars.
- Powder monkeys- Miners who prepared the dynamite.
- Timbermen- Miners who used timber (wood) to build supports to hold up the shafts (vertical tunnels) and drifts (horizontal tunnels).

Also, there were different parts of the mine including the **drifts** (tunnels), **stopes** (underground “rooms” the miners dug while taking out ore), **cage** (elevator), **doghouse** (breakroom), **hoistroom**, **shaft** (where the elevator would come up and down), **boarding house** (where miners who were single and didn’t have families would live), **change room** (where the miners changed before and after work and showered after work,) and **aerial tramway** (overhead transportation for ore from the mines).

There were also objects used in the mines:

- Ore car- A small railcar used to transport ore.
- Quadricycle- A bike with four wheels that traveled on rail tracks used by the managers to make sure the miners were working hard in the mines.

- Jackleg drill- A large, heavy drill powered by compressed air that drillers used to make holes for dynamite. The drills also had a hose attached to shoot water into the hole as it was being drilled to keep the air from getting dusty.
- Carbide Lamp- A lamp that miners could carry or attach to their helmets. Powered by a combination of calcium carbide (found in the mines) and water which could be ignited by a match.

### **Page 6 Miners working**

In the picture to the left, you can see the miners working in the mine. A couple of the men have pick axes. You can see a **sticking tommy** which is a fancy word for candle in a stick (see next picture too for clarification). Remember that there was no electricity in the mines so the miners were working in the dark. The candle helped give them a bit of light and so did the **carbide lamps** (picture to the right) that went on their helmets (see next picture for clarification). The carbide lamp was a gas lamp. They would put the chemical carbide in the lamp and mix it with water. A flame would come out of the lamp to give them light. The picture to the right also has a driller using a drill to make holes in the wall for dynamite. The dynamite helped the miners blast the rock into pieces to get through the rock quicker.

### **Page 7 Carbide lamp and sticking tommy up close**

These are pictures of a carbide lamp which goes on a helmet and a sticking tommy without the candle.

### **Page 8 What did miners wear?**

Miners wore a yellow slicker jacket, like a rain jacket, to keep them from getting wet in the mines. There was a lot of water in the drifts and so the jacket kept them from getting chilled. They also wore a helmet. Why do you think they wore a helmet (answer: to protect their heads from falling rocks). Miners brought a lunchbox to work as they did not leave the mine during the day or during their shift.

## Page 9 Miners and animals

Miners used donkeys and mules to pull the ore cars through the mine. Horses and donkeys lived in the mine in stables and were treated as pets by the miners. If the horses and mules were to go outside again, they would blindfold the animals to protect them from the light. Most lived the remainder of their lives underground. Also, cats would be in the mines to eat the mice and rats. Canaries (a type of bird kept in a cage and carried by a miner) were used to make sure there was enough oxygen in the mine. If the canary tweeted and seemed fine, the miners knew they could go into the mine that day. If the canary seemed upset or distressed, usually by tweeting a lot, the miners knew they could not go into the mine and they may have to make more vents to get more air into the mines.

## Page 10 Where did miners and their families live?

The house on the right is one of the boarding houses that miners used to live in when they didn't have families with them. Other miners built "miners' shacks" as temporary homes because many of the miners did not think they were going to stay. They built a shack to survive while they were here, make their money, and go back to their home countries. Unfortunately, that didn't usually work out and most of the miners lived here permanently. Some moved to other nearby states. But, some of the houses still survive today and have been added on to and have been renovated into beautiful homes. Next time you are on some of our historic streets (Main Street, Park Avenue, Woodside Avenue, Swede Alley, etc.) check out some of the houses. If you see a ribbon on them, it means they are historic and the Park City Museum has acknowledged that they have done a good job preserving the original part over the course of time.

## Page 11 Where did miners and their families shop?

Miners shopped for some of their supplies and food at mercantile shops also known as general stores. (***Mercantile means "of or relating to the business of buying and selling products to earn money."***) One of the shops was Smith and Brim. It would be where the current North Face Shop is on Main Street right

across from the Park City Museum. They could buy canned goods such as vegetables or fruits, coffee, tea, sugar, meats, and other supplies there. If they couldn't pay for their food that week, the owner would write the miner's name on a list with the payment he owed. Then the miner would come back and pay after he got his paycheck. Remember, there were no credit cards back then so this was an early form of using credit to pay for something.

### **Page 12 Where did the miners' children go to school?**

There have been quite a few schools built in Park City to accommodate all the children who have lived here. Just to talk about a few from top left and going clockwise:

Ontario School was Park City's first school built in 1875 by the Ontario Mine Company. It was a one room school building that served miner's children for many years. It is no longer in existence.

Lincoln School was built in 1896 of red brick and stood at 1031 Norfolk Avenue. Park City elementary grades were on the first floor and the high schoolers were on the second floor. The foundation cracked and the students were moved into a new school called the Marsac School which is the City Hall building today. The school was demolished.

The Jefferson School was built as a three room school in 1887 on Park Avenue where Treasure Mountain Inn is located today. The City put on an addition to the school in 1891 and added a bell tower, ten classrooms, cloakrooms, and modern heat and plumbing. This school was also torn down and the students went to the new Marsac School.

Washington School was built in 1889 by R. Hobbs. It had three classrooms all which had sixteen-foot ceilings. Each room was outfitted with a wood-burning stove. The school bell rang every morning at 8 a.m. sharp, and sometimes students-as a reward for good behavior-were allowed to ring the bell. In 1910, the building was remodeled with a large stairway leading to the attic where an office, additional classrooms and indoor plumbing were installed. The small wood-burning stoves were replaced with a coal-burning furnace and boiler to provide

central heating. Classes were held in the school until the large Marsac School was completed, centralizing the Lincoln, the Jefferson and the Washington schools. Due to a lack of enrollment, the school was listed for sale in 1931 and in 1936 was sold to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for use as a meeting and dance hall. During the 1950s, it was abandoned, as so many other homes and buildings in town. However in 1985, the old School reopened as the Washington School Inn, a beautiful bed and breakfast. Today, the Inn is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Page 13 What about the Miners Hospital?**

The Miners Hospital was created to take care of miners as they became ill or had accidents in the mines. It was funded by the miners and their union (\$1 per paycheck was given to the hospital) to be there for them when they needed medical help. The nearest hospital was in Salt Lake City and the miners wanted something closer especially in the winter. The union began to raise funds in 1903 and land was donated by Eliza Nelson to build the hospital. Miners Hospital was located near Thaynes Canyon and the Park City Mountain Resort. It operated as a hospital for thirty years under the miners' union and then another thirty as a private medical clinic. In the late 1960's and through the 1970's it served as a restaurant, skier dorms, and a hostel.

In the late 1970's the building was to be torn down and the land made into a condominium unit, hotel, and conference center. Local Parkites were upset and rallied together to save the hospital. The Hospital was moved to City Park where it still sits today. The Hospital was renovated in 1981 and became the Park City Library in 1982. It was the Park City Library for many years. The building is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

### **Page 14 What did miners and their families do for fun?**

The miners who came from Scandinavian counties loved to ski and Park City has always had plenty of snow. Many of the miners and their families learned how to ski as it was something to do in the winter. Ski jumping was especially popular. Kids would sled down hills, make snowmen, and have a good time in the snow.

There would be a lot of dances that people would attend as it was a way to meet people and socialize.

### **Page 15 What was China Bridge?**

There was a lot of discrimination against the Chinese immigrants who came to work in America. Many felt the Chinese were taking jobs away from American men. The mines would not let the Chinese work in them. Most of the jobs the Chinese took were not jobs that others wanted including working on the Transcontinental Railroad, in laundries, or as cooks in local businesses. China Bridge was a staircase bridge that led from the top of Rossi Hill (behind Marsac Avenue) over China Town and to Swede Alley. The people on Rossi Hill didn't want to walk through China Town so they walked over it, which is why the bridge was built. Most of China Town was burned down during the Great Fire of 1898 and most of the Chinese Parkites chose not to stay in Park City. China Town and the bridge were located where the China Bridge Parking Garage is located today, hence the name of the garage.

### **Page 16 What about the Great Fire of 1898?**

The Great Fire of 1898 started at 4 a.m. in June 19, 1898 at the American Hotel located on Main Street (a few doors up from where the Egyptian Theater is located today). The fire quickly spread because of the wind conditions and because almost all of the buildings were made of wood. Because people used to live upstairs and work downstairs in the building, the people started to put all of their belongings in the middle of Main Street to save them from the quickly spreading fire. Unfortunately, the wind changed directions and the fire spread from the one side of Main Street, to all of the belongings in the middle of Main Street, to the other side of Main Street and wiped out most of Main Street. Park Avenue, Swede Alley, and some other streets close to Main Street were affected too. Many people lost both their businesses and homes. Should they rebuild and start over again or should they pack up and move on was a question that the Parkites had to consider at the time. Most decided to stay and it took the City eighteen months to get some of the buildings rebuilt and the City up and running again. It was a long and hard time for many people. Without donations from

companies and people in Utah and beyond, the City would not be where it is today.

People always ask us at the Park City Museum how the fire started, did anyone die, and where was the fire department that morning of the fire. These are very good questions to ask. We don't exactly know how the fire started. They did not do fire investigations like they do today after a fire occurs. We do know the chef ran out of the building screaming that there was a fire in the building and trying to wake people up as it was 4 o'clock in the morning. One assumption from this is that the fire started in the kitchen. Also, the building was a hotel and there was no electricity at the time. Many guests would have used candles which could have been the cause of the fire. Either way, we do know it started in the Hotel and that the Great Fire (meaning big fire with much damage) is part of our history. Many of the buildings were rebuilt using brick or stone to ward off any future fires. As for deaths, luckily, no one died in the fire. Between gunshots being fired off to wake people up, bells ringing, the alarms from the mines going off, the people woke up and got to safety. The fire basically was out of control. The fire department had trouble with the hoses and the water pressure that morning and wasn't able to do too much. They asked Salt Lake City for help, but it took about 4 hours to get to Park City from Salt Lake City back then, as they used horses and wagons (remember this was a time in our history where cars were not invented yet) and by time they got here, the fire had already done the damage.

### **Page 17 Park City Then and Now**

Park City has come a long way since its mining days. Many of the homes near Main Street and the buildings on Main Street are historic because they have been in town for a hundred years or more. There are quite a few mining relics, buildings, and pieces all over town especially where the resorts are located today. When you go skiing, you might see a few. Some of the buildings in town have been adaptively reused (made into something different than it originally was intended). For example, the library today was once the old high school. The City Hall building used to be Marsac School. The Park City Museum used to be the old



City Hall, Library, Police Department, Jail, and Fire Department. Today each of these groups has their own building because Park City has expanded or become so much bigger over the years that they each needed more room. When you visit the Main Street area, look at the buildings because each one has a story. Come and visit us at the Park City Museum to learn more about Park City's history!