

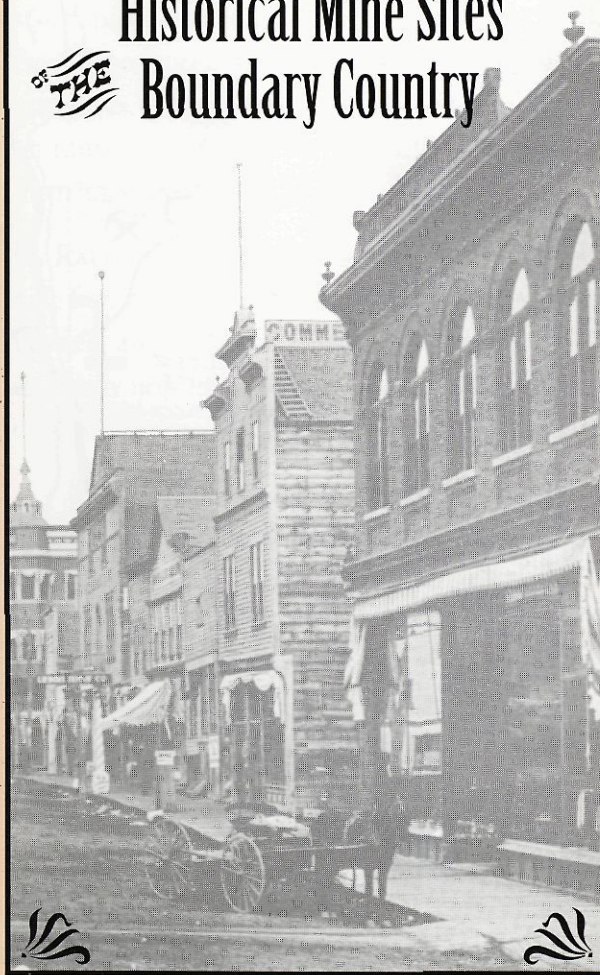
**In 1846**, the Oregon Treaty established the 49th Parallel as the International Boundary. Early surveys located it but the line did not interfere with local commerce or the flow of people. Trails from Fort Colville, in eastern Washington, travelled north and west along the Kettle River which provided a natural route into the Okanagan. The Kettle Valley was also valued for its hunting, fishing and fine grazing land. The area became known as the Boundary country, or more simply, the Boundary.

Early mining in the Boundary was part of the progression of events that took place to the south and east. The California gold rush of 1849 brought hundreds of miners westward and prospectors eventually came north. In 1859 placer gold was discovered on Rock Creek, a tributary of the Kettle River, and in the first six months of 1860, \$83 000 in gold was recovered. The search for mineral wealth in the Boundary had begun!

In 1884 the first hard rock claim was staked near Boundary Falls. Gold and silver were produced from it, and others in 1892, and by then the value of the big copper deposits of the district was recognized. Two of these were staked in 1891 and became major mines, one at Phoenix and the other near Deadwood. During this time more than a dozen camps had been established within 15 kilometres of a point on Boundary Creek that was to become the City of Greenwood.

# HISTORY STILL STANDING

A Guide to  
Historical Mine Sites  
of THE Boundary Country

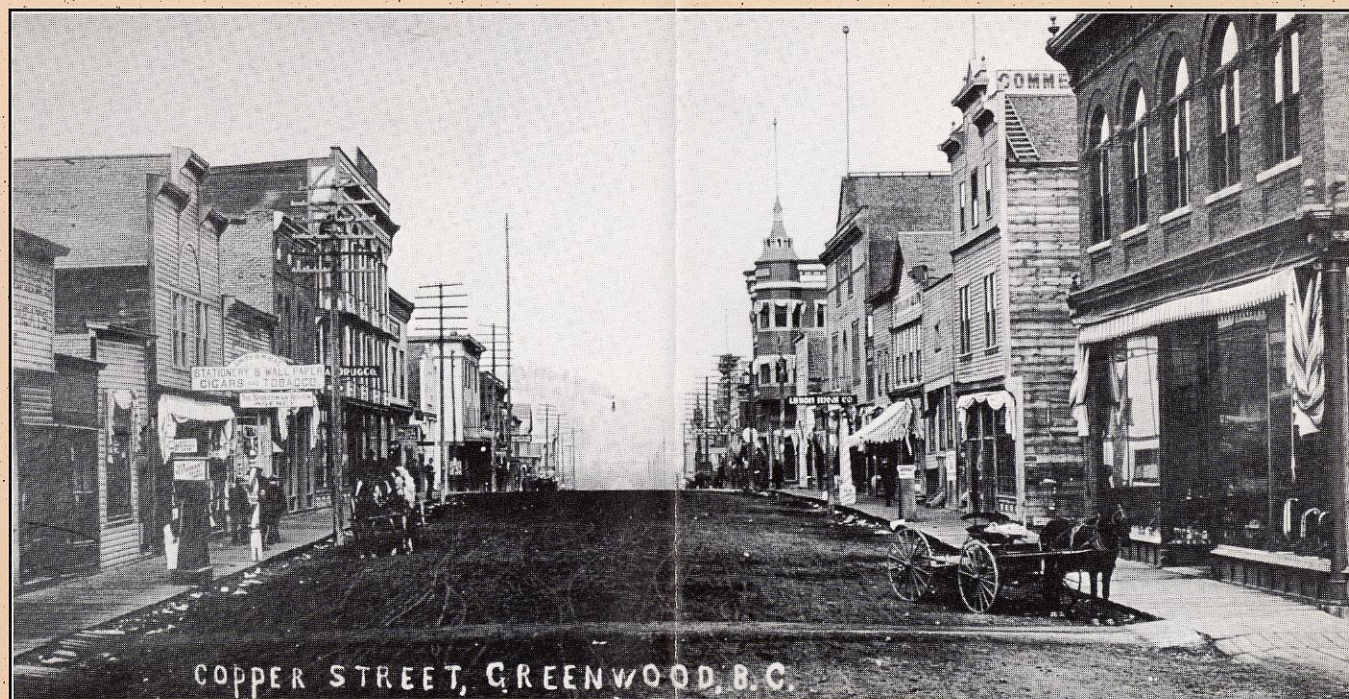


**GREENWOOD** came into existence in 1895 when Robert Wood recognized the potential for a town site that was within easy travelling distance of the many mining camps. He paid \$5000 for 81 hectares at the junction of Boundary and Twin Creeks and the building started. Houses, hotels, livery stables, a blacksmith shop, a general store, hospital and school sprang up from the undergrowth. The "Hub of the Boundary" grew quickly into a bustling mining town. In 1897 Greenwood was incorporated as a city, a status retained to this day. By 1899, the population numbered 3000, having doubled in six months. Three banks, sixteen hotels, fifteen general stores, three printing offices, four doctors, six legal firms and many other thriving businesses were located in the city. Streets, sidewalks, water lines, electric lights, telephones and telegraphs had been

installed or were planned. It was written that, "Such an era of prosperity will dawn upon Greenwood as has never yet lighted any city situated in the districts of western America."

Deposits of copper were the main reason for this prosperity. Stimulated by the success of mining in the western United States and by the demand for electric wire, rail lines from the east were built which made it possible to develop the deposits. The Columbia and Western, built by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), reached Greenwood in August 1899. At the same time the B.C. Copper Company built a smelter near the southwest corner of the town site to process ore from the Mother Lode mine four kilometres to the west.

The city and the smelter prospered together through the first decade of the century. But, during World War I



*Copper Street in Greenwood at the turn of the century. Many of these classic buildings still exist in Greenwood today. Now restored, they retain the image of their history.*

they struggled to keep alive. A shortage of ore and the uncertain price and demand for copper after the War, finally brought operations to an end in 1918. The city declined rapidly.

For the next two decades the city survived with persistent individuals finding, in the nearby hills, small pockets of ore that they could mine at a profit. Others turned to logging and millwork. In 1942 new life came to the city when about 1200 Japanese Canadians were evacuated from the coast and interned in the old buildings of the city, many of which were vacant.

Mining of copper resumed after World War II and again brought prosperity to the city. Today, even those mines have closed and the economy depends mainly on logging. Relics of the prosperous early years can be seen all around the city.

**PHOENIX** was built on a mountain of copper. Incorporated in 1900 as a city, Phoenix was very cosmopolitan, providing the finest in accommodations and services. At an elevation of 1400 metres, it was the highest city in Canada, and for a time the largest producer of copper ore.

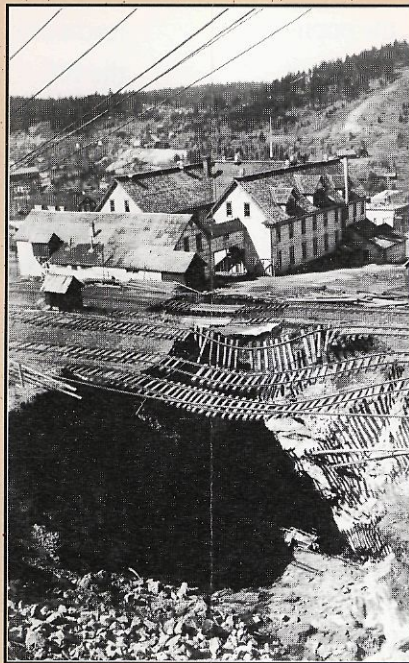
In the summer of 1891, essentially all the key claims at Phoenix were staked by pioneer prospectors Matthew Hotter, Henry White, Joseph Taylor, and Robert Denzler. These men, and others, struggled for the next few years to explore and promote their

claims. In 1896 J.P. Graves of Spokane, Washington and S.H. Miner of Granby, Quebec formed a syndicate to develop and mine the Old Ironsides and Knob Hill orebody. This syndicate, with influxes of capital from New York, soon became the Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, and began one of the great mining enterprises of British Columbia.

The company built a smelter at Grand Forks that, in 1900, was connected to the mines at Phoenix by a branch of the CPR. The first ore was shipped in July of that year and the smelter was "blown in" on August 21. By 1905 more than 1 995 800 tonnes of ore had been shipped and the Granby smelter became the largest copper smelter in the British Empire and the second largest in the world.

By 1910 most of the orebodies at Phoenix were under the control of the Granby Company. However some remained in the hands of the B.C. Copper Company and the New Dominion Copper Company which shipped ore to their smelters at Greenwood and Boundary Falls.

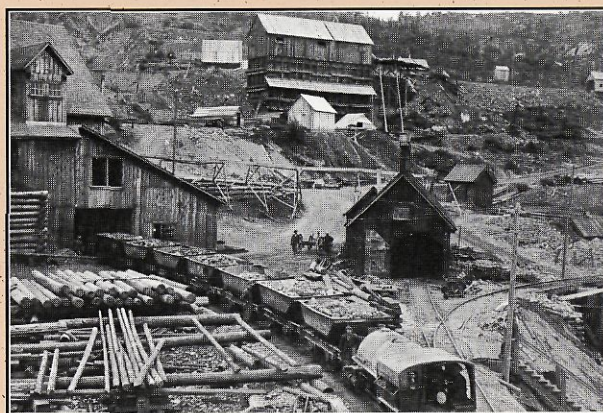
By 1911 about 4000 people lived in Phoenix. They had a fine hospital, tennis courts, moving pictures, a brewery and seventeen saloons that stayed open day and night. There was skating, curling, hockey and skiing. The first professional hockey in British Columbia was played in Phoenix!



BCARS-HP63752

The Granby Company closed the mines and the smelter in June of 1919 because the orebodies appeared to have been depleted, supplies of coke from Fernie were cut off due to a strike, and the price and demand for copper were uncertain. The railways curtailed service and the residents quickly moved away leaving the buildings and many of their possessions. By 1920 Phoenix was a ghost town.

Relatively little mining was done at Phoenix for the next three decades. In 1955 the Granby Company returned and developed an open pit mine that, between then and 1978, grew to encompass not only the old mining areas but all the town site of Phoenix. A cenotaph, erected to the fallen soldiers of World War I, was removed from the mining area, and it, together with the old cemetery, are all that remain from the pioneer mining era.

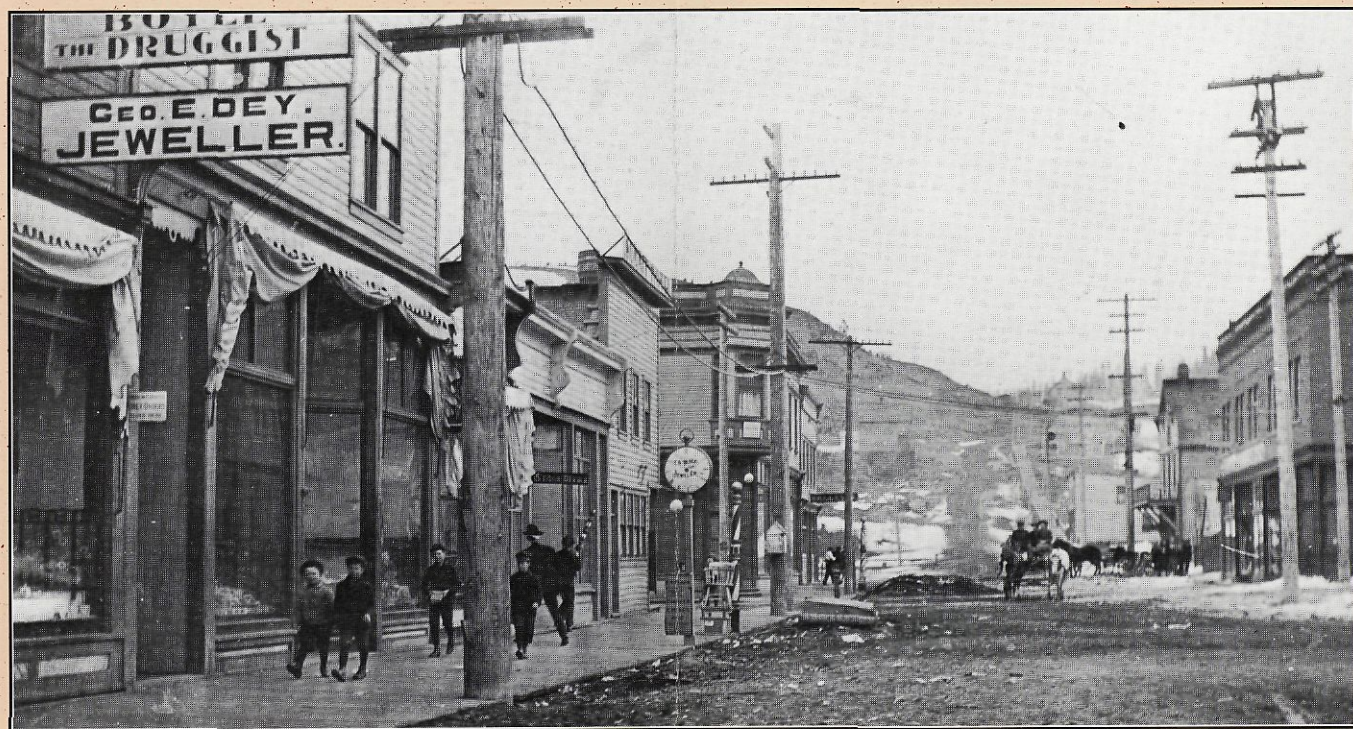


BCARS HP63750

*(Far left) Some mine workings were under the city of Phoenix causing occasional cave-ins. The one shown here occurred in 1919.*

*(Above) A view of a loaded ore train on a busy day at the Old Ironsides mine at Phoenix.*

*(Below) A view of the main street of Phoenix in 1909.*



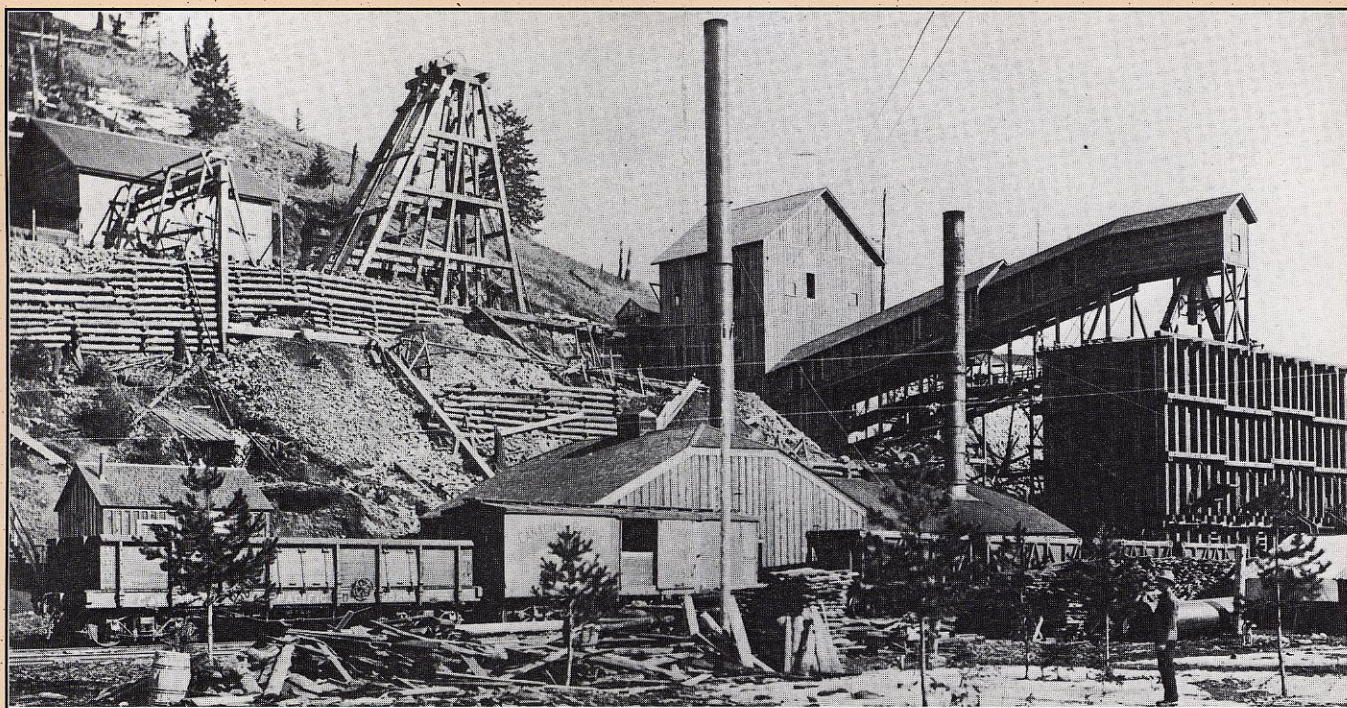
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**MOTHER LODE** was discovered in the spring of 1891 about four kilometres west of Greenwood. Two prospectors were so intrigued by “a big copper stained blowout, standing out prominently and distinctly noticeable from all of the surrounding thinly timbered hill” that they decided to investigate further. A newspaper of the time reported that the lode stood out for 300 metres along the hill and rose to a height of 90 metres. On May 28, 1891 the Mother Lode (named for its size) was staked. Very little work was done on the claim until the summer of 1896, when the property was sold to Col. John Weir for \$14 000. The Boundary Mines Company of New York was subsequently organized and a mining engineer was hired to develop the mine.

By this time the Mother Lode and other mines in the area had started to attract a great deal of attention.

Even though the City of Greenwood was only a few kilometres away, partners Colin Scott McRae and Donald McLaren saw an opportunity for a new town site near the Mother Lode. Together they preempted a 259-hectare parcel of land and in 1899 the new town of Deadwood was developed. By the first week of February 1900, 45 lots were sold for up to \$150 each. Despite this initial enthusiasm Deadwood never amounted to much, with the population reaching less than 100. The majority of the miners and their families lived at the Mother Lode mine site, which was home for about 400 people.

The ore was mined underground at the Mother Lode on levels with pillars to hold up the rock overhead. Surface ore was taken from six quarries forming an enormous “glory hole.” By the end of 1905, 752 431 tonnes of ore were shipped to the smelter. In 1909, even with a four-month stoppage due to a coal miners’

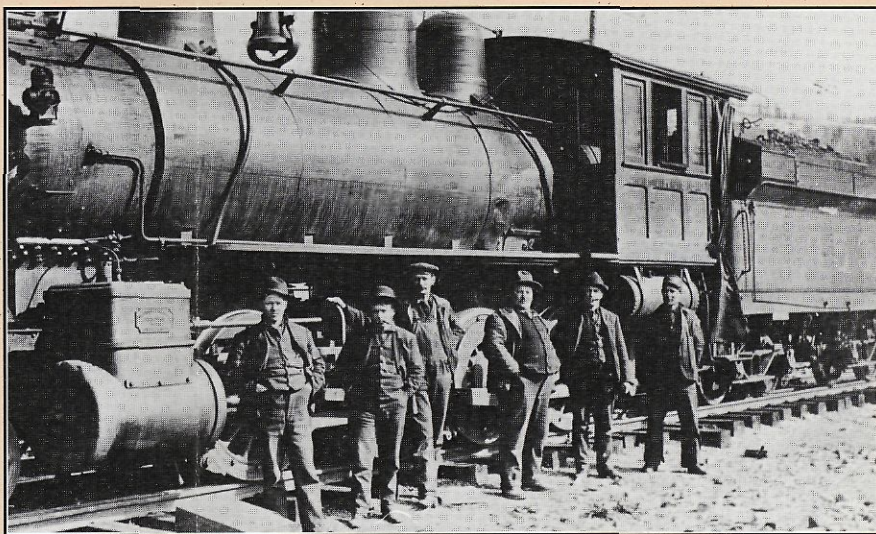


strike, the mine set a record of 349 272 tonnes. The Mother Lode continued to be worthy of its name!

Then in August 1913 a blast, which was claimed to be the largest in mining history, was set off at the Mother Lode. In all, 4834 holes of an average depth of 4.5 metres were driven and filled with explosives. The blast required 22 475 kilograms of 40 percent, anti-freezing powder to charge the holes. The holes were then wired in series of forty to a group, using 26 532 metres of electric wire. To prevent any possibility of accident, everybody was taken off the hill and three safety-switches were placed in the circuit, all of which had to be connected before the spark could pass. Approximately 39 000 tonnes of ore were broken but this momentous event also sounded the death knell of the mine. The already low grade ore was further diluted with waste and the mine became hazardous and expensive to work. The rim of the “glory

hole” collapsed, sealing many of the chutes through which ore was removed.

Today the Deadwood and Mother Lode sites have been reclaimed by nature. On the drive to the Mother Lode a visitor will go by the field that marks the remains of the Deadwood town site. At the end of the road is the enormous “glory hole.” Please stay on the road to view it, as the open pits are privately owned and very dangerous.



GM P0047



GM P0498

*(Far left) B.C. Copper Company's Mother Lode mine site around the year 1903.*

*(Above) Train engine #353 at the Mother Lode mine. The only identifiable man is Martin Anderson, standing fourth from the left.*

*(Below) Colin Scott McRae's cabin on the Deadwood Ranch in 1907. The cabin was destroyed by fire in 1935. Shown here from left to right—Alex Bothwell, Jack Luce (seated), Colin Scott McRae (standing in doorway), Colin and Gordon McLaren (boys), and Donald McLaren. The man seated in the doorway is unidentified.*

**THE SMELTER** was built by the British Columbia Copper Company, a New York-based organization that bought the Mother Lode mine in 1898. The smelter was erected on a 28-hectare site at the mouth of Copper Creek in the town called Anaconda, just south of Greenwood. The nearby superintendent's house, which still stands today, was the only smelter building built in Greenwood.

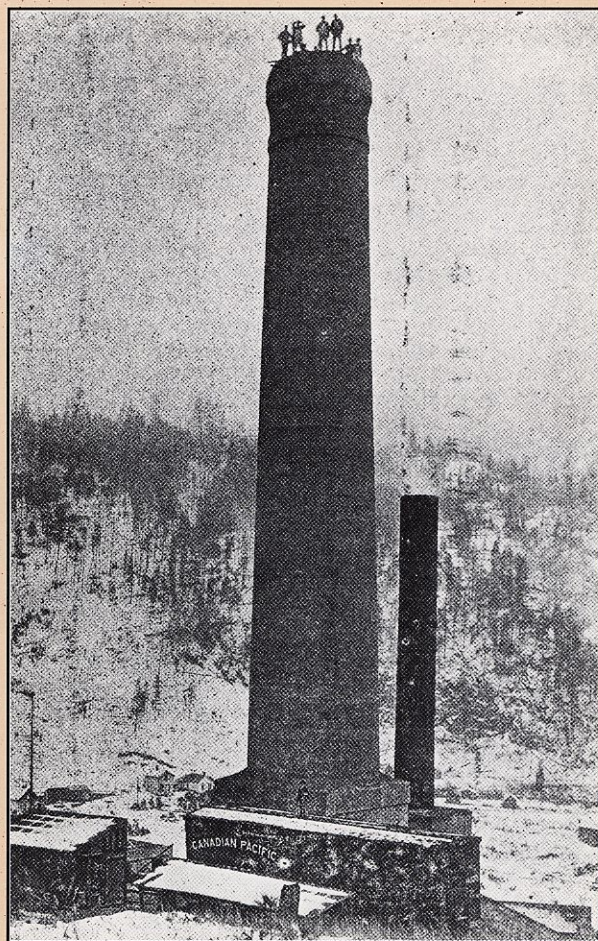
"The Vancouver Province" newspaper described the smelter as "one of the most complete and modern...that can be found in the world today... It is a model plant in every respect on which money has been spent unstintingly, and the machinery installed is the most modern in engineering practice."

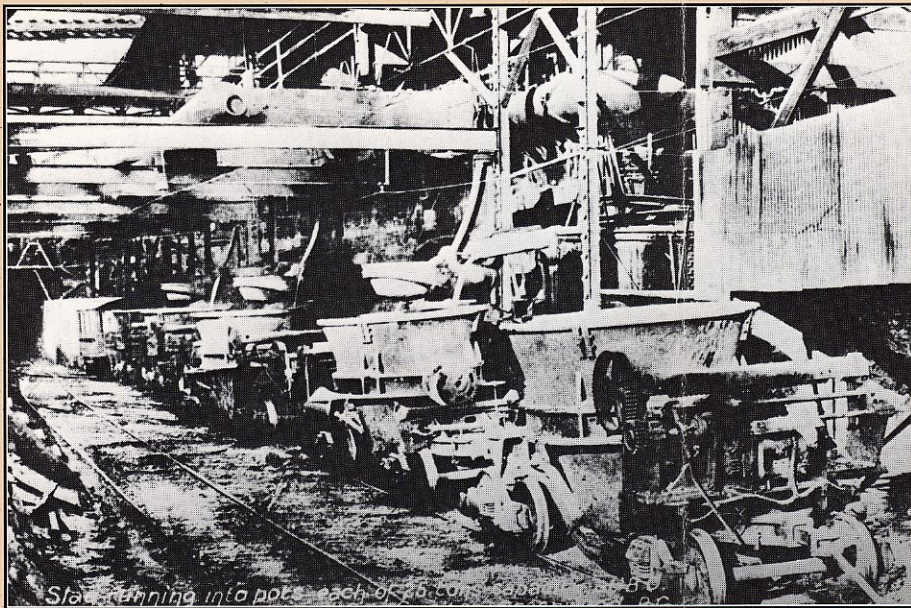
February 18, 1901 marked the blowing in of the first furnace. The smelter was open 24 hours a day, employing forty-seven men during the first year. That year 106 200 tonnes of ore were smelted. On January 18, 1902 a record amount, 416 tonnes (about 9 tonnes for every man employed), were smelted. The smelter operated very successfully until about 1912 when shortages of ore began to affect production. Throughout World War 1 the smelter worked intermittently at a reduced rate and on November 26, 1918 closed forever. The plant was sold to Leon Lotzkar who disposed of the machinery and later gave the site to the City of Greenwood as a park.

The smelter was originally built with a sheet steel smokestack that was replaced by the present brick stack when the works were expanded in 1904. The

brick stack was originally 36 metres tall, the highest in the province, and contained nearly 250 000 bricks.

Waste slag was taken from the smelter by rail in 25-ton (23-tonne) bell-shaped slag cars, and dumped nearby. The waste slag glowed red in the night during the smelter's heyday, but is now a black moonscape. A visitor can walk on this once molten pile of black glass and step inside some of "hell's bells"! One can also visit the foundations of the furnaces and machinery now quiet among the encroaching undergrowth.



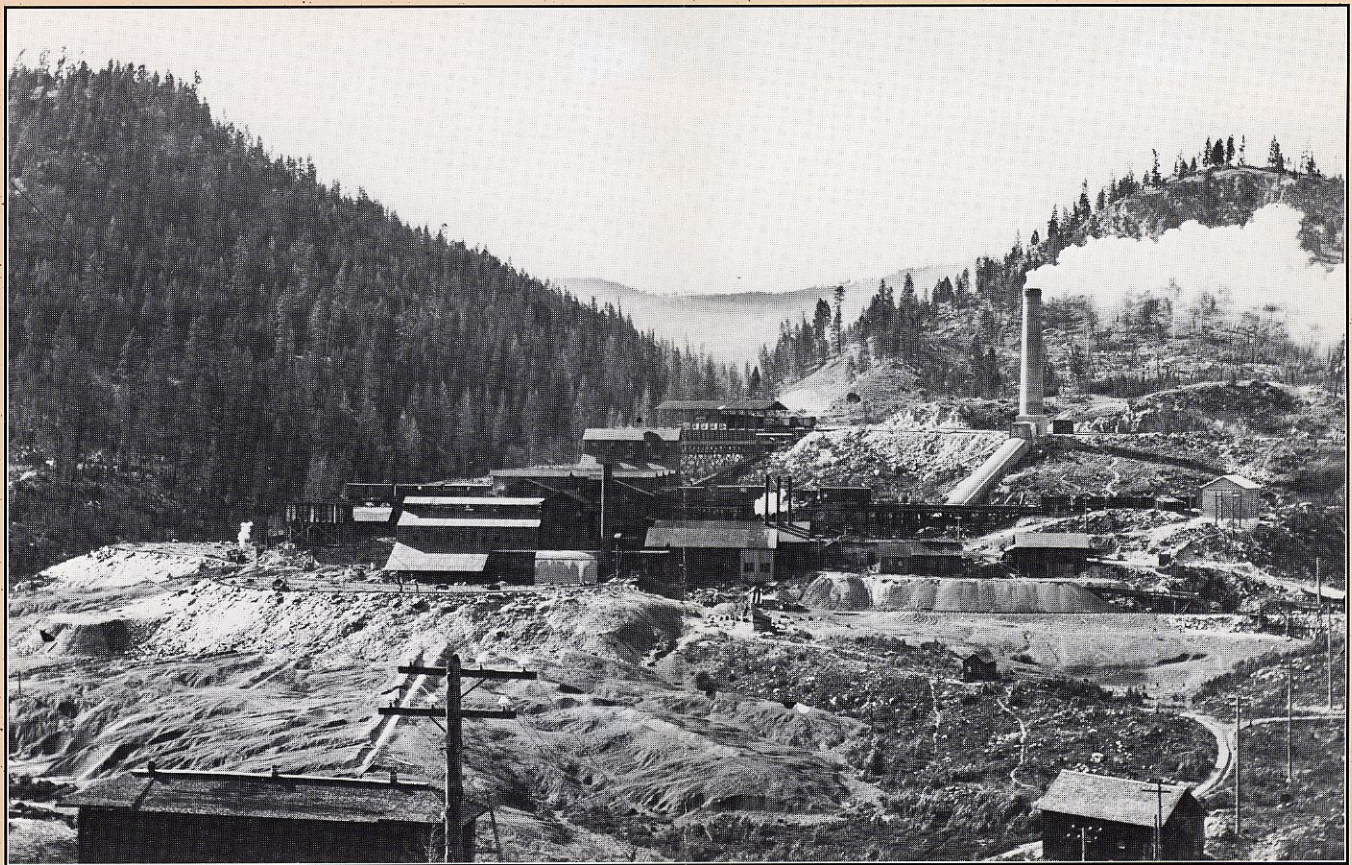


*(Far left) Workers on top of the B.C. Copper Company's new smelter chimney. Standing 36 metres tall, it was the highest in the province.*

*(Above) A train of cars being loaded with slag at the B.C. Copper Company's smelter. Today a visitor can walk on the giant mountain of waste slag and actually step inside some of the hardened "hell's bells."*

*(Below) A view of B.C. Copper Company's smelter site while in production. Remnants of the smelter and its foundations still exist on the hillside.*

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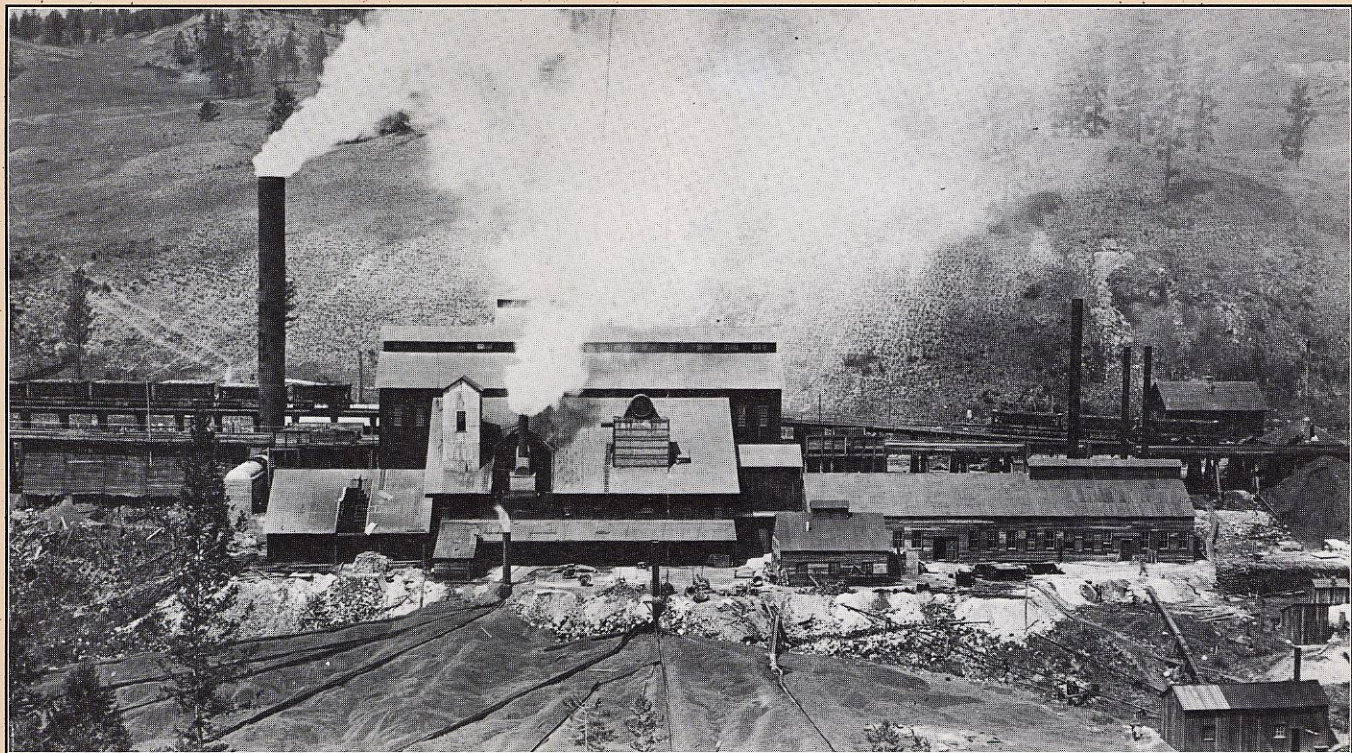


*(Left) Looking down on Boundary Falls soon after the pipeline and power plant were constructed. Remains of the cribbing still hang on the canyon wall.*

*(Below) A view of the Sunset Smelter at Boundary Falls. It operated intermittently from 1903 to 1908 and was dismantled in 1912.*

*(Far right) Travellers on the Dewdney Trail, built to the required standard of "four feet wide with the center two feet guaranteed to hold beast or man."*

BCARS HP45379



BCARS HP5565

**BOUNDARY FALLS**, hardly recognized by travellers on Highway 3 south of Greenwood, also holds an important place in mining history. Placer gold was recovered from Boundary Creek below the falls in the rush of 1860 as well as in later years. By 1865 the Dewdney Trail had been built to the required standard of "four feet wide with the center two feet guaranteed to hold beast or man." The trail followed the west side of the creek until just above the falls, where it crossed. From then on Boundary Falls became a meeting place and settlement for prospectors. By 1900 a town site had been built, a copper smelter was planned and a hydroelectric plant was being constructed.

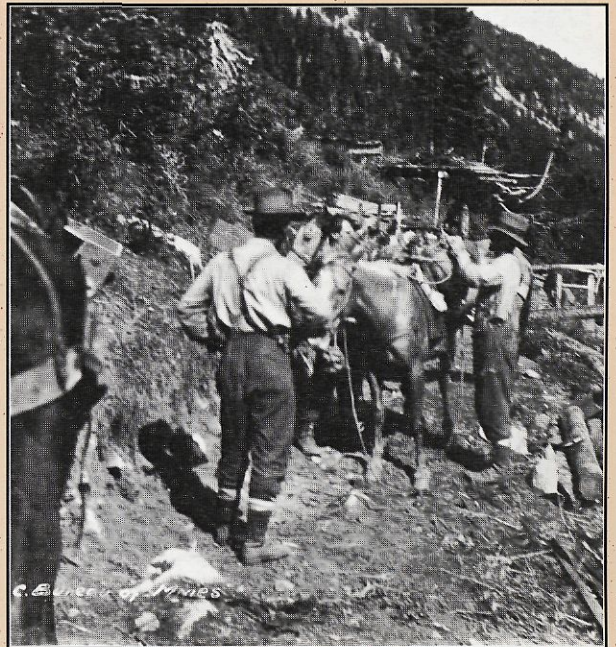
The falls are a beautiful place, particularly in the spring when the water is high and the wild flowers are blooming. The remains of the old wooden dam built above the falls about 1900, and the concrete supports and wooden trestle for the woodstave pipe can still be seen in the cliff above the falls. The foundations for the power plant which supplied electricity to the City of Greenwood between 1903 and 1920 are about half a kilometre downstream.

Two aerial tramlines that brought ore to the railway terminated at Boundary Falls. The No. 7 tram terminal was just west of the falls and brought gold-silver ore from the No. 7 mine about six kilometres to the east. The Lone Star tram terminal was above the falls and one of the towers still stands on the east side of the creek. It brought copper-gold ore from the Lone Star mine in northern Washington almost nine kilometres to the east.

Both tramlines were built in 1910 and dismantled ten years later.

The smelter, known as the Sunset smelter, after the name of the mine near Deadwood which was to supply the copper ore, was built on the west side of Boundary Creek almost a kilometre upstream from the falls. Although it was well constructed as a custom mill, the supply of ore from various mines in the district was never assured. It operated intermittently from 1903 to 1908 and was dismantled in 1912. The foundations and a small slag pile still remain.

The town site, which thrived between about 1895 and 1905, was built along the creek between the falls and the smelter. Only one of the original buildings, a private residence, is standing today beside the grade of the abandoned Kettle Valley railway.



**CONSIDERATION COUNTS!** Please respect the fact that the old mines are on private property. If you wish to get off the beaten track and explore, please visit the museum to get current conditions, or to plan a guided trip. **PLEASE DO NOT VANDALIZE ANY OF THE AREAS.**

**WARNING!** ABANDONED MINES CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS! **PLEASE, STAY OUT OF OLD SHAFTS AND TUNNELS!** It may be very exciting to explore the areas around old mine sites, but remember that the shafts and tunnels are out-of-bounds. They are privately owned and can also be very dangerous. Why? See list below. Be very careful, respect private property and read the following before embarking on your adventure.

## **DANGERS** LURK IN OLD MINE SHAFTS AND TUNNELS

**1. ROTTEN WOOD!** Ladders in old shafts, and timber supports in old tunnels may look safe, but appearances can be deceiving. Timber in abandoned mines is usually decayed, and although it can look very solid, just touching a timber can cause the tunnel to collapse. Ladders are often missing rungs and fragile due to dry rot.

**2. POTENTIAL CAVE-INS!** Cave-ins are an obvious danger and difficult to predict. Small disturbances such as walking or speaking can cause a tunnel cave-in. The top of a mine shaft is especially dangerous as loose areas cannot be detected. The result is a fall down the shaft as the edges cave in!

**3. POOLS OF WATER!** Pools of water at the bottom of shafts or in holes in tunnels can be deep enough to drown an explorer.

**4. BEWARE OF BAD AIR!** Poor air circulation in old mines often allows carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide to accumulate. The motion caused by walking can mix the gases with the good air, creating a lethal mixture.

**5. OLD EXPLOSIVES!** Abandoned shafts and mines contain old explosives left by careless workers. Explosives should never be handled. Old dynamite sticks and caps can explode if stepped on, or touched. Even experienced miners hesitate in handling old explosives: Dynamite caps can be scattered around on tunnel floors, then covered with dust, making them impossible to see.

**6. RATTLESNAKES!** Rattlesnakes love a cool place to hide from the hot summer sun. Old mine shafts and tunnels are perfect shelters. Any hole or ledge, especially near the entrance of a tunnel or shaft, can conceal a snake.

**WITH ALL THESE DANGERS TO BE AWARE OF, IT MAKES GOOD SENSE NOT TO PUT YOURSELF AT RISK!**

**THE ONLY SAFE WAY TO DEAL WITH  
ABANDONED MINES IS TO**

**STAY OUT!**

*Photograph credits—B.C. Provincial Archives (BCARS) and the Greenwood Museum (GM).*

*Prepared with the assistance of the Greenwood District Mining Heritage Committee.*

# HISTORIC GREENWOOD & THE SURROUNDING AREA

The Boundary country is a wonderful land to explore; full of relics and stories of the past. Please respect this area so that others can enjoy its splendor. Visit the Greenwood Museum for more information, guided tours and up-to-date conditions of the area.

