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Foreword

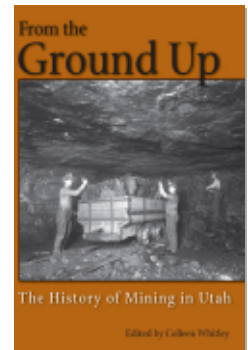
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FOREWORD

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Mining played a vital role in diversifying both the economy and population of Utah. These factors in turn exerted an impact upon geography, architecture, business activity, and social movements. The tandem industries of mining and railroading combined to change the face of Utah—changes that remain evident in all aspects of the state’s history. The ethnic and geographical landscapes of Utah continue to be profoundly influenced by these forces.

Mormons relied on an agrarian economy for survival. Ironically, prospectors en route to the gold-rush fields of California and Nevada provided needed monies to support the fledgling Mormon community. Yet Mormon efforts at mining concentrated on coal and iron, industries that proved ephemeral in nature. Brigham Young discouraged mining precious metals as a forerunner of moral and spiritual decay.

The onslaught of the United States Civil War ushered in the era of the “soldier prospector” in Utah Territory. Colonel Patrick Connor and the Third California Volunteers entered Salt Lake Valley in 1862, established Fort Douglas high on the east bench, and led the vanguard of miners who prospected and discovered outcroppings of precious ores mainly in the Wasatch and Oquirrh Mountains. The West Mountain Quartz Mining District, established in 1863, became the area’s first one, but transporting ore proved expensive to these soldiers, still serving in the military. Commercial mining of these resources, therefore, awaited the coming of the railroad in 1869. With the joining of the rails on 10 May 1869, mining in Utah began to emerge as a vital industry. Changes in the economy, the physical environment, business, and the peopling of the area intensified.

Geographical changes appeared quickly. Railroad spur lines raced to the burgeoning mining towns cropping up in many areas. These towns—Alta, Park City, Ophir, Mercur, Rush Valley, Tintic, Bingham Canyon, and others—altered a landscape dominated by orderly Mormon villages into one where towns curved, rose, and dipped due to the geography of mineralization. Ore bodies mined close to the ground surface by individuals gave way to massive plants operated by large mining companies chasing veins of ore down thousands of feet.

As these mining towns sprang up, they were populated by a diverse ethnic and cultural labor force. In the push-pull of immigration evident in Europe and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Utah's mining and railroading endeavors proved a solid magnet. New arrivals from northern, southern, and eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Mexico soon populated these towns. The rhythms and tones of Utah life changed.

This altering of Utah life was echoed in the late 1880s and early 1890s by the developing coal industry. The discovery of coal in the rich area of Carbon County by the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad forever changed that landscape. Diverse towns, peoples, and economies followed coal. Mining as an industry also changed as coal substituted for charcoal in firing the smelting furnaces of Salt Lake and other areas.

The business of mining gave rise to a diversity of other endeavors. Utah mining stocks early were traded on the London Stock Exchange. During the early twentieth century, mining entrepreneurs, such as Samuel Newhouse, sought to turn Salt Lake City into the "Wall Street of the West." Others such as David Keith, Thomas Kearns, and Enos Wall transformed Salt Lake's Brigham Street, now South Temple, into a promenade of mining mansions. Suddenly, architecture really mattered. Both residential homes and business blocks in many mining areas reflected the architectural styles in vogue throughout the country. At the same time, miners' cottages and bungalow-style homes made a unique Utah contribution. Mining money altered the architectural landscape.

Economic upturns and downswings affected mining. With prosperity came continued growth, but misery often followed depression. Such was, and is, the nature of mining. The Great Depression of the 1930s, coupled with the restrictive immigration legislation of the 1920s, left an indelible mark on the industry. Utah suffered along with most of the United States. World War II reinvigorated the economic devastation of the 1930s. Bingham Canyon, which had continued to produce minerals from its beginnings in the 1860s, rose to new heights as one of the world's largest copper producers. Kennecott Utah Copper, formerly Utah Copper, supplied much metal to aid the Allied efforts. With most males in the U.S. military, women and workers from Puerto Rico and other South American areas were highly sought. Again, the face of Utah's economy and her population altered.

Hard-rock and coal mining have exerted an incredible impact on the economic landscape, the natural landscape, and the population landscape of the state, and that legacy continues. New technologies have led to new practices, often requiring less labor and diminishing demand. In the United States, the costs of mining minerals, once manageable, have increased. Mining is no longer the economic giant of the past. Renewed interest in mining occurred from the 1960s to the new millennium, but world markets and the use of fossil fuels have curbed Utah's impact. Nonetheless, mining has changed Utah in many ways, and the history of that industry is a significant part of the present and future.