

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

1. Goodspeed's Trail

One of the very first documented trails in the Wasatch was presented to the public in a map of the Little Cottonwood mines published by A.L. Bancroft & Co. of San Francisco. From the names of the mines in the map, the newest one having been recorded in June of 1871, it may be concluded this document was published in the second half of 1871 or possibly early in 1872. In addition to the mines it showed Goodspeed's Trail winding up the north slopes from Central City, the lower portion of today's Alta, about where the Peruvian Lodge is located, and crossing the divide west of a summit, which was the cartographer's impression of Flagstaff Mountain. The trail, built to access the Reed and Benson, Ophir and Excelsior lodes located high on today's Reed and Benson ridge in the southeast corner of Cardiff Fork, was named after Henry C. Goodspeed, a principal in all three properties. The trail was mentioned in a newspaper article in April of 1871, a time when snows surely still covered the slopes, so it must have been started the previous year. The lode notices were filed in September 1870.

The story of Goodspeed and the Reed and Benson mine is told in *The Lady in the Ore Bucket*. Of interest here is the trail itself, one that was in place over one hundred and thirty five years ago. It is almost too much to believe that such a trail could have survived the ravages of Nature over such a long period of time, but portions of this trail still exist and can be followed. Much of the trail directly above Central City received considerable use for many years because it also accessed other mines in the area, so its route is fairly obvious. While it may have started as the Goodspeed Trail, it became better known in terms of the other mines it served. That portion will be discussed in another article in this series. Of interest here is the higher section running over the divide to the Reed and Benson tunnel.

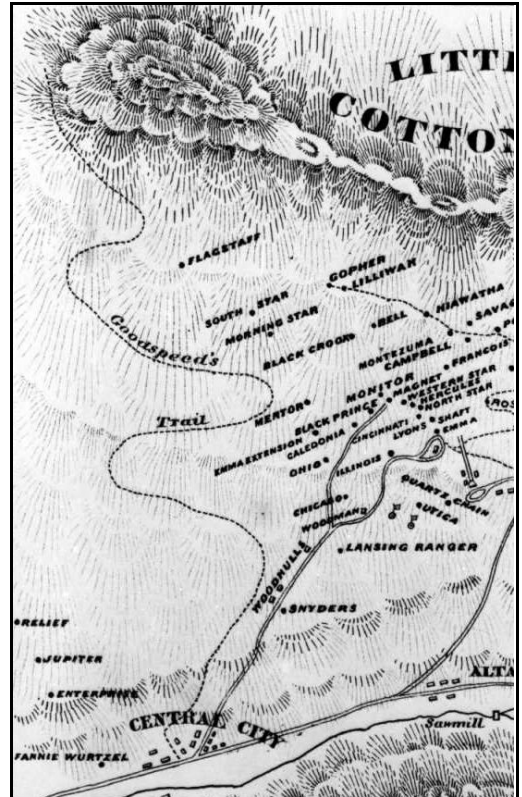


Fig. 1. A portion of the A. L. Bancroft & Co. map showing Goodspeed's Trail going up the north slopes above Alta and Central City.



Fig. 2. Goodspeed's Trail heading north from the divide between Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.

The easiest way to locate this part of the trail is to ascend Flagstaff Mountain, then follow the divide toward the west. After dropping about one hundred feet in elevation the ridge has a short level area before dropping further. Here the discerning eye will notice a trail ascending from the southeast, crossing the ridge and heading in a northerly direction on the west slopes of the Reed and Benson ridge. This is a remnant of the original Goodspeed Trail. If it is followed toward the north it runs nearly level for a short distance before it begins to descend. It traverses in and out of shallow gullies, but continues as a fairly good and recognizable trail until it reaches a steeper slope covered with

heavy scree. Here Nature has taken over and the trail vanishes. However, before reaching the scree, the trail divides, the upper branch being the one that disappears. It was the trail to the original lodes. However in 1871 it was decided to drive a tunnel to tap the three lodes at depth. The tunnel was located somewhat lower and was accessed by a branch to the original trail. This lower branch, if recognized, drops at a steeper rate before it also vanishes. However, by this time the site of the Reed and Benson tunnel can be seen, a narrow flat clinging to the steep slopes above the cliffs. A few artifacts remain on the flat and the tunnel is still partially open, posted with a sign, "Patented Mining Claims Owned by Melville, Ltd. S.L.C. Utah." This tunnel and other vanished prospects on the slopes above were the destination of Goodspeed's Trail.



Fig. 3. Goodspeed's Trail descending the steep slopes above the Reed and Benson cliffs. Note the rocky pinnacle left of center.

There was another access to this mining site, a trail coming up from Cardiff Fork; that will be the subject of the next episode in this series.



Fig. 4. The Reed and Benson tunnel is located at the far end of this narrow flat. The elevation is somewhat lower than in the previous photo.

From the ridge below Flagstaff Mountain the trail can be followed to the southwest, down the steep slopes above Alta. As it descends it becomes less prominent, and at several places is completely indistinct where trees and bushes have grown over it. Also as the elevation decreases, the trail has suffered more deterioration from snow pressures and detritus from above. However it can be followed until it reaches a small mine dump on a minor descending ridge, one that seems to be headed directly for the Peruvian Lodge. From this point the trail can be followed a little farther, but when it leaves the minor ridge it seems to disappear forever. That this much of the trail has survived seems a miracle.

If one were to follow the trail back up to the mine dump on the minor ridge a far more prominent trail might be noticed heading directly up toward the divide. In fact, in comparison Goodspeed's Trail is nearly invisible. This is a part of the trail to the Eclipse mine in Days Fork, a newer trail than the one we have been following. It, too, will be the topic of another chapter in this series .

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2. Reed and Benson Wagon Road and Trail

With the Reed and Benson mine in operation one scant year, the operators posted a notice with the recorder of the Big Cottonwood Mining District: “WAGON ROAD & TRAIL NOTICE To connect our mines ... with the road running up and down the Big Cottonwood Canon. ... said road to commence at the main Canon road and running up South Fork of Big Cottonwood Canon to the connection of the above mines ... We claim the right of way for said road and trail with all necessary timber, earth and rock for the making and successfully working and repairing said road and trail... We also claim the exclusive right of and to the use of said road and trail for our exclusive benefit. 30 June 1871.”

The trail began at the Reed and Benson tunnel and descended rapidly on a ledge carved out of the cliffs below. Once below the cliffs it continued its traversing descent toward the southwest across a steep grassy slope, then switched back toward the northwest, continuing to descend until it reached less steep slopes about 750 feet below the mine. From this point it became a road and headed down the South Fork (Cardiff Fork), descending gradually as it went. After crossing a

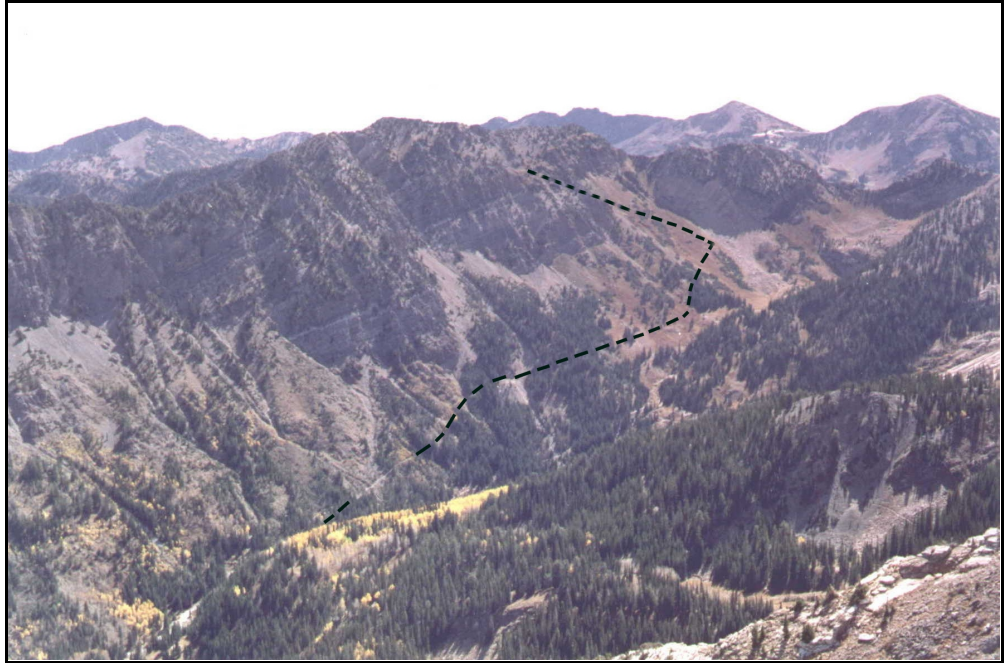


Fig. 1. Reed and Benson Cliffs and the southeast slopes of Cardiff Fork.

major gully it increased its rate of descent until it reached the South Fork stream near the point where today's Cardiff Fork road crosses the stream about a half mile below the Cardiff tunnel. The route from the mine tunnel down to the Cardiff Fork road is shown in dotted line in Figure 1. Mount Baldy, Sugarloaf and Devils Castle are on the skyline, from right to left. Flagstaff Mountain is at the end of the Reed and Benson ridge, directly under Devils Castle. Just to the right and below Flagstaff, but still under the highest part of Devils Castle, is the level spot on the ridge where Goodspeed's Trail comes across from the slopes above Alta, as described in the previous episode of this series.

Much of the Reed and Benson trail can be followed today. From a point about 75 feet south of the Reed and Benson mine tunnel, at an elevation of over ten thousand feet, the trail can be found dropping over the edge of the flat. There probably was a retaining wall that has since collapsed, covering the top end of the trail with rocks. Much of the soil the wall retained followed, leaving the very upper end of the trail somewhat indistinct. However, within a few feet its route becomes much more obvious. It quickly becomes a 'cliff hanger' as it drops down through the sheer rock faces. At several places its outer edge has been swept away, leaving only a narrow path, but they can be passed easily. Today the trail is frequented by mountain goats that live in the area, as evidenced by the many footprints in the dirt and the smell of a barnyard in the air.

When the trail leaves the lower end of cliffs and goes onto the steep grassy slope there is a short area of talus that must be crossed, but the trail is obvious as it descends southwesterly across the slope. A short distance down another, steeper branch of the trail splits off, only to be lost on the slopes below. The less steep route still has



2. Reed & Benson trail as it drops away from the tunnel flat in a southwesterly direction. In the distance the Pfeifferhorn and Chipman Peak are on the horizon.

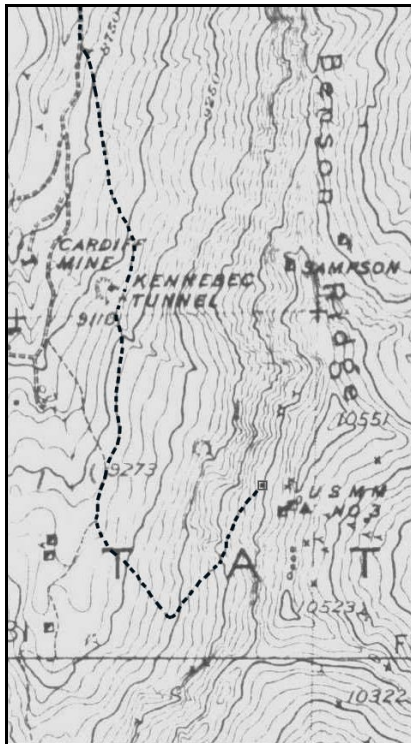


Fig. 4. This portion of the Geologic Survey's Cottonwood, Utah, map of 1939 shows the Reed and Benson trail descending from the mine and heading down canyon.

a grade well over thirty per cent. However, when it approaches the switchback it has lost enough elevation to have suffered from snow pressures and rocks tumbling down from above, so much so that the route of the lower half of the switchback is no longer obvious. It dropped at a continuing steep rate toward the northwest, passing through, above and around stands of trees, reaching less steep slopes in the process. As it leaves the wooded area the trail again becomes obvious in spots and heads for what appears to be a sizeable mine dump. This was the site of the Reed and Benson ore bin, built in 1872 or 1873, and the lower station of the tramway, which is the subject of the next article in this series.

The trail on the steep grassy slope can be difficult to see at times, depending upon the depth of the grass and the lighting. If viewed from a distance, especially from the other side of the canyon or from the Carbonate mine or Kessler Peak, during the morning hours when the sun is shining nearly down the slope, the trail becomes quite obvious. The photograph in figure 1 was taken from Kessler Peak.

The trail passed above this dump and continued down canyon almost on a contour line. Its faint trace can be seen headed for the woods beyond. There is another, more obvious road curving down hill and down canyon from this dump. While this was not part of the original Reed and Benson road it surely dates back to the years the ore bin and tramway were in use.

As the road heads north through the woods it reaches the major gully that has been mentioned. Many floods have come down the gully, carving it to a depth well beyond what was seen in 1872, but even then it must have been a formidable obstacle, explaining the need for the other road from the ore bin site.

On the north side of the deep gully are remnants of the Kennebec tunnel, which was begun in 1875 as the Reed and Goodspeed tunnel to tap the Reed and Benson ore body at depth. It was renamed by later owners. The road from that point is much better preserved due to its continued use by the Kennebec people long after the Reed and Benson operations ended.

The Reed & Benson trail and road can be seen in the map in Figure 4, with the switchback coming down from the mine being obvious. The elevation mark, 9273, is at the dump that has been mentioned, where the trail has leveled out. The road can be seen heading north past the Kennebec tunnel, then descending to the present day road. This map is from the Geological Survey's Cottonwood, Utah quadrangle of 1939. Its contour lines were inherited from maps issued as early as 1903, so they may differ from those seen in newer USGS maps.



Fig. 3. Reed & Benson trail as it leaves the lower end of the cliffs and heads for the steep grassy slope.

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3. Reed and Benson Tramway

The term “Faint Trails” in the title of this series suggests fading roads or footpaths, which is one of the topics of interest. But in an historical and philosophical sense a faint trail might be little more than a memory of things gone past, a reminder of what has transpired before our time. History abounds with faint trails. The Reed and Benson tramway is one of them. It has left little or nothing that can be followed or found today, but it is so important to the trails and activities in the southeast end of Cardiff Fork that it is worth mentioning. Besides, it is very interesting, for it must have been one of the great engineering achievements in the Wasatch Mountains in the 1870 decade.

With its mine located on the precipitous slopes high above the cliffs, extracting ore from the depths was only the first of the Reed and Benson company’s problems. Once the ore was brought to the surface it had to be transported to market. That was why the company built its trail down into the South Fork and then followed that fork to the Big Cottonwood road. But even that was not the ultimate solution, for the descent on the narrow trail through the cliffs and then the steep trail down the switchback was a challenge in itself. Hence, in 1873 the company began construction of a tramway between its mine and the road 750 feet below. Today it would be an almost trivial task to run an aerial tramway over that difficult terrain; many of today’s ski lifts and tramways run over slopes that are equally steep and challenging. But they enjoy over a century of technological advancement since the Reed and Benson

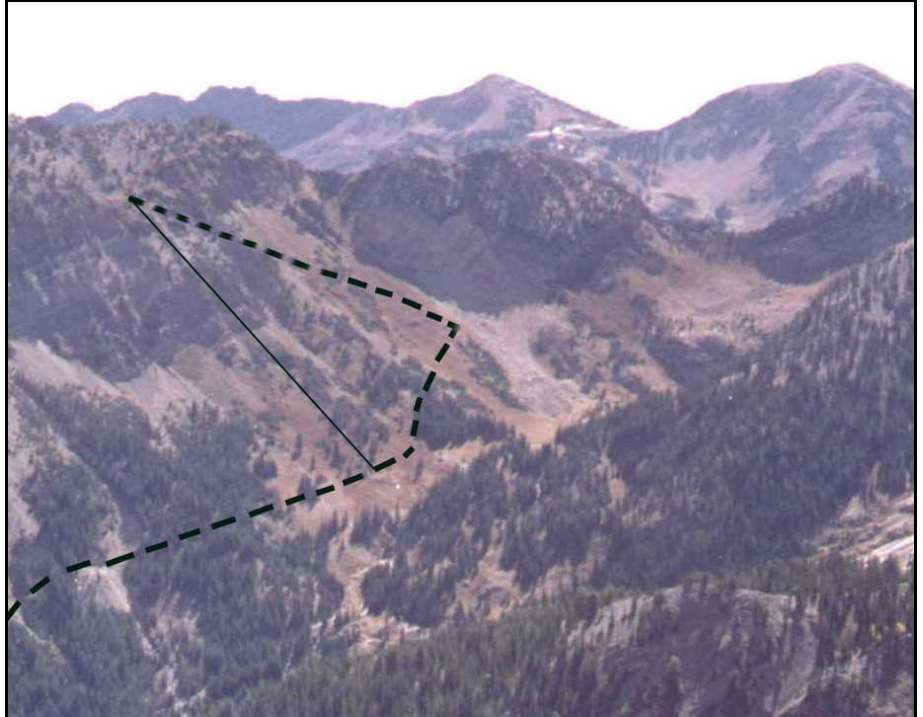


Fig. 1. The route of the Reed and Benson tramway is shown as a solid line in this photograph of the southeast end of Cardiff Fork. The dashed line is the Reed and Benson trail.



Fig. 2. View down into South Fork from the Reed and Benson tunnel. The tramway ore bin was located on the small flat to the left of the center of the photograph.

tramway was built. In the early 1870s aerial tramways were a newly emerging development. As a result the Reed and Benson company chose to follow older, more traditional methods and built a rail tramway, running on trestles constructed over the cliffs and down the steep slopes below. It was reported that workers had to be suspended by ropes while working on the steeper sections of the structure. A single track was used, even though there were two cars suspended at opposite ends of a long rope or cable, one car going up as the other went down. At the midpoint a short section of double track was built so the cars could pass one another, a technique still used today on some funicular railways. At the top the cable made one turn around a huge drum so well

built that in operation it was said to make less noise than other similar tramways.

At the lower terminus of the tramway, located just below the Reed and Benson trail, the company had built a bin to hold the ore until it could be taken by wagon or sleigh down the South Fork and Big Cottonwood Canyon. This site has the appearance of a mine dump, but there was no mine there. It is likely the waste rock came from the mine at the top of the tramway and was brought down as ballast to drive the tramway when taking supplies up to the mine. Apparently the ore bin was built before the tramway, for the *Froiseth's Map of Little Cottonwood Mining District and Vicinity*, published in Salt Lake City in 1873, shows the Reed and Benson tunnel, trail and ore house, but not the tramway.

In spite of the enormity of the construction task, the tramway was in operation by September of the same year in which it was begun, 1873. Recognizing that the winter snows would cripple its operations, the company chose to cover the tramway with a snowshed for its entire distance. With buildings at the mine providing living and working accommodations, and the use of sleighs instead of wagons in the South Fork, the mine was able to operate throughout the winter.

The tramway was the scene of several newsworthy incidents. The first happened only two months after it opened, when the mine's blacksmith chose to ride a tramway car down from the mine. During his passage the rope holding the cars broke, allowing the car to run down the steep track completely unrestrained. The passenger jumped for his life, but to no avail, for he was killed instantly as he crashed down the slopes. The car continued down the track, through the ore house and out the other side, coming to rest in the gully below.

In January 1875 three men walking to the mine were swept down by a snow avalanche. Two were rescued almost immediately, but the third had been carried under the tramway where he became lodged against one of the posts. The tramway structure provided enough of a cavity that he was able to breathe. He remained there for two days before he was found and rescued.

In 1878 the tramway and ore bin were severely damaged by a snow avalanche. Both were subsequently rebuilt and used as late as 1882. In the years between then and the turn of the century, both were either dismantled or allowed to deteriorate through lack of use or maintenance. No mention of either has been found after that year and neither appeared on any of the maps prepared since that time.

Unfortunately no photographs of this interesting tramway have been found. One sketch was published, shown in Figure 3, but it was of such poor quality that it defined very little. As a result we can only imagine how this interesting structure may have appeared.



Fig. 3. The only known view of the Reed and Benson tramway is this artist's sketch published in the *Utah Mining Gazette* of 13 December 1873. Notice the houses on the ridge, an indication of miner's cabins, some of whose stone walls can still be seen on the Reed and Benson ridge a short distance north of Flagstaff Mountain.

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4. Cardiff Pass Trail

In 1969 Harper and Rowe published a book by Robin W. Winks entitled *Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence*. While the content of the essays is not of importance here, the title is, for the historian is often found in the position where the evidence, i.e., source material, is insufficient to fully support an analysis of the situation or events. In that case it is necessary to play the part of the detective and synthesize the missing parts in light of existing evidence. So it is with the trail over Cardiff Pass, or Pole Line Pass as it is sometimes known, for there has been precious little source material found that describes or even mentions either the pass or the trail.

However, within the framework of evidence that does exist it is possible to reconstruct what must have happened.

Before the late summer of 1870 there was little prospecting activity in the upper reaches of the South Fork of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Most of the action was across the divide in Little Cottonwood Canyon, but then the prospectors began to look around on the north side of the divide. The Reed and Benson mine was one of the first mines on that side and its success probably did much to encourage prospectors to cross the ridge. The Goodspeed Trail was built about this same time, but it crossed the divide at well over 10,000 feet, only to find itself high on the upper slopes of the Reed and Benson Ridge. It was still necessary to descend the steep slopes to get into the South Fork of Big Cottonwood. However, less than a half mile west of the Goodspeed Trail it was possible to cross the ridge at a pass that was at least 300 feet lower than the Goodspeed crossing and have a more direct access to the South Fork. It would seem logical this would be the preferred route. There are several facts that support this supposition.

A review of the entries in the mining recorder's books show there were no claims that could be identified as being in the South Fork of Big Cottonwood before August of 1870. Then in the remaining months of that year about a dozen claims were filed, half of which were at the head of the South Fork. And those were filed by men active on the Little Cottonwood side of the divide that same year. Hence there is evidence that men were crossing the divide from Little Cottonwood in the year 1870.

In June of 1871 principals of the Reed and Benson mine filed their notice of the trail and wagon road running down the South Fork to connect with the Big Cottonwood road. Since that mine was essentially a Little Cottonwood operation even though it was located in the Big Cottonwood Mining District, it can be assumed that most of its workers came from the Little Cottonwood side of the divide. Since the new trail descended the steep slopes below the mine before continuing down the canyon, most of the work on it was at elevations



Fig. 1. This portion of the Utah, Cottonwood Special map of 1907 shows the Cardiff Pass trail much as it runs today on the Alta side of the divide, but considerably different in the South Fork.

considerably below the high point of the Goodspeed Trail, hence a more convenient route into the South Fork would certainly have been advantageous.



Fig. 2. The metal rod set into the rock in the foreground marks the junction of the original Cardiff Fork trail and the Reed and Benson trail. The latter's ore bin was at the flat with the small tree in the middle distance.

toward the southwest bowl to claims that had been located there. The area of interest on the 1907 map is shown in Figure 1.

On the map the Cardiff Pass trail, shown as a dashed line, follows much the same route as it does today on the Little Cottonwood side of the divide and in the upper bowl in the South Fork, but then makes a sharp jog to the east before continuing toward the Reed and Benson ore bin site. The prospect shown at the jog became the Rexall mine about the time this map was issued, and can be seen today as a large, prominent dump under the cliffs at the east side of the upper bowl. The steep switchback coming down from the Reed and Benson mine was no longer in use and was not shown in this map. Curiously, it was included in the later map issued in 1939, at which time the Cardiff Pass trail and all contour lines were still shown as seen in the 1907 map. However, in the *Dromedary Peak, Utah* map of 1975, seen in Figure 3, the trail is shown continuing due north from the upper bowl, on the opposite side of the drainage from the ore bin site, as it is found when hiked today. The original trail is now all but totally obscured, although the last hundred yards leading to the ore bin site still can be seen. At some time in the distant past a metal rod was set in a hole drilled in the rock at the point where the Reed and Benson trail came down the switchback and met the Cardiff Fork trail. Although it is not shown in the 1975 map, the road going northwest from the ore bin site to the Cardiff Fork road is very much in evidence and can be followed without trouble. The original Reed and Benson trail can also be followed through the woods as it heads down canyon, but it is very faint and presents major difficulties when it reaches the deep gully that continues to grow deeper from many floods during the past century or more.

In 1873 the Reed and Benson company constructed its tramway running from the mine down to its road directly below where it had constructed its ore bin. This created another destination of interest for a trail across the divide from Alta. Indeed, the Geological Survey's *Utah, Cottonwood Special* map of 1907 showed the trail over Cardiff Pass, although the pass was not known by that name at that time, running directly to the site of the Reed and Benson ore bin, shown as an elevation marker of 9273 on the map. Neither the ore bin nor the tramway were shown, but they were no longer there in 1907. The road up South Fork had been extended to the ore bin site many years earlier, bypassing the original Reed and Benson trail and its difficult crossing of the deep gully where the Reed and Goodspeed Tunnel, later renamed the Kennebec Tunnel, would be located. The South Fork road was later extended

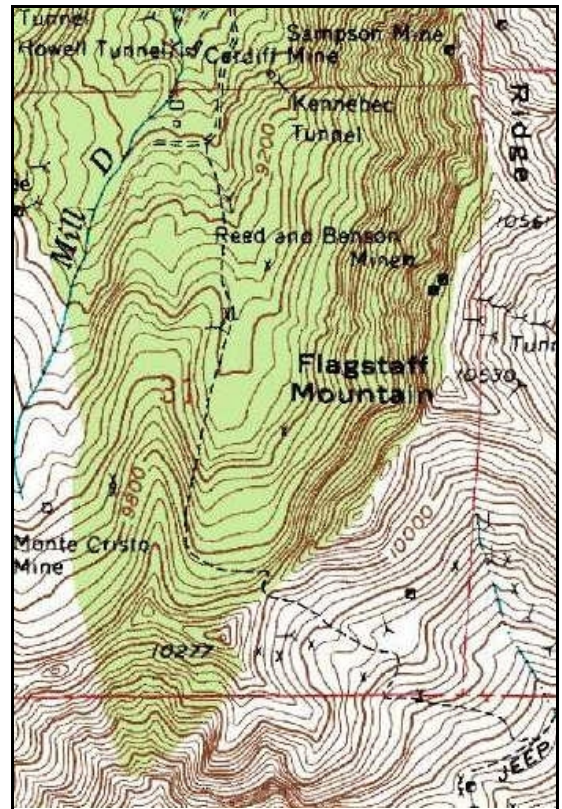


Fig. 3. The 1975 Dromedary Peak, Utah, map shows the Cardiff Pass trail running nearly due north from the upper basin to the Cardiff Fork road.

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5. Cardiff Fork Road -- Part I

In the second article in this series the Reed and Benson trail and road was described from the mine down to the point where it converges with today's road a short distance above the stream crossing, where it crosses to the east side. This article attempts to reconstruct that original road the rest of the way down the canyon. The map

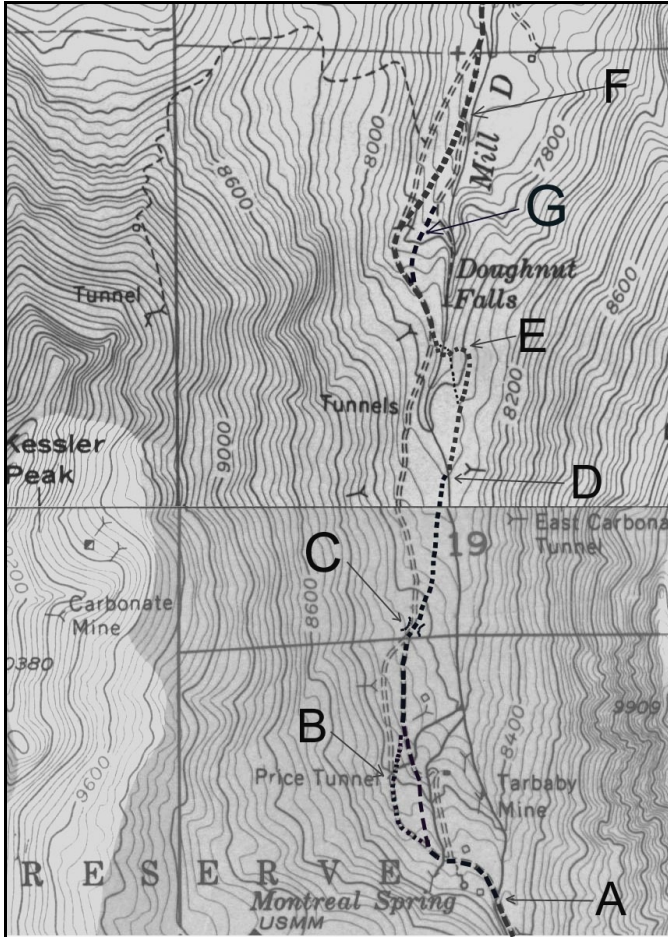


Fig. 1. The original Reed and Benson road is shown as a dashed line on this portion of the Dromedary Peak and Mount Aire USGS maps of 1955.

shown in figure 1 at the left is a portion of the 1955 *Dromedary Peak, Utah* 7.5 minute map with the original road and several of its mutations superimposed.

Point A is the stream crossing cited above. The old Reed and Benson road followed today's road, or vice versa, until it crossed the outflow of the as yet unnamed Montreal Spring where it turned down canyon, descending the steep slope on the west side of the stream until it reached the flat below. There it followed a gentle descending grade to point C on the map, where it merges with today's road. In the years that followed the steep section of the road was bypassed by one that followed today's road to point B. This is just above the Price Tunnel, seen today as a large dump below the road with a considerable amount of water flowing from the collapsed tunnel. The bypass road dropped below today's road about ninety feet above the tunnel site. The remains of that road can be seen if one is especially observant. Of course this was long before the tunnel was started, so the road simply dropped down the slope to joined the original road on the flat. At point C today's road goes through a short cut that is six or eight feet deep. The original road went over the top of this rise, then dropped through the wooded area below today's road. It emerged at another long flat, dropping slowly as it converged with the stream. At point D it crossed the stream on a bridge whose abutments can still be seen. It then climbed over a small rise before descending a steep grade to the stream. This steep

portion of the road, shown by a narrow dotted line on the map, was later abandoned in favor of a slightly longer, but less steep grade which ended in a pair of sharp turns at point E before fording the stream. It then climbed to meet the present road as the latter enters the woods. At this junction there is a large tree at the roadside that has its trunk almost completely rotted out, an obvious landmark.

North of point E the road stayed well above the stream gorge. If one were to stroll to the edge of the gorge and survey the terrain, it would be easy to understand why no attempt was made to follow the stream. Instead the road stayed high in the forest a short distance before dropping below the present road, going down a fairly steep grade through the forest until it was nearly at the stream level. This section, shown as G on the map, is very faint today, but can be followed until it reaches the ever popular Doughnut Falls trail at the point where the latter transitions from a fairly wide trail to a narrower trail that turns toward the stream. The Doughnut Falls trail below this point is on the original Reed and Benson road.

In 1910 this section was abandoned in favor of a less steep route built by the Cardiff and Reeds Peak companies. The new road followed the present road until it reached the site of the Reeds Peak tunnel, which is

seen today as a large dump immediately below the road and almost directly above Doughnut Falls. On the down-canyon side of this dump the road descends below the present road until it meets the very wide portion of the Doughnut Falls trail just above the foot bridge stream crossing, point F on the map. From this point the Reed and Benson road followed the route of the present road, crossing to the east side of the stream at the Doughnut Falls parking area.



Fig. 2. The old bypass road can be seen on the right, dropping below the present road as it heads down to join the original Reed and Benson road on the flat below. The Price tunnel is below the road behind the trees. This is at point B on the map.

Most of the road as described can be followed without much difficulty. One must be cautioned, however, that during the nearly fifty years of the four-wheelers' use of Cardiff Fork numerous side roads and alternate trails were formed. One must be careful not to be led astray by them. Also, remember that while the Reed and Benson people may have built the original road, it was immediately embraced by the mining community at large and was used by many more people than the builders. During the years that followed the road suffered numerous alterations and revisions, such that what we can follow today may not be exactly what was built in 1871. But it is close, and it continued to be used for nearly fifty years before being replaced by a road with more gentle grades.

There are several points of interest along this old road. Where it crosses the meadow above point C on the map there is a steel post on the east side of the road, the remnants of a gate installed by persons unknown for reasons unknown. Also, about halfway between points C and B, on the west side of the road is the site of the lower terminal of the Carbonate tramway, installed in 1908 by Alma Nielsen and associates who at that time held a lease on the Carbonate mine. This will be discussed further in a later article (FTW9, Carbonate Tramway).

In 1915 the Utah Power and Light Company installed a power line from the Utah Mines Coalition mine at Lake Solitude to the Cardiff mine in the South Fork. Once in the South Fork the power line generally followed the road. Remnants of this line can be seen several places where the power poles are on the ground, or stubs of poles still stand where the poles once stood. After the line was abandoned many poles were cut just above the ground. About half way between D and C on the map, where road is surrounded by trees, the remains of a double pole can be seen, probably installed to support a transformer. Also, where the road crossed the stream at the ford, point E on the map, a faint trail can be followed down canyon on the east side of the stream. It continues to an overlook point directly above Doughnut Falls where the stub of another power pole remains. As a matter of interest, in October 1917 the power line was extended over Cardiff Pass to Alta to supplement the electrical power sources at that location. The line was also extended to many other mines in the South Fork, including the Monte Cristo mine in the far southwest extremity of the fork.



Fig. 3. The ford where the road crossed the South Fork stream. The old Reed and Benson road went down through the vegetation on the left, dropping to its ford. A newer road was built on a lesser grade to cross a ford on the right, above the old one, which has washed out badly since it was first used. This is at point E on the map.

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6. Cardiff Fork Road -- Part II

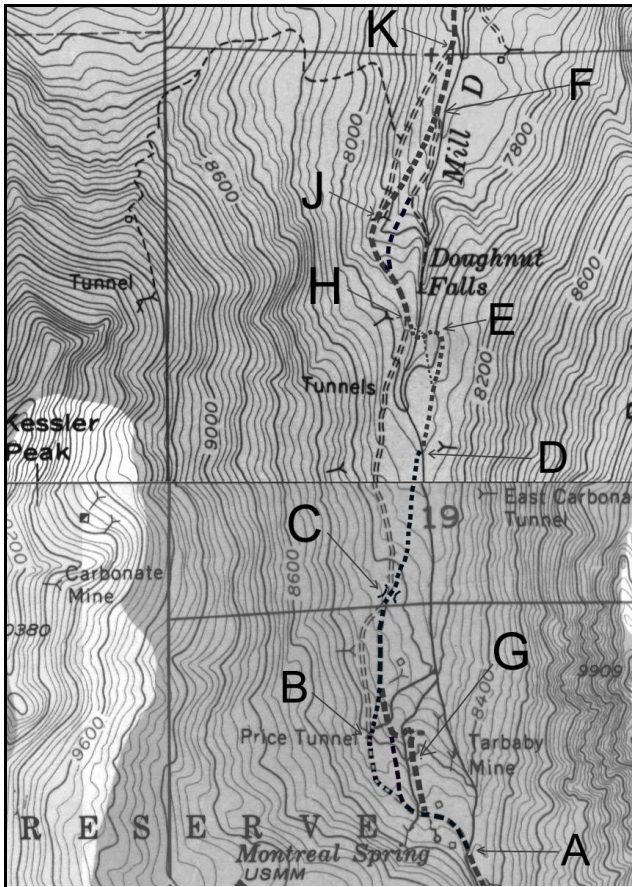


Fig. 1. The original Reed and Benson road is shown as a dashed line on this portion of the Dromedary Peak and Mount Aire USGS maps of 1955. The Tar Baby road, circa 1911, is shown as a heavy dashed line passing point G. Segments of the Cardiff Fork road as it exists today is shown as a double dashed line.

the fork road. This dump is from the South Price Tunnel, which was started some time after the Tar Baby. The Geological Survey's *Cottonwood, Utah* quadrangle of 1939 showed only the original lower part of the Tar Baby road, although it had surely been extended by that time.

The Tar Baby road continued to be used as long as the company was operating, at least until 1938, and on into the 1950s by leasers. Its entire length was shown in the 1955 edition of the USGS *Dromedary Peak* map, as was a structure on the built-up flat above the mine. The two-storey bunkhouse was destroyed by fire in the mid-twentieth century. Its remains can be seen above the road between the flat and the mine.

The next major change to the Cardiff Fork road

The Reed and Benson road described in the last segment of this series lasted with only minor variations through the first decade of the twentieth century. A major addition was made in 1911 or 1912 after the Tar Baby Mining Company was incorporated and began operations at its lower tunnel, located just above the South Fork stream in the deep gorge a short distance below where the road crossed the stream, point A on the map. At this very congested location there was little room for structures or staging areas for materials and supplies, so a flat area was constructed, suitably constrained by heavy stone walls, a short distance above and to the west of the stream. Access was provided by a road running from the newly prepared staging area at point G on the map, and running down canyon through a sharp S-turn crossing the stream from Montreal Spring, then joined the original Reed and Benson road to go onto the flat below where it joined the bypass road, passing the lower edge of the Price Tunnel dump on the way.

At some later date the Tar Baby Road was extended from the staging area up to the main road at Montreal Spring, following the east side of the spring's outlet stream. If the original Reed and Benson road on the west side of the spring's stream was still in use, this new road sealed its fate. Montreal Spring is located on the south side of the huge mine dump on the west side of the Cardiff Fork road, the dump that always has a flow of water from the mine tunnel coming down and flooding

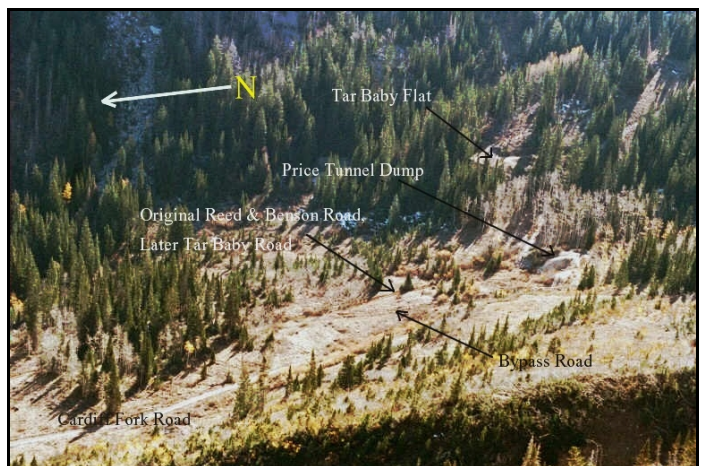


Fig. 2. Junction of the original Reed and Benson road, later the Tar Baby road with the bypass road. Tar Baby Flat is where the company's shops and bunkhouse were located. Price Tunnel dump is on the right. Today's Cardiff Fork road can be seen entering at the lower left.



Fig. 3. View down Cardiff Fork road from Reeds Peak dump. Old road down Greens Hill drops down on the right side of the modern road.

was made in 1915. The Cardiff mining company had made a major strike in its new tunnel and was prepared to ship large quantities of ore to market, as much as 100 tons per day. To ease the difficulties faced by teamsters in moving this amount of material, a new road was built at three places to ease the grades and shorten the distances. The upper section was started at the Price Tunnel, point B on the map, where the new road was kept up on the slope, well above the old road on the flat below. Descending at a constant gentle grade, it met the old road at point C, where a substantial cut was made to place it six or eight feet below the level of the latter. It immediately left the old grade again and traversed the side hill, descending gradually until it joined the old road at point H on the map. This

segment considerably shortened the distance traveled and avoided two crossings of the South Fork stream.

The final segment was built below the Reeds Peak tunnel, where the earlier road descended a rather steep grade known as Greens Hill. Although it is not known who this hill was named for, the General Manager of the Tar Baby mine was C. R. Green, a mining man with many years experience at the Cardiff mine and other South Fork properties. He may well have been involved in road work that caused his name to be assigned to this difficult hill, but nothing has been found to substantiate this possibility. At any rate the new road was built above the old one following a more gentle grade between points J and K on the map. Hikers going up this road may not consider the grade as gentle, but a trip up the old right of way will convince them otherwise.

In 1916 the Cardiff company was convinced to start using motor vehicles to transport ore down the canyon. This eliminated many teams from the canyon roads and did much to ensure the purity of the water in Big Cottonwood Creek. However, in spite of the road work done in 1915, the South Fork road was still too steep for the trucks and tractors available at the time. Teams continued to be used until 1918 when the White Motor Company was able to demonstrate a five-ton narrow-tread truck that was able to negotiate the road to the mine.

One final change to the Cardiff Fork road was made by Nature in the 1960 decade when a colossal thunderstorm caused a flood to come cascading down out of the cirque below Kessler Peak, bringing with it great amounts of limestone rock. The Cardiff Fork road was covered with this debris, leaving it impassable. Another road was cut adjacent to the damaged one to gain access to the upper canyon. This was between H and J on the map in figure 1, and explains why there are parallel roads for a short distance.



/fig. 4. The Reeds Peak road comes down Greens Hill in the distance. Original Reed and Benson road and Doughnut Falls trail departs to the left in the distance. Before the Cardiff Fork road was closed to traffic the broad open area in foreground was a parking area where Doughnut Falls visitors could park.

Faint Trails in the Wasatch

7. Mouth of Parleys Canyon

Since the Faint Trails articles dealt with the history of things or places that might be seen along the trail and the winter snow cover made it difficult to see anything that might be discussed, the series was suspended during the winter months. In the Spring time when the series was resumed, the higher elevations were still snowbound, so the articles briefly come down lower where features or sights that might be discussed would no longer be covered with snow.

Interstate 80 and two branches of the I-215 belt route form an elongated triangle at the mouth of Parleys Canyon, creating a bit of rustic isolation where it is almost possible to ignore the sounds of traffic on the roads above. It is accessible by taking the biking-hiking path that parallels I-215 across the mouth of the canyon and turning off onto the dirt road that drops to the bottom of the canyon in an easterly direction. In this small tract of land there is a great deal of history that can make a short hike very interesting.

The first thing that is noticed is the well known Suicide Rock, gaudily decorated by armies of spray paint artists. In the early days of settlement in the Salt Lake Valley the rock was known as Sentinel Rock. Today it has been reduced to insignificant stature by the giant fill that carries the Belt Route across the mouth of Parleys Canyon; the top of the rock barely reaches the height of the highway. But in the nineteenth century, when the canyon road was down at the stream level, Sentinel Rock towered high overhead and was a well-known landmark. It was indeed a sentinel that marked the end of a difficult and arduous journey down the canyon.

In 1888 Salt Lake City reached out to Parleys Canyon for an additional supply of culinary water. A canal was constructed to carry the water across the high east bench, the Fort Douglas military reservation, the city cemetery and the north bench. Water was flowing through the canal by September of 1888. It was taken from Parleys Creek at a diversion dam about a half mile above the mouth of the canyon, then ran along the steep north side in a flume until it could turn north. Portions of that flume can be seen above the road in the canyon bottom. In 1890 a pipeline was installed, following the same route as the canal.

Hardly was the pipeline completed before a new facility was planned for Parleys Canyon water. It included a reservoir and a settling tank, as well as a larger conduit to carry the water to the city. The dam and gatehouse were to be located at Sentinel Rock. At the time the railroad was built into Parleys Canyon, in the summer of 1888, the only way past Sentinel Rock was the narrow space on the north side shared by the stream and the canyon road. And so the railroad's surveyors placed the track on the wagon road, raising the ire of the traveling public. Numerous complaints were made to the County Court, and after considerable negotiation, the railroad company went around the south side of the rock, digging a deep cut in the process. Before this time there was no passage around that side, the canyon wall coming down to meet the rock about half way up its side. With the new reservoir between the road and the railroad track,

it was necessary to build retaining walls along both sides, as well as the dam across the stream. A large settling tank was built on the downstream side of the rock, with a tunnel drilled through the rock to bring water to it from the reservoir. The conduit carrying the water from the settling tank to the city crossed the stream on a stone culvert with two arches,



Fig. 1. The south side of Suicide Rock as seen from the canyon bottom. The railroad ran around this side of the rock. Before the railroad cut was made the canyon's south slope joined the rock at half its height. I-215 runs across the fill in the background.



Fig. 2. Top of the settling tank on the northwest side of Suicide Rock, with the concrete base for the conduit leading to the stream below.

of the rock, and some of the retaining walls still stand on both sides of the now empty reservoir. At its upper end some large pipes rest in the canyon bottom, they being remnants of the Big Cottonwood conduit. On the south side of Sentinel Rock the large cut that allowed the railroad to avoid the canyon road can be seen. The cut was considerably enlarged in the early twentieth century when heavy flooding caused the stream to leave its banks and run down the railroad bed. If one walks around the rock to the flat area just below the dam, the top of the settling tank can be seen, the tank having been filled with soil, and more recently an accumulation of trash. On the stream bank below the tank the base for the conduit remains, but very little of the arch bridge crossing the stream, which could be seen in the 1970 decade, has survived.

When Interstate 80 was built through the lower part of Parleys Canyon in the early 1960's there was no room in the canyon bottom to share with the stream, so it was banished to a pipe buried deep under the new highway. If one walks up canyon from the reservoir, the old road will disappear under detritus from the new highway construction, but a crude trail continues until this portion of the canyon ends where I-215 joins I-80. At that point the end of the underground pipe can be seen, with the water pouring out, leaping and splashing, as if expressing its joy at seeing the light of day once again.

The Suicide Rock name was a turn-of-the-twentieth-century innovation, the result of a legend of a beautiful (of course!) Indian princess who killed herself by jumping from the rock's summit over an unrequited love affair. The story was oft repeated by travelers who frequented the canyon, especially those with children, and was even picked up and documented by the WPA writer's project around 1940. While it is not known where this tale originated, there was a curious related story. In the early 1890s, when the water works was being built, a tunnel was drilled through Sentinel Rock to carry the intake pipe from the reservoir to the settling tank. According to Mr. B. F. Hill, who was in charge of the works after it went into operation, a human skeleton was found embedded in the solid rock in the tunnel, a human fossil, so to speak. It is unlikely such a significant discovery would have appeared in print only once; it must have been a fabrication. But one good tale deserves another, and this one may well have prompted the story of the Indian princess.

then continued in a westerly direction until it reached the top of the north slope and turned toward the city. It crossed Dudlers Gulch, about a half mile below the dam, on a high, arched culvert that today remains as one of the features of Parley's Historic Nature Park. The water works was built during the years 1890 to 1893.

When the city reached farther out to Big Cottonwood Canyon for more water in 1906 it built a conduit to carry the water as far as Parleys Canyon where it ran down into the canyon to dump the water into the upper end of the reservoir. After the Mountain Dell dam was fully operational and a new conduit was built to carry the water down the canyon, the plant at Sentinel Rock was no longer needed and both Mountain Dell and Big Cottonwood water were taken directly to the city.

The breached dam can be seen at the northeast side



Fig. 3. Part of the beautifully executed stone arch bridge that carried the water conduit across Parleys Canyon creek. This photo was taken in 1972.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

8. Carbonate Trail

In the first half of 1871 a number of mining claims were made on the high ridge south of Keslers Peak. They included the Homeward Bound, Provo, Silver Bilk, Infant, Sailor Jack and Little Giant lodes. There was much interest in these claims and they precipitated a flurry of activity on all sides of Keslers Peak and the ridge to the south. Almost immediately a trail was constructed from the South Fork to the claims. In 1877, after the activity had died down, the Provo claim was relocated, that is to say the original claimants abandoned the claim and someone else made a new claim on the same location. The new claim was called the Carbonite Mine. Mines always assumed the name registered in the mining recorder's book even if the name was badly misspelled. However in this case the claim was amended the following year to include a survey and the name of Carbonate. The new name was generally accepted and continued to be used for the mine and surrounding

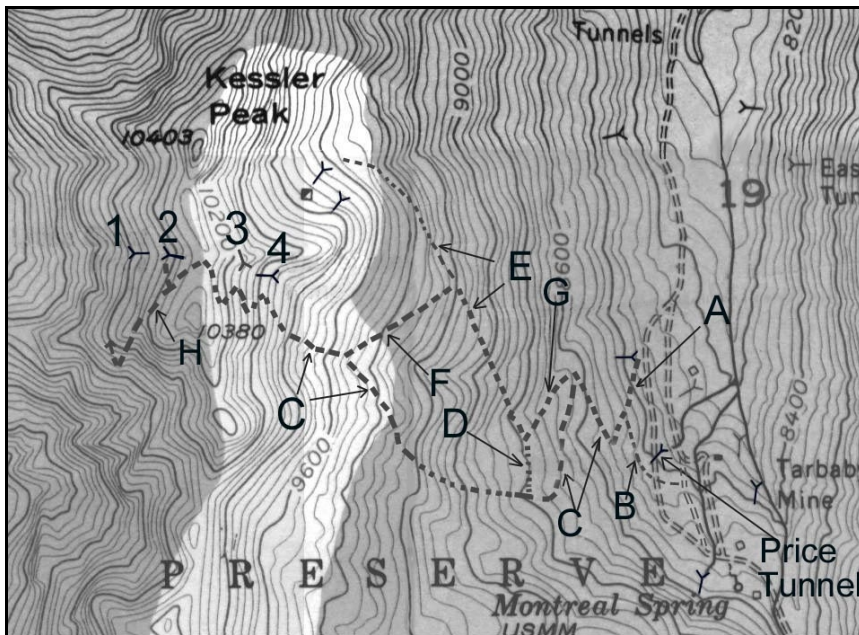


Fig. 1. The Carbonate trail, its branches and variants are shown on this portion of the Dromedary Peak and Mount Aire USGS maps of 1955.

area. The pass about a quarter mile south of Kessler Peak is known as Carbonate Pass, the peak to the south of the pass has been known as Carbonate Peak and the trail to the pass, first known as the Sailor Jack trail, became the Carbonate trail. Nearly every operator of the mine continued to use the Carbonate name; an exception was the Kessler Mining Company, a group of New York investors who in 1878 took the name of nearby Keslers Peak, but changed the spelling to Kessler. The Kessler Mining Company didn't last very long, but its spelling remained and the peak has been known as Kessler Peak ever since. The origin of the original Kesler name

is explained in *The Lady in the Ore Bucket*, p.55).

The trail to Carbonate Pass started at the Reed and Benson road, which itself was being constructed at the same time. It followed the route designated as B and C on the map. The traditional foot of the trail today, segment A, was built sometime later. When it reaches a badly washed out section, before the first switchback, the original trail can be seen going down toward the southeast and meeting the road just above the Price Tunnel. The site of the Price Tunnel is seen today as a large dump below the road with a considerable amount of water flowing from the collapsed tunnel. When the bypass road was built to avoid the original steep section along the Montreal Spring stream it cut through the lower end of the original Carbonate trail. The lower section was abandoned, but can still be followed when the vegetation is low.



Fig. 2. Base of the traditional Carbonate trail is at the North Price mine dump on the right (north) side of the road. The trail goes up the hill in the center background.

After the first switchback the trail climbs through a pleasant wooded area. When it breaks out of the trees the obvious route makes a climbing traverse across a steep open slope, segment G on the map. This, too, is of more recent origin. The original trail turned south for some distance. This segment of the trail can be followed without much difficulty, but when it turns to climb directly up the slope, it has almost completely disappeared. Near the top of the slope it can be picked up again and is easily followed up a climbing traverse, then nearly straight up the steep slope until it goes through a number of switchbacks up to and past the very obvious mine dump of the Homeward Bound tunnel and on to Carbonate Pass.

This was the route of the original trail. Today's traditional route follows the climbing traverse at G, going over a steep grassy slope and a section of talus before meeting a fairly level trail leading in a northerly direction, segment E on the map. The path goes through a deep gully, then climbs for some distance over open slopes before turning southwesterly. This segment, F on the map, climbs to and through a heavy stand of aspen, then breaks out onto the open slopes again before meeting the original trail, C.

The trail indicated as D and E on the map was built shortly after the original Carbonate trail. It took miners over into the cirque on the southeast side of Kessler Peak where there was considerable mining activity and was known briefly as the Belle de France trail, named after a claim in the cirque. Mine dumps, prospect holes and remnants of stone cabins can still be seen in the cirque. For many years, well into the 1960 decade, hikers used this trail as an accepted route to Kessler Peak, even though it required a trying climb over steep loose talus to the head of the cirque. Today the northern portion of this trail has all but disappeared. But with the understanding of why trail D and E was built and used, it is easy to see why segment G, an obvious shortcut, came into being.

In 1908 Alma Nielsen and associates took a lease on the Carbonate mines and built a gravity tramway from near the foot of the traditional trail up to the Homeward Bound tunnel. While this is the subject of the next segment of this series, it is necessary to mention it here because it explains the origin of the final segment, F, of the traditional route. Since the tramway passed through the aspen grove covering part of this segment, access was required to build the towers and string the cables. Indeed, there is a large unnatural flat area along the trail in the aspen that was likely prepared and used as a camp and storage area during the tramway construction.

At Carbonate Pass the trail continues over the top and down the other side in a southwesterly direction. Its path is easily followed until it reaches a switchback about three or four hundred feet from the top. Here it turns back toward the lowest tunnel on the west side of the ridge, but the trail has completely disappeared beneath a century of rolling rocks. A short distance down this trail from the pass another segment can be seen turning back to the upper tunnel on the west side.

The Carbonate mine ultimately had four tunnels, two on each side of the ridge, all connected inside the mountain. On the map the tunnels are numbered 1 to 4, they being the Little Giant, Carbonate, Baker and Homeward Bound, respectively. In addition to structures that may have been located at the tunnel sites, there were several cabins at the pass. Stone walls from these buildings and the ubiquitous cast iron stove parts still can be found there.



Fig. 3. Homeward Bound tunnel dump near the top of the Carbonate Trail. Rails and tramway cables are draped down over the side, while much mining detritus litters the slopes below.

Faint Trails in the Wasatch

9. Carbonate Tramway

The Carbonate group of mines built an enviable reputation during the 1870 decade when it produced much rich ore. However, as the mining boom sank into the late century doldrums, the Carbonate sank with it. After the turn of the century mining appeared to be returning as a viable Wasatch mountain industry, albeit not on a scale seen in the heady days of the 1870s. In 1908 Alma Nielson and associates secured a lease on the Carbonate group and began preparations to restore the property to its former glory. Addressing one of the major concerns, that of transportation of supplies and shipping ore, the group began the construction of an aerial tramway between the Homeward Bound tunnel and the bottom of the South Fork of Big Cottonwood Canyon, above the canyon road a short distance from the North Price mine. It was a “jig-back” tram using two cars, or buckets, one going up while the other went down. The buckets were supported by a carriage running on a fixed one-inch diameter cable and connected together by a three-eighth-inch hauling cable. Gravity provided the motive power, the loaded downward bound car pulling the other car up as it went down.

Since leasers are not usually in a position to invest heavily in facility improvement, the tramway was an exercise in simplicity. Eight towers were constructed along the its 4000 foot length, each being a simple heavy timber pole with two cross arms at the upper end and braced by guy wires. Cast iron carriers were bolted to the ends of the upper cross arm to support the fixed cable, while cast rollers were bolted to the lower cross arm to allow the hauling cable to be held aloft while it moved with the cars. It was reported that one of the associates, Robert Stevens, went to the Silver King at Park City where an old tram cable was lying on the ground and got a group of local men to roll it up for him. He then took it over to the Cottonwoods where it was installed on the towers. Just how they dragged four thousand feet of heavy cable up the mountainside and then raised it to the top cross arms

of the towers is not clear, but it must have been a masterpiece of ingenuity. They may well have put in the hauling cable first and used it to haul the big cable into place.

The hauling cable wrapped around large drums at both ends of the tramway. Again native ingenuity saved the day, or at least a lot of money. The drums were constructed on site. They took a large straight timber, carved wooden bearings at each end, then covered it with 4x4 and 6x6 lumber to build up the drum diameter and covered the circumference with hardwood flooring. Suitable braking was provided to prevent the cars from running away. James Wade later claimed one could hear the drums squeaking and groaning for miles around when the cars were in motion. The cars, actually large buckets, could carry about one ton of ore and make the trip from mine to base in three and one-half minutes.

The tramway was completed and operating by the end of the 1908 season, but the leasers did not enjoy its

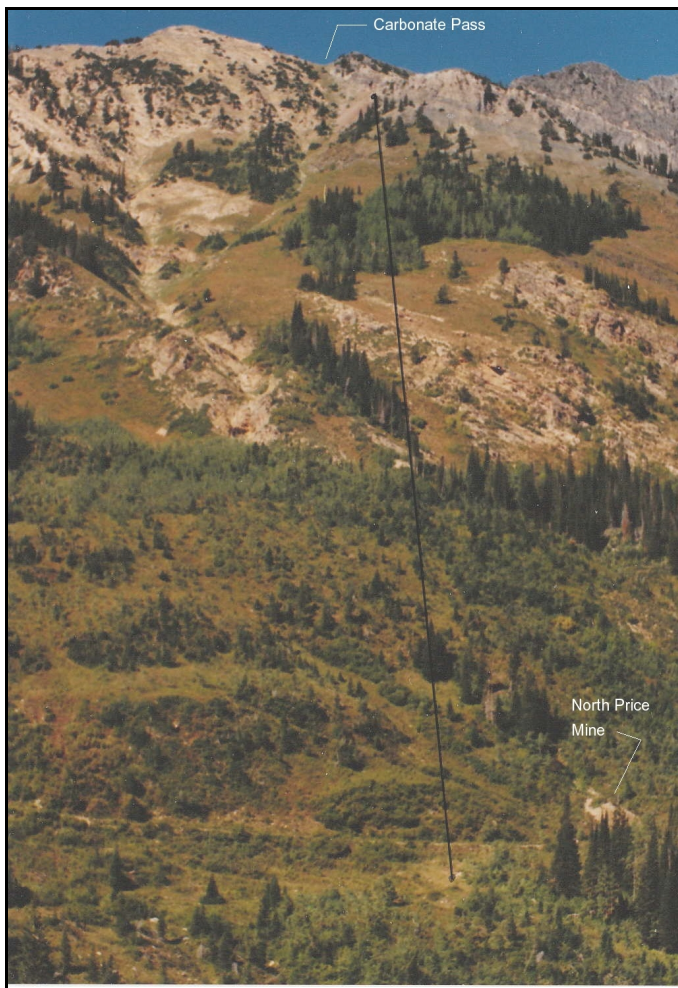


Fig. 1. Line of the Carbonate Tramway, from the lower terminal below today's Cardiff Fork road to the Homeward Bound tunnel below Carbonate Pass. The original South Fork road can be seen running below the lower terminal.



Fig. 2. Carrier casting bolted onto tramway tower upper cross arm to carry the large cable.

James W. Wade, George H. Ryan, Ben F. Tibby and D. Fenkell, secured a lease on the mine and began operations, using the tramway to ship small quantities of ore. During the winter of 1913-14 several towers were taken down by avalanches, but repairs were made and the tramway was back in operation by mid-June. James Wade later said they used the tramway a lot, but with the small amount of ore the few of them could extract they did not use it much in the span of each day. They also used it to bring their supplies up to the mine, hauled up by a descending bucket full of ore. Wade said it took a little push at the top to get the cars moving. The group continued to work the mines until 1916, but only shipped about 658 tons of ore in that time. After that time the mine was not worked, the tramway fell into disuse and began suffering the ravages of Nature.

In 1916 big changes were taking place in the canyon around the lower terminal of the tramway. The Cardiff company, under pressure by Salt Lake City and County to stop using teams to haul wagons in the canyons, was experimenting with various types of motor vehicles. To ease the grades they had to negotiate in the South Fork new sections of road were built. One of them was in the vicinity of the Carbonate tramway, where the new road was built on the slope above the tram's lower terminal. It is not known if the tram cables were high enough to provide clearance above the new road, but sometime, either when the road was constructed or in later years when deterioration of the tram towers may have dropped the cables onto the road, the ends of the cables were dragged down canyon and up the slope to get them out of the way of both the road and the North Price tunnel.



Fig. 4. Remains of a tramway tower that has fallen down hill. The upper cross arm with its carrier casting is in the foreground. The lower cross arm with its rollers is in the background, and the heavy cable crosses from top left to bottom center.

Today the large cables can be seen where they cross the traditional Carbonate Trail at two places. The hauling cables have all but disappeared, although rusting pieces can be found at a few places. All the towers have fallen and rotted away, and the metal parts have disappeared, probably taken as souvenir artifacts. The cables can still be seen at the Homeward Bound dump, but nothing remains of the upper terminal. The site of the lower terminal can be seen below today's Cardiff Fork road, with faint roadways circling it from the original road below. Segments of cables from deadmen also can be found there.

benefits very long. Two years later, in 1910, Ernest R. Woolley was able to arrange New York financing and purchased the Carbonate group of mines. Several months were required to get the tramway in operating condition before ore shipments began. In August of that year it was reported that "in the neighborhood of seventy tons" a day were being transported down to the loading station where it could be hauled to a local smelter. But barely had shipments begun when legal actions were brought by the former owner and a temporary restraining order was issued against Woolley's operations. There were no indications that they ever began again.

In 1913 a group of men, including



Fig. 3. The roller was bolted to the top of the lower cross arm, one at each end to support the moving hauling cable. A twelve-inch ruler gives an indication of the roller's size.

Faint Trails in the Wasatch

10. Argenta Trail

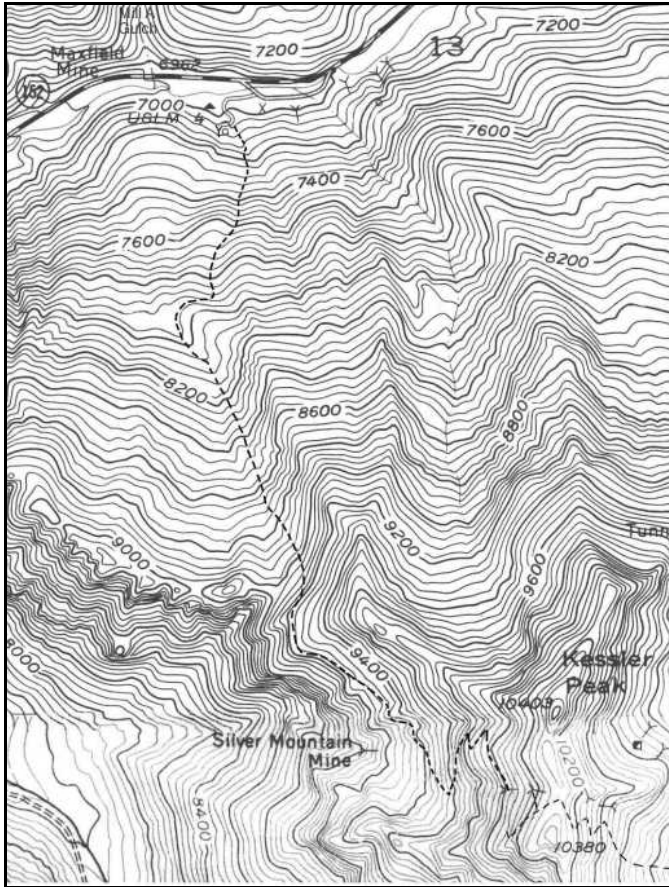
The Carbonate group of mines high on the ridge south of Kessler Peak had two avenues of access. The first was the Carbonate Trail, which was discussed in a previous episode in this series. The other was the Argenta Trail, dropping down the west side of the ridge, then heading north onto the south slopes of Big Cottonwood Canyon and down to the canyon road at the mining community of Argenta. The lower portion of this trail actually has a history going back a score of years before the mining era began.

For a half dozen years after the pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 Big Cottonwood Canyon was considered “impregnable.” The canyon had been penetrated for some distance, probably as far as Mill B South Fork, where the S-curve is today, but above that point the canyon walls converged on the stream, which in turn fell over one cascade after another. Passage beyond this point was considered impossible. Then in 1854, at a time when considerable new construction in the city created a desperate need for more lumber, Brigham Young, correctly assuming a tremendous supply of timber would be found farther up the canyon, formed the Big Cottonwood Lumber Company to exploit that resource. In September of that year he sent several of the new company’s principals on an exploration of the upper canyon. They too found penetration difficult, and went up Mill Creek Canyon instead, using the road to Archibald Gardner’s sawmill near the upper end of today’s paved road, crossed the divide into Big Cottonwood Canyon and explored their way down the canyon. Of course they found all the timber their leader had expected would be there. One of the explorers, Frederick Kesler, was a millwright whose responsibility was to locate, design and construct the sawmills the company needed. For his first mill, named Mill A, Kesler chose a site at the mouth of today’s Mill A Gulch. He sent his woodsmen up the south slopes to cut trees, first to construct the mill, which began in the early winter of 1854, and later to provide an adequate timber supply for the mill’s operation. In the process a network of trails and slides were created to bring the logs down the slopes, all converging near the mill site. Since Kesler was directing where the trees should be cut and where the slides should be built, the slopes became known as Kesler’s mountain. When the miners arrived on the scene they used the name for the entire massif, calling it Keslers Peak, the origin of today’s name.

As Mill A cut logs into lumber over the following years the woodsmen had to go higher and higher for their trees, and the main logging slides grew longer and longer until they reached nearly to the top of the slope. In 1862 the Big Cottonwood Lumber Company was disbanded, but the mills continued to be operated by the principals of the company, although the timber supply for Mill A was probably becoming marginal by that time. Then, on 18 March 1875, Mill A became a victim of its past appetite when an enormous snow avalanche came rushing down the denuded slopes, destroying the mill and its several outbuildings.

By this time, 1875, the miners had moved into the mountains and eagerly accepted names and trails that had been used by the lumbermen. One of the latter was a Mill A logging slide. A trail was built to connect it to the Little Giant tunnel in the Carbonate group, the lower tunnel on the west side of the ridge. It dropped down the west slopes to a point directly below the tunnel where it rounded the end of a band of cliffs. It then headed north, going through the deep gully below the couloir that starts at the summit of Kessler Peak and continued across a steep grassy slope and a talus field until it reached a pass on the ridge between Mineral Fork and Big Cottonwood Canyon. There it dropped into the woods only a short distance before arriving at the top of one of Mill A’s logging slides. It then followed the slide to the bottom of the canyon. By this time the mining recorder for the district had placed his office at the site known as Argenta, very close to the bottom of the trail. While it is not known exactly when this trail was constructed, it was in place before the end of the 1878 season because it was described in an article in January 1879. It surely existed much earlier than that since two 1872 claim notices referred to a trail going down to Mill A.

The Argenta trail between the canyon bottom and the grassy slope above Mineral Fork can be followed with relative ease, although it is very steep. At mile 8.8 on the canyon highway a section of the pre-1960 canyon highway drops down to where it once crossed a bridge. Just upstream is a gauging station with a footbridge across the stream. On the other side the old highway and a dirt road can be followed downstream, although both are now heavily overgrown with willows. The dirt road turns left and climbs steeply. The Argenta trail can be found going straight ahead, up the slope, where the road turns right again to go to the old workings of the Gold Coin tunnel. The trail is obvious from this point. Points of interest along the way include the deep U-shape of the trail at many spots, a result of dragging logs, rawhide loads and ore boats over the years. At one place where the slope is extra steep the trail



Approximate route of the Argenta Trail between the Argenta townsite and the Little Giant tunnel below Carbonate Pass.

splits, both sections making a climbing traverse toward the west, joining again at the top of the slope before entering a pleasant, almost level meadow. Above this point the trail can be obscured when the grasses grow high, but its depression can usually be seen and followed. As it climbs steeper again it passes a large area of red mulch, which not too many years ago was a pile of Douglas Fir logs awaiting their turn to be dragged down the trail. But their time never came and they are now in advanced stages of decomposition. This is one of the many places where a tributary trail can be seen, this one leading off toward the west. Before the Argenta trail reaches the pass where Mineral Fork can be seen, there is a flat area on its east side. This may have been the upper end of the original logging trail and certainly was a staging area for the miners. A faint trail leads off the end of the flat to join the Argenta trail a short distance down the slope.

Continuing above this point the trail leaves the woods and climbs to a talus crossing, then traverses south across steep grassy slopes. From this point the trail becomes faint. In the mid-1970 decade it was very obvious and easy to follow all the way up to the mine. At that time the trail was about one hundred years old, which appears to be the approximate life expectancy of unattended trails, especially on steep open slopes. Along this slope the dump of the Silver Mountain mine can be seen in the steep gully below. This was once one of the preferred

routes to Kessler Peak: up Mineral Fork, past the Silver Mountain mine and on up the gully onto the grassy slope and this trail.

The trail makes a climbing traverse to the base of the cliffs, crosses the continuation of the couloir coming down from the summit of Kessler Peak and climbs steeply up the other side. From this point a stone cabin can be seen on the slope above the cliffs, north of the couloir. It was for a mine located higher on the south side of the couloir. The trail continues in a southerly direction, climbing across a slope with much loose gravel until it reaches the end of the cliffs at the gully coming down from the Little Giant dump. The remnants of a mine can be seen in the gully with its cabin in the trees on the other side. This was most likely the Osceola, recorded in December 1870 and later becoming part of the Silver Mountain Mining Company's holdings.

At this point the Argenta trail made a switchback in the edge of the gully to go the other direction above the cliffs, but that part has been washed out for years. Above the cliff is much loose gravel that has completely obscured the trail. Loose gravel directly above a cliff is not a comforting situation, but if one heads northeasterly, the trail will again become obvious. It enters an area of large rocks, many of which have been thrown to the side over the years, making clear borders to the trail. It makes three more switchbacks, two to the right and one to the left, before taking a long traverse to its destination at the Little Giant tunnel. At the upper, last switchback a faint trail might be noticed climbing northerly to the edge of the big couloir. Below to the right is the dump of the mine and far below to the left is the stone cabin on the other side of the couloir, both mentioned earlier. From this point a trail once went to the mine and another from the mine down to the cabin, but Nature has reclaimed both.

Except for the section above Mineral Fork the Argenta trail is a pleasant one to hike. The forest on the north slopes of Big Cottonwood Canyon has recovered from its trauma of the sawmill years and after climbing several hundred feet the noise of the canyon is left behind, leaving one alone with Nature. The trail is little used, so there is small chance of meeting other people on the way. It climbs about 3200 feet from the Big Cottonwood stream to the Little Giant tunnel.