

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

41. Woodlawn Mine - Part I

Most hikers who frequent Honeycomb Fork are familiar with the Woodlawn mine. The wreckage of buildings raise curious interest, while the tunnel has attracted those who engaged in ill-advised underground exploration. However, it may come as a surprise to learn that in spite of the big mine dump and mining detritus, this was not the site of the original Woodlawn mine. It got that name from the name of the company that operated it: The Woodlawn Copper Mining Company.

The Woodlawn claim that gave its name to the company was not in Honeycomb Fork, but across the east ridge, high on the slopes above Lake Solitude.

The origin of the Woodlawn company goes back to 1873 and 1874 when Alfred A. Brim and two of his younger brothers prospected the upper reaches of Honeycomb Fork. They filed three claims, one of them named the Sensation Lode, straddling the ridge between Honeycomb and Mill F South Forks. However, the ore they found was of a low grade that could not be worked profitably by the methods of ore reduction in use at the time. As refining methods improved over the years that followed, Brim returned to his earlier claim and began working it as the New Sensation, the name reflecting his belief that the old Sensation claim held new promise. In this endeavor he was accompanied by his brother-in-law, Sylvester S. Phippen. Their significant efforts during the 1880 decade were mostly on the Honeycomb Fork side of the New Sensation claim. They drove two tunnels,

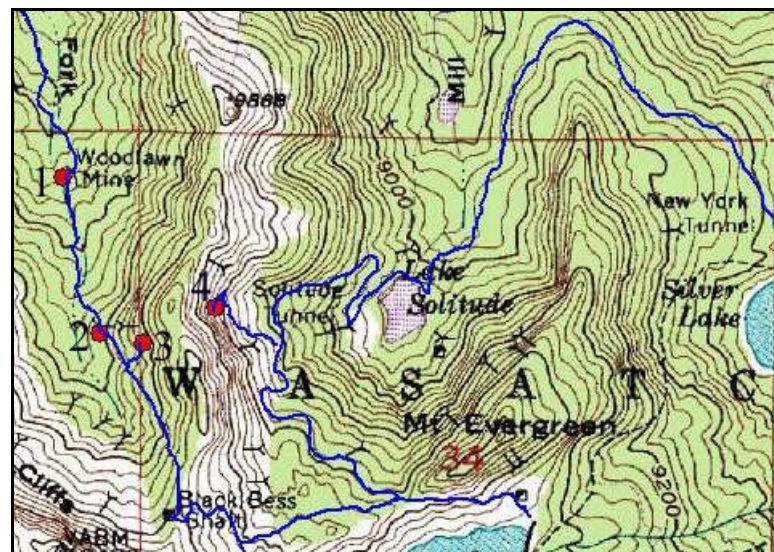


Fig. 1. This map shows some of the significant workings of the Woodlawn Copper Mining Company. The dark line across the bottom is the Twin Lakes Pass trail. The one at the upper right is the Brighton - Lake Solitude trail, continuing as a road up above the lake to join the Twin Lakes Pass trail, then climbs to Honeycomb Pass. The line on the left is the Honeycomb Fork trail. The numbered dots are: 1) Woodlawn mine, 2) Clark tunnel, 3) New Sensation tunnel, and 4) Manahansett tunnel. Trails to the latter two mines are also shown.

named Woodlawn and Snowstorm, and added considerable length to the Colbath tunnel that had been started by other parties. In 1890 they filed three additional claims around the New Sensation: the Manahansett straddling the ridge to the north and the Wood Lawn (two words!) and Lakeside on the east, the latter two being in Mill F South Fork. In fact, the Lakeside claim encompassed most of Lake Solitude. Two years later they were joined by Henry W. Lawrence, a Salt Lake businessman and mining entrepreneur who bought a one-third interest in their four claims. In 1894 they sold another one-sixth of their claims to Lawrence's son, George N., a lawyer in Salt Lake City. He in turn sold part of his share to Adrian C. Ellis, Jr., another lawyer, raising the number of owners to five. The original two miners may have felt overwhelmed by the number of new owners, but the infusion of cash certainly helped them continue their development work. During the next few years they ran another tunnel on the Honeycomb Fork side, this one called the New Sensation, and one on the Mill F South Fork side, called Manahansett, even though it was within the bounds of the New Sensation claim.

Early in the year 1899 the owners were joined by William T. Dinwoodey, another Salt Lake businessman, and Henry Lawrence's youngest son, William J., to incorporate the Woodlawn Copper Mining Company. Notice the tendency to recycle the Woodlawn name, first used for the early tunnel, then the 1890 claim and now the company. The original two owners were included as incorporators, and as if to assuage any hard feelings about being overrun by city folk, Phippen

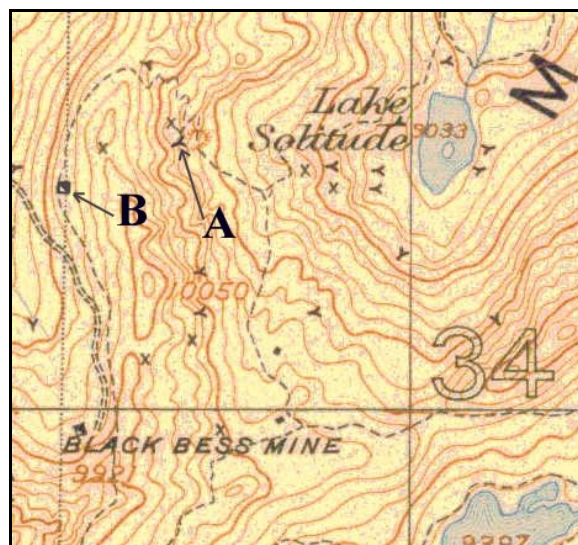


Fig. 2. This segment of the 1907 USGS Cottonwood Special topo map shows the trail to the Manahansett mine (A) going up from the Lake Solitude trail, then climbing over the divide between Mill F and Honeycomb Forks and down to the New Sensation mine (B).



Fig. 3. The remains of a log mine building at the Manahansett mine rests in a cluster of trees. The incline is at the dark spot at the base of the cliffs on the right.

was made vice president of the company and Brim became superintendent of the mine. However, William J. Lawrence, whose previous experience included being a clerk in his father's office and having filed six claims with Robert Brighton nine years earlier, was made mine manager. This arrangement didn't last too many years because in 1902 Lawrence became interested in Scott Hill properties that became the Scottish Chief Mining Company, causing the Woodlawn company to enter a period of inactivity. In 1906 Phippen took sick and died, and Brim moved out of state in 1908.

In 1911, when Lawrence closed his operations at the Scottish Chief, he returned to the Woodlawn properties and started some amount of work there. But both the New Sensation and Manahansett tunnels were difficult of access and very inconvenient for shipping ore. By 1915 it was announced the workings would be put out on lease and the company moved to a new base of operations farther down in Honeycomb Fork where it started to drive a long tunnel to exploit

its claims at depth. That story will be told in the next Faint Trails episode.

While these early workings leading up to the Woodlawn Copper Mining Company are rather remote and obscure, there are remnants of them that can be seen today. As shown in the accompanying 1907 topo map, Figure 2, the Manahansett and New Sensation tunnels were connected by a trail that ran over the divide. It started at the trail to Lake Solitude and climbed through one switchback to the Manahansett tunnel. This trail can be seen and followed today, although its lower end has been cut away by later road building for the Solitude ski resort. At the tunnel there is the remains of a curious log structure that rests in a cluster of trees. One wall has part of a window frame, so it probably was used as a shelter for miners and their equipment. Today its only occupant is a badly misshapen, rusted and dismantled ore car. The two tunnels were also connected inside the mountain by a winze across their 170 foot vertical separation.

From the Manahansett tunnel the trail over the divide can be followed for a short distance, but then disappears. However, on the Honeycomb Fork side it can be picked up again where it follows a long traverse to the New Sensation tunnel site. The dump is obvious, with its two piles of rock, but the tunnel has collapsed and its tell-tale depression is hidden behind a large spruce tree. The trail continues at the south end of the dump, supported here by a stone wall. It drops rapidly until it meets the present Honeycomb Fork road. Again, the foot of the trail has been cut away when the road was reworked for the ski area. As a result it is not very obvious and is easily missed unless one is looking for it.

Other old workings remain, albeit as little more than a small weathered dump or a scar on the hillside. Of those mentioned above, the Colbath tunnel is at the Clark tunnel site, which is the big dump on the Honeycomb Fork trail. The Snowstorm mine is only a short distance, about 130 feet, directly above the Clark tunnel. The site of the Woodlawn tunnel that existed before 1890 is south-southeast from the New Sensation tunnel site about 115 feet and only slightly higher. There are no obvious trails remaining to the latter two sites.



Fig. 4. The dump of the New Sensation mine in Honeycomb Fork. The trail to the Manahansett mine leaves the far side of the dump and follows the contour for some distance before going over the ridge and down the other side. The collapsed tunnel is at the large spruce tree on the right, and the trail down into Honeycomb Fork goes down behind the person viewing this scene.

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42. Woodlawn Mine - Part II

In 1915 the Woodlawn Copper Mining Company shook off its lethargy and started driving a long tunnel



Fig. 1. Dump of the Woodlawn mine in Honeycomb Fork, as seen from the trail going up the fork. The Honeycomb cliffs loom in the background.

to exploit its claims at depth. This took place farther down Honeycomb Fork from the earlier New Sensation and Manahansett mines, at the site of the Woodlawn dump we can see on the Honeycomb Fork trail today. The work started in 1915 with a great amount of activity. The site of the tunnel was north of the company's existing claims, not an unusual situation for tunnels whose destination was a considerable distance from the portal. But in this case the company took steps to control the land surrounding its new works. It had two new claims recorded, the Buena Vista and Snowstorm, side by side and contiguous to its existing Manahansett claim. Here was another example of the penchant to recycle names, for the Snowstorm tunnel was one of the very early workings of Brim and Phippen on the New Sensation claim back in the 1880s. Another

interesting thing about the two new claims was that the Buena Vista extended across Honeycomb Fork and encompassed the works at the Annie tunnel and another tunnel of the Prince of Wales group. Accordingly the company gave an easement to allow access to and use of the land that had been in used by the Prince of Wales company and its subsequent leasers for many decades.

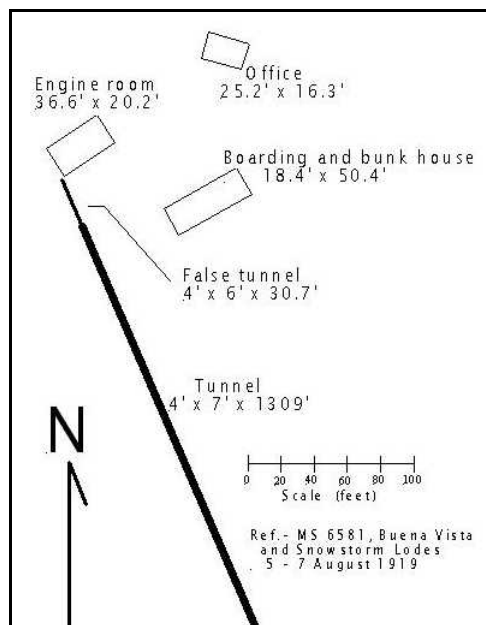


Fig. 2. Drawing showing the layout of buildings at the Woodlawn mine in August 1919. All structures have collapsed and are now in ruins.

he moved his family to Salt Lake City and went to work at the Woodlawn company's new tunnel. Within a year he was the foreman and by 1919 he was the mine superintendent. Under his direction the mine made great progress. In 1917 additional buildings were erected, probably the office and boarding house shown in the accompanying drawing, and heavier machinery was installed. At that time or in the years following another boarding house was built a short distance up Honeycomb Fork, separated from the mine

By the following summer, in 1916, the tunnel was over 400 feet in length and yielding a modest quantity of ore. Structures to support the new work were built, an electrically driven hoist was installed at a winze inside the tunnel and an air compressor at the portal supplied air for drills and ventilation. Power was taken from a transmission line that had been run from the Solitude tunnel at Lake Solitude through Honeycomb Fork to the Alta tunnel in Silver Fork several years earlier. While William Lawrence was mine manager, a man by the name of Harry Gardner became the foreman and supervised the daily work. Gardner had been working at Bingham Canyon since before the turn of the twentieth century. Then in 1915

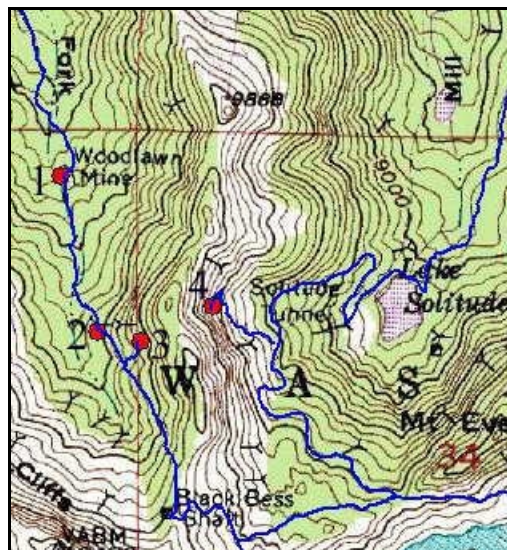


Fig. 3. This map shows some of the significant workings of the Woodlawn Copper Mining Company. The Honeycomb Fork trail runs to the upper left corner. The numbered dots are: 1) Woodlawn mine, 2) Clark tunnel, 3) New Sensation tunnel, and 4) Manahansett tunnel. Trails to the latter two mines are also shown.

buildings and the noise of the daily operations by a section of forest. Such separation was often used when mines were operated throughout the day and night, allowing the night shift to sleep during the day without the distraction of the daily operations.



Fig. 4. Three generations of tunnels created this, the Clark tunnel dump in Honeycomb Fork. The first was the Colbath tunnel, creating the small dump to the right of center. The depression of the collapsed second tunnel is to the left of the Colbath and has a large tree growing on its rather small dump. The Clark tunnel depression is to the right of the Colbath. The Honeycomb Fork trail can be seen going down canyon on the left.

In early March 1920, during an intense snowstorm, the power failed and the Woodlawn mine was left without light or electricity to run its machinery. After several days of inactivity Gardner decided to check the power line even though the storm was still raging. He and another miner went out and when they didn't return in a reasonable time the other miners went to look for them. They found a slope that had avalanched, but it was the following morning before they found the bodies of the two men. Both were taken to the city for burial, but the superintendent left his name behind and the tunnel where he spent the last four or five years of his life was thereafter known as the Gardner Tunnel.

This was not the first loss the company suffered due to a snow avalanche. Nearly twenty years earlier, in December 1901, Eugene Humphreys, who was shift boss at the New Sensation mine, went out into a storm to retrieve some candles he had left at another part of the mine workings and was swept to his death in a

snow avalanche. The company suffered another loss a year after the Gardner avalanche, this time by the action of a miner who apparently was not aware of the many dangers of electrical power. A short circuit started a fire in the compressor house and when the miner, Abe Erickson, investigated and found the machinery on fire, he threw a bucket of water on the flames and was electrocuted through his efforts.

During this time the Clark Tunnel, about a third of a mile up Honeycomb Fork from the Gardner tunnel, also was developed. While little information has been found about activities at this site, it is known that it had three generations of tunnels, the first dating from the 1880s and called the Colbath tunnel, the same one that Brim and Phippen had extended for their purposes in the 1880s. It was somewhat higher than the top of the large dump seen today and has a small dump that rests between the collapsed tunnels of the other two. The second tunnel, whose name and date remains unknown, was on the north side of the Colbath dump. Its dump is at the same level as the Clark's, but is much smaller and today has a large conifer tree growing on it. The Clark tunnel was on the east side of the Colbath and was extensively worked to create the large dump that remains today. It had underground connections with the Manahansett and New Sensation workings.



Fig. 5. Remains of the boarding house in the woods a short distance above the Woodlawn mine, as it appeared in 2006. (W. Nelsen photo)

The Woodlawn company continued operations until June of 1928 when it and the Big Cottonwood Coalition Mining Company were taken over by the newly formed Kentucky-Utah Mining Company. The Big Cottonwood Coalition company's tunnel, above the Big Cottonwood road northeast of the Woodlawn mine, became the main operating tunnel for the new company. It was driven under the Woodlawn workings and was worked until the middle of the twentieth century. But over the years it probably produced more water than ore, and continues to do so today, for the Kentucky-Utah tunnel is the source of culinary water for the Silver Fork community. In the 1950s most of the Kentucky-Utah property was taken over to create the Solitude ski resort.

Today the Woodlawn dump and detritus of the buildings that once stood there can be seen. A short distance above the remains of the newer boarding house rests among the trees awaiting its final demise. Farther up the fork the Clark dump attracts the curiosity of its visitors, but little in the way of artifacts remain, save the remnants of a dugout cabin a short distance down the Honeycomb Fork trail.

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43. Twin Lakes - Lake Mary Trail

Researching the origin and development of trails can be much like researching a family history. The problem with the trails is that there is nothing like a Trails History center or a library where one could search for something like “Twin Lakes to Lake Mary trail.” The alternative is to survey what might be available in the form of written accounts of an area and the activities that might have taken place there and merging that with what few old maps that might be available. In the case of the trail in question here, what is known is that originally it was

two separate and distinct trails that served their individual purposes, and later were joined to serve a new and completely different purpose.

The Twin Lakes - Lake Mary trail may not be as well known or as popular as others in the Brighton area, such as the Twin Lakes, Twin Lakes Pass or Lake Mary trails, but it is a wonderful trail that runs along the base of Mount Millicent, going through a dense forest as well as an open boulder field. Its route as it appears today is shown in Figure 1, but that was not its original route. The USGS Cottonwood Special map of 1907 shows two separate and distinct trails that join as they drop into Brighton. One goes up to the Twin Lakes and around the south side of the lakes, while the other goes to Lakes Phoebe and Mary. This was a time when Phoebe and Mary were two separate and distinct lakes, as can be seen on the map in

Figure 2. Also notice that the trail going

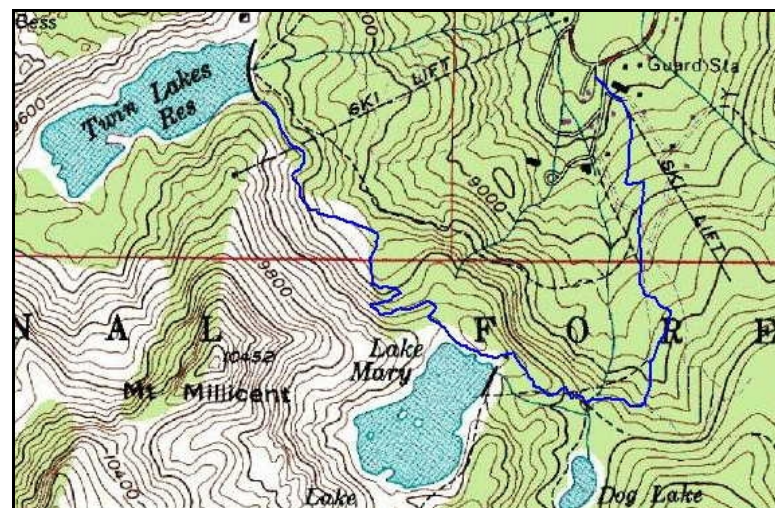


Fig. 1. The trail between the south end of the Twin Lakes dam and Lake Mary is shown on this 1975 vintage topo map. Also shown is its continuation around the east side of the dam to join the trail from Brighton to Lake Mary, and that trail down into Brighton.

farther up towards Lakes Martha and Catherine continued around the west side of the two lakes. It is likely this was the earliest route to the upper lakes. A Surveyor General map of this area dated December 1871 shows Brighton's house near Big Cottonwood Lake, today's Silver Lake, and a trail going from there toward the southwest, a much more direct route to Lake Mary than the trail in use today and one that agrees with the direction of the trail shown in the 1907 map. Since Brighton and his sons had several claims they were working in the area around Lakes Martha and Catherine, they could well be the ones who blazed this original trail. As for the one that went to the Twin Lakes, it may have been used by miners going to or from Alta. But by the second half of the 1870 decade Brighton's cabins and hotel were becoming a popular destination for recreationists and these trails gave them access to the lakes. If the Twin Lakes trail was not in place by then, the new breed of hikers certainly brought it into being.

Among the new group of Wasatch visitors were Henry L. A. Culmer and Alfred Lambourne, both artists and writers who shared their love for the mountains. In their explorations in 1875 they discovered a small body of water not far from the trail to Lakes Phoebe and Mary. Culmer called it “a dainty bit of water that rests upon a shelf of the mountain in a most secluded spot.” He further admitted that he and Lambourne later “spent a whole day in a vain search for this elusive sheet of water, and when it was afterwards found [he] gave it its name.” He called it Lake Annette, after Annette Wells, a daughter of Daniel H. Wells. Three years later she became Culmer's wife. The tiny lake was shown on the 1907 and 1939 maps, but fails to appear on more contemporary ones. Today the lake is very shallow, having

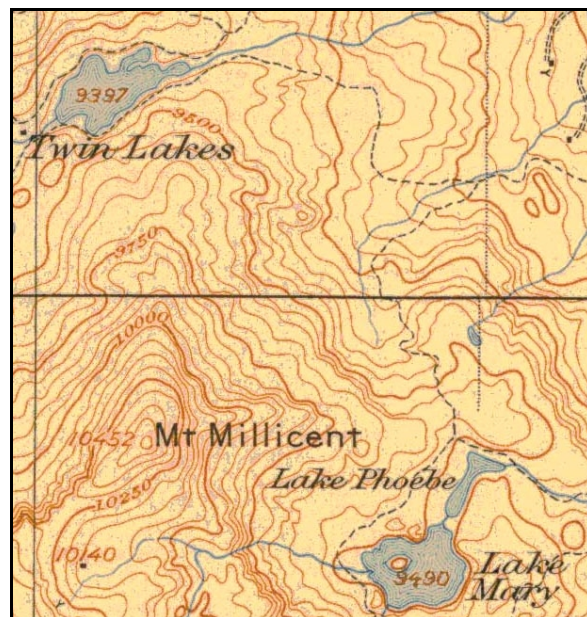


Fig. 2. This 1907 map shows separate trails from Twin Lakes and Lakes Phoebe and Mary heading down toward Brighton and merging before getting there.



Fig. 3. Little known and seldom seen, Annette Lake “rests upon a shelf of the mountain in a most secluded spot.”

been filled by years of silt, and is littered with downed timber.

Sometime in the late nineteenth century a road was built going east from Brighton, following the general route of today’s Lake Mary trail, but before reaching the lake it turned toward Dog Lake to support exploration of the Mountain Lake mining properties. This road will be the subject of another Faint Trails article. Suffice it to say now that it provided another route toward the popular lakes and a trail was created between the mining road and the old trail to Lake Phoebe, as seen in Figure 2.

In the first decade of the twentieth century the Salt Lake City Commission, faced with the need to provide ever increasing amounts of culinary water, began to look farther afield for water supplies. It was determined that new reservoirs were needed and the focus was on the Twin Lakes and Lakes Phoebe and Mary. In 1912 funds were appropriated for preliminary work toward the

construction of the dams. This required frequent travel back and forth between the two sites, so the trail from Lakes Phoebe and Mary was extended to the Twin Lakes. While it is not known when this was done, it surely was in place before the dam construction began in 1914. At the bottom of the fairly steep slope, where the trail came out of the forest and turned down toward Brighton, the new link was made to cross a large boulder field, then climb to the level of the new Twin Lakes dam. The original trail descending through the forest was rerouted somewhat to provide more and longer switchbacks. Considerable stone work was performed to build retaining walls at a number of places, especially at the ends of the switchbacks, creating a wider trail so pack animals could turn the corners without leaving the trail. A lot more stone work was necessary to get the new trail across the boulder field, as can be seen by anyone hiking the trail today. And farther up toward the Twin Lakes dam one can find granite gutters built across the trail to prevent erosion from intermittent streams created by snow melt or heavy rain storms. Now, almost a hundred years later, they are still serving their original purpose.

Because the new Lake Mary reservoir completely covered the original trail that continued up toward Lake Martha, more rock work was necessary to carve a new trail along the granite cliffs around the southeast side of the new reservoir, the same trail that is in use today. The old trail was rerouted below the dam to join the one from the mining road and the new cliff-hanging trail around the south side of the new reservoir.

As for the section of the original two trails after they joined and went down to Brighton, the common trail ran past the future site of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association lodge, which was built in 1922. The trail became very useful for the outdoor activities at the lodge. It also became the route for the lodge’s water lines from springs that are very close to the Twin Lakes - Lake Mary trail. The upper part of the former Twin Lakes trail became the route of the present ski area road from the lower terminal of the Millicent ski lift to the Twin Lakes dam. About one-third of a mile down that road from the dam the old trail goes down the slope to the south, then leaves the original alignment and turns east to go down to the maintenance buildings for the ski area.

The Twin Lakes - Lake Mary trail can be used as part of a circular hike: going up the ski area road to the Twin Lakes dam, then along this trail to Lake Mary, and back to Brighton on the traditional Lake Mary trail, a loop that is short enough to be done during a summer evening

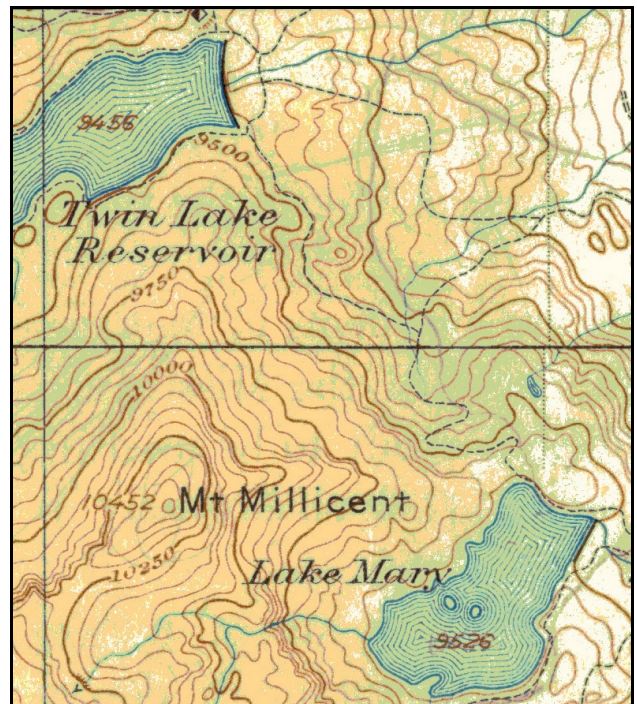


Figure 4. This map, dating from 1939, shows the Twin Lakes - Lake Mary trail after the dams were built to create the two reservoirs.

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44. Mountain Lake Mine and Road

In the spring and early summer of 1870 William S. Brighton and Joseph B. Elder went prospecting in the upper reaches of Big Cottonwood Canyon and filed four claims together before going their separate ways. Two of the claims were given names that were destined to survive and be used by important mining operations at the head of the canyon. The first was the Great Western. While the claim was not extensively worked, the name was salvaged and used for a series of mining companies that ultimately controlled about 1700 acres of mining land in Big Cottonwood and Snake Creek Canyons.



Fig. 1. This vintage 1976 topo map shows the Lake Mary trail as it exists today, and its continuation to Lake Catherine. It also shows the road going past Dog Lake to the Mountain Lake and Big Cottonwood mines. The legends are explained in the text.

close to the lakes Phoebe and Mary, the Brighton pleasure seekers quickly adopted it as an alternate route to the lakes and created a footpath between it and the lakes. When the ski areas came into being, about the same time the mining era ended, the lower part of the road was altered repeatedly as the slopes were graded and groomed. Alternate trails were put in place to replace the mining road and most recently, only a scant few years ago, a completely new trail was created along a new alignment. But where today's trail leaves the ski slopes and enters the woods to climb to a higher level, it is on the old mining road. At the top of that grade there is a trail sign pointing toward Dog Lake; the trail to that destination is also on the old mining road.

These trails and roads are shown in Figure 1. Label A points to the place where the road reaches the top of the slope and turns to cross the meadow toward Dog Lake. B is the location of the Mountain Lake Mining Company's tunnel, C is the location of the dump left by the Big Cottonwood Copper & Gold Mining Company's tunnel, and D is the remnant of the Emperor tunnel.

By the time the Mountain Lake Mining Company was

Brighton and Elder's fourth claim was called Mountain Lake, situated on the ridge between Dog Lake and Lake Catherine at the head of the canyon. For this claim Brighton included the names of his wife, Catherine, and three sons, Robert, William and Thomas. Through the years that followed the oldest son, Robert A., worked this and later adjacent claims continually with indifferent success. He also worked in some Park City mines and convinced a few influential men there that Big Cottonwood held considerable promise. In 1892 he was instrumental in forming the Mountain Lake Mining Company. Principals in this venture included his parents, three brothers and ten men from Salt Lake City and Park City. Several of the latter were well known to everyone in Park City at that time, and their names are still well known on South Temple street in Salt Lake City. But it was Robert Brighton who stayed in the mountains to work the mine, summer and winter. On occasion he was reported to have crossed the mountain to Park City on snowshoes so he could take the train to Salt Lake City to visit his family. He concentrated his efforts in driving a tunnel penetrating the slope below the claims to develop them at depth. Known then as the Magnet tunnel since it was on the Magnet claim, it had considerable length, over 550 feet when the claim was surveyed in 1898. It continued to be used well into the twentieth century and left a very prominent dump of light gray rock.

It was during these years the road that is the subject of this article was put in place. It ran due south from the Brighton community about two-thirds of a mile before turning toward the west to make a climbing traverse up a fairly steep slope. At the top it turned and crossed a meadow, going past Dog Lake before climbing to the tunnel site. Since the point where the road reached the meadow was quite



Fig. 2. Remnants of the ore bin at the Big Cottonwood Copper and Gold Mining Company's site. The tunnel was at the top of the dump on the right side of the photograph.

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45. Park City - Brighton Road

It may seem difficult to imagine today, but there was a time when the most convenient way to travel from Salt Lake City to Brighton was by way of Park City. That was the case in the last decade of the nineteenth century, but even before then there were roads and trails between the two places. They started as foot- or horse-trails used by miners or other workmen traveling between Park City and Alta in search for work. It has been claimed that these travelers caused William S. Brighton to recognize the importance of his location in Big Cottonwood Canyon and begin catering to them. Word got out, as the story goes, that Mrs. Brighton could serve an excellent meal, and travelers began making the Brighton cabin at Big Cottonwood Lake, as Silver Lake was called then, their place to rest or stop for the night. That surely encouraged him, Brighton, to apply for a Cash Entry patent on eighty acres at, and encompassing, the lake and pushed him into a new career as a hotelier. With his first hotel in place there was added need for a road to the nearest population center, which was Park City.

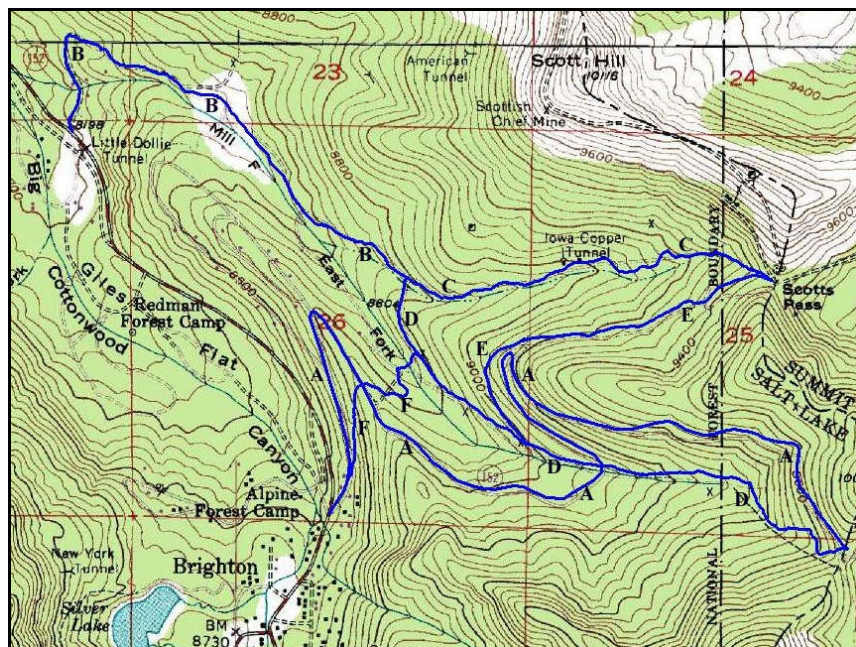


Fig. 1. Roads and trails in Mill F East Fork germane to the discussion on Park City - Brighton road are plotted on this 1975 topo map. The present day Guardsman Pass road, indicated as letter A, is shown for reference. B is today's Mill F East Fork road, but is essentially the same as existed in 1871. C is the road going up the north fork to Scotts Pass, while D is the road going up the south fork to the pass leading to Bonanza Flat. E is the Scotts Pass road, and F is the Daniel Brighton road.

from Park City traveled this way to visit Brighton Lake, going by horseback over the pass and all the way down Mill F East Fork, which name was in use by that time, and then up the Big Cottonwood road to their destination. On their return they chose to go over Scotts Pass, but reported it was not an uncommon sight to see a horse settle down on its haunches to check itself in the descent, suggesting the Scotts Pass route was not yet in general use. However, that soon changed because in 1886 Brighton solicited the patronage of people in Park City, reporting the best route was by way of Thaynes Canyon, over a good mountain road of eight miles. Much of that good mountain road was the result of the efforts of Brighton's son, Daniel, who shortened the long detour down Mill F East Fork and up the Big Cottonwood road by building a new road over the ridge northeast of the Silver Lake to join the existing road in the south branch of Mill F East Fork. He went up the latter road about a half a mile where he cut another road following a gently ascending contour line to Scotts Pass. The upper part of this latter road is the popular Scotts Pass road used today by hikers and bikers alike. While there were numerous mining claims along that road, there is no evidence to suggest that the claim owners contributed to its

The topo map in Figure 1 shows some of the many roads and trails in Mill F East Fork, which was the site of all the various roads and trails between Park City and Brighton. The first roads were put in place by woodsmen providing logs for Mill F, which was built in 1864. An 1871 Land Office map shows a road going up the fork and splitting to follow both branches of the stream for a short distance. At the end of the road in the southern branch the map showed a trail continuing in an easterly direction over the divide. While the map is somewhat crude, it is apparent that the trail went over the pass known as Guardsman Pass today and continued down to Bonanza Flat, where the office of the mining recorder for the Snake Creek Mining District was located. This was before William S. Brighton settled at Big Cottonwood Lake, but long after he built his first hotel the trail through Bonanza Flat remained the preferred route. In the summer of 1883 a group of men and women



Fig. 2. A brilliant light from the heavens shines on this quaint U. S. Forest Service structure built on the old Scotts Pass road.

construction. Indeed, in July 1886 the deputy mineral surveyor surveying the Silver Star claim complained in his notes that corner posts of this and two adjacent claims had been removed and destroyed by the grading of the new road to Brighton's Lake.

Except for visitors from Park City, it is likely Daniel Brighton's new road was not heavily used, because during the 1880 decade the preferred method of travel from Salt Lake City to Brighton was to take the train to Sandy, another train to Wasatch, the mule tramway to Alta, and on to Brighton by horseback or wagon. But all that changed in 1890 when the Utah Central Railway finally reached Park City and railway passengers from Salt Lake City could take the stage to Brighton via Thaynes Canyon and Scotts Pass. Traffic on this road increased the following year when the railway company introduced the Circle Route Tour - Salt Lake City to Park City on its train, across to Brighton via stage, to Alta by horseback or wagon, down the mule tramway under gravity power, then by rail back to the city.



Fig. 3. The Scotts Pass road descends through the aspen forest in a southerly direction below today's junction with the Guardsman Pass road.

ridge, climbing gently until it approached the road going up the south branch, then turned to go down that road only a few hundred feet where it met the Scotts Pass road mentioned above. This last segment was followed when the Guardsman Pass road was built many years later.

As motor vehicles appeared in ever increasing numbers during the early years of the twentieth century Brighton became more accessible through Big Cottonwood Canyon, either by private vehicle or public motor coach. But the old Park City road continued to be used for travel to and from that direction until the mid-1950 decade when the Utah National Guard's 115th Engineer Group undertook the construction of a road from Brighton to Midway by way of Bonanza Flat as a training project during its summer encampments. It took several years to complete the project, but then, in spite of its primitive nature, the road became the preferred route to Park City



Fig. 4. Junction of the Scotts Pass road on the right with the road coming up the south branch of Mill F East Fork



Fig. 5. View looking west down the road in the south branch of Mill F East Fork. The power company improved this portion of the road when the new power poles were installed. At the point where this picture was taken the old road leaves the improved road, coming to the lower right corner of the picture.

An additional segment was introduced before the end of the century, further reducing the elevation change, if not the mileage between the Brighton and Park City. Where Daniel Brighton's road crested the ridge northeast of the Brighton resort, instead of dropping down into the south branch of Mill F East Fork, the

new link turned and followed the crest of the

and the old roads of the past half century fell into disuse.

The trails and roads shown on the map and described in the text can still be followed today, although the upper portion of the north branch of Mill F East Fork is heavily posted. The portion of the Scotts Pass road between the Guardsman Pass road and the pass is much used today by bikers, hikers and workers for the numerous electronic installations on Scott Hill, but it generally follows the path of the original road. About 190 feet from the Guardsman Pass road an outhouse has been built right on the original Scotts Pass road. By walking around the back of the structure the original road can be seen going down on a gentle descending course. It is a pleasant road to walk to the south branch road, then follow it down until it forks. The left branch goes across the stream, then turns right to climb to the first switchback of the Guardsman Pass road. However, at that turn the old Daniel Brighton road, very faint at this point, turns left, goes back into the woods, then turns hard right to climb to the top of the ridge. It crosses the paved road about 470 feet below the winter gate. Continue across the paved road and the descending portion will be seen going down to Brighton, meeting the paved road again a little over one-tenth of a mile from the intersection with the Big Cottonwood road.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

46. Butler Fork - Soldier Fork Trail

Here is a faint trail that is difficult to follow because some of it has disappeared completely while other parts are terribly choked by downfall and avalanche debris. More is the pity, for it once was the route for an enjoyable evening hike, going up the Big Water trail in Mill Creek Canyon to the pass above Dog Lake, following the Desolation Trail part way around the head of Butler Fork in Big Cottonwood Canyon, then up this lamented trail to Soldier Fork pass and down Soldier Fork to the starting place. But this trail was in place long before the Desolation Trail was made. Its southern terminus was on the Butler Fork trail about a half mile below the pass at the head of the fork. It went up the usually dry drainage to Soldier Fork pass and then down into Mill Creek Canyon. After the Desolation Trail was built in the 1960s the upper part of the Soldier Fork trail received intermittent use, but the lower part was ignored and left to Nature.

What, you may ask, was the purpose of this trail? We have no hard documented evidence of its creation or existence, but there are a number of possibilities. In the late 1850s and on through the 1860s both Big Cottonwood and Mill Creek Canyons hosted a number of sawmills. Archibald Gardener had a rather large operation in Mill Creek Canyon, very close to the end of today's paved road which, incidentally, is where Soldier Fork joins Mill Creek. On the other side of the divide, a number of mills were operating, but the ones closest to this trail were Mill D near Mill D North Fork and Mill A down Big Cottonwood Canyon a short distance at Mill A Gulch. All required much labor, both at the mill and up on the slopes cutting and hauling timber. The men engaged in this work would have moved from one mill to another as the need for their efforts shifted, just as the miners did a decade later, and this trail would have been a convenient route to be used.

The northern part of this trail in Soldier Fork surely was built to access the timber resources there. To be sure, if one walks through the forest on either side of the drainage, a number of logging slides can be found. Also, in the 1860s the troops at Camp Douglas had a wood detail in this area, providing some of the camp's need for firewood, poles and lumber, and most likely gave Soldier Fork its name.

While there was very little mining activity in Mill Creek Canyon, the part of this trail in Butler Fork probably did receive use in 1903 when exploration activity took place on the ridge east of Soldier Fork pass. In the spring of that year a miner by the name of Henry Jones filed at least two dozen claims along the Big Cottonwood - Mill Creek ridge. At this time Henry Jones was about 51 years of age. He was a native of Blaenafon, Wales, a mining community where he probably was introduced to mining at a young age. In 1878 he immigrated to the United States with his wife and two children, settling in Colorado for a number of years before moving to Utah about 1895. By that time he had gained a considerable reputation as a mining expert. He spent some time as superintendent at the Golden Gate Extension mine in Mercur, but other than that his

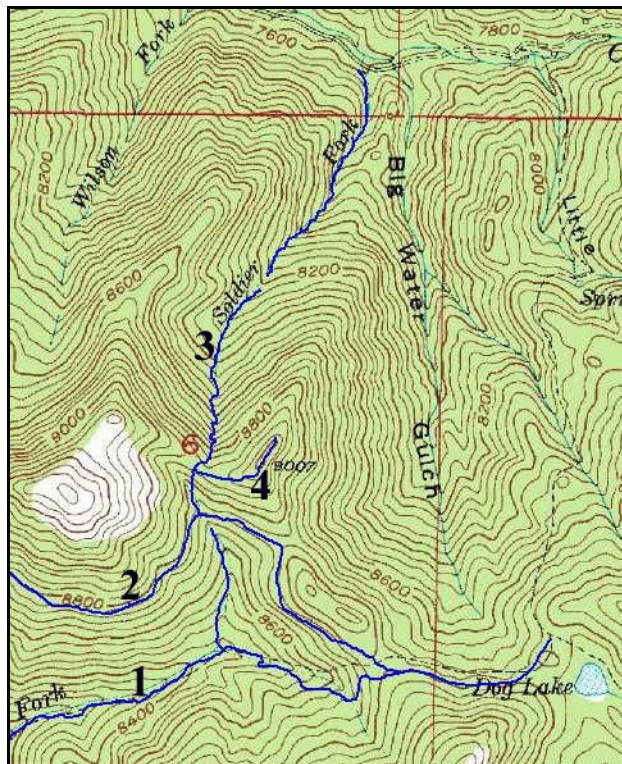


Fig.1. This Topo map shows trails in the area between Butler and Soldier Forks and Big Water Gulch. No.1 is the Butler Fork trail, No.2 is the Desolation trail and No.3 is the Soldier Fork trail, whose northern end is at the lower parking lot at the end of the Mill Creek Canyon road. No.4 is part of Henry Jones' trail to his prospects along the ridge.



Fig. 2. View looking west along the Henry Jones trail on the ridge between Soldier and Butler Forks, with a transverse prospect trench in the foreground. The Soldier Fork pass is down on the right edge of the photo. Twin Peaks are on the distant skyline, Kessler peak at the left.

activities in Utah remain obscure before 1903. He was not a prospector, at least not in the Big or Little Cottonwood Mining Districts because there are no claims on record with his name before that time. The claims he filed then were located to the west of the area of interest here, they being in and above Maxfield Basin. Almost immediately he transferred them to the Maxfield Mining Company for the sum of \$100. Since this happened so fast it causes one to wonder if he was not acting as an agent for the company, but nothing has been found to verify that. He then went farther east and began prospecting on the ridge between Butler Fork, Soldier Fork and Big Water Gulch. In September of 1903 he filed nine claims in that vicinity. Curiously, four of them were given names he had already used earlier that year, but they were not at the same location. Almost immediately after that event he was placed in charge of operations at the St. Louis-Vassar company's mine at Park City and nothing more was done with his claims in the Big



Fig. 3. This steep, heavily wooded slope is on the north side of Soldier Pass.

Cottonwood Mining District, either by him or anyone else. After this time his career took him to many places and positions, including superintending the Little Bell mine at Park City and the Scranton mine in the Tintic district, holding interests in mines in Mercur and western Nevada, and traveling throughout the western states to examine mining properties for various companies. It was not until 1925 that he returned to the Wasatch briefly as a mining engineer for the Logger Mining Company in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Throughout all those years he maintained a residence in Salt Lake City for his family. He died there on 28 June 1925. Henry Jones left a few faint marks from his efforts in 1903. There is a faint trail that runs from the Butler Fork - Soldier Fork trail toward the east along the ridge, and there are a number of trenches across the ridge. The trenches were commonly used by prospectors to explore the rocky backbone of a ridge for suggestions of ore deposits.

As mentioned earlier, the southern terminus of the Soldier Fork trail is on the Butler Fork trail where a shallow drainage comes down from the north, about a half mile below the pass at the head of the fork. The trail climbed to the north, staying close to the bottom of the drainage, but generally keeping to the west side. Early in the year, after the snow has melted but before the grasses grow high, or late in the year after the frost has flattened the vegetation, parts of this trail can be found. As the slope gets steeper, the trail becomes less distinct until it disappears altogether. But it did follow the drainage all the way to the pass.



Fig. 4. View down the drainage below the north side of Soldier Fork pass. The meadow at the head of the fork lies below, while Mill Creek Canyon is in the background.

From Soldier Fork pass the trail headed northeasterly and entered the very dense conifer forest. Being on a steep north facing slope, little light gets through the trees, leaving the slope bare of vegetation and giving it an eerie appearance in the half light. The trail went through numerous switchbacks as it descended, some of which are still apparent among the many transverse animal trails, then left the forest and followed the drainage toward the meadow at the head of Soldier Fork. The trail might be visible in the meadow before the vegetation grows too high, but here the avalanche debris starts to show up and gets worse as the lower end of the meadow pinches down into a narrow gully. The trail used to go on the south side of the drainage, which now is almost completely choked with debris. This continues for about half the length of the fork. Then, if the hiker has not taken refuge in the woods up on the side of the gully, the devastation ends and a trail becomes clearly visible.

The lower end of the trail, as well as the Soldier Fork drainage runs into the lower parking area at the end of the

Mill Creek Canyon road. It also crosses the Big Water trail a short distance above the parking lot. Since this is a very popular area for hikers, dog lovers and bikers, those who notice the Soldier Fork trail and are the least bit adventurous might follow it to see where it goes. As a result this lower end does get a bit of use and is easy to follow until it runs into the avalanche debris at the point seen as a gap in the trail on the accompanying map.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

47. Smoots Dugway, Granite Power Plant Flume

Smoots Dugway is a name never heard in modern times, but for many decades it was known to all who traveled Big Cottonwood Canyon. It dated back to the first years that the pioneers in the Salt Lake Valley settled in the Cottonwoods. They had immediate need for logs to build shelters, poles for fences and wood for fuel. And where better to get that than in the mountains looming above their new home. Building a road up the canyon did not pose serious difficulties until they reached a point about one and a third miles above today's Wasatch



ig. 1. The upper end of Smoots Dugway is at the right side of this photo. The edge of the macadam paving can be seen above the boulder. It is located across the Big Cottonwood highway from the Ledgemere picnic area.

Boulevard, where the stream made a sharp turn to the right and the canyon walls pinched together, barely leaving enough room for the flow of water. The easiest way to get around this barrier was to climb onto the north slope and continue up canyon about two-tenths of a mile, then drop back to the level of the stream. That's what they did, and that short stretch of road became known as Smoots Dugway. While no documentary evidence has been found to link any individual to this road, circumstantial evidence says the name came from Abraham O. Smoot and his stepson, William C. A. Smoot, who arrived in 1847, settled in Cottonwood and were the only early pioneers with that name.

Smoots Dugway continued to be used for the better part of a century before a huge excavation allowed the highway to be moved down to its present location. It is not certain when that happened, but it had to be in the 1930s or later. The canyon road was not paved until 1928 and the roadway over Smoots Dugway was paved before it was abandoned. In fact it was possible to walk on pavement for much of the length of the dugway until a dozen years ago when it was disturbed by

the reconstruction of the flume for the Granite Power Plant. However, some pavement still remains at the dugway's upper end, across the canyon highway from the Ledgemere picnic area, and at the lower end.

The Granite Power Plant's flume hovered over Smoots Dugway for a full century before it was relocated underground in 1998. It was built by the Utah Power Company in 1896 to supply water to drive its hydroelectric power plant at the mouth of the canyon. The company was formed by a group of mining and business men from Salt Lake City in the spring of 1895, with the intent of providing electrical power for the city's street railways. But they were doing exploratory work nearly a year earlier when the Salt Lake Tribune reported a surveyor's camp at the mouth of the canyon, freshly driven stakes along the roadside and engineer's pennants dotting prominent crags and peaks going up the canyon. All that was an indication that providing water to the power plant site a mile and a half down canyon was not an inconsequential task. It was determined that a metal pipe running that far would have been prohibitively expensive, although from this distance in time, it is not apparent that building a water channel along the side of the cliffs would have been any less costly. The flume was built, four feet wide and three feet deep, with two-inch planks, and followed a gently descending contour line from the tail race of the Stairs power plant, where it received its water, for a mile and a half to arrive at the head of a penstock that dropped some four hundred feet to the Pelton water wheels that drove the generators. In that distance it rested on ledges blasted into the cliffs, crossed gulches on trestles and at some places clung to the face of the cliffs with no apparent means of support.

The original flume only lasted ten years. By that time the power plant had been sold to the Consolidated Railway and Power company, which subsequently merged into the Utah Light and Railway company, and had received the name Granite Power Plant. The new company replaced the flume with one of greater capacity. This one lasted nearly twenty-five years before it was partially rebuilt again in 1931. Concrete foundation blocks were installed along eastern part of the route and new



Fig. 2. This is the Granite Power Plant flume as it appeared high on the north side of Big Cottonwood Canyon.



Fig. 3. The path of Smoots Dugway can be seen in this aerial photograph, climbing above the Big Cottonwood road from the big bend at the left, then descending back down to the road near the center of the picture. The route of the Granite Power Plant Flume is also seen running above the road and toward the upper left corner of the photo. The heavy diagonal line running down from the flume to the west end of Smoots Dugway is the route of the new steel pipe flume mentioned in the text.

abutments were provided for the trestles. It has had major repairs since then, occasionally evidenced by the bright color of new planks as seen from below. Also there is evidence that the western end of the flume was replaced at a later, unknown date.

Over the years visitors and travelers have looked up and marveled at this feat of construction. Often one could see an inspector walking along the top of the structure. In the wintertime water leaking from the flume would run down to the low cliffs above the highway and freeze, creating great icefalls. And there were pranksters who made great sport of throwing vegetable dyes against the vertical sheets of ice, giving them a display of many colors. On more than one occasion the flume ruptured, sending thousands of gallons of water down the slope, carrying mud and rocks onto the highway below.

In 1998 all this came to an end when the Utah Power and Light Company chose to replace the aging flume with a buried steel pipe, the alternative that was considered too expensive a century before. The new pipe was buried under the flume route for about a quarter mile where, almost directly above the upper end of Smoots Dugway, it dropped down the slope on a descending traverse to the lower end of the dugway. From that point it followed the canyon highway down to the power plant. The flume was dismantled, leaving nothing more than a few scars along the cliffs to mark its passing.

The accessible part of the flume trail, the eastern end, is an easy walk of just under one mile. It can be reached by going onto Smoots Dugway at its upper end and at its highest point follow one of the several pathways up to the trail. Alternatively one can go up the short but steep, gated access ramp located across the Big Cottonwood highway from the parking turnout at the Birches picnic ground. For much of the length of the trail the concrete foundation blocks installed in 1931 can be seen, some with inscriptions left by the workers. And timbers from the dismantled flume and trestles are scattered about on the slope below the trail. If that offends you, raise your sights and enjoy the view. At a distance of about 0.9 mile there is a gully that is easily crossed and on the other side is a wall that can be surmounted by anyone comfortable on rock. For the less adventurous souls there usually are bits of timbers from the dismantled flume that people have propped against the wall to aid the ascent. Once across this minor obstacle, the trail continues only a short way, perhaps 150 feet, on a ledge until it reaches a yawning chasm similar to the one seen in the picture of the flume accompanying this narrative. At that point some considerate person has built a bench. What a great place to sit and enjoy the unique view of the lower part of Big Cottonwood Canyon.

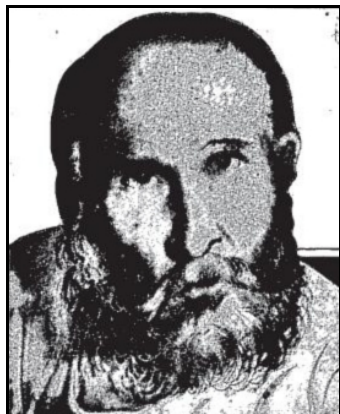


Fig. 4. View looking west along the Granite flume trail. Concrete foundation blocks from the 1931 reconstruction can be seen on each side of the foot path.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

48. Julius Kuck, “Hermit of the Wasatch”

Just as footpaths and roads that are no longer used fade away and vanish over a period of time, so do memories of once well known people fade away and become their own faint trails. One such person was Julius Kuck who was well known by most people who frequented Big Cottonwood Canyon during the first third of the twentieth century. He was a recluse, a hermit who only infrequently left his chosen mountain home. For that reason, he could well have been named the Hermit of Big Cottonwood Canyon, for it is likely he never saw any other part of the Wasatch mountains.



Julius A. Kuck, 1935

As is so often the case with people who live in seclusion over much of their life, little is known about their past, their families or their reasons for their chosen lifestyle. And often research yields information that is fraught with conflicts. Such certainly is the case here, but this is what can be said, or presumed about this man.

Julius Kuck, whose last name was pronounced ‘Cook,’ immigrated from Germany in the 1870s. While it is not known when or why he came to Utah, there is a story that he told a neighbor in the canyon during the later years of his life. That story claims he had been a lawyer in his native Germany and that he intended following that profession in the United States, only to find that his knowledge of U.S. law was lacking. He planned to enter a period of study to remedy that situation, but found he needed a way to support himself and his wife and daughter. He thought this could be easily done by engaging in lumbering and mining in the local mountains, and to that end moved into Big Cottonwood Canyon where he built a cabin. It is known that he was there as early as 1895 when he filed three mining claims in Willow Patch Fork. The story goes on to say that his wife, after a year or two of suffering through frigid winters of isolation, took their daughter and left, subsequently getting a divorce and relocating to California. This event convinced him to abandon his legal studies and remain at his home in the mountains.

His alleged former profession as a lawyer would suggest that Kuck was a well educated man, one who might be interested and aware of current events. This was further suggested by the names of three mining claims he filed in 1899, again all in Willow Patch Fork, which he now called Mill F North Fork. The names of the claims were Li Hung-chang, Admiral Sampson and Admiral Schley. Li Hung-chang was a Chinese statesman and general who in 1895 was the chief negotiator of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ended the First Sino-Japanese War, and in 1896 negotiated the treaty that granted Russia the right to build the Trans-Siberian Railroad across Northern Manchuria. This is not the kind of information the average man in the city would know. Admirals

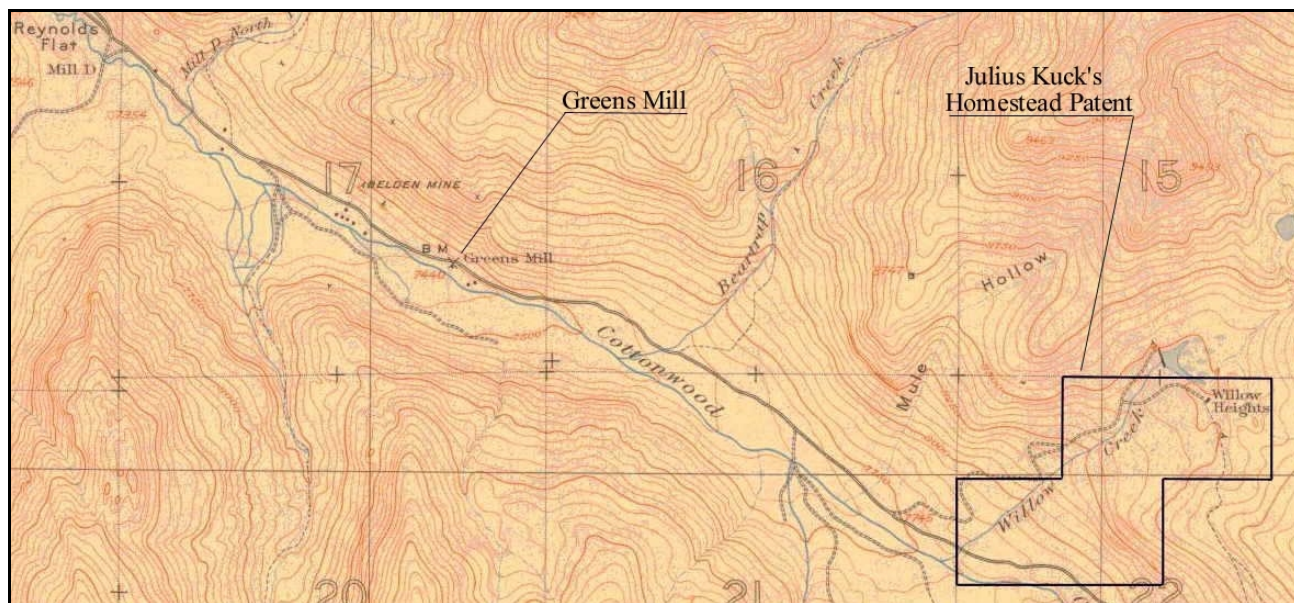


Fig. 1. This segment from the USGS 1907 Cottonwood Special map shows the area in which Julius Kuck was active during his tenure in Big Cottonwood Canyon. His Wasatch Aspen Works was the building shown as Greens Mill, left of center. His Homestead patent is outlined in the area around Willow Heights on the right.

Sampson and Schley were prominent figures in the Spanish-American War during June and July of 1898.

In 1901 Kuck filed two more mining claims, one of them named General Funston. Fred N. Funston was a mercenary fighting with the Cuban independence in 1896. After suffering a bout of malaria he returned to the United States and was commissioned a Colonel in the U.S. Army. He was sent to the Philippeans where he fought in the Philippean-American war and was commissioned a general in 1900. This means that Kuck was still knowledgeable about current events at that time. About this same time he applied for a homestead on the land in Willow Patch that he had chosen for his home. The Homestead patent



Fig. 2. Julius A. Kuck's Wasatch Aspen Works, possibly with Kuck himself standing at the entrance. This building was formerly the Green's sawmill. Located about a third of a mile above today's entrance to the Spruces campground, it was directly below Greens Basin. This building was destroyed by fire at the end of January 1934. Utah Historical Society photograph.

was issued in April 1904, giving him 160 acres as shown on the accompanying map.

Sometime in the first decade of the twentieth century he moved into the Greens Mill, situated between the canyon road and stream about a third of a mile above today's entrance to The Spruces campground. The mill had been built by Alvin Green, who ran it for a number of years. He and his wife were still there in 1902, but after that time Kuck took over. There is no record of his having purchased it or of the Greens ever having title to the property. They were all squatters in that respect. For nearly thirty years Kuck used the mill to saw Aspen logs and build rustic furniture that he sold to travelers passing by. He called it the Wasatch Aspen Works, a well known building along the canyon road, occupied by the well known recluse. But that ended in January 1934 when a skier heading for Brighton noticed the building had burned down. When he arrived at the Balsam Inn he told the owner, Tom Davis, what he saw. Tom and his son Paul went down to check on Kuck and found him, badly burned, wrapped in two mattresses in a nearby cabin where he had taken refuge from the cold. He had been there for several days without food or water. They took him to the Salt Lake Hospital for treatment. After his recovery he went back up the canyon and moved into his old cabin in Willow Heights. During the following winter National Forest workers made numerous trips to his cabin to check on his welfare. On one occasion the Davis family and friends skied down to his cabin from Brighton. They found him in good spirits, with an ample supply of food and fuel. He told them the only inconvenience the winter caused him was that it sent him to bed early each day. The early nightfall forced him to retire about 4 pm because he had no artificial light. And he usually remained in bed until late the following morning.

After that winter the Forest Service employees at the guard station in the Utah Outdoor park, today's Spruces campground, insisted Kuck move down to the road so he would be closer to safety during the winter months. They helped build a cabin for him near his former Wasatch Aspen Works, and he moved in there for the winter. That worked well because the Forest Ranger was able to look in on him frequently. The following winter, however, saw Kuck's cabin suffer the same fate as his sawmill. On 9 April 1937 the cabin burned down from an overheated stove, the same cause of the previous fire. In trying to save some of his belongings, the recluse again suffered serious burns. He then waded through deep snows to the Guard station where the ranger had him taken to the Salt Lake General Hospital for treatment. This time, however, he was not released to return to the mountains, for he was now a bewildered, ill old man. When they asked him questions he answered them incoherently. But he probably had been bewildered and confused for a long time. In 1910 he told the census taker that he was a mechanic at a sawmill, which may have been true, but he reported his age as 49. Ten years later he reported his age as 71 and said he was a house painter. He was given quarters in the hospital infirmary and there he remained almost a year and a half before he died on 28 September 1938. His death certificate stated his age as 78 years, but that was based upon a birth date that he had given when he entered the hospital. He was buried in Mount Olivet cemetery. While that may have been the end of the hermit, memories of him lingered on in the minds of those who frequented the canyon or lived there. But as another generation took over, his story became little more than folk lore. And in another two decades he was almost completely forgotten. He had faded away, just like an unused road or footpath and had become another Faint Trail in the Wasatch.

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

49. Parleys Canyon Rail Trail – Part I

Rail trails, using abandoned railroad rights of way, have become quite popular in recent times. And well they might, as they provide a continuous path through cities, counties and even states with never more than a gentle grade. While Utah does not have an abundance of them, Salt Lake County does host two publicized trails, neither being in the Wasatch mountains. However, there is one that has not yet made the grade (pun intended): the Parleys Canyon Rail Trail, which can be seen on the north side of Interstate-80 about a half mile above Lambs Canyon when heading toward Parleys Summit. It is about all that is left of the Salt Lake City to Park City railroad in Salt Lake County. It offers an interesting walk of up to four miles, but its history is even more interesting. It is a story whose thread winds from Salt Lake City across the country, through the business and financial centers of the United States and England, the halls of Congress and even into the White House. But the full story would more than fill a good size volume. With the limited space available here, only high points can be told.

It started as a narrow gauge railroad in 1883 when the principals of the Salt Lake Rock Company incorporated the Salt Lake & Fort Douglas Railroad to bring sandstone blocks into the city from their Red Butte Canyon quarries. To build this railroad they brought in John W. Young, third son of President Brigham Young and Mary Ann Angell Young, and a cousin to attorney LeGrand Young, the force behind both companies. John W., as he was commonly known, had extensive experience in railroad promotion, punctuated by great endeavors, moderate successes and colossal financial failures. While construction of the new railroad began quickly, it soon slowed while John W. busied himself with numerous matters in the east, not the least of which was raising funds and attempting to get a bill through Congress giving him permission to cross the Fort Douglas military reservation. Realizing the latter would take some time, he chose to run a branch line along the Salt Lake and Jordan Canal to Sugar House and on to the Mill Creek farming community, a second destination intended to give the railroad some immediate business. However, there wasn't much business to be had from the farmers, so he looked for another source of revenue. He found it in the shale beds, the great limestone deposits about two miles up Parleys Canyon. The residue that remained when the stone was quarried, or that was created by crushing the stone, was found to be an excellent material to spread on the city streets, providing a much more agreeable surface than the dusty or muddy surfaces the dirt streets offered. If the railroad were built to the shale beds, it was supposed, the company would have a considerable business hauling shale into the city. And so the track was laid past the penitentiary, along Parleys Creek and into the mouth of the canyon. Before the shale beds were reached there were rumors that the railroad was headed for Park City, and reports were made that graders were working farther up the canyon, as far as Mountain Dell. The rumors became fact in September 1888 when the Salt Lake and Eastern Railway was incorporated with Park City as its destination. Two years later the name was changed again, this time to the Utah Central Railway.

The year 1889 took the railroad over Parleys Summit and almost to its destination. But it was also the year that sealed its fate to never be a viable and profitable venture. At Lambs Canyon it faced a yawning gorge a hundred feet deep. A sizeable expensive trestle, estimated to be 300 feet long, would be required to span it. Since expenses were being held to a minimum the track was run into Lambs Canyon to the point where a short bridge would suffice to cross the stream. However, the canyon was much too narrow to allow the track to make a sweeping turn to go out the other side. Instead a switchback was made, forcing the train to back out. Over a half mile above Lambs Canyon a wye was constructed on the south side, allowing the train to turn around so it would again face the correct direction. Trains coming down from the summit would turn around at the wye, back down into Lambs Canyon and across the bridge, then continue their downward journey in a forward direction. A very cumbersome and time consuming process, to say the least.

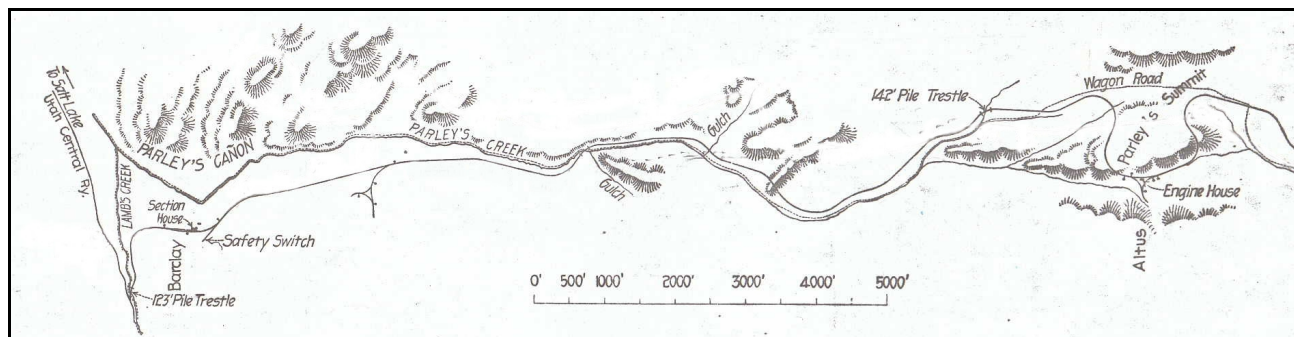


Fig. 1. Map of the narrow gauge Utah Central Railway between Lambs Canyon and Parleys Summit. Notice the switchback in Lambs Canyon and the wye more than a half mile farther up the canyon. The trains always traveled backwards through this section. Another wye was at the summit, with a structure to enclose a locomotive used to keep the road open in the winter.

From Lambs Canyon to Parleys Summit, about three miles, required a climb of 888 feet, for an average six per cent grade, very steep for a railroad. The construction engineer wanted to build a loop line on the south slopes



Fig. 2. Three Utah Central locomotives on a Parleys Canyon grade, possibly at or near Mountain Dell. (Author's collection)

to lower the grade, but that too was ruled out due to cost considerations and the track was laid directly up the canyon. The company's motive power consisted of a number of locomotives retired by the Utah Northern Railroad when it converted from narrow to standard gauge. The little engines were tired and unable to pull more than a few cars up the steep grade. There were numerous incidents, such as in October 1890 when passengers complained that the evening train to Park City had to stop two times going up the canyon to allow the engine to build up more steam. A few days later the morning train arrived four hours late when a minor explosion rendered the engine useless. When winter unleashed its fury the railroad faced new and different problems. In February 1891 a passenger train was unable to climb the steep slopes while bucking the heavy snow, so the engine crew left the cars and passengers on a sidetrack

while they went back to the city to get another engine. About two weeks later the evening train from Park City only got as far as Gogorza, below Parleys Summit on the east side, where it remained overnight. The next morning three locomotives and a snowplow managed to clear the track and allow the train to continue over the summit and into Salt Lake City, arriving there with its half-frozen passengers nearly twenty-four hours late. The heavy snows would be a continuing problem for the little road. In January 1892 a snow blockade closed the road for twelve days while most employees of the company, including the General Superintendent, were on the mountain shoveling snow.

Barely had the railroad reached Park City and started regular daily service when it reached the end of its frayed financial rope. Numerous suits were filed against the company for unpaid accounts due to its contractors and suppliers at the same time it was unable to pay interest due on its bonds. John W. went to New York, and then to England in an attempt to raise more money. At the latter place he took sick and was incapacitated for many months. In his absence a new board of directors took over, leaving John W. completely out of the picture. The new president of the company did his best to put the railroad onto a solid financial footing, but time was not on his side. In November of 1893 the court appointed receivers, who ran the road for the next four years. Finally, in March 1897 the judge ordered the entry of a decree of foreclosure, outlining the priorities and amounts allowed on the various claims, and appointed a special master to sell the road. The purchaser was the Rio Grande Western Railroad.

In the year following the sale numerous improvements were made, the most significant and spectacular one being the construction of the Lambs Canyon trestle that did away with the switchback and the cumbersome operating procedures it required. It was a 19-span curved timber trestle about 300 ft. long. With the track 82 feet above the creek below, the trestle became one of the scenic features of the line. The remaining improvements that created the Parleys Canyon Rail Trail will be discussed in the next Faint Trails episode.



Fig. 3. Lambs Canyon trestle on the Rio Grande Western Park City Line. Built in 1898, it was about 300 feet long on a curve and 82 feet above the creek. (Utah Historical Society photo)

FAINT TRAILS IN THE WASATCH

50. Parleys Canyon Rail Trail – Part II

After the Rio Grande Western completed the Lambs Canyon trestle in 1898, it addressed the next major problem, that of the steep grade to Parleys Summit. This was done, first, by building a loop line on the north slopes of the canyon, increasing the distance the trains had to travel to the summit, but decreasing the grade to a manageable four per cent. And second, it chose to drive a tunnel under Parleys Summit to replace the big horseshoe curve over the top of the ridge on the narrow gauge line, eliminating 160 feet of additional elevation required to cross to the other side of the divide. At the same time the railroad company would eliminate the narrow gauge track and rolling stock and convert to standard gauge. The work in the canyon began in November 1899 when large numbers of men moved into a tent city near Lambs Canyon and began grading for the new alignment of the track, while others moved to the summit where they began digging the tunnel. Work on the roadbed and the 1,132 foot long tunnel continued during the first half of 1900.

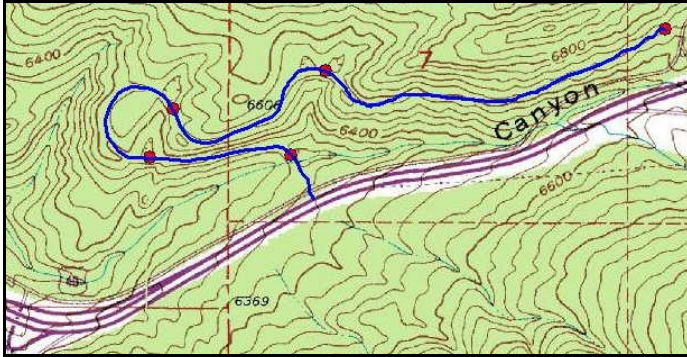


Fig. 1. This map shows the Parleys Canyon Rail Trail as it exists today. The Lambs Canyon interchange on I-80 is in the lower left corner. The dots on the trail are the approximate center of large fills, the first crossing Parleys Creek, the rest crossing other drainages. The dot at the upper right is where the trail enters the Beehive-Wasatch Bowhunters club property, about two miles from the trailhead.

Two large trestles were built above Lambs Canyon, the first spanning Parleys Creek where the track crossed to the north side and headed west while climbing that side of the canyon, and the second about a third of a mile farther up the grade where the track crossed a deep drainage. It then entered the great loop of nearly 270 degrees before turning easterly and heading toward the summit, now well above the bottom of the canyon. At the end of July the final gauge change was made and on 30 July the first Rio Grande Western standard gauge train pulled into Park City. The first passenger cars used on the new line were narrow gauge cars placed on standard gauge trucks. Some of them were used for several years before being retired.

The original Parleys Canyon wagon road generally followed the creek and was not a very pleasant road, even with horse and wagon. But when the Rio Grande Western removed the narrow gauge track the county moved the wagon road to the old railroad roadbed, providing a far better roadway, much to the pleasure of travelers. At Lambs Canyon the road turned into the canyon as the narrow gauge railroad did, crossed the stream, then followed the Lambs Canyon stream, passing under the huge trestle and joined the old road at Parleys Creek. In 1914 when a new state highway was being built, it followed the same route, but the road was widened to a twenty foot width. In Lambs Canyon a new concrete bridge was built to cross the stream. On the tops of the parapets the workers embedded bits and slivers of stone to form the words "New State Highway 1914" on one side and "Lambs Canyon" on the other. While the 1914 highway has long since been replaced, the Lambs Canyon bridge remains and can be seen about two-tenths of a mile from the I-80 interchange.

In the years that followed the railroad company sent many work trains with cars full of rock and soil that dumped their loads at the trestles, thereby building massive fills that took the place of the bridgework. However, the trestles remained buried, even to this day. When I-80 was under construction in the 1960 decade, many large timbers were unearthed while grading for the Lambs Canyon interchange, bits and pieces of the once magnificent Lambs Canyon trestle.

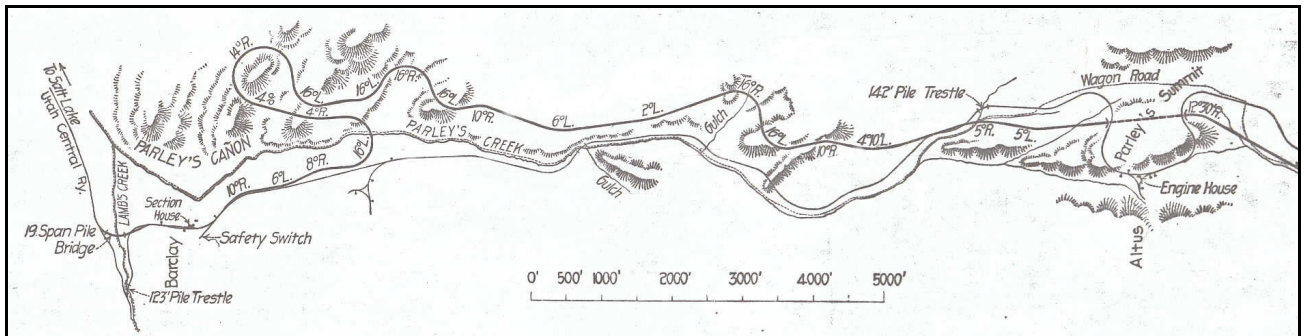


Fig. 1. Map of the Rio Grande Western railroad between Lambs Canyon and Parleys Summit. Also shown is the earlier Utah Central Railway narrow gauge line between the same two points.

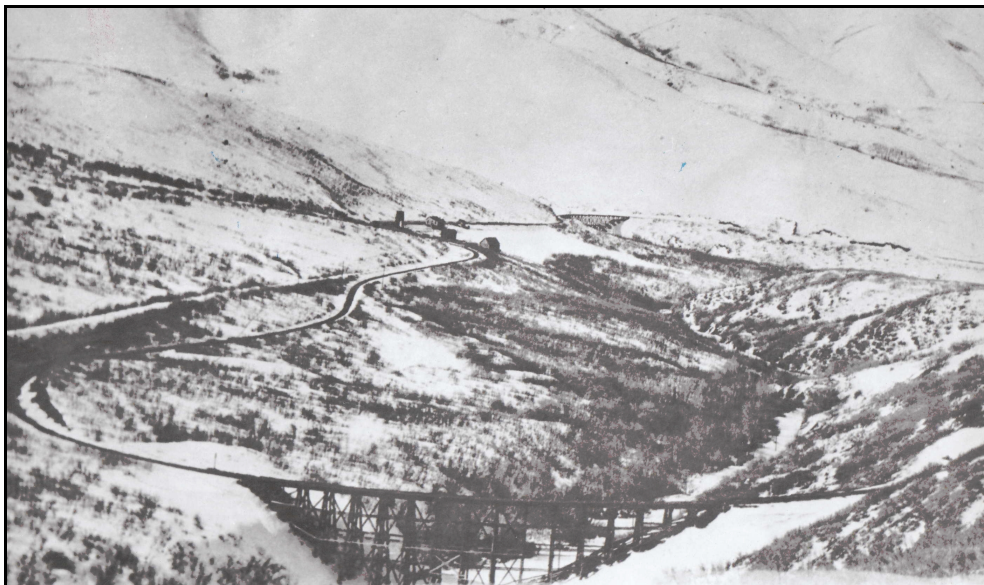


Fig. 2. This photograph from the early part of the twentieth century shows the Rio Grande Western track above Lambs Canyon as seen from the upper level, above the great loop. The trestle in the foreground crosses Parleys Creek, while the Lambs Canyon trestle is in the distance. The buildings, including a water tank, are at Barclay station, named after James W. Barclay, British member of Parliament who invested and promoted John W. Young's initial railroad venture. The old narrow gauge railroad right of way, now the canyon wagon road, is seen going up the canyon on the left. (Author's collection.)

The Park City railroad gave continuous service to travelers until 1946 when the state wanted to rebuild the highway to four lanes. There was not enough room for highway and railroad in the lower part of the canyon, and the rail traffic had diminished to the point where the railroad company was willing to abandon the line, so the track from the cement quarry to Park City was removed.

The Parleys Canyon Rail Trail can be accessed by driving up the service road on the north side of I-80 about seven-tenths of a mile beyond the Lambs Canyon interchange.

Vehicular access to the trail is blocked by large boulders at the roadside. While walking across the big fill across Parleys Creek, imagine the many timbers that made up the trestle still buried underneath. At the next big fill going up the grade toward the west another trestle remains buried. This one was not as high as the fill is today. It was intended to use only a fill here, but there wasn't sufficient material available, so a lower fill was put in place and the trestle was built on top. It was reported that this fill settled two feet before trains were run and the trestle had to be jacked up and supported by additional pieces of timber. Today the fill has a noticeable depression, leaving one to wonder if it did not continue settling, even after the railroad was abandoned.

With I-80 in plain sight, this first part of the trail is rather noisy, but after the second fill, as the trail enters the great loop through a deep cut, the background noise suddenly disappears and silence reigns. Upon leaving the cut a splendid view of Mountain Dell and Parleys Canyon appears. What a wonderful ride this must have been for travelers during the period of operation of this railroad. The trail then winds back and forth over fills and through cuts until it straightens out and makes a beeline for the summit. At about two miles from the trailhead the roadbed goes through property of the Beehive-Wasatch Bowhunters club, but at that point the best and most interesting part of the trail has been passed.



Fig. 3. A Rio Grande Western work train and crew pause on the trestle across Parleys Creek to have their picture taken. The wye, where the narrow gauge trains changed direction was located on the flat area beyond the locomotive's steam plume. Today Interstate 80 runs across the picture behind the steam plume, and the trestle is buried inside a massive fill. (Salt Lake Tribune Archives)