

Arizona History
AZT Passage 3-Canelo Hills West
by Preston Sands

The area to the south of this passage is historic mining country with a storied past. Spanish explorers were the first to take notice of the area's mineral treasures, but it was Mexican and then American miners that began mining in earnest. In 1859, Sylvester Mowry purchased the Patagonia Mine from its Mexican owner, and renamed it the Mowry Mine. A military man and West Point graduate, Lieutenant Mowry had been stationed at Fort Crittenden nearby. Mowry invested heavily in his new mine, and purchased smelting equipment to process its rich silver ore. A small mining camp grew up nearby to house the miners. The Mowry Mine produced a fortune in silver in a very short time, but Mowry's fortunes were soon reversed.

In 1862 Mowry was charged with selling lead ammunition to the Confederacy, and incarcerated at Fort Yuma. The charges were later dropped, but during his absence Apaches had destroyed the Mowry Mine and its mining camp. The Mowry Mine was sold at auction for a fraction of its actual value, and Mowry spent the last decade of his life trying unsuccessfully to raise enough money to reopen the mine. Decades later, the Mowry Mine reopened under a new owner. Today, the mine is silent and the village of Mowry is a ghost town.

The Patagonia Mountains were the scene of prolific mining activity during the late 19th and early 20th century, and gave rise to several prominent mining towns. Among these is Harshaw. Rancher-turned-pro prospector David Harshaw made a rich silver discovery which became the Hermosa Mine, and sold it to New York investors for a small fortune. The new owners developed the Hermosa Mine and the town of Harshaw. True to Western tradition, the town of Harshaw grew quickly, and boasted a number of saloons, as well as its own newspaper. While the population peaked at around 2,000, the closing of the mine, as well as a disastrous fire in 1882, caused Harshaw to become a ghost town.

The twin towns of Duquesne and Washington Camp, located less than a mile apart, were quite lively during the 1880's and 1890's, and owed their existence to the dozens of mines nearby. Duquesne was named for the Duquesne Mine, a property which was developed by renowned inventor George Westinghouse. The town of Duquesne housed the miners, while Washington Camp functioned as the company's mill town. Local folklore suggests that George Westinghouse himself once lived in Washington Camp, and impressed others with hot and cold running water in his home, something unheard of at the time. A decline in mining activity doomed Duquesne and Washington Camp by the early 20th century.

The northern end of this passage is in the town of Patagonia. In the late 1890's, Rollin R. Richardson, a local rancher and miner who lived along the route of the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad, began to move forward with plans to develop his ranch. Richardson laid out the new town site of Rollin on part of his ranch, and constructed a smelter to process ore from area mines. While the smelter operation failed, the new town became an important railroad shipping location for the many mines in the Patagonia Mountains. The

town of Rollin voted to change its name to Patagonia in 1899. Patagonia weathered the loss of the local mining industry and the railroad over the years, and has transformed its identity to an globally renowned eco-tourism destination focused more on natural resource protection than extraction. It's among the most beloved of the Arizona Trail's Gateway Communities.

References

Barnes, W. C. (1988). *Arizona place names*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.

Lauer, C. (2005). *The arizona trail in history*. Unpublished manuscript.

Massey, P., Wilson, J., & Titus, A. (2008). *Backcountry adventures arizona*. Castle Rock, CO: Adler Publishing Company, Inc.

Myrick, D. (1975). *Railroads of arizona volume 1*. San Diego, CA: Howell-North Books Publishers.

Trimble, M. (1986). *Roadside history of arizona*. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing Company.

United States Geological Survey. (1904). *Arizona patagonia quadrangle*. Retrieved from: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/topo/arizona/pclmaps-topo-az-patagonia-1904.jpg>

Unknown author (n.d.). *History of patagonia*. Town of Patagonia. Retrieved from: <http://patagonia-az.gov/about/history/>

Weiser-Alexander, K. (2007). *Arizona legends. Patagonia back road ghost towns*. Legends of America. Retrieved from: <http://www.legendsofamerica.com/az-patagoniaghosts.html>