

FREMONT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 17, 2021

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 1

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The story of the mining communities which sprang up in the Southwest part of the county in the late 1800's:

TITUSVILLE

The mining history of our area is widespread and deeply entwined into the entire fabric of the pioneer life that we know they lived, then. This is an explanation of one of the lesser known areas, which is now a subdivision in the areas where the old stagecoach roads once traveled. When first hearing about Titusville and the stage stop, we were intrigued but also perplexed. There are a few clusters of broken down log cabins in Cody Park but where's evidence for the rest of it? Did it ever really exist? In addition to the plat filed with the Fremont County Clerk, our early research uncovered documents to support the following. At its peak in 1880, the Titusville District boasted approximately 300 people- enough to have William Leonard appointed Justice of the Peace and enough to prompt John Austin to petition the U. S. Postmaster to open an office in Titusville (much more convenient than having mail service at Dora, 6 miles away). The petition was granted and the Titusville Post Office opened along the stage route in 1881. Apparently, there were also enough children in the area for Allie Herbert to open a one-room school in September 1882. The Titusville Mining District also became a voting precinct for the county. and in 1882 J. G. Titus, John Mott, and A. Hussy were appointed election judges for the precinct. In his memoirs, D. N. Cooper, who lived there from 1881 to 1882, remembers about 24 log/wood homes and many large tents on rock foundations along the gulches. In unincorporated Titusville, platted lots were even bought and sold. A bill of sale dated September 16, 1883 shows that Joseph Graeter sold his lot on the corner of Spring Rd. and Sunflower Rd. to Thomas Pennington for \$25 and a one- quarter share of his Monarch of the Mountain mining claim.

The story of Titusville has been researched and written by Dennis Bokhaut and Laurie Fellabaum but as yet has not been published. I was lucky enough to receive this essay several years ago, and now give you a chance to know about the history of Copper Gulch, Grape Creek and Oak Creek on the Southwest side of the county.

PAGE 1: TITUSVILLE

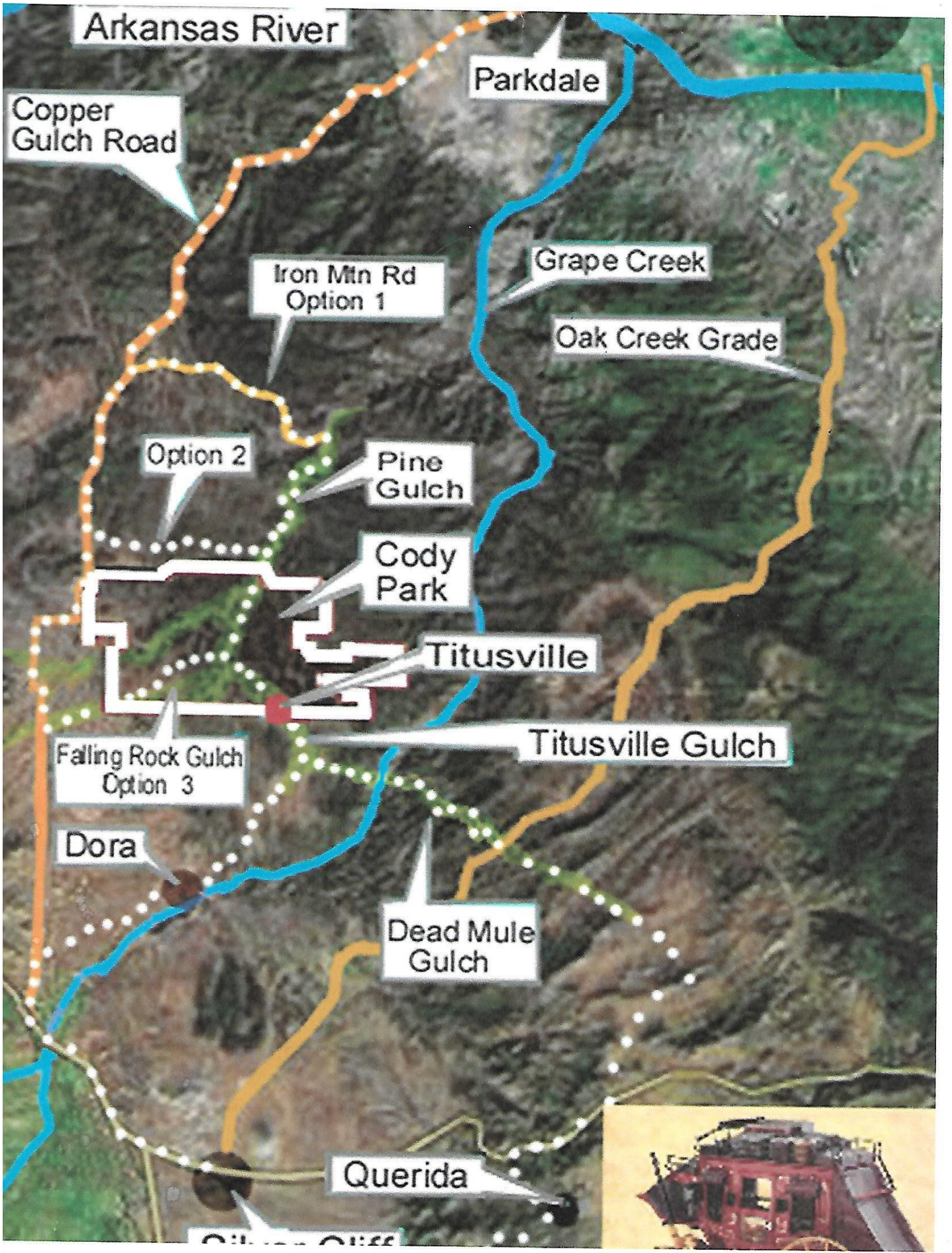
PAGE 2: MAP OF AREA -GRAPE CREEK

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WHAT IS FCHS: The Society was formed in 1971 by 200 charter members. The mission was to identify, preserve and educate people about the historic treasures of Custer and Fremont Counties. The society was instrumental in providing the Local History Center in the Cañon City Public Library with the resource materials collected over the years by the members of the Society.

The collection of historical materials which is now housed in the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center at 612 Royal Gorge Boulevard are the result of preservation efforts by the Historical Society. There are many opportunities for families to find their ethnic history, addresses of former members of their family and the resting place of many of the pioneers of these counties.

We urge you to also find the old papers, letters, and other artifacts that may be of value to the community as a whole about your family and history. Join the Historical Society to further its aims, or donate to this organization to help preserve our history.

Membership

Due on January 1st of each year

Individual \$15.00

Family: \$20.00

Advertisement: \$40.00

Life Membership one-time donation: \$150.00

FLORENCE HISTORICAL ARCHIVE, INC. We encourage you to attend the ongoing programs which are sponsored by the Bell Tower event center. The partnership has produced some wonderful programs over the past two years. Cost for a presentation is \$5.00 for general public non-members of the Bell Tower, and \$4.00 for the members of the Bell Tower.

The programs will be continued in the Spring of 2021, with some really great stories of the history of Florence and surrounding area.

Please visit

the website at www.florencehistoricalarchive.org



ROYAL GORGE REGIONAL MUSEUM AND HISTORY CENTER

The Museum and History Center is open by appointment for research and for tours with a minimum of occupants of the building at this time.

The various exhibits throughout the building are directly connected to the Fremont County and Colorado past. There is a display honoring veterans and telling the story of a country at war and the participants of each branch.

The new Amick gallery exhibit is of vintage clothing and the explanation of the various styles that have changed from 1865 through the 1980's.

Visit them online or at 612 Royal Gorge Boulevard Wed. through Sat. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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The City of Cañon City is pleased to print the Fremont County Historical Society Newsletter as a contribution to the Society. Thanks for all you do for Fremont County History.



The Oak Creek Cemetery, which is the property of the Fremont County Historical Society, is being improved and marked this year. The one stone in the cemetery that is identifiable is this one of Bessie Rhodes, a 9-month-old baby girl buried by her family whom we assume lived in Yorkville or Titusville at the time of her death.

Photo by C. McNew

Oak Creek Cemetery

In 1885, little Bessie Rhodes was buried here by her family at the age of nine months. This cemetery was the community cemetery near Yorkville on the Oak Creek Grade Road. She joined others there from the small mining communities that had sprung up with promises of gold – along Grape Creek and Oak Creek drainages. Later, another grave was marked on a natural red stone rock with only the date of 1892.

The area was part of the huge Payne Ranch until it was sold and subdivided into the Big Horn Subdivision. The little cemetery plot of one and a half acres was designated an out-lot and was not included in the subdivision. Later, a tax deed was issued for the acreage, to George Papp, who soon discovered he could do nothing with the property except donate it to a non-profit or let it go back to the Fremont County Tax assessor. He decided to donate the property to the Fremont County Historical Society, which still holds the deed to the land.

In 2000 the Historical Society put up a small sign on the side of the Oak Creek Grade Road which states the cemetery is the property of the FCHS. Their diligent search for additional graves or information that would indicate the other identification of obvious burials was to no avail, although a November 1990 newspaper notice was found stating “Charles Rand of Querida buried one of his children at Galena on the 28th.”

Interviews of old -timers about the cemetery produced many opinions as to the actual name of the cemetery, the dates it may have been used, and the other names of possible people buried there. The four mining communities most likely to have produced accidents or disease were: Titusville, Galena, Yorkville and Blackburn. All these mining communities are now gone. Without records to be found, the cemetery is a mystery and an enigma. Other names that were in the various communities were extracted from census and school records. The Galena School is still standing on the property now known as the Griffin Ranch.

The remains of at least seven graves are noticeable, and there is legend that over 22 graves actually are within the boundaries. Since the wooden picket fences and other markers are almost gone, we assume the locals needed firewood in the harsh winters, and this was a good place to just pick-up pieces of kindling

Our information is scant, but gleaning names from the census, we found the following who may have been interred in Oak Creek Cemetery in the late 1800's: Topliss, Griffin, Rants, Hill, Stultz, Daniels and Starr. The Rhodes family shows on the census in 1885 with A. J. Rhodes, wife Josephine, children, Henry, Perry, and Mary. The picture shows the crudely carved rock with the name of Bessie Rhodes engraved.

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