

Miner's Delight, Investor's Despair: The Ups and Downs of A Sub-Marginal Mining Camp in Wyoming

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Miner's Delight is near the mining towns of Atlantic City and South Pass City. Not only is there a chance of seeing this old mining town, but the wildlife of the area is phenomenal: antelope, elk, moose mule deer and a random bear or two. On some maps of west-central Wyoming, out at the end of a dimly-traced track lies a tiny dot, with the name Miner's Delight (Hamilton City) close by. In an age when backcountry travel has become a significant recreation activity, this is sure to attract some attention. The name itself fairly drips with "the dew of promise" to today's ghost town buff, as it did to wandering miners and unwary investors alike for almost half a century in Wyoming's youth. Part of the lure now lies in the physical remains of mining settlement with its antiquarian appeal. Surely behind such a name, and the cluster of mining structures and shacks it represents there must also be some lure for the folklore-seeker, the reader of western history, and perhaps for the scholar. We believe all these classes of reader may find a closer historical look interesting, since very little factual information on this old community appears in print. In taking such a look, we found that the facts are on the one hand less glamorous than the flights of fancy to which the sight of these ruins have carried some writers. On the other hand, the facts we have found serve to interrelate the story of Miner's Delight with the greater story of the mining-west. They also reveal in some detail the normal activity and the ups and downs of a camp that is, if anything, pretty typical of the western mining camp. It is a story much more filled with the heights of human hope and despair than it is with bonanza wealth. The fact that this camp saw three unsuccessful periods of development over a period of only forty years is a tribute to the "will to believe" common to gold camp folk, to the tenacity of the western miner and the gullibility of otherwise knowledgeable financiers.

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