

CRIPPLE CREEK

DISTRICT SOCIAL HUB



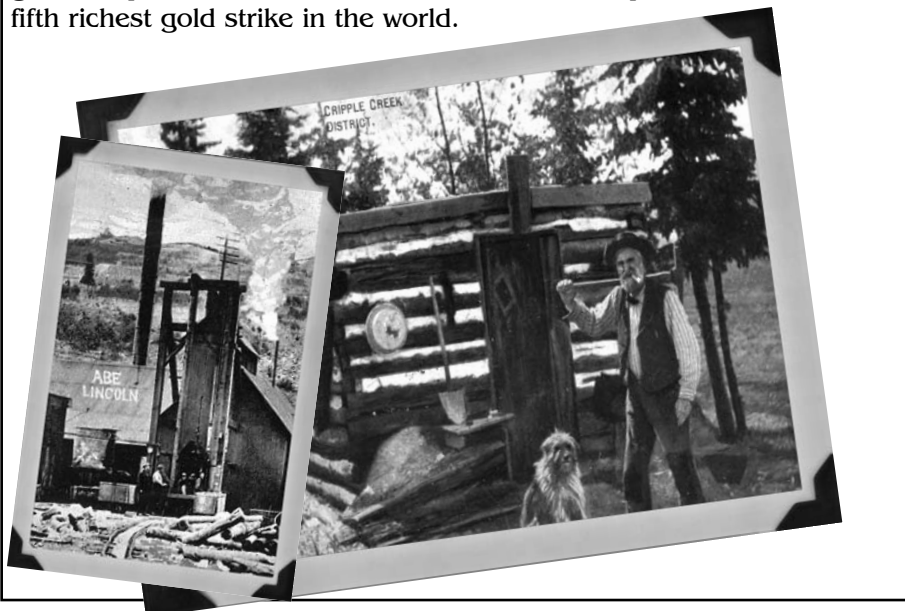
HOW CRIPPLE CREEK WAS NAMED

The town of Cripple Creek developed along a small creek after gold was found by Bob Womack. There are numerous stories about how the city was named. The most recounted story is of a cow that fell while crossing the small stream that flowed through Poverty Gulch, resulting in the statement, "That's some Cripple Creek."

Another story is the creek got its name from the way it runs - at one point it forms what is known as an "ox-bow," or a cripple.

And another comes from an incident reported in 1896 involving 5 prospectors. The men built a cabin. One of them fell off the roof, hit a dog, broke the dog's leg and his own arm, making 3 cripples in the same camp. So they called it Cripple Creek.

By 1894, what had been a quiet, serene cattle ranch was a booming gold camp of about 50,000 souls. The small camp was to become the fifth richest gold strike in the world.



BOOMTOWN MAKES HISTORY

Denver real estate men, Horace Bennett and Julius Myers developed Cripple Creek from its quiet beginnings as a ranch owned by Levi Welty. With the rush to find gold in full swing, the realtors made over \$1,000,000 selling sites for businesses, homes, stables and services.

The gold rush brought lumber yards, hotels, 100 saloons, over 40 assay offices and an equal number of brokerage firms, 80 doctors, 91 lawyers and 14 newspapers. Electricity lighted the streets in 1892 and in 1893 the city's water system was completed.

The Cripple Creek & Victor Mining District was a place of firsts. The first (and only) authentic Mexican bullfight was held at Gillett in the District. The first indoor rodeo was held in Cripple Creek at the Grand Opera House. Several celebrities either grew up here or spent time in the mining district, including: Groucho Marx, Lowell Thomas, Texas Guinan, Wyatt Earp and Jack Dempsey.

Today, nearby Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mining Company operates the Cresson Project - the largest surface gold mine in Colorado.

In 1990, the voters of Colorado approved limited-stakes gambling in Cripple Creek. The surge to build casinos and make civic improvements brought on a new gold rush to the century-old city that began with the meager endeavors of a few ranchers in Poverty Gulch.

PIKES PEAK HERITAGE CENTER

Visitors should start their Gold Country experiences at the Pikes Peak Heritage Center (PPHC) above Cripple Creek. Displays include geologic and human history, regional recreational activities and attractions. The PPHC has a wall of windows that offers stunning views of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range. PPHC offers visitor information, maps and directions and also sells in their gift shop a Heritage Passport which packages three museums into one admission. The PPHC is 1 mile north of Cripple Creek on Highway 67. Admission is free. Hours are 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., 7 days a week. For info, 877-858-4653 or visitcripplecreek.com.

DISASTER STRIKES TWICE

In 1896, disaster struck Cripple Creek, not once, but twice. In late April of that year, a "taxi dancer" on Myers Avenue (the Red Light District) got into a fight with her boyfriend. During the struggle, a kerosene heater was overturned which started a fire. Because of prevailing winds and the fact that all the buildings were wood, the eastern half of the Cripple Creek business district burned along with a good portion of the residences.

The resilient Cripple Creekers refused offers of help and rebuilding commenced the next day. Three days later, a cook at one of the hotels overturned a pot of grease on a hot stove, which started another fire. This second fire burned what was left of the business district, including the start of the new construction, and several more homes. This time, offers of help were gratefully accepted. The city fathers ordained the business district to be built in brick. Today, these brick buildings line Bennett Avenue and house the modern day casinos.

Wild Donkey Herd

A MINER'S BEST FRIEND

The World Famous Cripple Creek Donkey Herd can be found wandering around town. The animals are purported to be the descendants of the donkeys that worked in the mines before electricity reached the District. Donkeys provided a major labor force above and underground, packing supplies and hauling ore cars and timbers for mining and construction. The Two-Mile High Club of Cripple Creek cares for the animals by purchasing feed and veterinary services. Every June the town celebrates the donkeys with Donkey Derby Days. This year the event is June 27 and 28 and includes fun for all ages.

