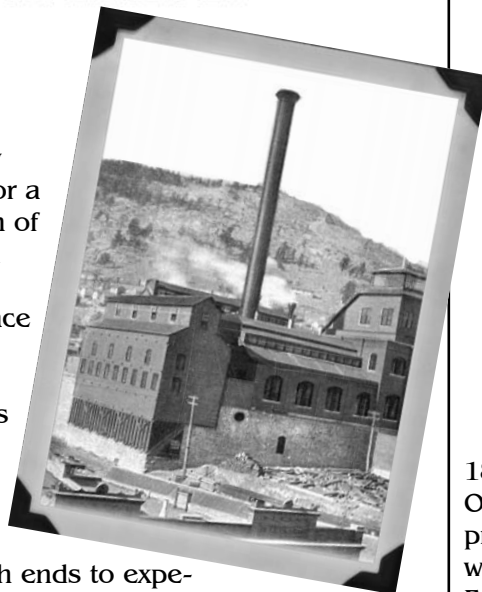


MANY MINES FEW FORTUNES

By Ed Hunter

THE FAMOUS GOLD COIN

The Woods brothers, who were selling lots in the new town of Victor, found a gold vein in the excavation for a hotel that they were building in downtown Victor in March of 1894. They followed this vein up the hill to the Gold Coin claim which they promptly leased and later purchased. During the fire that destroyed the town in 1899, the surface structures for the mine were burned but the brothers rebuilt the hoist house and other structures in brick. The facilities became a showplace, with stained glass windows installed in the hoist house, along with the largest hoist and air compressor in the district. The town of Victor quickly grew up around the plant leaving no room to construct a mill or to dump their development rock. The Woods solved this challenge by driving a tunnel from both ends to expedite completion; one heading starting at the 100 level of the shaft going west; the other heading starting to the east from the portal in Arequa Gulch.



An interpretative site at the Gold Coin Mine offers a glimpse of the giant hoist that once operated at the mine. This is located at Diamond & 5th in Victor. Interpretive signs describe the history and owners of the mine. View the original shaft and remains of the mine's brick structures from the top parking area or in the alley below.

THE STRONG MINE

One of the early mines in the area, the Strong Mine claim was located by Sam Strong in 1891. It is estimated that the Strong produced over \$13,000,000 in its lifetime.

The Strong surface workings were blown up in the 1894 labor war. Strong was shot in a local bar after an altercation with the bar owner.

In 1897, the Midland Terminal (MT) and the Florence and Cripple Creek (F&CC) railroads feuded over access to the Strong ore bins. The standard gauge MT had been denied access to the Strong ore bins by the existing narrow gauge F&CC. The MT laid a temporary track directly over the F&CC rails to reach the ore bins and lowered some cars down the grade to begin loading. The F&CC countered by ramming the MT setup with some old cars. After the dust settled and the wreckage was cleaned up, the two railroads agreed to lay a third rail along the F&CC narrow gauge track to allow both companies to reach the ore bins.

Wanted To Know

A stranger from the distant East, Begrimed with travel stain,
One day got off at Cripple Town From an early morning train.

A near hotel he quickly sought, His hunger to allay,
And after breakfast caught the clerk And talked to him this way:
"For weeks and months I've read about The Independence Mine.
The wonders of its treasure vaults, The walls with gold that shine.

I'm curious now to view it, And think I'll take a stroll.

Now what direction shall I take To reach that mineral hole?"

The sad eyed clerk with pitying glance Repressed a rising tear,

And answered with a faltering voice:

"It's six miles east of here.

Just take the next suburban That goes to Victor - see?

And you'll find the Independence in that locality."

The stranger, disappointed, Was silent quite awhile,

But broke the silence painful With conundrums of this style:

"Well, what about the Portland, Ajax, Gold Coin and Strong?

You advertised throughout the world to Cripple Creek belong?

I'll take a walk and look at them, While I've nothing else to do."

But the clerk just faintly murmured: "Those mines are at Victor too."

The stranger paused a moment, Then gave it to him raw:

"Well, where's your Battle Mountain, And the hill entitled Squaw?"

The clerk turned pale and gasped for breath,

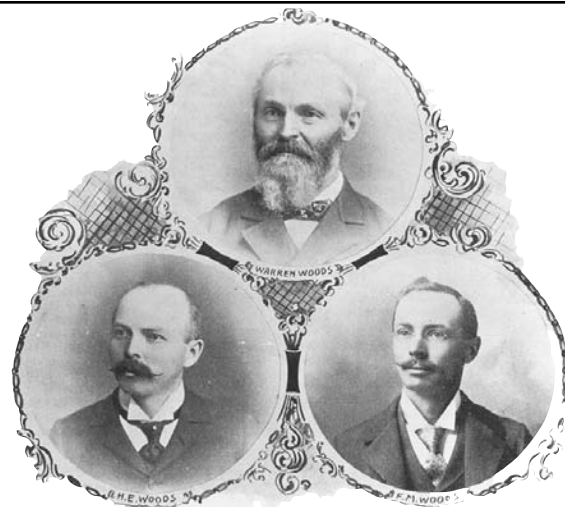
Keeled over on the floor,

And the subsequent proceedings Interested him no more.

The stranger grabbed his grip sack And caught the Victor train.

The chances are he'll not be caught In Cripple Creek again.

Anonymous

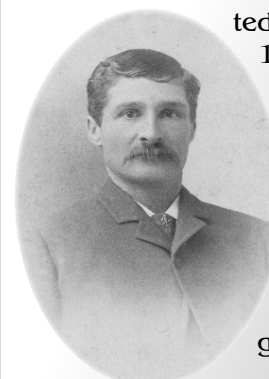


THE FOUNDERS

VICTOR ADAMS

Warren, Harry & Frank Woods came to Victor in 1892. Warren Woods, the father, was born in 1834 in Ohio and was president of most of the Woods' enterprises. Harry Woods was born in 1859 in Illinois and was a newspaper man before moving to Colorado. Frank Woods lived in Victor during the gold rush, managing the offices and operations of the Woods Investment Company.

The Woods purchased the Mount Rosa Placer and incorporated the Mt. Rosa Mining, Milling and Land Company January 9, 1892. The area was platted into lots and blocks, and the 137 acres netted the Woods over \$50,000 by 1895.



Victor Adams

Courtesy Victor Lowell
Thomas Museum

Victor was named after one of the town's first pioneers and ranchers, Victor Adams. According to family members, the townsmen decided to draw names from a hat to select the town's name. Adams, who lived in Victor long before it became a gold mining town, was the lucky draw.

By the time the town was platted in 1893, it was already known as the City of Mines

because the largest & richest gold mines of the Cripple Creek Mining District were located just above Victor on Battle Mountain. While Cripple Creek claimed the glory of a wealthy gold camp, nearby Victor and its environs played the biggest role in the production of the nearly \$434,000,000 in gold (in 1890's value).

In May of 1894 the town was officially incorporated and the first town council was elected in July of that year. Bruce Barger was the first mayor and he was assisted in governing the town by 6 trustees. March 3, 1898 Victor became a statutory city in Colorado.

By then the town had a population of 8,000 residents. August 21, 1899 it took wind-driven flames only five hours to destroy the bustling town and the Gold Coin Mine. The pioneering spirits that had made Victor a stronghold in a rough mining camp at nearly 10,000 feet rebuilt the city with brick in 6 months.

The Woods' other interests included the First National Bank of Victor and the Golden Crescent Water and Light Company. Their largest project, aside from the Gold Coin Mine, was the development of the Pikes Peak Power Company, which supplied Victor with hydroelectric power from a dam they built forming Skaguay Reservoir. Their prestigious bank building still stands at 4th & Victor and is now the Victor Hotel.