Silver Reef Interpretive Trail Guide

This Interpretive Trail Guide will help you identify some of the vestiges of Silver Reef, a mining town which flourished between 1876 and 1890.

Please help us preserve what is left of the town by not climbing on the ruins, picking up artifacts, or taking souvenirs. Should you see something you think may be of value, please speak to the Museum director about it. Enjoy your tour and thank you for coming.

(1) Wells Fargo Express Station: Built in 1878, this is the oldest Wells Fargo Express Station still in existence. Here, silver bullion from the mines was guarded and exported. The building served as a stage coach stop and housed the Wooly, Lund, and Judd Store. The Museum is currently located in this building. Visitors will find displays about mining, geology and Western Frontier history and may take a guided tour.

(2) Cosmopolitan Restaurant: Reputed to serve the best hash in the territory, this popular restaurant was owned by Margaret Grambs, a native of Bavaria. It was dismantled in 1895 when Mrs. Grambs moved to Salt Lake City. The current building was reconstructed on the original site.

(3) Harrison House: This hotel was Silver Reef's Waldorf Astoria! A large, two-story structure, it provided a five-star restaurant in the basement, furniture and general merchandise stores on the main floor, and guest rooms on the upper floor, a total of 45 rooms. After being destroyed by fire, it was completely rebuilt and refurnished.

(4) Silver Reef Miner Printing Office: Producer of ads, news about the mining industry, and jabs at various religions, this newspaper was a source of information and entertainment.

(5) Chinese Drug Store: The tall walls you see once had elegant arched doorways on both the east and west sides. Following completion of the transcontinental railroad, many Chinese laborers moved into mining areas. Silver Reef had numerous businesses operated by these immigrants, enough to form a “China Town.”

(6) Elkhorn Saloon: George Miller, the 300 lb. German owner of this establishment, calculated that by providing free salty foods at the bar his clientele would spend more on drinks, but when he ousted a patron for eating and not drinking, the man came back to get him. Seated under a shade tree at the time, George arose, extended his arms and said, “Shoot.” The man shot five times and missed. Later, two patrons who didn't miss their mark were the marshall and a miner who had twice stiffed him. They stepped out front and shot each other dead, probably about where you are standing. A few steps to the east of the Elkhorn Saloon was the jail, a handy arrangement since the saloon often served as courtroom and helped keep the jail in business.

(7) Cassidy Powder House: This is a reconstruction of a building in which explosives were stored. In it you will now find a diorama of the original town, models of mining mills and other structures, and an audio narrative of the history of Silver Reef.

(8) Nichols/Lubbock Home: This home was originally owned by Capt. H. S. Lubbock, whose wealth could pay for the finely cut stone walls. It is remembered as being most beautifully built and surrounded by trees and flower gardens. (From this location you can see sites 12 & 13-- the Barbee Walker Mine and the Schoolhouse. These are best reachable on the road; there is no trail.)

(9) Father Scanlan & St. John's Catholic Church: The rough-and-tumble miners were disinclined to take kindly the admonitions of priests and pastors. But Father Scanlan had already won their respect in Pioche and brought his reputation with him. The popular Catholic priest succeeded in establishing a church and hospital.