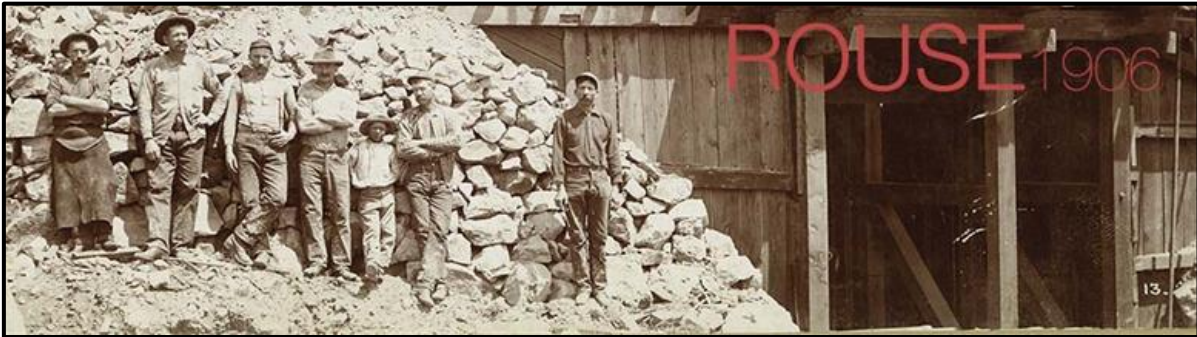
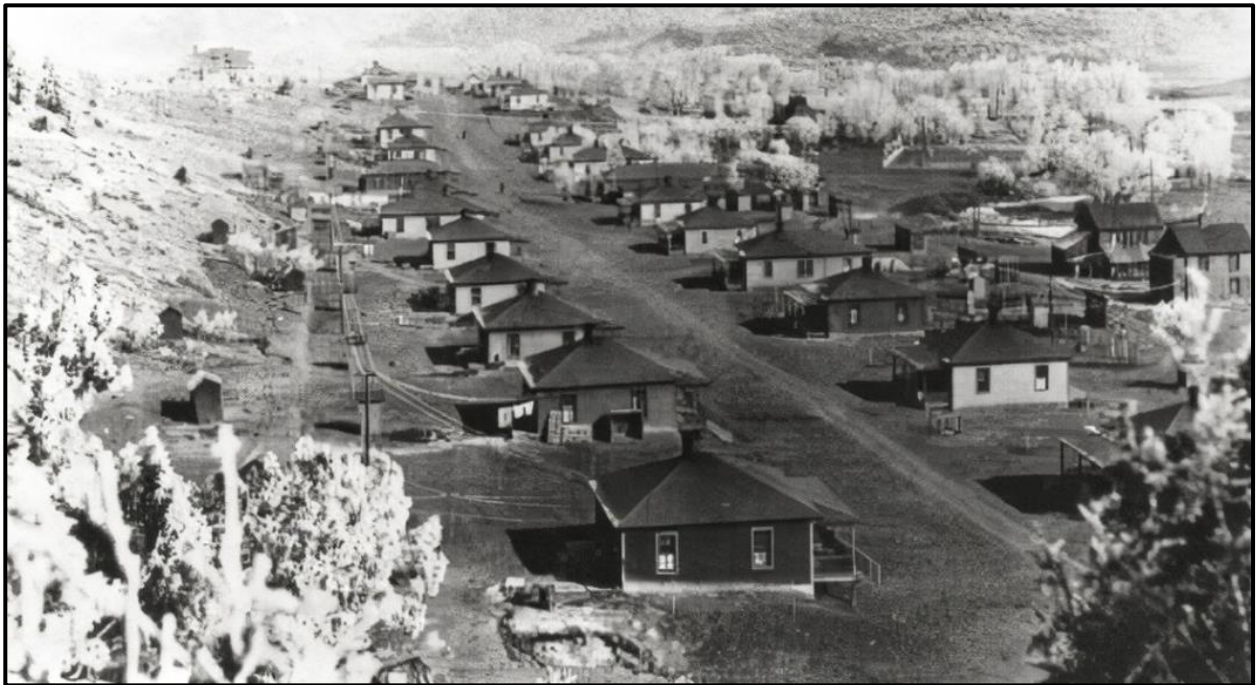


New Rouse, Colorado *by Nancy Pasternak*



When you drive through the front entrance of Blackhawk Ranch do you ever wonder about the concrete foundations on both sides of Four Mile Canyon Road? These foundation remains are all that is left of the once bustling little community of “New Rouse,” Colorado. “Old Rouse” was a coal mining town from 1889 to 1899 about six to seven miles south of Walsenburg, and men from all over the world moved to Huerfano County to work. Unfortunately, it was a constant battle to keep the mine shafts dry until the day arrived when the pumps could no longer stay ahead of the water. In 1899 the mine operations were moved to the new location of New Rouse near the old Santa Clara mines as well as every house and building that could be moved or dismantled. The New Rouse mine operated from 1899 to 1920.



Miners earned sixty cents a ton or from \$3.00 to \$6.00 per day. The mine was operated by Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, and by 1889 was the leading producer in Huerfano County,

averaging 70 rail cars a day. Fatalities and injuries were common in the mines, usually caused by a “fall of rock.” By 1895 it is estimated that Rouse had 1,500 residents. Rouse had the first kindergarten class in Huerfano County. The town had its own electrical plant, schools, churches, a boardinghouse, and a post office. Masquerade balls, oyster suppers, and baseball games were the favored social events.

The Rouse post office was moved to Pryor and operated until November 30, 1929. It was located in the adobe stucco house near our current Blackhawk Ranch mailboxes next to the county road, and a general store was also housed in the same



structure. A former dance hall also remains on the southeast corner of Rouse Road and CR316. We can only try to imagine what life was like for the residents of “Old Rouse” and “New Rouse” more than one hundred years ago in that bygone era when miners struggled to provide and care for their families. But if you listen oh-so-carefully, you may still hear the laughter of children at play and music serenading dancers well into the night. (For more historic photos of Rouse, visit <http://rouse1906.com/photo-gallery>)

