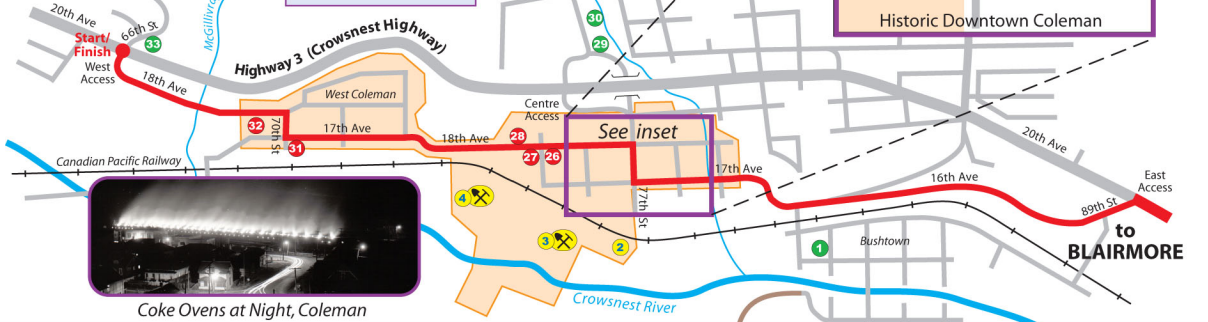


Crowsnest Pass COLEMAN

- Heritage Driving Route
- Heritage Sites on Route
- Heritage Sites off Route
- Former Location
- Coleman National Historic Site
- † Cemetery



Coke Ovens at Night, Coleman

- 1. Polish Hall** (1406 -82nd Street) The Polish Brothery Aid Society was founded in 1916, and in 1927 the society constructed the Polish Hall. Bricks used in construction were salvaged from the Rocky Mountains Sanatorium in Frank.
- 2. International Coal & Coke ovens** (South side of CPR tracks) The coke ovens were constructed in 1903 and expanded in 1904. Due to lack of ovens for coke the ovens were closed from 1912 to 1922, after which time they were reopened and substantially rebuilt. The coke ovens were shut down permanently in 1952. The remaining ovens are of 1932 vintage.
- 3. International Coal & Coke surface plant** (South side of CPR tracks) The International Mine opened in 1903 and the community of Coleman quickly grew to the north of the mine site. The International merged with the McGillivray Mine and Hillcrest-Mohawk in 1951 to form Coleman Collieries.
- 4. Coleman Collieries tippie** (North side of CPR tracks) The merger of International, McGillivray and Hillcrest-Mohawk Mines in 1951 formed Coleman Collieries, a company that would be the last of the coal mine operations on the Alberta side of the Crowsnest Pass, closing down in 1983.
- 5. Coleman Legion** (7531 - 17th Avenue) Coleman Branch No. 9 received its charter on October 6, 1926, making it the oldest legion in Alberta. It was offered the title of Branch No. 1, but chose No. 9 in honour of its nine founding members. The location of the cenotaph to the east of the Legion building was once a valley owned by William Haley and later Bill Antle.
- 6. Chinese Laundry** (A Nest of Needles; 7819 - 17th Avenue) Built in the early 1920s, this was originally a Chinese laundry on the main floor run by the Goosy family and an apartment above. Over the years, this building has held many different commercial enterprises.
- 7. Janostak's Grocery** (Vacant building; 7807 - 17th Avenue) Stephen Janostak, who also operated a store in Hillcrest, took over the grocery business of J. Solus in this Coleman location.
- 8. Evans's Boarding House** (This Cafe; 7800 - 17th Avenue) Jim Evans ran a boarding house that was known to rent to teachers. Later the building was Pepp's Cafe, then to the establishment of Chris and Irvin's Cafe.
- 9. Grand Theatre / Texaco Motordrome** (Vacant building; 7755 - 17th Avenue) The Grand was Coleman's earliest theatre, occupying a prominent location on main street. The site was later transformed into a Texaco service station known as the "Motordrome".
- 10. Grand Union Hotel** (7719 - 17th Avenue) The Grand Union opened in 1904 under owner Lloyd Manley. The original hotel was replaced by the current building by Calgary Breweries in 1926 and survived a fire in 1958. In the 1940s, hotel manager Lorenzo "Sonny" Richards was a big promoter of local hockey, sponsoring the Coleman Grands who won several major championships in the late 1940s.
- 11. Coleman Mercantile Store** (Coal Towne Antiques; 7701 - 17th Avenue) Still standing as a significant landmark in historic downtown Coleman, the Coleman Mercantile was designed by Edmund Disney for the Smith brothers of Lethbridge and constructed in 1904. At one time the building sported a unique 5-sided tower over its front entrance. A number of businesses have occupied the building over time, including a meat market, barber shop and hardware store.
- 12. Coleman Hardware** (Bagatelle; 7740 - 17th Avenue) J.D. Hill was the proprietor of the hardware in its early years. In 1948, the original Coleman Hardware building was destroyed in a massive fire that burned down several buildings along main street.
- 13. Palace Theatre** (Roxby Theatre; 7738 - 17th Avenue) One of a chain of theatres in the Crowsnest Pass that included the Orpheum in Blairmore and the Rex in Bellevue. The Palace Theatre was destroyed by fire in 1948 and replaced by the Roxby. The theatre was run by the Cole family from the early 1930s into the 1960s, when the chain was sold to the Dobek family.
- 14. P. Burns Meat / Zak's Meats and Groceries** (Vacant building; 7702 - 17th Avenue) Originally one of a chain of Pat Burns meat markets that were found in virtually every small town in southern Alberta. It was later operated by Henry Zak as Zak's Meats and Groceries.
- 15. Coleman Journal** (Daily Do's & Vespers; 7706 - 18th Avenue) Coleman's first newspaper, The Coleman Miner, began in 1908 and was shut down by the sheriff following pro-labour editorials during the 1911 miners strike. In 1921, regular newspaper service was re-established when publisher Tom Holstead started up the Coleman Journal. The entire paper was hand set and the hand-rolled copies rolled out 500 copies per hour. Over its lifetime, the Journal received numerous awards including a prestigious Pulitzer Prize from Columbia University.
- 16. A.P.P. Barracks** (809 - 18th Avenue) The building was built in 1904 for use by the Royal North West Mounted Police. In 1917, rural policing duties were taken over by the Alberta Provincial Police, who continued to use this building as a barracks. In 1922, P.P. Constable Steven Lawson and his family lived in the building. Constable Lawson was shot and killed outside the front door of the barracks in a heated argument with Emilio Picariello, noted local rum runner.
- 17. Miners' Hospital / Union Hall** (Coleman Seniors' Drop In Centre; 7801 - 18th Avenue) One of the concessions won in a miners' strike in 1905 was an agreement by the International Coal and Coke Company to build a hospital in Coleman. The Miners' Hospital was designed and built in 1906 by Edmund Disney and Wes Johnston. Dr. Westwood was the first doctor to practice at the hospital. The hospital served Coleman until the opening of the Crowsnest Pass Hospital in Blairmore in 1949. Following its decommission as a hospital, the building later served as a Union Hall for Coleman Local of the United Mine Workers of America.
- 18. Coleman High School** (Crowsnest Museum; 7701 - 18th Avenue) A new high school was built in Coleman in 1936 to alleviate overcrowding at the town's other two schools. John D'Apollonia was the general contractor. The large two storey brick building

HERITAGE SITES - COLEMAN

- served as a high school from 1936-1963, and an elementary school from 1963-1980. The Crowsnest Historical Society opened the Crowsnest Museum in the building in 1985. Today, the Museum holds over 50,000 artifacts, the majority of which are on display in one of the many exhibit galleries. The Museum is open year-round to visitors.
- 19. Coleman National Historic Site monument** In 2007, a section of Coleman was designated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as a National Historic Site. It was deemed that Coleman's old downtown area, with its mine site, railway, commercial core and residential areas with miners' cottages preserves the atmosphere of an early mining town.
 - 20. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce** (1734 - 77th Street) In 1926, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce replaced the 1906 Eastern Township Bank building with a new brick building at this location.
 - 21. St. Paul's United Church** (Coleman Christian Assembly; 1802 - 77th Street) In 1904, the Presbyterian congregation of Coleman was offered a lot on the hill above downtown by the International Coal and Coke Company, but preferred something closer to the downtown core. In 1905, the downtown lot was secured and the church was built by the Smith brothers, who had underbid Edmund Disney. St. Paul's dedication service was April 9, 1906.
 - 22. Coleman Fire Station** (7621 - 18th Avenue) Following a major fire in June of 1905 that destroyed a block of buildings on main street, a new fire station was constructed. It had twelve large rooms equipped with the latest fire-fighting devices. In 1934, the building was faced with concrete block and a new, large door was installed to accommodate a larger more modern fire engine. The building also served as Coleman's town hall and library until amalgamation in 1979.
 - 23. International Coal & Coke Office** (Vacant building; 7601 - 18th Avenue) In 1904, the main office building for the International Coal and Coke Company was constructed. It housed the Company's general manager, superintendent and clerical staff as well as the mine surveyors. The building, which was designed and built by Edmund Disney and Wes Johnston, also held the offices of the Coleman Light and Power Company.
 - 24. Eagles' Hall** (Spirits of the Creek; 7619/7621 - 17th Avenue) The Eagles' Hall, one of the few surviving brick buildings along Coleman's original main street, was constructed in 1909-10 by E. Morino, a contractor who had moved his business from Blairmore to Coleman in 1909. The Eagles' Lodge met on the second floor and rented out the main floor to druggist R.R. Webb. The Eagles were one of many fraternal orders that existed in early Coleman. In 1920, the Oddfellows purchased the building, and the main floor was occupied by Abbousa's Clothing Store for many years.
 - 25. Italian Hall** (Vacant building; 7601 - 17th Avenue) The Italian Benevolent Society was formed in Lille in 1906 by Italian miners who recognized the need for mutual assistance in times of sickness or death. When the mines at Lille closed in 1912, many of the miners moved to Coleman. The building was relocated to Coleman from Lille and renamed the Italian Hall. In 1935, the building underwent major renovations and was stuccoed in the Art Deco style of the period. The upper floor at the back was rented out as a residence and the main floor housed the Italian Co-operative Store. The White Lunch Cafe occupied the east side of the hall for many years.
 - 26. Wes Johnston residence** (Private residence; 7502 - 18th Avenue) Wes Johnston, a talented carpenter who was responsible for the construction of many early Coleman buildings, built his personal residence here in 1904, adding to it in 1908. In 1909, at the time of his marriage, Johnston built a second smaller residence on the property. Johnston and his family alternated between the two homes, renting out the larger house on occasion.
 - 27. Edmund Disney residence** (Private residence; 7498 - 18th Avenue) Edmund Disney, prominent contractor and builder of early Coleman built his personal residence in 1909. In addition to his contracting business, during his life Disney served Coleman as a mayor, town councillor, magistrate and coroner.
 - 28. Toppano Store** (Private residence; 7481 - 18th Avenue) For many years the Toppano family ran a small grocery store out of this location. Macaroni was a specialty at the store. The building was constructed in 1908 and had the family residence in the back and on the second floor.
 - 29. Flumerfelt Park** (North of Highway 3 at 77th Street) In 1910, land for the park was donated by the International Coal and Coke Company. The park was named for A.C. Flumerfelt, president of the coal company.
 - 30. Miners' Path** (North of Flumerfelt Park along Nepe Creek) The Miners' Path follows the route that miners living in Coleman took to reach the McGillivray Mine entrance. The route has been restored and today makes for a pleasant stroll to a waterfall.
 - 31. Coleman's General Store** (Private residence; 7002 - 17th Avenue) E.G. Gram opened up a general store at this location, one of the few commercial enterprises in West Coleman.
 - 32. Cameron School** (Vacant building; 6921 - 17th Avenue) In 1919, a school was built in West Coleman to house Coleman's primary grades. In 1925, the school's name was changed from West Ward School, as it had been known, to Cameron School, in recognition of Alex Cameron, who had served as chairman of the School Board since 1904 and was mayor of Coleman from 1904-1911.
 - 33. McGillivray Mine Office** (Vacant building; North of Coleman Mine at West Access) In 1909, the McGillivray Creek Coal and Coke Company acquired the coal seams to the north the International Mine's property and quickly began production. The good fortune to have two mines operating assured Coleman's growth for the next few decades. By 1929, McGillivray had 600 men on the payroll and this building housed McGillivray's Mine's office staff. In 1951, the McGillivray operations were sold to the newly formed Coleman Collieries, which also bought out the International Mine and Hillcrest-Mohawk Collieries.
 - 34. McGillivray Mine entrance** (No public access) The main entry to McGillivray Mine's underground workings is set above the west bank of McGillivray Creek and can be seen from Highway 3.

Coleman

In 1903, the International Coal and Coke Company **3** acquired 5,300 acres of land that included the future location of Coleman. A townsite was surveyed, lots were quickly purchased and by the end of 1904 the village had a growing population of five hundred. Two hotels, a bakery, a barber and a number of other stores emerged in the new community. The village was named by A.C. Flumerfelt, President of the International Coal and Coke Company, after his youngest daughter, Florence Coleman Flumerfelt. In 1909, the McGillivray Creek Coal and Coke Company **34** began operations to the north of the townsite and Coleman's future seemed assured. In 1910, Coleman was incorporated as a town, with Alex Cameron as mayor. Coleman suffered a severe economic blow in 1918 when the collapse of the coke market caused the International Coal and Coke Company to shut down all 216 coke ovens. **2** Only half of the ovens reopened in 1932 when the market turned more favourable. Despite the booms and busts of the coal industry, Coleman continued to expand.

During the heyday of the rum running era, the murder of Constable Steven Lawson brought unwanted attention to the town. **16** Coleman survived a major flood in 1923 and the Great Depression (1929-1939) before the demand for coal during World War II revived the town's sagging economic fortunes. In the immediate post-war period, the ever-increasing cost of underground mining forced a reorganization of coal mining in the Crowsnest Pass. One of the results was the formation of Coleman Collieries, **4** an amalgamation of the International, McGillivray and Hillcrest-Mohawk mines. In 1983, Coleman Collieries would be the last mine to close its operations in the Crowsnest Pass.

Edmund Disney **27** and Richard Wesley "Wes" Johnston **29** were Coleman's most prominent early builders and contractors. Both Disney and Johnson were contracted by the mine companies to build workers' cottages and offices **23** and also had a hand in many private commercial and residential structures. Their prolific work can still be seen in many of the buildings in Coleman today.

Ethnic Diversity

The Crowsnest Pass in general, and

Coleman in particular, was a venerable melting pot of cultures in the early years. Immigrants from eastern Canada and the United States, Great Britain, the Ukraine, Russia, Poland **1**, Czechoslovakia, Italy **25**, the Balkans, Scandinavia, Belgium, and France made their way to the Crowsnest for jobs in the coal mines. Coleman had its ethnic enclaves of Bush Town (Ukrainian and Polish), Italian Town, and Slav Town (West Coleman) where the rich and varied cultures were preserved. Over time, other groups such as Chinese, Dutch, Hungarian and Japanese arrived, adding to the fascinating and unique ethnic mosaic that makes up the Crowsnest Pass of today.



Downtown Coleman, circa 1920

Lawson's Murder

On September 21, 1922, during the prohibition era, Steve Picariello, son of famed rum runner Emilio Picariello, had just made a liquor run in from B.C. Steve's "run" was tipped off to police, and he was forced to make his escape from Blairmore back to the B.C. border. While passing through Coleman, Constable Steven Lawson attempted to stop the younger Picariello, and ended up shooting at the vehicle as it passed, wounding Steve Picariello in the hand. Emilio "Emperor Pick" Picariello learned of the shooting, and drove from Blairmore to Coleman to confront Lawson. Emperor Pick took Florence Losandro, the wife of his business partner, with him to Coleman. Outside the A.P.P. barracks **16**, Lawson argued with the elder Picariello, who was still inside his car. At some point in the argument, shots were fired and Lawson fell to the ground dead. Picariello and Losandro made their escape but were apprehended the following day. In a trial that captivated the nation, both Picariello and Losandro were found guilty of murder and both were hanged.

Coleman National Historic Site

In 2002, historic downtown Coleman was designated a National Historic Site. The plaque **19** commemorating the site states: "Coleman played a vital role in making the Crowsnest Pass one of Canada's most productive coalfields until the 1950s. Between 1903 and 1913, the International and McGillivray mines helped to fuel the boom years of the region. These operations relied on sophisticated preparation techniques and skilled miners of many ethnic backgrounds to produce large quantities of coal and coke. Coleman is one of the few Canadian sites where substantial physical evidence exists of the surface plant and of the town, where mine management and militant unions vied for control."