NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dawson Cemetery
other names/site number Evergreen Cemetery

2. Location

street & number Approx. 4 mi. NW of jct. US 64 and the Dawson Rd. N/A not for publication
city, town Dawson N/A vicinity
state New Mexico code NM county Colfax code 007 zip code

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
[X] private	[ ] building(s)		buildings
[ ] public-local	[ ] district		sites
[ ] public-State	[X] site	1	structures
[ ] public-Federal	[ ] structure		objects
	[ ] object		
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [✓] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [✓] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

[illegible] SHPO — 2-18-92

Signature of certifying official — Date

Historic Preservation Division

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[✓] entered in the National Register. [✓] See continuation sheet. — Beth Boland — 4/9/92
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register.
[ ] other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A
roof N/A
other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

The cemetery, which once served the no longer existing town of Dawson, is located east of the main road into the town, at the base of a mountain, about three quarters of a mile southeast of the former townsite. The three contiguous sections of the burial ground are surrounded by barbed wire or iron pipe fencing and contain about 600 marked burials which face west, toward the road. The section with the largest number of marked burials (about 360) is a large rectangle enclosed by iron-pipe fencing and surrounded on three sides by the rest of the cemetery. Within the pipe fence are primarily the graves of miners killed in two major mine explosions which took place in 1913 and 1923. The majority of these graves are marked with identical iron crosses placed in orderly rows, although there are more individualistic markers and fenced grave sites as well. Contiguous on the north and east of the miners' section are about 150 marked burials dating from as early as 1906 to the late 1920s. South of the miners' section, the third and newest area contains about 80 burials dating from the late 1920s through at least 1949, including casualties of World War II. In both sections outside of the pipe fencing are buried women and children as well as miners and others. The graves are farther apart and appear more haphazardly placed. All three sections contain examples of a diverse collection of markers which vary in size, style, material, and language and which represent the highly mixed ethnic makeup of Dawson. There are no excessively large or high style monuments nor are there any mausolea or above ground tombs. In all sections some plots are enclosed by fences constructed primarily of wire, iron pipe, or wrought iron. There are no buildings or other structures within or near the cemetery. It has no overall pattern of design and only natural landscaping. Since the town closed in 1950, some burials have been moved to other locations and other graves have been neglected, particularly in the older section outside of the miners' cemetery. Nevertheless, despite the passage of more than forty years, relatives still visit and attend to many of the graves and in a few cases new markers have been added to existing grave sites. Perhaps because of the extremely isolated location there has been little systematic vandalism beyond the destruction of portraits on grave markers. Most of the cemetery is intact and well represents its historical and cultural associations. Recently the Phelps Dodge Mining Company financed a major refurbishing with particular attention to the miners' section.

[x] See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
OTHER: coal mining	c.1906 - 1941	1913
ETHNIC HERITAGE/European/Hispanic		1923
SOCIAL HISTORY/company town		

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Significant Person: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY

This property is the best and only complete resource representative of Dawson, at one time the largest coal mining community in the Raton coal field of northeastern New Mexico. The town was established solely to expedite the mining of nearby underground coal and razed when mining coal was no longer economically viable. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe and from Mexico were a large part of the population of Dawson which for most of its existence was a tightly-held company town, owned and operated by the Stag Canyon branch of the Phelps Dodge Corporation, a major producer of copper. The Dawson mines were PD's only coal operation and for a number of years they ranked second in production in New Mexico. The town of Dawson was developed as a "model" company town offering a range of amenities not usually associated with coal camps. At the same time Dawson miners were victims of two of the worst explosion accidents in the history of American coal mining. The cemetery is significant under Criterion A for its association with the history of Dawson and the history of coal mining. As a company town Dawson was representative of a phenomenon which was broadly significant in the development of mineral and lumber resources in remote and unpopulated areas of the American West but today is nearly nonexistent. The cemetery itself with its diversity of ethnic markers and contrastingly uniform rows of crosses commemorating the explosion victims represents the experience of immigrants some of whom came to America as part of the wave of migration at the beginning of the century which preceded the imposition of quotas in the early 1920s. The site has further significance under Criterion D for its potential to provide knowledge within the framework of disciplines such as cultural anthropology and cultural geography. Thus this cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria Consideration D for its historical associations with the history of coal mining in northeastern New Mexico, the history of coal mining accidents in the United States, the phenomenon of the company town, and early twentieth century immigration patterns, and for its potential to yield information on the experience and adaptation of immigrants as part of this history.

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

[X] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property About 9 acres

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	13	520670	4056480
B	13	520880	4056580
C	13	520950	4056440
D	13	520740	4056340

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property corresponds to the rectangle labeled "Cem." on the USGS map of the Dawson Quadrangle, having vertices marked by the UTM reference points listed above.

[ ] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the cemetery as determined by the USGS.

[ ] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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★U.S.GPO:1988-0-223-918

DESCRIPTION

The section of the cemetery enclosed by white-painted pipe fencing contains the graves of most of the miners killed in two major mining accidents, (Photos 6, 7, 8, 9). The victims of the 1913 explosion, which killed 263 men, appear to have been buried in the eastern end of the cemetery, that closest to the old cemetery and the mountain. Immediately to the west, closer to the road, are buried those miners who died in the 1923 accident which killed 120 men. There is no apparent separation of the graves from the two disasters. At the far end of the miners' cemetery are about five small plots individually enclosed with iron piping that is connected to the main fence. In some cases these appear to contain family members buried with victims of the earlier explosion.

Most graves from both accidents are marked with identical iron crosses placed in rows of ten on either side of a center passageway, (Photos 6, 12). These crosses are about two and one half feet high and have been painted white. The tops and horizontal members terminate in a trefoil pattern. Many have a first and last name embossed on the cross member in inch-high letters raised about a quarter of an inch. Others are blank probably indicating unidentified casualties. On the north side of the path there are nineteen rows of crosses; south of the path are seventeen rows.[1]

Interspersed among the iron crosses are a number of individual stone or metal markers, the majority of which have foreign epitaphs in Italian, Slavic languages, Spanish, or Greek, (Photos 13, 14, 15, 16). Some have inscriptions which refer to the mine explosions. A number of sandstone markers have common design elements of shape and decoration, (Photos 13, 14). The most common shared feature is a rectangular base decorated with a pattern of incised diamonds. All are vertical in emphasis and include a relatively tall, cross-vaulted obelisk and a shorter, wider obelisk. Repeated decorations are a cross and wreath in high relief under the inscription of the taller monuments and a cross in very low relief at the top of the less tall stones. Many of these stones are in Italian, others are in a Slavic language or English. Within the miners' cemetery, there are also a few distinctive metal markers, no two of which are alike, (Photos 15, 16). Some grave sites are defined by cement curbing or individual fences, enclosing in a few cases the graves of two or three brothers. Burials do not appear to be grouped by national origin. The presence of a number of markers bearing Greek surnames in close proximity perhaps resulted from a common and separate religious service.

1. Christian, "Note," 2.

In contrast to the section holding explosion victims, where graves are placed neatly in compact rows on either side of a center walkway and marked by identical crosses, the surrounding sections appear more haphazardly arranged. Marked graves are farther apart and more randomly spaced. As in the miners' section the most common shape or decorative motif is the Roman cross, reflecting the prevalence of Roman Catholicism in the Dawson population. However, aside from this common feature, the grave markers represent a striking variety of styles and materials. They range from simple, hand-carved wooden crosses; rough-hewn, hand-lettered, sandstone or "home-made" concrete markers; and individualist wrought-iron designs to commercially produced sandstone, marble, or granite monuments with professional lettering, carved decoration sometimes in high relief, and occasional photographic portraits, (Photos 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36). Many have foreign inscriptions predominantly in Italian and Slavic languages, as well as Spanish, Greek, and English.

In the oldest section are a number of sandstone markers which are similar in style and decoration to those in the miners' section; some have inscriptions in Slavic languages and others in Italian, (Photo 20). Also in the older section there are a number of distinctive wrought-iron markers without identifying inscriptions. Though similar in style each is unique, (Photos 17, 18, 19). In the new section the graves of three victims of the major explosions are marked each with the standard iron cross as well as a stone monument, (Photo 36). In the newer section, more stones are made of granite and more are lower in profile, (Photo 35). In both sections many graves are defined by concrete curbing or less frequently stones, (Photos 22, 23, 27, 30, 32, 35). Some are covered by a concrete or stone slab, (Photos 25, 28, 36). A significant number of plots are surrounded by fences of wire, pipe, or wrought iron, (Photos 4, 21, 24, 25, 34, 35, 37). In some cases there are no markers within a fence. A number of graves have groupings of small stones placed upon them, (Photo #25).

There has been little purposeful alteration of the cemetery since 1950 when the town of Dawson closed. There is no landscaping beyond what grows naturally; a few scattered trees may be remnants of earlier plantings. A small wooden tool shed which once stood at the northwest end of the cemetery is now gone. The older section east and north of the piped fencing has suffered most from the ravages of time. Some markers have fallen down, some are illegible, and others are simply overgrown, (Photo 37). The newer section, like the miners' cemetery, is generally better maintained. Nevertheless, in all three sections there are many graves bearing evidence of recent attention from the living such as planted flowers, ribbons, and plastic flowers.

As a whole the cemetery remains intact and undisturbed. In the summer of 1990 Phelps Dodge undertook to renovate the miners' cemetery. The originally silver-gray iron crosses were brush-painted white as was the pipe fencing. Some graves which had fallen down were set upright again. The pipe fence was cleared of brush and a section of about 100 feet that had fallen down along the south side was repaired and replaced. The old wire gate was replaced with new posts and a gate made by a retired miner. The road which had been eroded by drainage was build up and a ditch constructed to redirect the water.[2]

2. Mora; Bennett; Davis; Kendrick, interviews.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Coal Mining in New Mexico

Although coal mining had developed into a sizable industry in some areas of the United States in the early nineteenth century, in New Mexico large-scale coal production began only after the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in 1879-80. The railroad not only provided the means to transport coal in quantity but was itself a major consumer of coal to produce steam. Faster, cheaper transportation also made practical for the first time the full-scale development of other resources such as copper which in turn required huge smelters fueled by coke made from coal. In addition, coal largely replaced wood as a heating fuel for homes and offices; by the turn of the twentieth century New Mexico coal was used extensively for this purpose. Until replaced by other fuels later in the century, coal was America's primary private and industrial source of energy.

Much Western coal was owned and mined by companies, such as the major railroads and large metal-producing companies like Phelps Dodge, which were dependent on coal to fuel their primary operations. In 1880 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway began mining operations in the Raton Coal Field, the New Mexico portion of a vast deposit of bituminous coking coal occupying approximately two thousand acres of northeastern New Mexico and southeastern Colorado. A number of mining camps sprang up in the vicinity of Raton, New Mexico, the principle community on the AT&SF in northeastern Colfax County. Of these Dawson was the largest.[1]

Like other coal mining areas, the Raton coal fields attracted large numbers of immigrants. Before the coming of the railroad and the opening of large coal mines, European migration to this region of New Mexico had been slight. In the new mining towns a majority of the population was typically of foreign birth with Italians, Slavs, and Greeks predominating after the turn of century. Later, immigrants from Mexico came in increasing numbers. Often leaving behind families, men came to New Mexico seeking economic opportunity as miners or as skilled or unskilled laborers. Many eventually were able to bring others to the United States including wives, relatives, and friends. A high proportion became American citizens and many went on to open businesses in Raton and nearby towns.

1. Kesel, 231-234.

Nationally coal production peaked in 1918 and declined thereafter mainly because of the increased use of petroleum and natural gas and the economic depression of the 1930s. As early as 1911 oil-fired steam locomotives were used in California and by the early 1920s, copper smelters were being converted from coke to fuel oil. New Mexico coal production of 2,697,840.10 tons in 1920 was the lowest since[2] 1908 and was 1,415,700 tons less than the production for 1917, a peak year.[2] Production levels through the mid-1920s remained stable averaging 2,941,829 per year from 1920 through 1927 and declined thereafter particularly in the years of the depression. Shortages of other fuels during World War II resulted in a renewed but temporary need for coal and production reached an all-time high in 1947. However, after the War coal production fell dramatically as diesel power completely replaced steam in locomotives and fuel oil and natural gas replaced coal for heating.

The history of mining in the Raton Field parallels that of the coal industry generally. Production peaked in 1918 at 4 million tons and thereafter declined except for a short period during World War II. By 1954 mining operations in the Raton field had ceased. In that year the state mine inspector referred to coal mining there[3] as a dead industry and his office stopped compiling figures for the area.[3]

Phelps Dodge and the Company Town

Although many variations existed, a company town was generally created around a single industrial operation and was owned and operated by the company which operated the industry. That is, the company owned all homes, business and public buildings, recreational facilities, utilities, the company store, and so on. Any private businesses were leased from the company and existed at its pleasure. Some two hundred company towns[4] have been identified as having existed in eleven western states.[4]

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, company towns were most often associated with the mining and lumber industries. They served an essential role in the development of these resources which were often located in remote, unpopulated areas. Not only was there little incentive for property ownership given the presence of only one industry, but also housing

2. State Inspector of Mines, "Report," 1921; State Inspector of Coal Mines. "Report," 1927.
3. Kesel, 236.
4. Allen, viii.

and credit at the company store were necessary inducements used to secure laborers from among impoverished immigrants. In addition, the company itself often wanted to reserve the possibility of future mining of the land on which a town was built. Finally, in the twentieth century company towns were seen as a useful arrangement in resisting union organizing.

The company town was crucial to the development of coal industry and from coal mining camps has come the unsavory reputation of company towns in general as squalid places of low wages, substandard housing, high prices, and perpetual debt. Abuses in company towns were often exposed by the union movement and were detailed in 1923 and 1947 Federal government reports of investigations of conditions in coal industry. However, in the early part of twentieth century companies established a new sort of planned community of which Dawson is a primary example.

The Phelps Dodge Mining Company developed a number of company towns associated with copper mining and smelting, in addition to the coal-mining community of Dawson. In these towns Phelps Dodge was characteristically involved in other enterprises such as company stores, recreational facilities, and hospital services. Dawson is an example of a well-run company town with, by all accounts, exceptional community services and strong community spirit.

By the 1960s company-owned towns in the West had practically disappeared. Born of economic necessity, they died when economic viability was lost. Workers achieved financial independence and were no longer as dependent on the company to provide basic necessities. Improved highways and the widespread ownership of automobiles permitted them to commute from other communities. When coal mines closed as a result of the steep decline in demand, their associated company towns were either sold to private interests or, as in the case of Dawson, wiped completely off the map.

Early Twentieth Century Patterns of Immigration to the United States

The migration of some 34,000,000 Europeans to the United States between 1820 and 1959 was a major part of what has been called the greatest movement of population in Western history. Before 1890 the majority of these immigrants were from northern and western Europe. By 1907, 80% of those entering the United States came from eastern and southern Europe. Many were single men from crowded, economically depressed, agricultural communities, who found opportunity as wage earners in America's industrial centers and mining camps.

The largest numbers came from Italy where the government actively encouraged and protected emigration. After 1921 the number of migrants to the United States was drastically reduced by new laws limiting immigration.[5]

Until 1920 the only restrictions placed on entry into the United States were based on the adjudged fitness of individuals in such matters as health, economic viability, and criminal record. However, immigration acts passed in 1921 and 1924 in reaction to swelling numbers of Mediterranean, Slavic, and Oriental migrants, established narrow quotas for admittance based on the percentage of a nationality already represented in the population.[6]

HISTORY OF DAWSON

John B. Dawson and the Maxwell Land Grant

The town of Dawson was built on land which was once part of the vast grant made in 1841 to Guadalupe Miranda and Carlos Beaubien by Manuel Armijo, the last Mexican governor of New Mexico. In 1844 Beaubien's son-in-law, Lucien B. Maxwell, obtained possession of the grant, including most of the Raton coal field in both northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. The land was used primarily for sheep and cattle ranching; there is no record that Maxwell developed coal for commercial purposes.

On January 17, 1869 Maxwell sold a portion of the grant for $3,700 to a rancher named John B. Dawson.[7] The tract, which contained vast quantities of coal, was thought to encompass about 1000 acres, although the boundary description was imprecise. At a time when wood still prevailed as a home fuel, Dawson used the coal for heating and cooking but did not exploit it commercially in any extensive way.

In 1870 Maxwell sold the entire grant, excepting Dawson's tract, to a group of investors called the Maxwell Land Grant Company. They sought to eject Dawson twenty-two years later once the value of the coal he controlled became apparent. Protracted litigation included an appeal all the way to the

5. Cochran, 442.
6. Ibid.
7. Mora County Deeds, Bk. 2, pages 112 and 114, (Cited by Keleher, 143).

United States Supreme Court. When Dawson finally prevailed, he became the undisputed owner of not 1000 but 20,000 acres containing invaluable coal resources.[8]

The Town of Dawson and the Development of the Dawson Coal Fields

While the case brought against Dawson by the Maxwell Land Grant Company was still pending, the tireless New Mexico railroad promoter, Charles B. Eddy, obtained an option to buy the Dawson property if the case should be settled in Dawson's favor. Eddy had built the El Paso & Northeastern railroad north from El Paso, Texas, to Carrizozo, New Mexico, from which he had extended a branch line to the Salado coal fields. When these mines did not meet their initial promise Eddy recouped the project by persuading the Rock Island Railroad to join him in completing a line from Carrizozo to the Rock Island terminus in Liberal, Kansas.

In 1901, the dispute with the Maxwell Land Grant Company having been settled, Dawson sold land for $400,000 to the newly formed Dawson Fuel Company, a subsidiary of Eddy's railroad. Eddy also formed the Dawson Railroad Company and built a 132-mile spur north from Tucumcari, New Mexico, on the Rock Island line to the Dawson coal fields. For another $5000 the Dawson Fuel Company purchased land for a townsite to be named Dawson. John Dawson kept his home and 1260 surrounding acres; his wife obtained an exclusive ten-year franchise to sell milk to the coal camp that the company was about to establish. A saw mill was set up and the company proceeded to build houses for the miners it needed to attract.

In 1906 Phelps Dodge Mining Company purchased the Dawson coal operation and renamed it the Stag Canyon Fuel Company. Phelps Dodge also gained control of the rail lines from Dawson to Tucumcari and to El Paso, Texas. This line, which connected at El Paso with the Phelps Dodge's own El Paso and Southwestern Railroad to its copper smelters in southwestern New Mexico and southern Arizona, gave the company complete control of a huge supply of coking coal and the transportation to ship it to its smelters. Phelps Dodge estimated that the Stag Canyon Fuel Company had the resources to "supply all the coal needed for the next hundred years."[9]

8. Keleher, 143-146.
9. Cleland, 149.

New equipment was installed and more mines opened. Eight mines were worked in 1917 and from 1918 through the mid-1920s there were ten in operation. The Dawson mines ranked second in production in the state, after the mines owned by the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain & Pacific Company, also in Colfax County. With 446 coke ovens, Dawson was the main source of coking coal for the Phelps Dodge copper smelters. The population of the town grew from 600 in 1902 to a peak of about 6,000 from 1917 through the early 1920s. Dawson is said to have been the largest town in the Southwest supported by a single industry.[10]

Much of the population of Dawson consisted of immigrant miners, from eastern and southern Europe and from Mexico. The majority in the early years were part of the turn of the century wave of Mediterranean and Slavic migration to the United States. In 1910 of 783 underground employees in the Dawson mines, 39.68% were Italians, 16.19% Slavs, 9.65% Greeks, 6.4% Austrians 1.47 Germans, and 1.08% Japanese. The countries of Finland, France, Sweden, Spain were represented by less than 1% per cent each. The major European groups thus represented over 70% of the total. In contrast, Spanish speaking natives of New Mexico and of Mexico made up 17.18% and English speaking employees, including Americans and African-Americans, made up only 12.67% of the total.[11] Around World War I, Dawson reportedly had one of the largest groups of Italians from the Province of Lucca to be found west of Chicago.[12] By 1919 the percentage of Europeans had decreased in favor of Mexicans. Of 733 underground employees, 13.8% were listed as American, including Blacks, 28% as Mexican and Spanish. Europeans made up 58% of the total including 27% Italian, 21% Slavic, 9% Greek, and 1% Hungarian. A year later the proportions had changed suggesting even greater immigration from Mexico and far less from Europe. Of the men working in the mines, 16% were American, 46% Mexican, 20% Italian, 12% Slavs, and 6% Greek, or a total of 38% European.[13]

Phelps Dodge sought to create a model company town at Dawson by building sturdy houses for residents and providing amenities unknown in most coal camps. The community was described in 1917 as "a cozy, hustling little western city, with a great many comfortable homes, instead of the bleak, mineral painted, raw-pine-and-corrugated-iron collection of shacks that experience tells you to anticipate when arriving in a mining settlement."[14] The company-operated department store, generally called PD Mercantile, was

10. Twitchell, 92; Melzer, 311; 312.
11. Stanley, The Dawson Tragedies, 17.
12. Bohme, 111.
13. State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Reports," 1919; 1920.
14. Twitchell III, 92-93.

housed in an impressive four-story brick building with an ice plant in the basement. Phelps Dodge also operated a hotel, a bank, and a modern hospital. According to the recollection of a former resident, at one time hospitalization insurance cost three dollars per month and covered everything including medicines which were free.[15] The company supported well-appointed schools and two churches, one Catholic with a resident priest and one Protestant with a resident minister. Phelps Dodge owned and operated the cemetery. The water works and a steam electric power plant, which provided electricity to the towns of Raton, New Mexico and Walsenburg, Colorado, were company owned as well.

For recreation the company-built amusement hall contained an opera house, movie theater, pool hall, bowling alley, and a large lodge room used by Dawson's many fraternal orders. Also provided were a ball park, swimming pool, concrete tennis courts, a golf course, and so on. During prohibition three converted saloons became "soft drink parlors." In 1919 the motion picture show changed every night and cost twenty cents including the war tax, less than in outside towns. Bowling cost ten cents a game and pool, five cents a cue.[16] The golf club was said to be the oldest in New Mexico in terms of continuous existence. The company also supported a baseball team in the summer and defrayed the cost of tents and transportation to send the boy scouts to camp.[17]

The annual reports of the state mine inspector note more than once the "civic features" of Dawson. In 1913 the new store building was said to "probably surpass any store building at a coal camp west of the Mississippi." The same year 70 new concrete cottages of four and five rooms were noted. In 1918 eighty-eight new dwellings were constructed of cement blocks with painted shingle roofs and electric lighting. A new $5,000.00 X-ray machine was installed at the hospital and a modern school building built for $22,000, presumably the school structure of pebble-dashed concrete block mentioned in the next year's report. Two years later the new school on Capitan Hill built of brick with stone corners and trim was called a "credit to any city in the state."[18]

Some of Dawson's European immigrants were hired by Phelps Dodge in New York City as they arrived in this country. Others found Dawson through relatives or friends already working there. In at least one case a couple who

15. Herrera interview.
16. State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Report," 1919.
17. Scanlon interview.
18. State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Report," 1913; 1918; 1919; 1921.

had lived nearby in Croatia without knowing each other met and married in Dawson. Many miners came as single men; most remained in the United States. Some saved money to bring over wives, potential wives, relatives, or friends. In one instance an arrangement was made between the priest in Dawson and a village priest in Croatia to select and send over twelve marriageable young women.[19]

Dawson residents lived either in the townsite or in areas in the mountains close to the mines called "camps" and named either by the number or name of the nearby mine, such as Capitan or #7. Single men lived in boarding houses generally run by Italians. Although some camps were associated with particular ethnic groups, the overwhelming recollection of Dawson residents is that groupings were by choice and that the living areas were ethnically mixed, with one exception. Housing was assigned according to availability and anyone could apply for a vacancy anywhere. During the years of peak coal production, it was difficult to get housing and families sometimes had to double up in the same house.[20] Although people tended to live near where they worked with management generally downtown and miners near the mines, even this separation was not hard and fast.[21] The one exception was the African Americans, many of whom worked as mule skinners. They lived together in a group of houses known as "Coon Town."[22]

There were no elected officials or representative government in Dawson. A superintendent hired by the company ran the whole operation. Under him was a mine superintendent who directed the mines and a town manager who was in charge of the town. Among the manager's duties was the assignment of housing and plots in the cemetery.[23]

Former residents, particularly those who grew up in Dawson, remember a strong emphasis on the importance of schooling. Although immigrants used native languages at home, all spoke English at school and some parents also insisted on English at home. Night classes were offered for miners to learn to speak, read, and write English. The superintendent of schools gave lessons

19. Lucero; Simpson; McClary; Myers; Grubesec interviews.
20. Randall interview.
21. For example Carol Myers whose father was an accountant for PD remembers having neighbors downtown who worked in the mine.
22. Chavez; Scanlon; Grubesec interviews.
23. Chavez; Shelton interviews.

in "Americanization," directed toward the requirements for citizenship.[24] During the vacation months cooking and sewing were taught by a special teacher who looked after the girls and agricultural clubs were formed for the boys.[25]

Descendents of those who worked in the mines remember that coal mining was seen as an opportunity. Miners felt they "earned good money" and "lived life to the fullest." Faced with the constant danger of an extremely hazardous activity, they "worked hard and played hard." Rather than an atmosphere of doom or depression, a city of "rollicking fun" is recalled with music and dances, picnics and ball games.

A death in Dawson was felt as a loss to the whole community. Festive wakes were customary in the home of the deceased and attended by friends of any nationality. While a few people maintained a solemn vigil over the open coffin, in other parts of the house there was plenty of food and wine. The children were told either very funny or very frightening stories by people well known for their capacities in either direction. Stories of their reactions would become traditional at similar occasions in the future. The next morning the coffin was taken to the church for funeral services and then to the cemetery for burial. Afterwards all went back to the house to eat, a more solemn occasion than the wake but full of feelings of warmth and friendship.[26] The solidarity of the community was strongly expressed in the rituals of death.

A remarkably strong community spirit developed at Dawson which is remembered with pleasure by former residents. Typical comments are, "There will never be another Dawson," or "We were like one big happy family, like brothers and sisters." Interest in sports ran particularly high and the town boasted many championship football, basketball, and baseball teams. The one note of dissention surrounds the miners' union. Some feel that the atmosphere changed after the union became active in 1930s and "antagonized" company executives; others feel that the union helped the miners by improving working conditions and created no long-lasting conflicts.

24. McClary interview.
25. State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Report," 1919.
26. Komadina interview.

As in the coal industry generally, Dawson's coal production peaked around World War I and declined thereafter. The highest output 1,439,904 tons was reached in 1916.[27] By 1926 the PD copper smelters had switched to oil and coking operations at Dawson discontinued. Two years later the Rock Island Railroad converted to oil-burning locomotives, further diminishing the market for Dawson coal. By the late 1920s the number of working mines had been reduced to eight. After the crash of 1929 coal production at Dawson fell sharply from 710,524 tons in that year to 248,236 in 1932 and the population had fallen to 2000.[28] Although Dawson profited from the brief resurgence of demand for coal during World War II, after the war demand fell sharply as coal was completely replaced by oil and natural gas as the major fuel for transportation and heating. When the Southern Pacific converted entirely to diesel in 1949, Phelps Dodge lost its last major customer for Dawson coal.

On February 25, 1950 Phelps Dodge posted notices that the town of Dawson was closing. The mines were to be shut down and its residents evicted. The entire town was either moved, torn down, or salvaged in order to remove it from the tax rolls. Some company homes were sold to former tenants who moved them to other towns; others were sold and moved away in large blocks. Many ended up in Raton and other nearby towns, and some as far away as Amarillo, Texas. Phelps Dodge donated the former Catholic church to the diocese; it was dismantled and the material moved elsewhere. The coal washer was sold and moved to Harlan County, Kentucky. What was not moved away was razed by the National Iron & Metal Company of Phoenix, Arizona, a scrap metal and wrecking firm that paid approximately $500,000 for the town.

The records of Dawson suffered a similar fate. Under the direction of Celso Chavez, the chief mine clerk, they were burnt in an operation that lasted from April through June. Records regarded as "vital" such as the payroll were sent to company headquarters in Douglas, Arizona.[29] According the wife of Dawson's last town manager, her husband sent company records of Dawson to Phelps Dodge headquarters in Douglas, Arizona, and civic records pertaining to such matters as the schools to the County Clerk in Raton. None of these records can be found today.

27. Melzer, 312.
28. Ibid.
29. Chavez interview. Melzer adds the detail that the company had refused to donate the records to the University of New Mexico. Op. cit, 324.

The demise of Dawson was a severe blow to the economy of surrounding Colfax County which lost 8% of its tax revenues. Phelps Dodge had been one of the large companies most significant in the economic development of the Raton area. The later history of the county, characterized by the outflow of population, the disappearance of large settlements, and economic decline, is directly attributable to the loss of coal industry and the consequential loss of this and other communities.

The former Dawson townsite is now grazing land leased by Phelps Dodge to the C & S Cattle Company of Cimarron, New Mexico. The main street is gone save for crumbling foundations along an overgrown sidewalk. A handful of scattered buildings remain such as a service station, mule barn, a few houses, and other miscellaneous buildings as well as a few remnants of the coal operations, such as coke ovens and tall chimneys. The cemetery is the best representative of the once thriving community.

Dawson is gone but not forgotten. Since the town closed, former residents have held regular reunions on the Sunday before Labor Day in even-numbered years. It is said that over 1500 people returned from all over the country for the most recent gathering in 1990.

The Dawson Mine Explosions

Despite a reputation for being the best-equipped mines in the area with state-of-the-art safety equipment and well-trained rescue squads, the Dawson mines were the site of two of the worst accidents in the history of American coal mining. One of these led to the loss of 263 lives in 1913, the greatest number of fatalities in any single coal mine explosion in the United States between the years 1911 and 1958.[30] In 1923, 120 men were killed in another mine explosion. The number of fatalities in these accidents is unmatched in New Mexico coal mining history.

The possibility of explosion was an ever-present danger in underground coal mining where highly flammable methane gas and coal dust could become concentrated in small enclosed spaces and explosives as well as electrical wiring were part of the mining process. Although numerous other hazards in coal mines led to loss of life, such as collapsing roofs, rock falls, poisonous gases, deep shafts, electric wiring, heavily loaded moving cars, and dangerous machinery; explosion was the primary cause of massive loss of life. The first reported coal mine explosion in the United States occurred in 1810

30. Humphrey, 38-41; 168; 235; 264.

and in New Mexico in 1895. Government research on the prevention of mine explosions began in 1908 after more than one thousand miners had been killed by explosions in eight mines in the previous year, including 362 in Monongah, West Virginia and 239 in Jacobs Creek, Pennsylvania.[31]

On October 22, 1913, just days after the state inspector had pronounced Mine No. 2 in "splendid general condition," an underground explosion was caused by an over-charged shot fired while all of the men were in the mine. Ignited coal dust propagated the explosion to all parts of the mine and flames shot 200 feet out of the mouth of the tunnel. As a result the Stag Canyon Fuel Company issued orders that all shots would be fired only by the most experienced shot firers and only after all men were out of the mine.[32]

A total of 263 men were killed in the accident including the general superintendent of the mine and two rescue personnel. Only one previous reported explosion in an American coal mine had taken more lives.[33] The majority of the men killed were of foreign nationality. Only 39 (including nine men identified as "Negro") of the those listed among the dead were American.[34] The majority (184) were southern and eastern Europeans and of these the greatest number were Italians (131) followed by Greeks (35), Slavs (8), Hungarians (4), Austrians and Russians (2), and a single Bohemian and Pole. The third largest single foreign group after Italians and Greeks were Mexican nationals who numbered 33. Therefore, of the total number of men killed, about 70% were southern and eastern Europeans and about 50% were Italian. Mexicans represented about 12% and American citizens about 15%.[35]

Undertakers from neighboring communities were called in to assist and coffins shipped from Las Vegas, Raton, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, as well as Trinidad, Colorado and other places. Funeral services were held over lines of black caskets laid out on the floor of a temporary morgue. Some bodies were never identified. Some of the dead were transported to family plots in other cities, but the majority, especially those who were recent immigrants to the United States, were buried in Dawson in graves marked by gray iron crosses. All burial expenses were borne by the company including a plot in the company

31. Ibid., iii; 1; 5; 22-23.
32. State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Report," 1913.
33. Humphrey, 17; 22-23; 38-41.
34. Tabulations based on the list of 258 names and nationalities of men killed. State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Report," 1913.
35. The remaining 3% are accounted for by three men listed respectively as French, Scotch, and Irish and by 5 who are not listed, presumably because they were not identified.

cemetery. Each widow was given $2000 and an offer of travel money to return to relatives in Europe.

On February 8, 1923, another disastrous explosion rocked Dawson trapping 122 men underground in Mine No. 1. Arcing trolley and feed wires ignited a dust explosion after a derailment had knocked down the timbers to which they were attached. The initial explosion was again propagated by dust throughout the mine. Only two men escaped alive; eighteen hours after the explosion they walked out of the mine unharmed and unaided.

A significant number (48 or more than a third) of the 120 dead were of European citizenship, although a considerably smaller percentage than the proportion of Europeans killed in the earlier disaster. Nearly as many Americans (43) were killed and the highest number from a single nationality after Americans was Mexicans (28). Of the European nationalities, the most killed were Italians (18) followed by Greeks (16), Austrians (7), and Montenegrins (6).[36] The Italian ambassador wrote expressing his deep distress at the number of his countrymen who lost their lives.

A temporary morgue was set up in an office building near the scene. The Phelps Dodge undertaker was assisted by two colleagues from Las Vegas, New Mexico. Plain gray or black caskets were brought from all over the state and funerals were held by an Italian Catholic priest for the Italians, another priest for English-speaking Catholics, and by a Protestant minister for the rest. Those buried at Dawson were taken to the cemetery in an old-fashioned hearse pulled by two white mules and followed by a few mourners on foot; the graves again were marked by gray iron crosses. It was estimated that over 50 women were widowed and nearly two hundred children left fatherless.

In addition to these major disasters Dawson experienced other mine explosions. On September 14, 1903 a mine fire and explosion hospitalized many men and killed three. A shotfiring explosion on April 14, 1920 killed five men including four shot firers who illegally returned to the mine before all shots were fired. By this time the firing was done electrically from outside the mine and only after all men had left.[37]

36. Harrington, Appendix 2.
37. Humphrey, 87; State Mine Inspector of New Mexico, "Report," 1920.

The loss of life in the two major Dawson disasters was unmatched in other New Mexico coal mines and exceptional even from a national perspective. The 383 men killed in both explosions represent approximately 38% of the 1,016 fatalities from all causes in and about New Mexico coal mines from 1895 to 1932 of which 473 (about 47%) were attributable to explosions.[38] Therefore, the Dawson fatalities in two accidents represent about 81% of the explosion deaths in the state in the thirty-seven year period from the first New Mexican mine explosion in 1895 until 1932. After 1912, excepting the Dawson explosion fatalities, yearly totals of coal mining deaths from all causes in the entire state usually numbered less than thirty.[39]

In the United States as a whole, the total yearly fatalities in reported major (five or more deaths) explosions from 1911 through 1920 averaged 279. The yearly average for the next ten years rose to 320 and in the following decades declined sharply to 102 and 86. Of the 223 major mine explosions reported in the United States between 1911 to 1940, none caused a greater loss of life than the 263 men killed at Dawson in 1913 and only five caused a loss of life greater than the 120 killed at Dawson in 1923.[40] In the majority of these accidents (193) less than 50 lives were lost.

HISTORY OF THE DAWSON CEMETERY

Called at one time the Evergreen Cemetery,[41] the graveyard, like the rest of Dawson, was owned and operated by the Phelps Dodge Mining Company. The cemetery was under the control of the town manager who kept the records and assigned plots.[42] Space in the cemetery was available to anyone. For many years Pat Tiller, the manager of the hardware department at the mercantile store, doubled as the local mortician.[43] Coffins were sold at the store and tombstones could be ordered.

38. Kintz, 1.
39. State Mine Inspector, "Reports," 1912-1933.
40. Humphrey, 41.
41. Santa Fe New Mexican, November 3, 1913. No one interviewed remembers this name being used.
42. Shelton interview.
43. Chavez; Shelton interviews.

It is not known precisely when the cemetery was established; however, the oldest recorded date of death on an inscription is May 12, 1906,[44] the year the PD purchased the Dawson Fuel Company. Burials started towards the northeast corner and proceeded west and south. The lack of clear spatial ordering or sequence of dates in the oldest areas east and north of the miners' section[45] established in 1913, suggests considerable latitude in the location of burials. In the newer section established south of the miners in the late 1920s, a separate area was consecrated for Roman Catholics, in the vicinity of a large cross, (Photo 10).[46] Sections for Protestants and members of different lodges were also designated, although the demarcation of these areas is not clear when looking at the cemetery today.[47] A plat defining them has been lost.[48]

Except for the miners' crosses presumably purchased by the company,[49] grave markers and decoration were privately provided without company imposed restrictions. This freedom combined with the number of different nationalities and the range of sources for markers led to the striking variety of grave decor. Hispanics seemed to follow the local tradition of hand-made wooden markers, (Photo 31). Sometimes these graves were surrounded by a rectangular fence locally called a cuna (cradle) or cerquita (little fence), a custom believed to have been brought to New Mexico along with the use of grave markers by nineteenth century Anglo-American influence.[50] Other nationalities also used fences at Dawson, a custom which was popular in the eastern United States in the early part of the nineteenth century and in other parts of the

44. Burt, 52.

45. For the purposes of this nomination, the term "miners' section" refers to the area of the cemetery within the pipe fence, where most of the victims of the 1913 and 1923 mine disasters are buried. However, it should be clear that some miners who died in these disasters, as well as victims of other mine accidents are buried in the other two sections of the cemetery.

46. Shelton; Bergamo; Mataya interviews.

47. As early as 1922 there was a "fraternal plot" enclosed with a fence furnished by the company, (The Dawson News, May 11, 1922). The location of this plot is not presently known.

48. Bergamo interview. Mr. Bergamo expected to be able to consult this plat at the Errington mortuary in Raton. The successors to this business have no record of it.

49. There is no record of this universal assumption and the source of the crosses is not known.

50. Benrimo; Warren, 116; Jordon, p. 70 questions this assumption not entirely convincingly.

West in the later years of the century.[51] In addition to markers and fences, the burial place was defined in an individual way by concrete curbing, lines of stones, or a cement or stone slab.

Grave markers were obtained from a number of sources. Many were homemade of wood, stone, concrete, or metal. Italian stone masons working for PD made tombstones on the side. John Moruzzi carved sandstone markers from patterns in a book until his death in about 1925.[52] A number of sandstone markers in the oldest section and the miners' section are of similar design and may be his, (Photos 13, 14, 20). Joe Cicone who was in Dawson until it closed was another mason who may have made tombstones.[53] Granite and marble stones could be purchased through the mercantile store in Dawson or the funeral parlors in larger towns such as Raton and Las Vegas, New Mexico or Trinidad and Pueblo, Colorado. Salesman from the more distant towns came around with pictures of designs.[54] A number of interesting wrought-iron markers without inscription are of unidentified source and nationality, (Photos 17, 18, 19).

The most common decorative motif is the cross, reflecting predominance of the Roman Catholic religion. The number of sources of markers, either home-made, produced by a local mason or perhaps a local blacksmith, purchased from any number of mortuaries in different towns, or chosen from a travelling salesman's illustrations, partially accounts for the diversity of individual markers within the same ethnic group, and for the similarity of sandstone markers which cuts across ethnic lines. This striking variety contrasts strongly with the lack of individual response that characterizes the modern memorial garden with its rows identical, industrially-produced, two-dimensional metal plates.

Most of the inscriptions on the stones are in foreign languages. Despite the emphasis on learning English and the fact that many Dawson residents became citizens, they returned finally to their linguistic roots. Most inscriptions are brief listing name, birth and death dates and sometimes place of origin between formulaic expressions equivalent to "Here lies" and "Rest in Peace." On almost none are there personal or poetic epitaphs. This may

51. French 83-84. Francaviglia, 507.
52. Bergamo; Chavez interviews.
53 Chavez interview.
54. Chavez; Hancock; Komadina; McClary; Mataya; Shelton interviews.

reflect the young age at which many of these people emigrated to the United States and the lack of education occasioned by the difficult circumstances of their early lives.

It was a matter of considerable pride, conversation, and sometimes sacrifice for a family to have a well-marked and well taken care of grave. The stone marking the graves of Petar Mataija and Florijan Komadina, uncle and nephew who died as a result of mine accidents in 1922 and 1920, was purchased jointly by their widows at considerable effort from Pueblo, Colorado, (Photo 22). The stone is today a subject of pride to these men's children as well as distress that photographs of the two men have been destroyed by vandals.[55]

In some cases markers were added in later years. In the miners' section, a number of inscribed stone or metal markers augment the company-provided crosses, interrupting the military order of the crosses. Evidently order was less important than the level of commemoration. Sometimes a PD cross is used in conjunction with a more personalized marker outside of the miners' section, (Photo 36). Even recently new stones have been added.[56]

Most of the names on the markers bear witness to the southern and eastern European or Hispanic origins of many of Dawson's residents. Although clusters of stones in the same language indicate some grouping by nationality, no areas appear to be strictly limited to a particular people. There is some grouping by family but there are not many obvious family plots with a dominating family stone. In the miners' portion of the cemetery the presence of a cluster of Greek burials suggests an order of burial based on common religious services.

The majority of the stone markers are of eastern European or Mediterranean origin. Their numbers, in contrast to Hispanics of New Mexican or Mexican origin, appear to be disproportionate to working population of the mines for several possible reasons. The customary Spanish wooden crosses, often without any inscription, do not readily identify themselves. Some may have been lost as wood does not withstand the elements as well as stone or metal. Individually they do not have the visual impact of a more massive stone nor the ready identification of the more complete inscription permitted on the larger surface of a stone. Finally, it may have been more feasible for Hispanics who had not come from as great a distance as the Europeans to have returned in death to their native places in other parts of the state or in Mexico.

55. Komadina; Mataya interviews.
56. Christian, Draft NR nomination.

A small wooden tool shed formerly was located on the north side of the cemetery near the front of the old section. It is said that it was used to stack bodies waiting for burial during the influenza epidemic of 1918 when people "died like flies."[57] About twenty markers indicate death dates in 1918 and 1919;[58] some are clustered in the east end of the cemetery.

The cemetery as a whole was controlled by the company but maintained by local volunteer help. Before a caretaker was hired, citizens were called up for spring cleaning at the cemetery as part of "cleanup week." For example, in May 1922 an announcement in the newspaper called for volunteers:

> Wanted, 150 men.
>
> Dawson's community spirit is calling for 150 men who are willing to go out to the cemetery at 8:00 o'clock Sunday Morning, May 14, and work until noon that this, the last resting place of so many Dawson people, may be given a clean up which has been needed for some time past.
>
> ...Every man reporting for work is asked to bring tools, shovels, rakes, and other cleaning up implements which will be needed in abundance.
>
> Wagons will be furnished by the company for carting away the rocks and trash which now litter the old part of the cemetery.
>
> Among those buried in the Dawson cemetery are people of many different nationalities for all of whom we have the most profound respect. It would seem in the work proposed that it would be a common meeting ground for representatives of every nationality. It is everybody's work, let everybody come.[59]

Two weeks later the success of the "volunteer clean-up squad" was reported. Over fifty men reported with rakes and shovels.

> Shortly after eight o'clock the clean-up work was well under way. Starting at the extreme north side of the cemetery the grounds were cleared of the accumulation of rubbish which was loaded into wagons and hauled away. The grass which had grown up in the old part of the

57. Grubesec; Mataya; Komadina interviews. In 1925 it was planned to repair the building at the cemetery for a caretaker's residence, (The Dawson News, May 14, 1925). It is not known if this was actually done or if it was same building. The building remembered by former Dawson residents was not appropriate for this purpose and was only used for storage.

58. Burt, 51-56.

59. The Dawson News, May 11, 1922.

cemetery was burned off and the ground raked over. Many graves which had been neglected were given attention.

The Dawson News desires to commend the community spirit of those rendering assistance in this work. Special mention should be made of the number of Mexicans reporting, their nationality being in the majority of those present.[60]

In 1925 The Dawson Cemetery Association was organized for the maintenance and protection of the cemetery, in response to desecrations of the burial ground. Funds were to be raised through donations from Phelps Dodge and interested individuals, and from the registration of burial plots. PD gave $200 for the first year and over 500 members quickly signed up to pay $.25 per month. A. C de Baca was hired as caretaker. Water was turned on and a hose purchased so that flowers and shrubs could be properly cared for. The caretaker devoted his first six months to improvement of the grounds. Sunken graves were filled in, rubbish removed, weeds kept cut, flowers watered and cared for and the iron fence painted. Tools were purchased and a set of lowering straps for the accommodation of those who do not hire an undertaker.[61]

According to Fred Bergamo, the general manager of the Western Division of Phelps Dodge took a special interest in the cemetery for many years. A 4" line ran from the town water system in summer to water plantings of trees, shrubs and flowers. An elderly caretaker had charge of the grounds; in the late 1930s and 1940s the high school boys were detailed to go down a month before Memorial Day and start irrigating and clearing out brush. Bergamo recalls plantings of Russian olive trees, Chinese elms, spirea, lilacs and irises. Only a few scattered trees remain today.[62]

Although few others remember as much general landscaping, the cemetery was regarded as a lovely place for pleasant visits which was shaded by trees and beautified by flowers planted near individual graves. For some it was a matter of pride to care for the graves and it was important to keep them decorated. Hours were spent making exquisite paper flowers or when available fresh flowers were brought from gardens. Memorial day was an important occasion but families often visited at other times as well. Ann Komadina, whose father was killed in a 1920 mine accident, fondly remembers visits to the cemetery which began early and would last most of the day with her mother going from grave to grave telling the children about the people buried there.

60. Ibid., May 25, 1922.
61. Ibid., April 16, 1925; May 14, 1925; June 4, 1925.
62. Bergamo interviews.

The cemetery was warm and spiritual, not an isolated or desolate place.[63] Although the Dawson cemetery does not possess the formal attributes associated with the nineteenth-century "rural" cemetery movement, which created picturesque landscapes as scenic oases of peace and natural beauty to be visited in their own right, some of the sentiments expressed about it are reminiscent of the values and attitudes inherent of that movement.

Today the cemetery is isolated but not ignored. Its very isolation has perhaps saved it from serious vandalism and although it has an overall appearance of neglect, closer examination shows that it is has not been abandoned. At least 75 to 100 people can be counted on each year to clean and decorate graves for Memorial Day.[64] Cleaning and visiting the cemetery is an important part of the biannual Dawson picnic on Labor Day weekend. The tendency, however, is for people to clean their own graves and it is said that is difficult to organize general maintenance. As a result there is considerable disparity between the condition of those graves which are still visited and those which apparently are not. In the summer of 1990 Phelps Dodge sponsored a general cleaning and renovation primarily of miners' section of the cemetery. The work was supervised by the contractor Wesley Kendrick who supplied necessary heavy equipment. The labor for much of the cleaning and painting was provided by a crew of six to eight volunteers.

SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERION A

The Dawson Cemetery is significant under Criterion A for its association with several important themes in New Mexican and American history: underground coal mining, coal mining explosion accidents, the early twentieth-century immigrant experience, and the company town. The cemetery is the last intact and best physical representation of the town of Dawson and the history with which it was associated. It is the only part of the former town today open to visitors without prior permission. Since the town records are either destroyed or lost, the cemetery is also one of the best primary sources of any type.

The town of Dawson exemplifies the history of Colfax County and the region, characterized by prosperity based on the richness of the Raton Coal Field and by decline with the loss of a coal economy. As the home of many early twentieth-century immigrants from Europe and Mexico it illustrates the experience of these groups which formed a significant portion of the American

63. Randall; Komadina interviews.
64. Bergamo interview.

population. As a company town, it illustrates an important aspect of the social history of the exploitation of coal.

The cemetery itself is singularly significant for its association with historic events connected with the history of coal mining, not only the development of the Raton Field, a major resource, and the formation of company towns, but also the catastrophic accidents and extensive loss of life associated with underground mining. In holding the graves of many men killed in mining accidents as well as of the 383 men killed in two of America's worst underground coal mine explosions, the cemetery commemorates events of national significance. These individual tragedies illustrate a part of the price paid for American industrial development. The row upon row of identical iron crosses are a moving statement.

The cemetery is significant for the concentration of immigrant burials, primarily Mexican and European. Mediterranean and eastern European nationalities represent the major waves American immigration in the early twentieth century but are not typical of New Mexican immigration patterns as generally understood. The persons buried are significant not for the importance of any particular individual or group but as an aggregate of those who came to the United States looking for economic opportunity. They are a tangible reminder of the exertion and sacrifice of these men and women to overcome language and cultural barriers and sometimes lack of skill to create a better life than that obtainable in Europe or Mexico and in a few cases the Orient. In the process they provided the manpower which made possible American industrial development.

SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERION D

Cemeteries have belatedly come to be recognized for the cultural legacy they embody and their capacity to yield, through systematic study, information about the attitudes and the conditions which created them. The products of particular circumstances of history, economics, sociology, and psychology, cemeteries in the words of Richard Francaviglia, "mirror the living and not the dead" and may "tell us a great deal about living people who created them."[65]

65. Francaviglia, 501.

Cemeteries have proven to be invaluable resources for investigation of such questions as settlement and immigration patterns, social status and social organization of various groups, and changes in the attitudes of the living toward death. The special and narrowly defined circumstances of history which created the Dawson Cemetery render it a particularly apt subject for controlled, comparative studies and suggest a number of specific areas for research.

For example, one might explore the relationship between the settlement patterns of the town and the cemetery. On initial examination it would appear that the cemetery was populated in much the same way as the town. The living tended by choice to live in ethnically defined groups but were not limited to these. The option of choosing to live anywhere there was available housing led to a situation that Dawson residents remember as a remarkable mixing of people from different ethnic backgrounds, with the notable exception of African Americans. So too in the cemetery graves seem to have been placed where there was room and where people chose to put them. Though they appear to be grouped very loosely by language or religion, the overwhelming impression is of a striking mix of ethnic origins.

However, this situation apparently changed over time. Although this is not visually obvious, the newer section of the cemetery was more ordered with assigned sections based on religion and lodge (which may correspond to ethnic) affiliation. Further study would be necessary to determine if this change signaled any alteration in attitude among the living. A systematic analysis of spatial arrangements by surname would be required to determine the relative effect this change had on ethic grouping.

On preliminary examination, the settlement of the cemetery seems to have followed a pattern which is the inverse of that of the town where initially ethnically related groups might have settled together corresponding to the sources of immigrants at a particular time as mines were opened and housing established. Later perhaps more mixing occurred as people moved in wherever space was available.

Just as neighborhoods of the living do not seem to have been differentiated according to socio-economic groups, there do not appear to have been "better" neighborhoods in the cemetery. An interesting question requiring research would be whether there was a Black section as there was a Black neighborhood in town and whether this situation changed over time.

These graves are tangible expressions of cultural diversity. Demographic data could be gleaned from the dates, ages, nationalities, and causes of death of the deceased. A systematic inventory of the markers for style, language, and inscription content as well as the styles of grave delineation and decoration, could have bearing on many questions such as the attitude toward death among people for whom it is a fact of daily life and changes over time in these attitudes. Comparison of contemporary practices in countries of origin could help define the immigrant response to the problem of adaptation versus maintenance of tradition. It would appear that among the Europeans ethnicity was more rooted in language than in the style of markers. Despite their efforts to learn English and the vigorous and successful encouragement of their children to become Americanized, in death these people returned almost universally to their native languages.

Comparative studies of other towns populated by corresponding groups of immigrants in similar and unlike circumstances and different populations under the same circumstances could help clarify the degree to which responses in Dawson were attributable to the standardization of life in a company town, the values and customs of immigrant groups, and the dangers of coal mining or other activities by which communities regularly suffered loss of life as a result of local economic activity.

SIGNIFICANCE UNDER CRITERIA CONSIDERATION D

The Dawson Cemetery is eligible under Criteria Consideration D for its association with historic events evaluated under Criterion A and for its potential for study evaluated under Criterion D. It is hoped that recognition by the National Register will aid in the preservation of this unique resource.

In 1991 Representative E. Kelly Mora introduced in the Fortieth New Mexico Legislature a Certificate of Congratulations to Phelps Dodge in recognition of the company's efforts on behalf of the cemetery. The text of Representative Mora's remarks, quoted here in part, summarizes the history and significance of the Dawson Cemetery.

> All legislative sessions force us to focus on current events and problems. We concentrate on the present - our modern lives. But for just a moment we should pause and look back at our history - a footnote in our history - the life and times of a town called Dawson - look beyond - at other communities like Dawson that have been the backbone of our country. A mixture of immigrants from all over the

world - to name a few - Italians, Germans, Greeks, Spanish, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, English, Scots, etc.

These immigrants came to this country seeking a better life - most of them could speak only their native tongues - but they brought with them the hope and courage that would sustain them in the New World.

Think about it, they had faith and above all they had guts. They had no idea of what to expect, in their hearts they knew that with hard work and determination they could have a better life. The mixture of cultures and ideas became the melting pot of the world - what has made the United States the greatest country in the world.

Dawson is a ghost town in my district - it has been a ghost town for 40 years. One of the only things left in Dawson is the well preserved Dawson Cemetery with its rows and rows of crosses.

...In recognition of the valiant contribution by these miners and in respect for the miners whose final resting place is Dawson, the Phelps Dodge Mining Company has committed substantial resources to renovate and restore the Dawson Cemetery. The Dawson Cemetery is a dramatic reminder of another day and age - I encourage all of you to visit Dawson and reflect for a moment on the past and the contributions made by these courageous individuals throughout our country who by their labor have contributed to the development of our country.

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Interviews

Bennett, Ken C., 10/10/91

Fred Bergamo, 10/15/91; 10/23/91

Celso Chaves, 10/8/91

INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL PHOTOGRAPHS:

1. Dawson Cemetery
2. Dawson, Colfax County, New Mexico
5. Historic Preservation Division
   New Mexico State Office of Cultural Affairs
   Santa Fe, New Mexico

INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS:

Overviews

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Overview showing main gate with oldest and miners' sections at a distance. Camera facing southeast.
7. Photo #1

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Overview of the oldest and miners' sections. Camera facing southeast.
7. Photo #2

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Overview of oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #3

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Partial overview of oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #4

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Partial overview of oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #5

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Partial overview of miners' section showing entrance and central walkway. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #6

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Partial view of miners' section with oldest section in the background. Camera facing northeast.
7. Photo #7

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Northeast corner of miners' section with oldest section in the background. Camera facing northeast.
7. Photo #8

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Partial overview of miners' section. Camera facing west.
7. Photo #9

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Overview of newest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #10

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Partial overview of newest section looking toward miners' cemetery. Camera facing northwest.
7. Photo #11

Individual graves and markers

3. Dale Christian
4. September 1990
6. Example of the iron crosses which mark the graves of victims of two major mine explosions. Painted white. Battista Ballastrocci, [d.1913] Miners' section. Camera facing northeast.
7. Photo #12

3. Dale Christian
4. September 1990
6. Sandstone marker. High relief cross and wreath. Diamond design pattern on base. Duilio Zamboni, (d. 1913). Miners' section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #13

3. Dale Christian
4. September 1990
6. Sandstone marker. Low relief cross. Diamond design pattern on base. Merlotti Francesco, (d. 1913). Miners' section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #14

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Metal marker. Crucified Christ and two surrounding figures. John Sekrotes, (d. 1923). Miners' section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #15

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Elaborate metal marker. Crucified Christ on tall cross. Metal fence. Emanuel G. Minotakis, (d. 1913). Miners' section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #16

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Wrought iron marker. No inscription. Oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #17

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Wrought iron marker. No inscription. Oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #18

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Wrought iron marker. No inscription. Oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #19

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Sandstone marker. Vertical. Relief cross and wreath. Gius. Coppi (d. 1907). Oldest section. Appears at a distance in Photo #19. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #20

Dale Christian, 3/26/1991.

Les Davis, 10/11/91

Lena Forte, 10/17/91

Al Grubesec, 10/22/91

Bill Hancock, 10/14/91

Juan Herrera, 10/15/91

Ann Komadina, 10/22/91

Charles Mataya, 10/22/91

E. Kelly Mora, 10/7/91

Wesley Kendrick, 10/12/91

Mrs. Robert Lucero, 10/15/91

Alberta McClary, 10/14/91

Carol McClary Myers, 10/15/91

Marjorie Pascetti, 11/17/91

Ona Randall, 10/17/91

Gene Scanlon, 10/16/91

Ruth Shelton, 10/13/91

Kay Simpson, 10/15/91

Eva Mary Trujillo, 10/14/91

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Stone marker. Cross shaped with crucified Christ in high relief. In front of wire-fenced grave site. George Tomic (d. 1914). Detail of Photo #4. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #21

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Stone marker commemorating two burials. Incised cross surrounded by floral decoration. Destroyed portraits. Concrete curbing. Graves cleared of natural growth. Planted flowers. Petar Mataija (d. 1922) and Florijan Komadina, (d. 1920). Detail of Photo #5. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #22

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Stone marker. Cross attached at top in different stone. Intact portrait. Ivan Brozovic, (d. 1922). Concrete curbing. Graves cleared of natural growth. Farther grave covered with red pumice. Bright plastic flowers. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #23

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Stone marker with cross-shaped top. Two newer wooden crosses. Older weathered wooden cross, askew. Planted flowers. Bright plastic flowers and ribbons. Graves sparsely overgrown. Matt Shuster, (d.1919); Matt (7 mo); Johnie (3 mo). Wire fence. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #24

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Polished granite marker. Granite slab over grave. Angelo Frazzini, (d. 1927). Plastic flowers. Eight stones randomly placed on slab. Iron pipe fence. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #25

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Homemade sandstone marker. Low relief cross. Fortunato Pezani (d. 1908). Oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #26

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Cast concrete marker. Simple metal cross affixed to top. No inscription. Deteriorating concrete curbing. Overgrown grave site. Oldest section. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #27

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Cast concrete marker. Incised cross. Concrete slab over grave site with incised cross and irregular lettering. Mary Brozovich (1928). Camera facing east.
7. Photo #28

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Homemade metal cross. Eloisa Freitas, (d. 2-23-). Camera facing east.
7. Photo #29

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Simple wooden cross. Painted white. Black lettering. Baby Raymond Menapace, (d. 1927). Concrete curbing. Plastic flowers. Somewhat overgrown. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #30

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Carved wooden cross with a cross at the end of each member. Timotea Paiz Trujillo, (n.d.). Camera facing east.
7. Photo #31

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Stone marker. Drapery motif in low relief at top. Luigi Montepara, (d. 1922). Wooden cross with carved crucified Christ, (closer view in Photo #33). Perimeter of grave marked with stones. Cleared of weeds. Plastic flowers. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #32

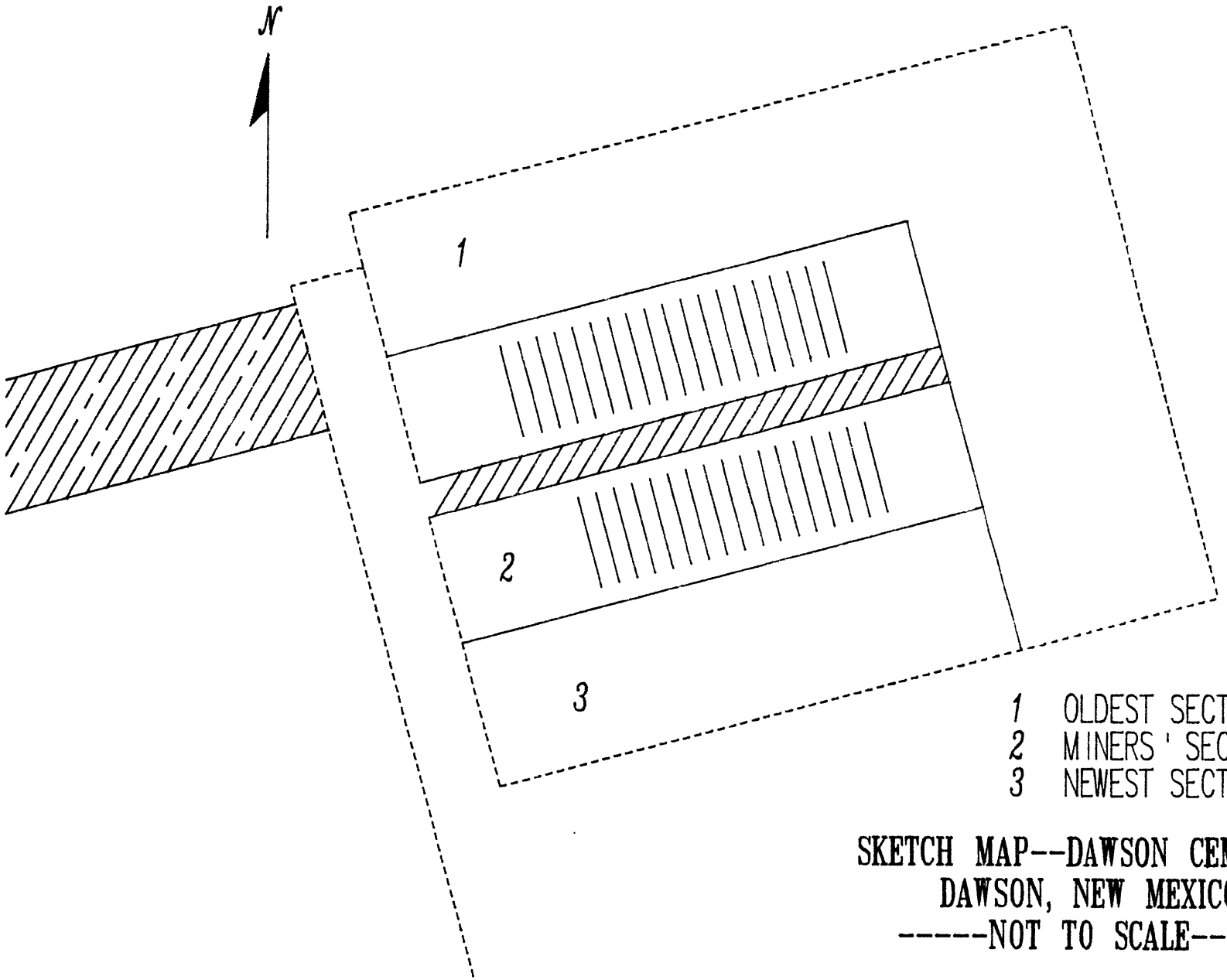
3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Wooden cross with carved crucified Christ. Detail of Photo #32. Camera facing southeast.
7. Photo #33

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Grave surrounded by metal fence. Mounded with concrete and stones. Plastic flowers. Camera facing east.
7. Photo #34

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Granite slant markers. Concrete curbing with low pipe fencing painted white. Robert Wilson, (d. 1936). Small American flag. Iris plants. Plastic flowers. Plastic plaque, "MOM." Grave cleared of weeds. Sparse regrowth. Grave on left, Robert Baldwin Upton (d. 1935). Newest section.
7. Photo #35

3. Dale Christian
4. June 3, 1991
6. Stone headstone. Iron miner's cross at the foot. Plastic flowers. Concrete slab over grave. Newest section. Camera facing northeast.
7. Photo #36

3. Corinne P. Sze
4. June 28, 1991
6. Grave site surrounded by metal fence, completely overgrown with shrubbery. Oldest section. Camera facing northeast.
7. Photo #37



1 OLDEST SECTION
2 MINERS' SECTION
3 NEWEST SECTION

SKETCH MAP--DAWSON CEMETERY
DAWSON, NEW MEXICO
-----NOT TO SCALE-----

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000249 **Date Listed: 4/9/92**

Dawson Cemetery	Colfax	NM
Property Name	**County**	**State**

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland — **Signature of the Keeper**

4/9/92 — **Date of Action**

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Amended Items in Nomination:

"Industry" is added to the areas of significance; therefore applicable areas of significance are INDUSTRY, OTHER/Coal Mining, ETHNIC HERITAGE/European/Hispanic, and SOCIAL HISTORY/Company Town.

This information was confirmed by Mary Ann Anders of the New Mexico SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)