

Site 9: The Colorado Central Mine and Silver Dale



*View of the Argentine Central Railway narrow gauge track and the Colorado Central and Kirtley Mine dumps.
Photo courtesy: Denver Public Library, McClure Collection, MCC-691*

Silver Dale was once a prosperous little mining camp in the vicinity of the mouth of the Marshall Tunnel. In 1871, the first child born there was christened after the camp's subsequent name, Ocean Wave. The *Colorado Miner* newspaper suggested "that the inhabitants of the town donate the boy one of the best lots in the town." [*Colorado Miner*, 11 May 1871]. Two years later, the *Miner* proposed that "this camp should have an appropriate name. The mines in that vicinity are rich and there is no doubt but that the Marshall tunnel will, eventually, be driven through Leavenworth Mountain. Mills will no doubt be erected for the treatment of ore and a large prosperous and thriving mining camp, is sure to grow up in that locality. The *Miner* suggests as an appropriate name of the place Silver Dale." [*Colorado Miner*, 29 Jan 1873]. It is unknown if the baby boy given the unique name of Ocean Wave was renamed Silver Dale.

The Colorado Central and Kirtley mines dominated the landscape of this section of Leavenworth Mountain. Discovered in 1872 via the Marshall Tunnel, the Colorado Central was one of the largest and richest ore producers, valued for its high content of silver ore. The mine was in operation intermittently until it 1926 when it was covered by the landslide and ultimately ceased operations altogether.