

The Story

The Ludlow strike and massacre is often forgotten or deliberately left untold.

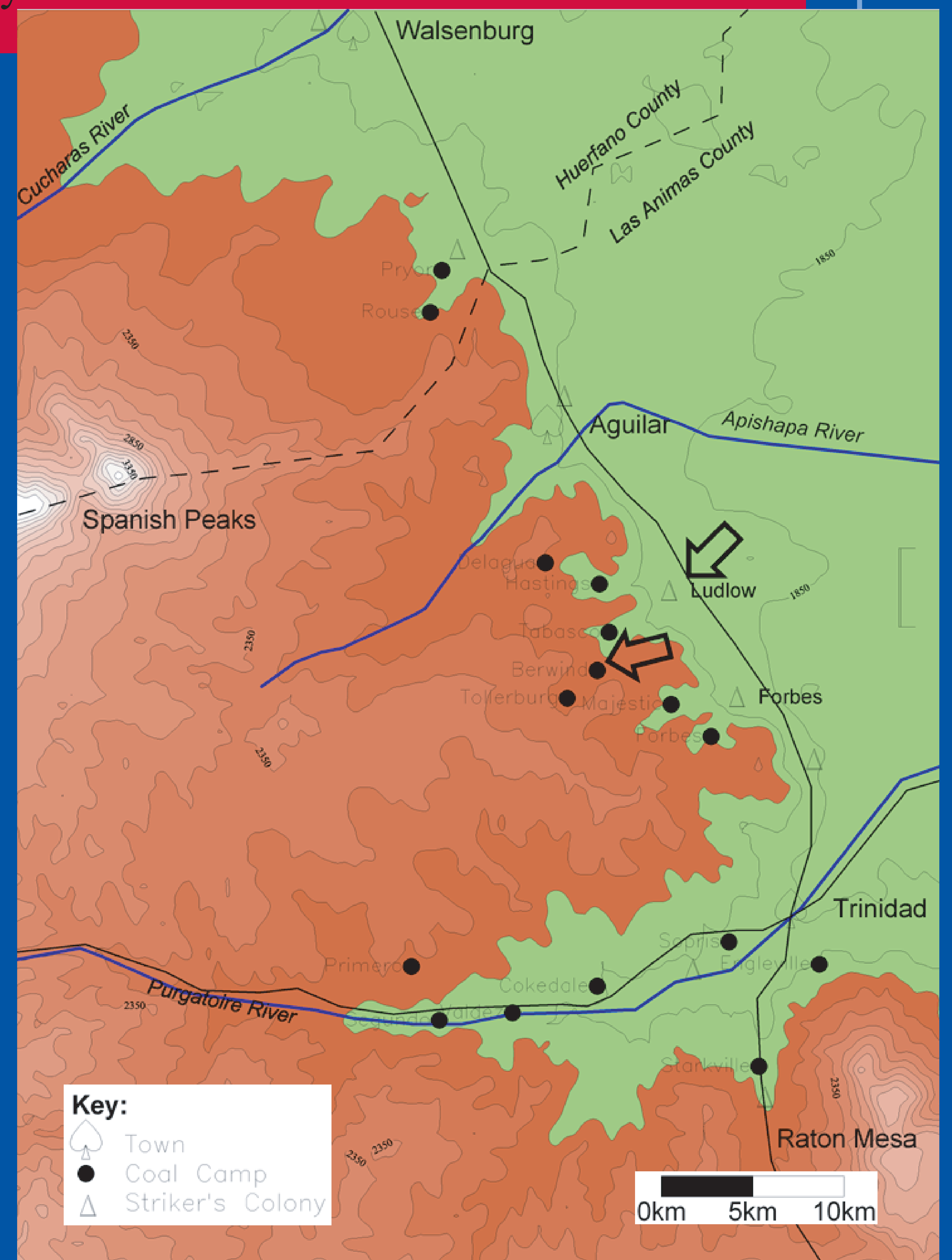
Looking onto this prairie, you see one of several places where striking coal miners lived during the 1913-1914 Colorado coalfield strike.

Among the miners' demands were the right to organize, better wages, an eight-hour work day, a safe workplace, and less company control over their daily lives. After the United Mine Workers of America called the strike in September 1913, thousands of miners and their families were evicted from their homes in company towns. The UMWA provided tents to house the striking miners. Ludlow was the largest of these colonies, with about 200 tents and 1,200 people.

A culturally diverse group maintained its solidarity throughout the strike.

Local Hispanic people and immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe provided the majority of the labor force. Twenty-four distinct languages were counted in the camps. During the strike, these different groups pulled together to form a community with a common goal.

The strike was plagued by violence. The Governor called out the state militia to help keep the peace. By April 1914, the local militia units were largely composed of company employees, and sided with the company against the miners.



On April 20, 1914, hostilities came to a head, which resulted in the Ludlow Massacre.

Throughout the day gunfire was exchanged between the militia and miners. Lives were lost on both sides. By evening the tent colony was in flames. Among the fatalities were two women and eleven children who suffocated in a cellar dug beneath a tent. This is known as the Death Pit. The Death Pit and the monument are maintained at this site as a memorial to those who lost their lives in the battle.

The nation is shocked.

The events of the Ludlow Massacre outraged the nation and embarrassed John D. Rockefeller Jr., who owned the majority of the Colorado Fuel and Iron company. This event sparked many of the labor reforms that workers now take for granted. Rockefeller instituted a plan that established a company sponsored union, instituted procedures to air grievances and improved the conditions in the company towns.

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