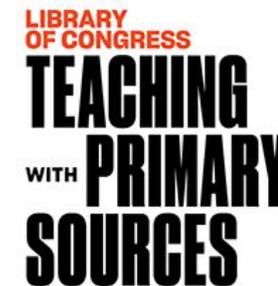


1. Title / Content Area:	Ghost Towns of Colorado
2. Historic Site:	St Elmo National Register Historic District
3. Episode	https://www.pbs.org/video/ghost-towns-kdqpuh/
3. Developed by:	Michelle Pearson, Adams 12 School District Laura Israelsen, Denver Public Schools
4. Grade Level and Standards:	<i>Grade Level:</i> 6 th - HS <i>Standards:</i> Colorado Social Studies Standards 1-4 <i>Prepared Graduate Competencies:</i> Content in this Document Based Question (DBQ) link to Prepared Graduate Competencies in the Colorado Academic Standards 6 th : PGC 1-5, 7, 8 7 th : PGC 1-5, 7 8 th : PGC 1-5, 7 HS: PGC 1-5, 7, 8
5. Assessment Question:	What can ghost towns tell us about how people lived in the past, and what are the challenges of protecting these places in the future with increased access and recreational use surrounding them?
6. Contextual Paragraph	St. Elmo is a historic ghost town in Chalk Creek Canyon near Buena Vista, Colorado. Recognized as one of the most well-preserved historic ghost towns in the state it is an example of the rise and fall of a small mountain mining community over time. The National Register Nomination for the St. Elmo Historic District States: <i>“St. Elmo owed its existence to the emergence of the minerals industry in a mountainous area of Chaffee County. Exploration and development began in the vicinity of Chalk Creek in the early 1870s, if not earlier, notably with the opening of the Mary Murphy Mine, the region's most important and long-lived producer. Settlement grew primarily along Chalk Creek, which drew its name from the nearby cliffs. In October 1880 the inhabitants of the area, about 400 in number, obtained a plat for a town to be known as Forest City on account of the thick cover of</i>



evergreens, but the U.S. Postal Service objected to the name on the grounds the community might be confused with Forest City, California. The town then changed its name to St. Elmo, St. Elmo's greatest era of prosperity came in the 1880s. Both the Denver South Park & Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande railroads ran lines into town, while stagecoach firms set up offices to use the community as the point of origin for routes that ran over Tin Cup Pass to Aspen, Gunnison, and Tin Cup. For a time St. Elmo also served as the staging point for construction of the Alpine Tunnel, built under the continental divide 12,000 feet above sea level. But St. Elmo never became a great mining center. Except in the Mary Murphy Mine, the silver-lead ores never proved exceptionally rich or extensive. Population peaked out at around 1800 people in the mid-1880s. Then the decline began. The mines petered out, the railroads tore up track, and the populace drifted away. St. Elmo remained "frozen" as a mining town that never attained the eminence of Central City, Leadville, or Cripple Creek. Unlike most mining communities St. Elmo never sustained a cataclysmic fire that destroyed entire towns and lead to rebuilding in masonry. Thus a substantial amount of the early, architecture remains today a reminder of the early days in the evolution of most mining communities."

7. Connection to Historic Preservation

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the St Elmo Historic District houses some of the best preserved historic buildings in the ghost towns of Colorado. The National Register nomination states:

"St. Elmo itself consists of a group of commercial buildings and several clusters of homes. Forty-three structures dating from the 1880s and 1890s contribute to the historic integrity of the town while two recent intrusions detract from but do not compromise the integrity to any meaningful degree. All buildings are located along or near unpaved streets some of which have wooden sidewalks. The architecture is entirely vernacular and reflects the haste of construction, the cost and availability of building materials, and the desire to project a more prosperous, permanent appearance than was actually the case. This was characteristic of mining camps of that era. St. Elmo remains in this condition because it never grew into an important

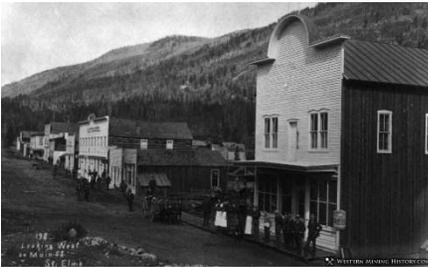
center of mineral production.”

After listing the district in the National Register, owners of several of the buildings created the St Elmo and Chalk Creek Canyon nonprofit to help preserve, protect, and interpret the historic buildings in the area. Through the architecture in this area, visitors can trace the creation, development, and decline of a typical historic mining town in this region.

Document Based Question (DBQ)

Western Mining History: Main Street St Elmo (Photo A)

Photo Taken Prior to 1940



<https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/colorado/st-elmo/>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of activity do you see on Main Street?
2. How do the buildings on Main Street reflect that this is a commercial area?
3. This is a small mining town in Colorado. Why would it be important to have special buildings and more detailed architecture on Main Street than in other locations in the area?

Main Street buildings St. Elmo- North Side
(Photo B)
Photo Taken June 1934

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. How does this photo differ from Photo A?



2. How does this photo compare to Photo C?
3. The photos you have examined come from three different time periods. How has Main Street in St. Elmo changed over time?
4. In your opinion, is it important to record the changes in the buildings and landscapes of St. Elmo? Why or why not?

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.co0182.photos/?sp=6>

Main Street St Elmo, Colorado
(Photo C)
Photo Taken July 2008



GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What materials are these buildings made of?
2. How would the weather of this region contribute to the deterioration of the buildings?
3. Why would fire be a huge risk in this area?
4. What special skills would someone need to help preserve these buildings in the future?
5. What challenges would there be to preserving buildings such as these in a high mountain location?

<https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/image/st-elmo-historic-district>

<p>Entrance to St Elmo, Colorado (Photo D) Photo Taken July 2008</p>	<p>GUIDING QUESTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does this photo reflect the current challenges St Elmo is facing? 2. How do you know St. Elmo is once again seeing use by people? 3. How does the increase in recreation in this area and surrounding this town, affect the preservation of the landscapes surrounding it and the historic buildings within the historic district? 4. In your opinion, is it more important to allow people to access the town and possibly damage historic buildings, or should the town be protected and public access limited? Defend your answer with evidence that supports your opinion.
	
<p>http://www.rozylowicz.com/retirement/co-2015/co2015-2.html</p>	

<p>St Elmo, Colorado</p>	<p>GUIDING QUESTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the significance of St Elmo? 2. How did the community play a role in the protection of this town after the last two residents passed away? 3. What efforts have been made to preserve this ghost town from development? 4. Why does mining continue to cause a threat to this region and the historic places within it?
	
<p>https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/st-elmo</p>	

Assessment Question

What can ghost towns tell us about how people lived in the past, and what are the challenges of protecting these places in the future with increased access and recreational use surrounding them?

Response