

The Lafayette House at 600 E. Simpson, is one block west of the Simpson Mine site.



Architectural Character

Small cottage on Baseline Road, at the north edge of Old Town.



Structures in downtown Lafayette were built of both wood and brick. Today, mainly the small, false front buildings have survived. These include those at 304, 401, and 414 Simpson.

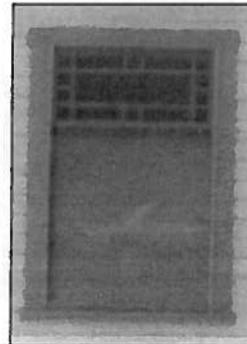
Old Town's historic housing stock is modest: gabled cottages like the Lewis House at 108 E. Simpson, woodframe "hipped boxes," slightly larger merchants residences, and two-story miners' boarding houses.

Ornamentation is simple. Front porches have turned wooden posts. A few porches have banisters, railings, or decorative brackets. Some houses have large windows with colored stained glass in the upper section.



"Hipped box" residence of William Moon.

A common feature on the front facade is a large "cottage" window, sold through mail order catalogues. Some have colored glass panes like this one.



Boarding House Tradition

Many single men worked at the coal mines. Often they lodged with other bachelors in Lafayette boarding houses. These were plain, two-story buildings with several exterior entrances. The best example in Old Town is at 600 E. Simpson. One block west of the Simpson Mine, it provided rooms to the Baldwin-Felts private detectives hired by the mining company during the Long Strike of 1910 – 1914.

Other boarding houses were located at 105 E. Cleveland, the Bradley House at 305 E. Cleveland, and the Dier House at 411 E. Cleveland. Newlyweds and newcomer families often stayed at the Rose Terrace apartments on 207 E. Cleveland, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Nearly every two-story building in town was a boarding house at one time or another, according to Beth Hutchison of the Lafayette Miner's Museum.

Dier House Boarding House at 411 E. Cleveland.



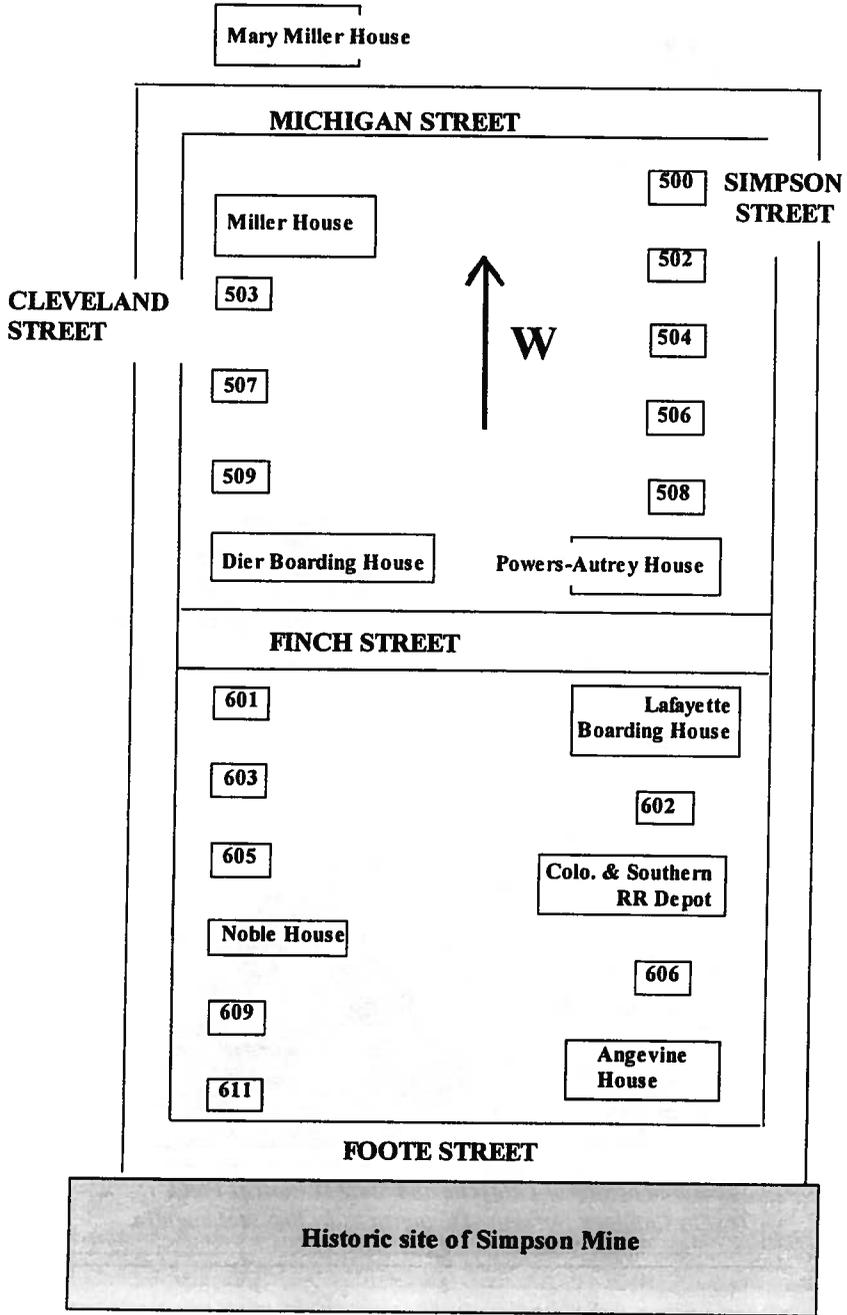
Old Town Lafayette Architecture Tour

Historic Preservation Week – Sunday, May 9 1:00 p.m. Tour begins at 500 E. Simpson.



Sponsored by City of Lafayette and State Historical Fund. Text by Cathleen Norman. Photographs by Bob McLaughlin.

MAP



Mary Miller, photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society



Mrs. Miller's Legacy

"The Mother of Lafayette" was a rancher's widow who discovered a four-teen-foot-wide coal seam on her east Boulder County homestead in 1888. One year later she had platted the town, the railroad had arrived, and there were dozens of structures built of lumber.

Mary Elizabeth Miller had followed her parents to Colorado Territory, as a newlywed in 1862. Mary and her husband Lafayette Miller ran a stage station. The Millers also boosted area agriculture by bringing with them the first reaping machine in the county.

Mrs. Miller laid out wide city streets and generous 50-foot residential lots. She founded the city's first bank and her son, Thomas, was its first mayor. Until her death in 1921 she was Lafayette's leading benefactress. She taught local children in her parlor, before the school was built. She donated funds to build the first church and paid the pastor's salary out of her own pocket for three years. Citizens planted elm trees to shade Lafayette's streets at her urging. And she encouraged temperance habits by putting into every title deed sold a requirement that liquor not be sold, imbibed, or stilled on the premises.

Several of her sons were local merchants and businessmen. Her house still stands at 409 E. Cleveland.

Mary Miller House, 409 E. Cleveland



Lafayette Coal Miners

Photo courtesy Lafayette Historical Society

From the start, Lafayette was a working man's town, peopled by coal miners, laborers, and providers of goods and services to mines and miners. The town's two largest employers were the Simpson Mine at the east end of Simpson Street and the Cannon Mine, at the east end of Cannon Street.

Lafayette miners averaged less than \$3 a day in wages, and had to provide their own supplies. To afford their own homes they rented sleeping rooms to single miners or school teachers. Miners walked to work, after they heard the whistle that told them there would be work that day.

Coal mining was less glamorous than mining gold or silver. However, it fueled an industrial revolution, converting a wilderness into a network of railroads connecting mines, mills, cities and farm towns.

The transitory nature of the coal industry made Lafayette an itinerant town. There was a lack of work due to labor strikes, annual fluctuations in demand, and mining accidents, driving miners to other western coal camps to seek jobs.

This "hipped box" at 510 E. Simpson was the home of Pat Powers, a coal miner. Another resident was Fred Autrey, manager of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company Store.

