

Arizona Hard Rock Miner

by Todd and Tina Town

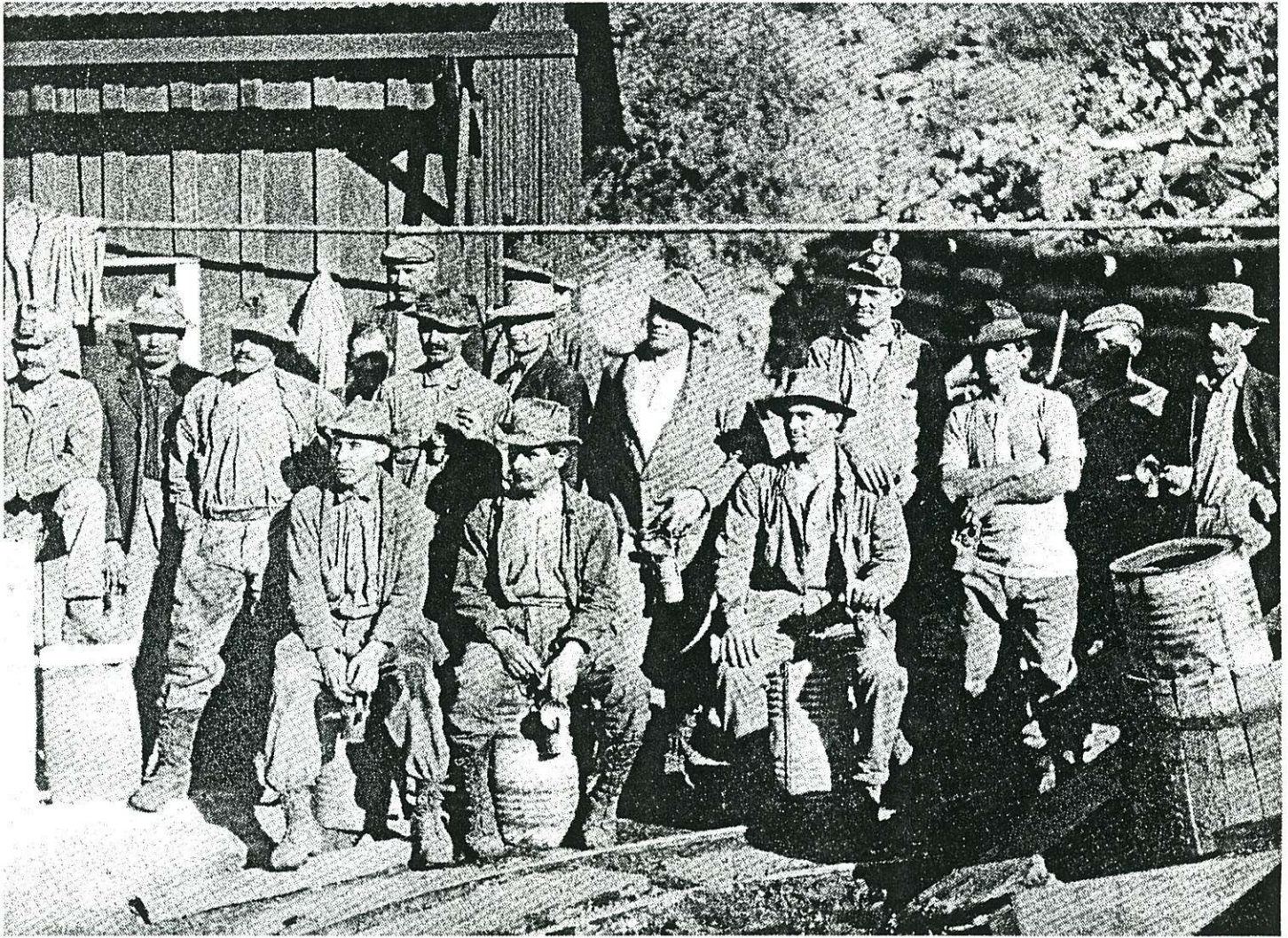
At the turn of the century and prior to the first world war, half of all hard rock miners living and working in Arizona were immigrants. The silver and copper miners of Globe, Copper Hills and Miami were no exceptions. Many an immigrant miner worked just long enough to obtain enough money to tramp out, leaving little trace that he was ever here or there. But some stayed.

One who did was Dominic Tony (Giacoma) Rosa, born in Salle, Italy, the son of farmers. He came to America at the age of 15. Alone and speaking no English, and with no means of support, Dominic traveled west in quest of his America. Saint Charles, Michigan was his first stop. There, he loaded coal in cars for \$1.00 a day and learned the art of coal digging. Dominic worked the coal fields of St. Charles until 1911, at which time he went back to his native Italy on holiday to visit his parents. Unlucky for him, Italy and Libya went to war and Dominic, still an Italian citizen found himself on the front lines in the Italian army until his discharge in 1913.

The first boat back was fine with him, and after corresponding with friends, he made his way to the copper mines of the Globe, Miami area, finding work in the Black Warrior Mine in Miami. He learned the skill of a western hard rock miner. An American citizen now, he was one of the first men from the Globe-Miami area to be sent to fight the Kaiser.



Dominic Rosa, photographed by the Ingersol-Rand company underground at the Old Dominion Mine, Globe, Arizona (ca. 1925)



Dominic Rosa, third from left. Black Warrior mine, Miami, Arizona. Prior to World War I.

Discharged in 1919 and again taking the first boat back, Dominic settled in and married a Globe native, Elena, and worked the Iron Cap, the Superior Boston, the Sulfide Tunnel and then the locally famous Old Dominion Mine. First as a miner, then as shift boss, Dominic saw the Old Dominion in its prime and glory. It was the largest copper mine in the Globe-Miami area and put the mining district on the map. But its size and riches fell victim to the depression and inability to keep the mine dry; she closed in 1931 and never reopened.

During the depression, Dominic and other hard rock miners from the area

put their talents to work for the government programs, building roads. He found steady work again at the number 9 shaft in Superior, one of the few copper mines to stay open during the depression.

Starting as a miner, he worked his way into an underground mine foreman position where he remained until his retirement in 1955.

Dominic Rosa was one of the few immigrant miners who stayed. He built his own house, raised three children and saw mine lighting go from candlestick, to carbide, to electric lamps.

Dry drilling, coal dust, and World War I gas finally took its toll. Shortly after his retirement, he died at his home on Berrautti Street. The Old Dominion is still there, his house is still there, but Dominic and all the other hard rock miners now are remembered by the photos they left behind.¹

Notes

1. We would like to thank John and Patsy Rosa for allowing us to interview them and for the use of the two photos for this story.