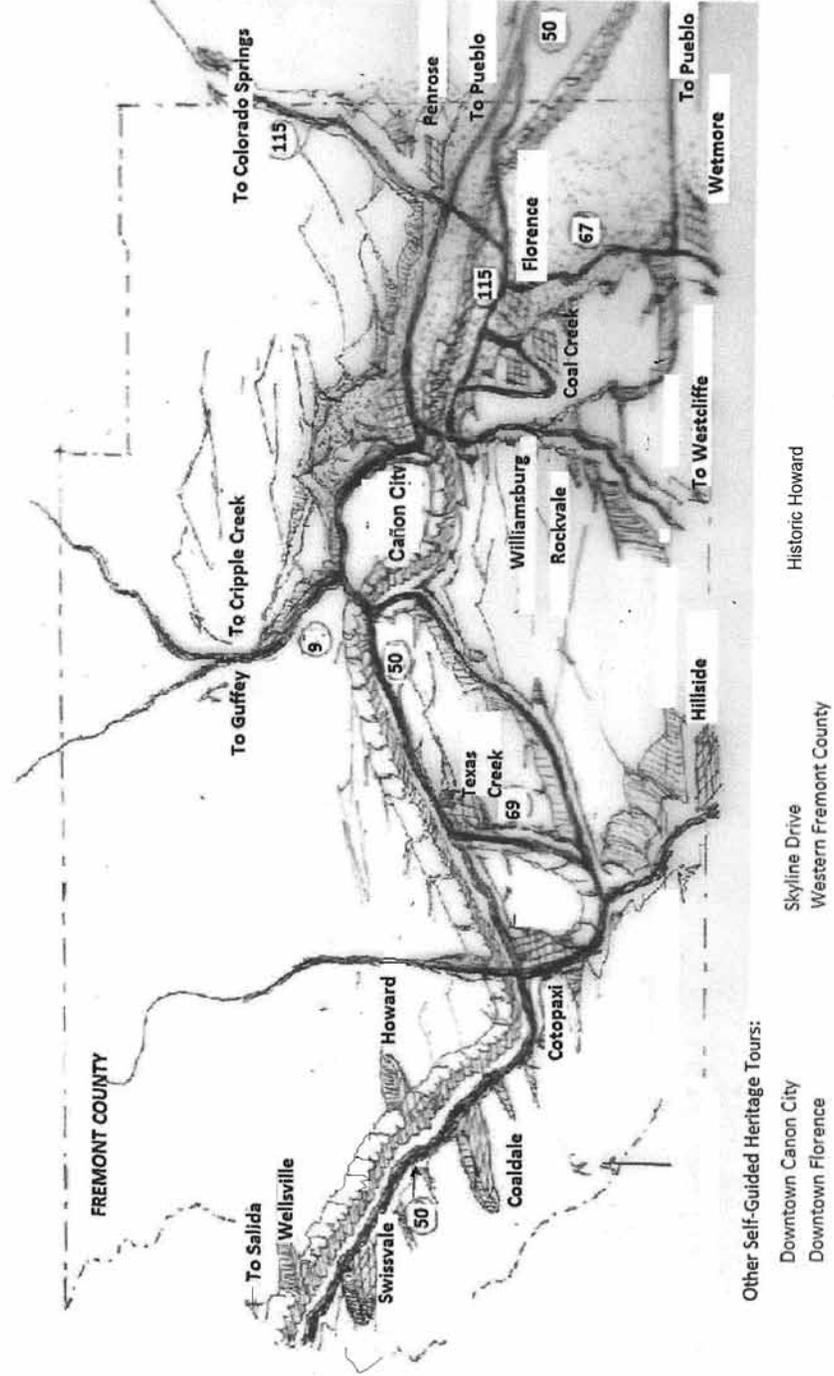


Self-Guided Tour

Skyline Drive



**FREMONT COUNTY
HERITAGE TOURS**



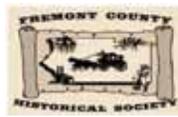
Allow about one hour for the Skyline Drive Self-Guided Heritage Tour. The Drive is generally open daily during daylight hours, but may be closed for bad weather or ice. For questions if the gate is closed call the Cañon City Police non-emergency number at 719-276-5600.

This is the first in a series of Self-Guided Heritage Tours developed by the Fremont County Heritage Commission and Fremont County Tourism Council, with the support of a grant from the Colorado Tourism Office, to encourage heritage tourism in our area. The Fremont County Historical Society, a 501(c)3 non-profit educational organization, is a partner in this effort.

Questions, comments and suggestions are welcome and may be conveyed to info@fremontheritage.com or sent to Fremont County Heritage Commission, 615 Macon Ave, Cañon City, Colorado, 81212.

These and other tours being developed may be downloaded for free at www.fremontheritage.com or found at Chambers of Commerce, Museums and visitor destinations throughout Fremont County. Additional information beyond the scope of this booklet may also be found at these locations along with other tours and information.

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Stop SD-01— View of Skyline Ridge & PCC Stegosaurus



Just west of Cañon City on Highway 50, turn left onto the Fremont Campus of Pueblo Community College Campus and take the road around the main building to see the stegosaurus. The terraces between the building and the highway, as well as the rest of the campus, were once the **Prison Gardens**. Owned and operated by the Colorado Department of Corrections as a prison work site, vegetable garden and animal farm from the late 1880's, reaching its peak in the mid 1930's, the area served the needs of the prison and produced a profit. The stegosaurus is a metal sculpture that was constructed by the Department of Corrections in the 1990's in recognition of the many dinosaur fossils recovered in the Cañon City area. An interpretative sign near the stegosaurus tells the story.

Looking across Highway 50 you are seeing Skyline Ridge, an upturned Dakota Sandstone Hogback on which Skyline Drive was constructed. The one way paved roadway is about 15' wide with wonderful vistas and 450' drops on both sides in some places. The bottom, red layer of rock you see just above the highway is what geologists call **Fountain Formation** that was created by outwash from erosion of the Ancestral Rocky Mountains. Above it is the **Morrison Formation** in which dinosaur fossils are found and above that is the Upper Cretaceous **Dakota Sandstone** which is more resistant to erosion.

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Stop SD-02 — Skyline Drive Gateway Arch

Leaving PCC, turn left and go west for two miles and turn right into the entrance to Skyline Drive. The drive was built in 1905 with prison labor. Sixty inmates got ten days off their sentence for every thirty days worked. Originally for horses, bicycling and walking, automobiles were prohibited until 1907 because they scared the horses.

Park to the side and walk to the arch. In 1932, inmates under Warden Roy Best repaired the road and built this entrance arch using a stone from every state in the union. A marble marker is beside each rock with its state name. When contacted, New York Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt wrote back questioning if this project was a private or public enterprise. The response back to FDR was that it was public and he then agreed to send a stone. Letters and other information are available for viewing at the Royal Gorge Regional Museum & History Center in Cañon City.



Stop SD-03 — First Overlook & Parking Area



This overlook is where the original road from the Cañon City side of the hogback reached the ridgetop. The area is part of the developing Hogbacks Open Space and that early road is now the trail descending on the left.

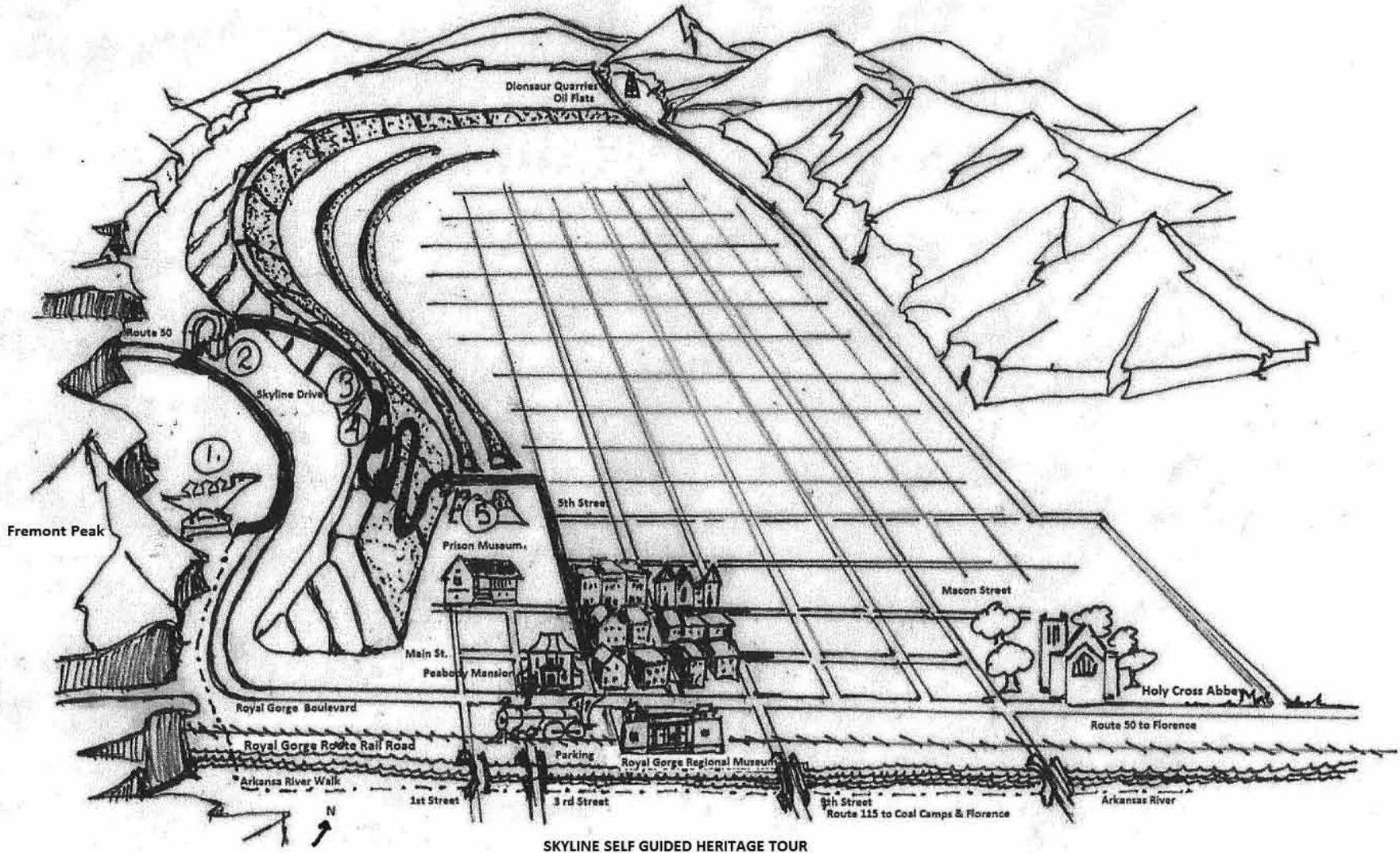
You may park here to access the trackway site and enjoy the views. (Above photo: Steve Kaverman)



Historic Drive



Snack Shack



Dinosaur Trackway



To view the trackway, walk carefully back down to the fenced area you drove past. As you proceed look for areas in the layers that look like burrows, tubes or small tracks. The rocks to your right are in the lower

part of the Dakota Sandstone group, created from sandy and muddy sediment deposited near the edge of the Western Interior Seaway. The burrows and other traces represent the ancient movement of clams, shrimp and worms.

Because of the Rocky Mountains uplift millions of years ago, at the trackway you see the bottom side of tracks made by a group of 30-foot long, six-ton, armored **Ankylosaurs** walking in a westerly direction. Interpretive signs tell the rest of the story.



One single track was discovered here in 1999 by local resident and paleontology student Bill Kurtz and exposed by the work of Garden Park Paleontology Society volunteers in 2000. Return to the parking area.



History - Looking East

From the first overlook parking area you see Cañon City. First settled in 1859 and platted in 1860, the area went through many changes as gold seekers from higher mountain locations to the north and west brought by the Pikes Peak Gold Rush sought winter quarters here. Cañon City began to grow as a farming, freighting and mining camp supply center only to be nearly abandoned after 1861 due to the Civil War. The arrival of post-Civil War **Resurrectionists** revived the town and Cañon City, incorporated in 1872, soon became a bustling town with stores, a lovely downtown, territorial prison, gardens and beautiful homes.

Looking beyond downtown, the Holy Cross Abbey, east on Highway 50, was built in 1924 as a Benedictine monastery that included a boys' boarding school in the 1950's and 60's. Now closed, an event center remains active and the Winery at Holy Cross Abbey operates a tasting room for its award winning wines as well as hosting festivals and other activities.

Skyline Drive is built on the toughest part of the Dakota Sandstone ridge called a **Hogback**. This resistant sandstone was deposited by sand and mud transported by rivers about 105 million years ago and then laid down near the edge of the **Western Interior Seaway**, which covered the central part of North America for almost 25 million years. All of the geology layers evident in the ridges below you and everything underlying the entire area are part of the **Cañon City Embayment**, which lies between the Front Range and the Wet Mountains. Rich coal and oil fields resulted from the tropical setting that once was here.

Stop SD-04 –Second Overlook History – Looking East

At the second overlook you are near the **Old Max** territorial prison which is located just below and to the right. You will get better views and can learn



a lot more at the **Museum of Colorado Prisons** located east of the Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility. The Dakota Sandstone of this Hogback was quarried on-site and used to build the prison in 1871. It was also quarried for building materials, providing an income for the prison.

Further southeast lies Florence, site of 2nd-oldest oil field in the US and now home to many fine antique shops.

Geology - Looking West

The prominent granite peak to the west is Fremont Peak, named after early explorer John Charles Fremont who led several 1840's expeditions through the county now named in his honor. Beyond the peak flows the Arkansas River, at 1,450 miles the 6th longest in the US. The river's course through the Royal Gorge provides what was once a hotly contested railroad route over which the scenic Royal Gorge Route Railroad now operates.

The rocks to the west are much older than what you are standing on. Some of the visible rocks are 1.4 billion years old. The large active quarry provides rock for a large number of projects such as flood protection all along the Front Range, while smaller historic quarries to the west have provided stone for churches, the library and other buildings in Cañon City and the region.



Astraspis desiderata

A primitive jawless fish. This was the world's oldest known vertebrate fossil for the 85 years from its 1892 discovery until 1977 when older fossils were found.

This layer cake of geologic history is where, in 1892, noted paleontologist Charles Doolittle Walcott identified bony plates of an extinct armored fish that lived about 450 million years ago.

Walcott was director of the US Geologic Survey from 1894 to 1907, when he became the 4th Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution until his death in 1927.

The Fremont Campus of Pueblo Community College is located below the quarry on

rock layers that were originally deposited by swift moving streams some 300 million years ago.

Stop SD-05 – Foot of Skyline Drive Parking Area

(Greenhorn Limestone of the Western Interior Seaway)
These rock layers represent deposition in the great **Western Interior Seaway** that existed in the western US for 25 million years. The small hill on the other side of the road is Greenhorn Limestone. It contains abundant evidence of life forms that lived in the sea. We ask that you take pictures but leave the rest for the next visitors.

Continue on Fifth Street to Main Street

Turn right (south) when you reach the first cross street. After several blocks you will reach the center of Cañon City. There are many interesting shops and restaurants along Main Street, a **National Historic District**.