

*Granby Mining* by Dan McWilliams is a 22 x 28 foot mural, painted on the south facing exterior wall of the Granby Miners Museum in 2007, with a black frame painted cleanly around the mural. It is one of two murals on the wall and was painted using Nova Color acrylic paint. Artist Sherry Pettey and the Crowder College Art Department executed the large scale painting.

McWilliams used an impressionistic style of painting to depict the back-breaking struggles of miners working in the harsh, dark, and cramped environment of the early Granby mines.

The first mine opened in 1850 and ushered in a century of work that would define the small town and the white workers of European descent who made Granby their home. In the early days of mining in Granby, ore was mined down to a depth of about 75 feet. As early surface mining began to play out deeper shafts started to be dug.

Starting in the lower left corner of the mural, we see a brown mule with a white patch of hair running down the

length of the front of his face. The mule wears a harness and stands on golden brown dirt.

Directly behind the mule, we see the grey structural frame legs of a whim rising up towards a blue sky. (With deeper mines came the need to transport men and equipment into and out of the mine, lifting the ore to the surface, and the need to remove surface water that seeped into the mine and threatened to flood it. This was accomplished in the early days of mining with a simple device known as a whim.) Inside the whim, which raised and lowered heavy objects in and out of the mine, is a platform holding a drum with brown rope wrapped around it. The rope would connect to the mule's harness so it could power the device by walking. A man operating the device stands to the right side of that drum, he wears a hat, long sleeved white shirt, and blue jeans. Standing at the far right leg of the whim, is a second man similarly dressed and leaning his right outstretched arm against the structure: he's the mule operator. When switching from pulling up to lowering, the mule operator had to change the animal's walking

direction.

Above the mule-powered whim, are brown, wooden structures necessary to mine the lead containing ore. These structures extend across the background (top) of the mural from the top left corner to just right of center. A blue sky fading down to light gold above. The tall, slender structure just left of center that rises taller than the others is the shaft house. The shaft house stands high over the shaft where men and equipment entered and exited with mined ore containing rock. Next to the shaft house, on the right, is a small rectangle shaped structure. This is the hoist house which contained the steam powered engine used to drive the hoist. As mines grew deeper, the need for more power to hoist things into and out of the mines also grew. To the left of the shaft house is a framed trestle structure.

Before the ore could be pulled up from the earth, it had to be mined. This part of the process is represented as we move into the upper right corner of the mural where the

artist fades the scene from outside the mine down into one of the underground mines. Here a man in blue coveralls, blue shirt, and a black helmet stands using two hands to hold a large drill. With his feet set shoulder width apart he uses the drill to place holes into the mine wall.

Moving down and to the left, a man, his back to the viewer, works in blue overalls and a white shirt swinging a sledge hammer. To his left are two miners, one dressed in black and the other in blue, both wearing helmets with lights mounted to the front. Below and to the right of the miner with the sledge hammer is another miner hard at work. He is bare chested and using a large scoop shovel which is mounded up with loose ore.

In the center of the mural is a large, round rust colored ore bucket. Two miners work to maneuver the bucket onto a flat top mining cart with large wheels sitting on a track. The miner on the left wears a sleeveless, black shirt showing muscles developed from the intense labor he performs. He is gripping the upper part of the ore bucket while the other

miner works with his back to the viewer. He wears blue overalls and a white shirt. Both wear black helmets that have shining lights on the front of them.

Across the bottom of the mural (spanning from the center to the right corner), are three wagons - each one pulled by a team of mules. A miner stands in each wagon while four more are gathered in front of the mules. Several hold picks and shovels in their hand and wear hats or helmets with lights.

The results of the miners' hard labor were taken by wagon from Granby to towns such as Fort Smith, Arkansas to be boated down the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, and eventually shipped to major cities like New Orleans, New York, and Boston.

By 1950, all of Granby's mines were closed, but their rich history and the stories of their impact on the community live on.

Artist Dan McWilliams painted and submitted a small scale version of *Granby Mining* to the 2006 Thomas Hart Benton Festival Mural Contest being held by the Newton County Tourism Council. His painting was selected as one of the two winning pieces that would be turned into a large-scale mural in Granby, Missouri. Sherry Petty and students from Crowder College, led by art instructor Alan Bishop, painted the large scale mural over the course of several weeks. They used the traditional grid method to transfer the design. This method involved creating a grid on both the small design and the wall, then copying the design square by square.