

United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet  
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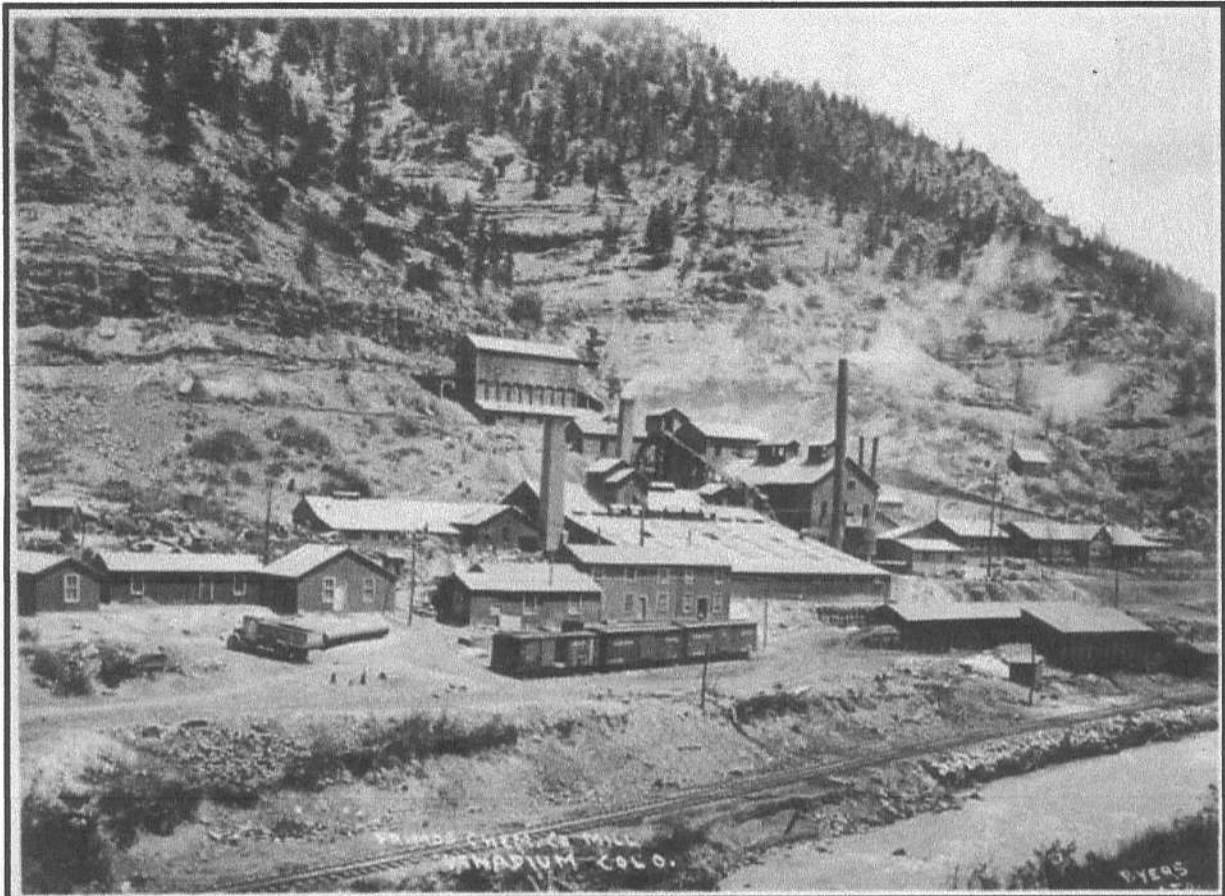


Figure E 4.6: During the latter half of the 1910s, the Primos Chemical Company operated North America's largest vanadium mill at the town of Vanadium. At the time, the vanadium mining industry experienced a boom due to a heavy wartime demand for vanadium. Source: Denver Public Library, CHS.X5701.

Because carnotite carried both vanadium and radium, the ore enjoyed a demand that was heavier than ever. This time, however, the roles of the metal constituents were reversed. In the past, companies produced carnotite for its radium and considered the vanadium as an afterthought. By 1917, the large companies refitted their mills to recover vanadium first and radium only as a byproduct. In so doing, the companies found carnotite to be highly profitable because the ore featured four times more vanadium than uranium.<sup>68</sup>

Repeating the pattern of the past carnotite excitements, the World War I boom provided opportunities for both large companies and independent parties. Prospectors were quick to sense the potential and congregated in the areas known for production. Some worked out of Standard Chemical's Joe Jr. and Ford camps, and others stayed in Julian Camp, on the San Miguel River

<sup>68</sup> Amundson, 2002:4; Boardman, 1956, et al.:17.