

**CULTURAL TOURISM, A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR THE INDUSTRIAL
PATRIMONY OF THE MINING DISTRICT OF REAL DEL MONTE AND
PACHUCA
MEXICO***

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INTRODUCTION

Unlike other experiences in the world of industrial patrimony in which work on protection, conservation, and reutilization begins with the recovery of buildings and machinery, in the mining district of Real del Monte and Pachuca, in Central Mexico, salvage work began with the historical archives of the mining company called the Compañía Minera de Real del Monte y Pachuca (CRDMyP) and of other mining enterprises of the region in 1987.

These archives known as the **Archivo Histórico de la Compañía Real del Monte y Pachuca** (AHCRCMyP) are among the most important of their kind in Mexico. It is one of the few private archives that has published a general guide to its holdings and that has the status of a legal entity.³

Its collection of textual and visual documents has been the keystone for the establishment of three museums,⁴ in a clear feedback system between the archive and the museums. Stemming from the opening of these facilities, the demand for service has increased in the archive, the periodicals and newspaper archive, and the library. Today it has placed at the service of researchers, students and the general public a historical archive with 419 years of information, enriched by an image bank of photos, plans, and posters. Its work has been recognized by the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), the Mexican national archives, which in 1995 awarded it National Mention of Archival Merit in the category of Non-Governmental Archives.

In addition to this pioneering work on the Mining District of Real del Monte and Pachuca may be added the recovery of machinery, tools, and facilities that made it possible to create the **Mining Museum** in July 1993. In 1995 the Historical Archive and

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³ The archive was constituted as a non-profit association in February 1995. From that time, it has continued to operate exclusively on the basis of donations, grants, and admission fees to the three museums forming part of its patrimony. OVIEDO, Belem (Coord.). *Guía General del Archivo Histórico de la Compañía de Minas de Real del Monte y Pachuca*, Mexico, AGN, CRDMyP and AHCRCMyP, 1993

⁴ The general coordination for the establishment of these museums, including historical research and exhibition design, restoration, and the re-utilization plan, has been coordinated by the authors of this paper.

Mining Museum (HAMM) was created as a non-profit association to guarantee the protection of the region's industrial mining patrimony. The next year, it received the donation of the former Mining Hospital building from the Real del Monte and Pachuca Mining Company. Following its remodeling, this structure was converted into the "**Nicolás Zavala**" **Cultural Center**, which includes a museum devoted to labor medicine known as the **Workers' Medicine Museum**. In 1998 it received the donation of the **Acosta Mine**, which was transformed into a **Site Museum**, which was opened to the public in July 2001. Already more than 125,000 visitors have visited this Site Museum.

These museums form part of a project to create a **cultural tourism corridor** based on the study, recovery, conservation, and reutilization of mining industrial patrimony, including the towns of Huasca, Mineral del Chico, and Mineral de La Reforma.

The corridor comprises the Mining Museum, installed in the former offices of the mining company of San Rafael, the Corteza and San Pedro La Ravia mines, and the Ore-Processing Haciendas of San Buenaventura and Loreto in Pachuca. In Real del Monte, it includes the mines of Dolores and Dificultad, the site museum at the Acosta Mine and the Workers' Medicine Museum, in addition to other sites of interest, such as the haciendas of Regla in the municipality of Huasca.

The opening of mining museums has resulted in a greater demand on the part of users wishing to consult the historical archive holdings. The library and newspaper and periodicals archive have been consulted by more than 4,000 students. The archives have been the primary source of information for more than 300 researchers, many of whom have written a licentiate, master's, or doctoral thesis based on their work. The Mining Museum in Pachuca has received more than 84,000 visitors and the Acosta Mine Site Museum has now seen more than 100,000 visitors in its third year of operations.

Over the course of nineteen years, little by little the HAMM⁵ has managed to recover a small, but significant, part of the patrimony of industrial mining in the state of Hidalgo and in the last five years it has indirectly contributed to strengthening the economy of the town of Real del Monte, since the visitors to its museums require a number of services. Suffice it to say that when the restoration of the Acosta Mine and the remodeling of the main street in the town began in 1998, there was not a single hotel and there were only three or four small restaurants. Now the town has more than eight hotels and 25 restaurants.

We believe that one of the benefits of recovering and reusing industrial patrimony from a productive activity, which on many occasions gave rise to entire towns, is that it reinforces the cultural identity of local towns and people. It stimulates them to revalue

⁵ Member of several national and international organizations for the study, protection, and dissemination of patrimony: Asociación Mexicana de Archivos y Bibliotecas Privados, A.C., Comité Mexicano de Ciencias Históricas, and Comité Mexicano para la Conservación del Patrimonio Industrial, A.C. In the international sphere, it is part of ICOM and TICCIH.

their history and to support their economy through so-called cultural tourism, as will be discussed in greater detail in this paper.

The Mining Museum in Pachuca

The museum arose from the need to safeguard the machinery, tools, and equipment abandoned and dispersed in different areas by the company, material that was being lost or sold as scrap metal, or that went on to form part of the decoration of private homes. It is also a way of paying homage to the memory, history, and life of those who pursued a trade that through time developed an entire culture: namely, the miners of Real del Monte and Pachuca (RDM&P).

This is why in 1993 we decided to make a space within the building housing the historical archive and to open the doors of the first mining museum of the legendary district that directly sustained the region's economic development.

At that time, the Museum was composed of a main gallery, an industrial archaeology area, two temporary exhibition spaces, and a multi-purpose room. The gallery was divided into five sections. The first three were devoted to the productive process of silver mining: geological exploration, exploitation, and mineral processing. The last two focused on social and labor aspects, such as the organization of workers and the efforts on the part of entrepreneurs and workers to reduce the number of mining accidents.

Ten years after the museum was opened, it was remodeled to make this mining history more accessible to the general and specialized public, to children and young people. Among the new halls, there is one on regional mineralogy and geology displaying three-dimensional maps and mineral samples. This is followed by a historical survey of the development of mining in the region, from the pre-Hispanic exploitation of the obsidian mines of Cerro de las Navajas to the present, passing through mining in the viceregal period, manned by Indian and slave labor, and the patio process of mineral extraction. The display also covers the arrival of the steam power with English and Mexican businessmen, the introduction of electricity by a U.S. company in 1906, the nationalization of mining, and then its privatization in 1991.

The museum has a mineral collection from different mining centers in the country, plans of XIX century mining estates, photos from the XIX century to the present of interiors of mines, miners working, winches, buildings and the everyday life of workers.

In the Industrial Archaeology space, located in the main patio and in the gardens, one can see the heavy machinery, as well as an old perforator from the late XIX century, Mack vehicles that transported the ore from the processing hacienda of Loreto to the railway station, and an eighty-ton crane from "The Brown Hoisting Machinery Co." of Cleveland.

Acosta Mine, Site Museum

As already mentioned, the HAMM proposed the need to create an integrated project devoted to the industrial patrimony of the mining district of RDM&P, starting work on

the Acosta Mine⁶ due to its long history of three centuries of mining exploitation. The site also has a colonial aqueduct running through the mine, which is surrounded by impressive walls and buttresses that harmoniously blend with the majesty of the engine room housing one of the first steam engines in Mexico. The metal fork and the winch house are a legacy of the era of electricity.

In May 1998, restoration and conditioning work began on the mine “with the drawing of architectural plans, a diagnostic of its state of preservation, and the preparation of a general plan that took historical research into account,⁷ interpretation of the site, industrial archaeology,⁸ and restoration criteria based on the analysis of the different construction processes at the site and in light of the Acosta Mine as historical patrimony of great value. In addition to the preceding was the project to establish a site museum, with detailed plans regarding the design and the remodeling of spaces in accord with the site’s physiognomy and the historical, technological, and architectural discourse of each one of its spaces, in addition to fulfilling safety requirements and comfort needs of visitors.”⁹

The areas composing the Museum are as follows:

The Superintendent’s Office is where the history of the mine is set forth from the initial claim in 1727 until its final closure in the 1970s. It includes a special area devoted to the introduction of steam power by miners from Cornwall, England. This is enriched by industrial archaeology conducted in the engine house and in the area of the boilers. This work was sponsored in part by a grant from the National Council for Science and Technology through the Ignacio Zaragoza Research System.

A metal fork, measuring more than 30 meters in height, and the winch house are the best examples of the “American era,” when electricity was introduced on a massive scale to work the mines. However, without a doubt, the drain gallery used to extract minerals and the entrance tunnel to the depot at level 180 of the Dificultad Mine is one of the major attractions for visitors. Over the course of a 450-meter path, visitors can see the different work methods through history, illustrated with tools, equipment, machinery, photos and large-scale illustrations on miners in the XIX and XX centuries, as well as on the geological formation of minerals.

A XIX century residence, known as the Superintendent’s House, has several permanent exhibition halls on the major mines of Real del Monte; the history of the labor

⁶ The Acosta Mine has an area of about 7,000 square meters of land. Exploitation of the mine began in 1727 and continued for 243 years.

⁷ Historical research was conducted by B. Oviedo and Rosario Villalobos with the support of Aracely Monroy and Cosmelia Ortíz.

⁸ This work was directed by Jaime Litvak King and undertaken by Iván Hernández Ibar who was the first Mexican student to receive a degree with a thesis on Industrial Archaeology.

⁹ OVIEDO Gámez, Belem and HERNÁNDEZ Badillo, Marco Antonio. “Restauración de la Mina de Acosta y creación del Museo de Sitio” in *Memoria del Segundo Encuentro Nacional para la Conservación del Patrimonio Industrial. Patrimonio Industrial Mexicano frente al nuevo milenio y la Experiencia Latinoamericana*. p. 148

movement in the region beginning in 1766 when there was an uprising in defense of the so-called *partido* payment system to the creation of a national labor union organized by the miners of this district. There is also an exhibition of tools used inside the mine and a room on El Hiloche forest, the former gathering place for mining families and today an area in serious risk due to the expansion of the urban growth. In the different areas of the house, there are displays of minerals, theodolites, and levels used in the mine.

Other areas in the museum are the winch house, the forge, and the boiler room where archaeological excavations exposed the ash pits of XIX century steam boilers. There are also two special areas for children where the first history and visual arts workshops have been given, culminating in the publication of a guide on the Acosta Mine Site Museum illustrated by children. The project was sponsored by a grant from the National Fund for Culture and the Arts in Mexico and funds from the non-profit association itself.

**“Nicolas Zavala” Cultural Center
Workers’ Medicine Museum, Oral History Archive, Temporary Exhibition Halls,
Service Areas—cafeteria, auditorium-**

The Hospital of the Compañía Real del Monte y Pachuca (CRDMyP) was the result of an agreement between the miners-diggers and the company signed on December 1, 1906. The employees and workers provided support by contributing 2% of their salary, while the company provided the facilities and the medical equipment with the best technology available at the time. Service was extended not only to the workers, but also to their families.

After two years of work to restore the building and salvage as much of the medical equipment as possible, the hospital was converted into the “Nicolás Zavala” Cultural Center on October 27, 2004. It includes the Workers’ Medicine Museum, the Archive of the Word, an area for temporary exhibitions, and an auditorium and cafeteria. This project was supported by grants from the J.P. Morgan Foundation and the National Fund for Culture and the Arts in Mexico, in addition to from donations by private parties and friends who contributed their work free of charge.

The building, furnishings, surgical equipment, rehabilitation equipment, and x-ray machine, which were preserved, as well as the apothecary were donated to the HAMM, in 1996 by the CRDMyP, planning from that very moment the remodeling of the edifice for the installation of the Cultural Center. The Center was named after Nicolás Zavala, one of the heads of the uprising organized in Real del Monte in 1766 by the miners.

When the hospital ceased to function, it had the following areas and services: a reception area, apothecary, x-ray room, a room for hospitalized patients, a doctor’s office, nurses’ station, and recovery, treatment, and rehabilitation rooms, an operating room with its sterilization and equipment area, a bathroom with shower and tub, an area for ironing sheets, and a mortuary chapel. All of this is in the building today occupied by the Workers’ Medicine Museum, as well as a laundry room.

The exhibition display design respected this division so that a visit to the museum begins with a stop at the former chapel. There one can see posters done by the safety department describing accidents that occurred in mines.

The other areas of the museum are:

The apothecary, which was completely installed and equipped by November 1907, brings together the diverse expressions of medical therapeutics from the past century with “modern medicine” from the early XX century. The use of some plants, such as boldo, senna leaf, tabachin flowers, linden and citron blossom came together with chemical products to fill the physician’s prescriptions. The druggist, who according to hospital records, often worked without a “pharmaceutical degree,” was responsible for preparing the pills, capsules, and unguents.

The x-ray room. Throughout the XIX century, x-rays were the principal diagnostic method for determining ailments produced by silica on miners, while it also afforded precise identification of bone fractures from mining accidents. The General Electric brand equipment there dates to the 1930s and serves as an example of the hospital’s advanced technology, which is distributed in the different rooms of the hospital based on its characteristics.

The room for hospitalized patients has beds, screens, spittoons, commodes, chamber pots, tables, chairs, serum stands, and oxygen tanks. In this room, there is a reproduction of the male and female human body, dissected and printed onto transparent acrylic, which allows the visitor to delve into the marvelous, unknown world of the human body.

The curing room was the room where miners who had been in an accident were received. First the wound was cleaned, taking into account that many accidents took place on the mine’s interior, where hygienic conditions were far from ideal or the type of work they were undertaking did not allow them to be clean. For example, when drilling, the worker got covered with dirt and water. Therefore, if one of them had an accident, it was necessary to bathe them and disinfect the wounds to meet basic measures of asepsis.

The rehabilitation room is where different types of splints could be found, ranging from those used for the movement of wounded miners (re-usable wire splints) to those designed by Brown Bohler, which were installed on the patient’s bed. There are a good number of metal splints to immobilize different parts of the arms, hands, and fingers, pullikan-type splints of shoulder fractures and corsets for back support. A variety of apparatuses used in the physical rehabilitation of the worker, as well as orthopedic surgical instruments, such as the portable equipment designed by Dr. Albin Lambotte (1866-1955); Jackson cannulae, endoscopes and cystoscopes. A wheelchair and a stretcher were used to move patients within the hospital.

Operating room and equipment and sterilization area. After 99 years, the operating room has been equipped with instruments from the early XX century, such as forceps, separators with interchangeable valves, aseptic syringes, tweezers for biopsies, and

sutures of different calibers. It has complete anesthesia equipment, including pure ether and chloroform vials, a metal ejection table, a surgical table made of metal and glass, a metal otorhinolaryngology chair, oxygen tanks, a propulsion apparatus useful in thoracic interventions, and emergency lamps.

In the equipment and sterilization area, there are two refrigerators, two sterilizers for syringes and clothing, Duallan boxes, an apparatus for liquid sterilization, and water sterilizers, in addition to other equipment.

Industrial Patrimony and Tourism Route

Mineral de La Reforma

Cerro de las Navajas is one of the most important obsidian sources from the pre-Hispanic period. A range of workshops and mines have been found all around the hill. In the rancho de El Guajolote, the people have resumed the tradition of producing decorative pieces made of obsidian, which are sold to tourists.

The Real del Monte Mines XVIII, XIX, XX Centuries

The Dolores, Acosta, and Terreros Mines. From the viceroyalty period, these were strategic points to control drainage at the Real del Monte mines. So-called blood winches—because they were moved by animal power—and steam pumps were used there to be able to exploit mineral beds at a greater depth. Currently the **Dolores Mine** retains the “Cornish”-type engine house, the fork, the winch house, clear examples of the use of electricity in the XX century, in mining work, as well as buildings for offices and living spaces. **Terreros Mine**, commonly known as Prison Mine, for having a prison that provided manpower for the mines, only has a large tower at the foot of the main entrance to Real del Monte and the walls of its engine room. The **Acosta Mine**, after 274 years, has been restored and conditioned as a Site Museum.

The Purísima Concepción Mine. Here exploitation began in 1893 after which on June 13 Jorge Latamar received the title to the property. However, it was not until the 1930s when the mine was intensively worked with the application of electrical energy to its operations.

The San José La Rica Mine. Its origins can be dated back to the XVIII century, however the title of ownership in the name of Don Jorge Latamar dates to December 18, 1894. This mine “was renowned for its wealth in the mid-XVIII century, for the abundance and high quality of its metal (30 standard assaying weights or more per load); but a flood prevented its exploitation despite the efforts to remove the water undertaken by the different owners that it successively had.” In the memoir that Don José Pedro de Leoz addressed to the Viceroy, the Marquis de Croix, on July 11, 1770 that mine appears without an owner, with no other reference to it until its acquisition by Don Jorge Latamar.

The Dificultad Mine. This mine was claimed in 1865 by some men by the name of Martiarena and Chester. Through the financing system, it passed into the hands of the financing organization known as the Sociedad Aviadora de las Minas de Real del Monte y Pachuca. At the end of the XIX century, a 580 horsepower German steam engine was installed there and an 80-ton fixed winch to drain it as well as the mines adjacent to it.¹⁰ Today it preserves an impressive engine house, the steam winch on its interior and a boiler, in addition to a high-voltage electrical energy distribution center and pump tanks.

The Morán Mine. The mine was claimed by Don Francisco Manuel José de Moya in 1765. In 1826 Fausto de Elhuyar and Tomas Murphy took over, so it is likely that work was conducted there with pumps based on the hydraulic ram system to drain it, as invented by Elhuyar, who was also the owner of the Cabrera Mine. The only part that remains are the perimeter walls and some hoppers.

The Cabrera Mine. The majority of the architectural remains preserved are from the American period, in other words from the first half of the XX century. What stand out are the metal fork, the winch house, the electric winch—still in use—and the house.

The Pachuca Mines

XVIII, XIX, XX Centuries

The Xacal and Cuixi Mines. These are two of the first mines exploited by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century.

The Rosario Mine. It was worked with steam machinery during the XIX century, later using electricity in the XX. Today all of the machinery that once dotted the landscape has disappeared, and only the installations and a drain gallery remain.

El Álamo Mine. This mine ceased to be productive and was closed in 1993. Nevertheless, the patrimonial legacy that it holds on its interior is extremely rich. It is one of the best examples preserved of the arrival of “modernity to these mines,” begun in the XX century with the massive use of electricity in different work areas, including carpentry.

The San Juan Pachuca Mine. This is one of the most important in the region’s productive history. It is there, at level 280, where the ore extracted from all the mines in the region arrived to be extended into a stratum and sent to the ore-processing hacienda of Loreto. Although steam technology was used at this mine in the XIX century, the material remains resulting from the use of electricity are the ones that are preserved and that are still in use.

The Corteza Mine. When Don Pedro José de Leoz visited the mines of Real del Monte and Pachuca in 1770 he mentioned in his report that the Corteza Mine was abandoned,

¹⁰ OVIEDO Gámez, Belem. Mina La Dificultad, ejemplo de la ritualización de la tecnología, in *Un Recorrido por Archivos y Bibliotecas Privados*, Mexico, AMABPAC, FCE, 1999.

having been reactivated in the XIX century by English entrepreneurs who introduced a steam engine to drain it. Nowadays, one can see its engine house, which serves as a warehouse for samples of diamond drilling carried out by the Compañía Real del Monte y Pachuca.

The San Pedro La Ravia Mine. Dating to the XIX century, this mine, in addition to the Corteza Mine, are the only ones in Pachuca that still preserve the engine house that together with its patios are a true monument to the effort and tenacity of English and Mexican miners who worked to extract the silver of this region.

Drain Galleries

Azoyatla Drain Gallery was planned and built by José Alejandro Bustamante y Bustillo in the XVIII century to drain the mined located on the Vizcaína lode. Its entrance is located in the town of the same name and is the only one that we can see today.

Morán Drain Gallery, considered the first great drain gallery in New Spain, was planned by Alejandro Bustamante y Bustillo and built in partnership with Pedro Romero de Terreros. They succeeded in achieving what the Azoyatla Drain Gallery could not: namely, draining the mines located on the Vizcaína lode in Real del Monte, and directly contributing to the great mining boom of this town. The venture made Romero de Terreros one of the richest men in New Spain.

Aviadero Drain Gallery. The first man to attempt to undertake this engineering endeavor, which to date continues to support the drainage of the mines of Real del Monte, was José Manuel Valcarze y Guzmán, who claimed the Plan del Aviadero or Plan de Omitlán, to open up a drain gallery on November 23, 1756. Economic problems led him to turn the property over to the Romero de Terreros family, and it was not until 1816 when the third count of Regla formally began its construction. However, a few years later, he leased his properties to the Compañía de Aventureros en las Minas de Real del Monte, which continued this work. Finally, Mexican entrepreneurs organized around the Sociedad Aviadora de las Minas de Real del Monte and Pachuca were the ones who finally concluded the work.

Ore-Processing Haciendas

Huasca

The **Haciendas of San Miguel, San Antonio, and Santa María Regla** were the three most important haciendas belonging to Romero de Terreros, the first Count of Regla, during the viceroyalty period. Nowadays, **San Miguel** has been converted into a hotel, where rooms are constantly being added on, completely transforming the former hacienda. The only part that still speaks of the productive activities conducted there are the ovens rising from an artificial lake created for the enjoyment of tourists. **San Antonio** today is under the waters of a dam built over it and **Santa María Regla**, mentioned by many XIX century travelers, such as Madame Calderón de la Barca, unfortunately is being transformed into a hotel, running the risk of being altered,

because criteria for the restoration of historic buildings have not been respected due to the lack of legislation to protect it as well as the lack of true interest on the part of authorities responsible for these patrimonial sites. Due to its state of preservation and integrity, until a couple years ago, Santa María Regla was the best example of an ore-processing hacienda based on the patio system in the region and perhaps in the entire country.

Pachuca

Hacienda of San Buenaventura. This hacienda where the patio process was used, with wind energy and with hydraulic wheels, belonged to the mining company known as the Compañía Minera de Maravillas y Anexas. Its majestic ruins, on the royal road to El Cerezo or to Real de Arriba, bespeak its importance. In addition, there one may see the system of ore exploitation. If Santa María Regla is one of the best examples of ore-processing haciendas due to its state of preservation, San Buenaventura is outstanding for the majesty of its constructions, now in a state of ruins.

Hacienda of Loreto. It began its work with the implementation of patio ore processing during the XIX century, and in 1906 this process was replaced by the cyanide process. In the 1920s a refining plant was installed, making it the only place in the country with complete silver and gold mineral processing.

Hacienda of Purísima Grande. Here Bartolomé de Medina perfected the amalgamation ore processing system, commonly known as the “patio process”; this system was in use for more than three hundred years. The remains of this hacienda were virtually destroyed, until it was remodeled in 1963 and a Social, Cultural, and Recreational Club of the CRDMyP was installed on its lands.

Omitlán

Hacienda of Guerrero. This was installed in the first half of the XX century and it became one of the main ore-processing haciendas of Real del Monte to employ the cyanide process. Today only a few perimeter walls remain on the royal road between Real del Monte and the town of Guerrero.

CIVIC CONSTRUCTIONS

Pachuca

Las Cajas Reales or the Royal Treasury is one of the most emblematic buildings in the city. Built in 1776, it has a central patio, two back patios and two stories. The upper floor was intended to house rooms for royal officials and their family. In the central patio of the lower story, there are offices, mercury storerooms, carriage houses, a living space composed of a sitting room and a bed chamber, two rooms for servants, and cubbyholes under the stairs for storage. In the back courtyard, there were stables, rooms for straw, corrals, and restrooms.

During the viceroyalty period, the Treasury fulfilled the function of fostering mining in the region, collecting the royal fifth tax, and controlling quicksilver or mercury. Once

Mexico won Independence, the building became the property of the Mexican government, which sold it in 1855 to the Sociedad Aviadora de las Minas de Real del Monte y Pachuca. From that time on, it was converted into offices of the Compañía Real del Monte y Pachuca.

The Methodist Church. English migration to this district began in 1824; from that time forward, we can find several waves of migrants, those who arrived in the late XIX century together with American immigrations, which have left us one of the most important architectural complexes in the city of Pachuca. These are the Methodist School built in 1877 and the Episcopal Methodist Church constructed between 1882 and 1900, which is the sole example of Romanesque and neo-Gothic styles in the capital of the state of Hidalgo.¹¹

Real del Monte

The English Cemetery, located on the hill known as Cerro del Judío is without doubt one of the most unique places in the mining town, where tombs with Masonic symbols such as the broken column, the compass and carpenter's square and those reproducing part of the façade of the Methodist Church of Real, among centennial pines, covered most of the year by mist, have given rise to several legends, reproduced by Don Chencho.¹²

With the passing of time—170 years since the oldest date recorded on a slab—with its resulting deterioration, the semi-abandoned state it has had, vandalism, pooled with the lack of awareness of those who visit the cemetery and who, lacking respect, walk right on top of the tombs and leave trash are factors that are causing serious damage to the site.

MUSEUMS

Pachuca

The Mining Museum, installed in the former cashiers—offices—of the Compañía Minera de San Rafael, built at the end of the XIX century, invites us to take a journey through the history of mining in the region, from the pre-Hispanic exploitation of obsidian at Cerro de las Navajas to the present. In its galleries, one can see old photos of the mines, the miners, and the ore-processing haciendas of this mining district, original documents, plans and maps, drawings, and samples of minerals from all over the country, machinery, and tools. The museum includes an industrial archaeology space.

The Mineralogy Museum, located in the former Hospital of San Juan de Dios, is today the venue of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo. It holds some 700 samples of minerals and rocks.

¹¹ KATZMAN, Israel. *Arquitectura el siglo XX en México*. Mexico, Trillas, 1993. 497 pp.

¹² Inocencio Hernández, caretaker of the Cemetery.

REAL DEL MONTE

Acosta Mine Site Museum. As we have mentioned, it is an XVIII century mine that was worked until the 1970s. In its diverse galleries located in its facilities, visitors may come face to face with their history, with the arrival of the “steam age” to the mining district, as well as the rise of the labor movement in the region.

The **Workers’ Medicine Museum** forms part of the “Nicolás Zavala” Cultural Center, located in what was the mining hospital of the Compañía Real del Monte y Pachuca. It was inaugurated at the beginning of the XX century and continued to function until the 1980s. Surgical, x-ray, rehabilitation, and hospitalization equipment may be seen here, as well as pots and jars from the old apothecary and archival documents that are part of the museum.

CONCLUSIONS

The creation of tourism routes based on the recovery and reutilization of industrial patrimony are fundamental in revaluating the collective memory of patrimony from a productive activity. It includes property, archives, machinery, tools, oral tradition, and so forth that also serve to reinforce formal teaching and to economically reactivate towns that indirectly support the creation of formal and informal jobs.

The restoration work at the Acosta Mine and its adaptation as a Site Museum began in 1998. The remodeling of the town of Real del Monte took place the following year and soon after, following the example of Acosta, the former mine of San Cayetano was transformed into the Institute of Arts of the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo (2003). This project contributed to converting this town into a tourist site.

The more than 130,000 visitors to the two industrial museums in this town impact it by creating a demand for services. Based on statistics provided by the Tourism Ministry of the State of Hidalgo, in December 1999, there was only one hotel in Real del Monte, but today there are more than eight, one of them a luxury hotel, as well as a trailer park. At that time there were only three restaurants, but now there are more than 25 restaurants and six bars.

All the tour guides of the Acosta Mine Site Museum and the Workers’ Medicine Museum located in the “Nicolás Zavala” Cultural Center are former miners, in the case of men, and daughters of miners in the case of women. They have been trained on the history of mining and specifically on the place where they offer their services. In addition to raising their self-esteem, it has made them aware of the value of the patrimony that miners have forged throughout their history.

This work is also beneficial for children, with the history and visual arts workshops that are given at the museums of Real del Monte. One initial result is the publication of a children’s guide to the Acosta Mine Site Museum with drawings they themselves have made and three exhibitions of their work, one at Acosta and two at the Nicolás Zavala Cultural Center.

In a town without a deeply rooted craft tradition, now a group of craftspeople have united and with the help of government authorities have managed to build a Parián or market where they sell their products made of silver, wood, minerals, plants, as well as “antiquities” such as carbide lamps and plastic mining helmets, and even typical local delicacies.

Real del Monte has been converted into an alternative for tourists within Mexico and especially for the visitors from Mexico City due to its proximity to the capital, the low costs, and a reasonable supply of cultural attractions. The Acosta Mine Site Museum is now considered a “must see.”

The Acosta Mine and the town of Real del Monte are also an ideal set for television networks, with the resulting economic benefits filtering down to the rest of the population.

Through this brief overview, we can say that mining continues its cultural legacy by supporting the development of the “Magical Town” of Real del Monte in the state of Hidalgo.