Bridge Ojuela 1898. Mapimí, Durango, Mexico.

Cristina Matouk Núñez

Owned by the Compañía Minera de Peñoles. Design and supervision, Wilhelm Hildenbrand. Assistant engineer, Henry G. Tyrrell. Construction engineer, Santiago Menghini. Supply of cables and connections, John A. Roebling's Sons Company.

Abstract

Compañía Minera de Peñoles, founded in the state of Durango, Mexico in 1887 by Mexican partners. In 1890 he declared the intention to buy the smelting Hacienda del Agua in Mapimí, Durango, for which required capital injection.

That same year the company established in Mexico Minerals and Metals with Jacob Langeloth Frankfurt, Barthold Hochschild New York, Metallgessellschaft Frankfurt, Henry R. Merton and Company of London. Minerals and Metals bought most shares of the Compañía Minera de Peñoles (Peñoles).

In 1891 Peñoles acquired the mine Ojuela and other belongings in the Sierra de la Bufa, in the municipality of Mapimí site that at least since 1775 had mining activity.

From 1893 the stage of modernization of Ojuela and other mines, with the direction of Engineer Charles Reidt born in the United States and graduated in Freiberg starts. Among other works he electrified mines and installed modern equipment as an extraction and transportation of ore.

For 1896 the company expanded smelter Mapimí installing more furnaces Water Jacket and built a railway line via narrow to link the town of Mapimí with Bermejillo station 24 kilometres away, connecting to the Central Railway and was going abroad the ore (lead) and speiss gold and silver sold in Hamburg, Antwerp (Antwerp) and New York.

1897 Peñoles completed construction of a railway line two miles and 1,000 feet to the mining camp Ojuela, designed the famous train "cog" of Maniton Pike Colorado State, design Wilhelm Hildenbrand and the supply central line of the Abt Company of Sweden. The train was carrying ore from the mine to the smelter and moved an average of 2,000 passengers per month.

In 1898, with the same designer, construction of suspended bridge Ojuela concludes, whose main purpose was to facilitate the transfer of the mineral extracted by the Campo Sur shaft towards Ojuela. These fields are separated by a canyon more than 100 meters deep. The bridge still standing, measuring 318 meters in length in a single span, 1.75 m wide and has a suspended weighing over 112 tons. The work made possible the replacement of the burden of animal power to lower ore by the barrel and travel several kilometres around a hill, by an efficient and inexpensive way to load trucks thrust, which slipped on a central rail bridge.

The construction of the cog railway and bridge detonated an increase in the production of Compañía Minera de Peñoles and meant an increase in the population employed in the mines and called Ojuela Anexas. An extended community en1900 was 3590 inhabitants.

Ojuela had mainly work and social infrastructure including schools, trade, cinema, hotel, casinos (Mexican and foreign), chapel, pharmacy, nursing and trace.

The mining operation ended in 1932 due to low production of oxides and the high cost of extracting water from mines.

Today Ojuela has eleven historical monuments cataloged by the National Institute of Anthropology and History of Mexico, including the bridge Ojuela, the flagship for the community of the region, an icon of progress and modern mining in the early twentieth century.