



OBJECT ID F2013.57

OBJECT NAME Photograph

ACCESS POINTS

- basil
- bottle
- cigarette
- coal mine
- guns
- immigrant
- Miners
- portrait
- Utah
- worker

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

Black and white portrait of a group of men. There are three rows of men seated or standing. They are dressed in nice suits with ties and moustaches on their faces. All hold bottles of alcohol and/or guns. Many of the men have flowers pinned to their vests or jackets. They are posed outdoors with a rocky hill behind them. While the photo is in black and white, there is brown coloring on several of the highlights throughout the picture.

The note on the back gives context to the photo explaining that "Greeks from Crete had their picture taken for old-country relatives with bottles and guns as signs of affluence: sprigs of basil are a symbol of friendship...Clear Creek, Utah Miners c.a. 1914." This photo comes from Utah State Historical Society's Photography collection, specifically the Peoples of Utah collection.

ORIGIN

The first Greek arrived in Utah in 1870 but steady immigration did not start until about 1900. The Greek immigrants worked primarily as miners or on the railroads. They were brought in as cheap labor to break strikes and so were paid extremely poor wages and lived in shanty towns. The note identifies those pictured as miners from Clear Creek where, between 1910 and 1920, 2,000 tons of coal was being mined a day. The Cretans became known as a violent and uncontrollable faction of the Greek immigrants due to their involvement as strike breakers on the railroads and later as the strikers themselves.

Basil, though it may also mean Friendship, is used in holy water in the Greek Orthodox Church.

CITATION

Photograph, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 09/12/26.
