

Extra Credit for Rufino Rodrigues: Oklahoma Orpheus

About Lehigh, Oklahoma

Website: [Lehigh](#) is now a ghost town, with a few buildings still standing.

About Coal Mining

Book: Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Growing Up in Coal Country*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996.

Book: Dineen, Jacqueline. *Oil, Gas, and Coal*. Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, c1995.

Website: [GenDisasters](#). Chronicles events that touched the lives of our ancestors.

Website: [Coal mine virtual tour](#). From the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Website: [The Mining History Association](#)

Website: [Abandoned Mines of New Jersey](#)

Website: [The World Museum of Mining](#)

About Mining Accidents and Explosions

Book: Quigley, Joan. *The Day the Earth Caved In: an American Mining Tragedy*. New York : Random House, 2007.

Book: Malam, John. *You Wouldn't Want to be a 19th-Century Coal Miner in England!: a Dangerous Job You'd Rather Not Have*. Danbury, CT : Franklin Watts, 2007.

Website: [Historical Data on Mine Disasters](#). Provides statistics published by the United States Mine Rescue Association.

About Hispanics in Oklahoma

Book: Smith, Michael Myrle. *Crossroads Oklahoma: The Mexican-American Experience in Oklahoma*. Stillwater, Okla: Crossroads Oklahoma Project, College of Arts and Sciences Extension, Oklahoma State University, 1981.

Book: Smith, Michael M., *The Mexicans in Oklahoma*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

Book: Oklahoma Centennial Hispanic History Project, Yolanda Charney, et al. *Latinos Presentes!* Tulsa, Okla.: Oklahoma Centennial Hispanic History Project, 2007.

Website: Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. "[Hispanics](#)".

Website: Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. "[Mexicans](#)".

About Child Labor

Book: Herumin, Wendy. *Child Labor Today: a Human Rights Issue*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow, 2008.

Book: Josephson, Judith Pinkerton. *Mother Jones: Fierce Fighter for Workers' Rights*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1997.

Website: [Child Labor in U.S. History](#). Maintained by the Child Labor Public Education Project of the University of Iowa Labor Center and Center for Human Rights.

About George Orwell

Book: Ferrell, Keith. *George Orwell, the political pen.* New York : Evans, 1985.

Book: Flynn, Nigel. *George Orwell.* Vero Beach , Fla. : Rourke Corp., 1990.

Website: [“Down the Mine”](#) from *The Road to Wigan Pier* by George Orwell

Website: [George Orwell](#). Maintained by the BBC.

Website: [George Orwell](#). A short bio from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*.

About Carnegie Heroes

Book: Chambers, D. R. *A Century of Heroes.* Pittsburgh, Pa: Carnegie Hero Fund Commission, 2004.

Website: [Carnegie Hero Fund Commission](#)

[Rufino Rodrigues Criss Cross](#)

[Rufino Rodrigues Word Search](#)

Discussion Questions and Writing Exercises

- Why were there donkeys in the coal mine?
- Why is a fire in a coal mine so dangerous?
- What made it difficult for Rufino to communicate with the other coal miners?
- Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer.” Do you think this is a valid description of Rufino’s actions? Why or why not?
- Why do you think coal mining was one of the few jobs open to immigrants in the early part of Oklahoma’s history? What sorts of jobs do new immigrants work today?
- What do you think motivated Rufino to risk his life in order to warn the other coal miners about the fire? What would you have done if you found yourself in the same situation?
- This chapter calls Rufino the “Oklahoma Orpheus.” In Greek mythology, Orpheus went into the underworld to try and bring his wife back from the dead. He was given one condition: that he not look back on the way to the surface. Orpheus failed, and his wife returned to the dead. In what way is the myth of Orpheus similar to Rufino’s experience? In what way does it differ?
- Rufino Rodrigues was an inspiration to the men he rescued, their wives and their children. Have you been inspired by an act of extraordinary bravery? Your hero may be someone you know personally or someone famous. Describe how this person meets your definition of a hero.

Teacher’s Resources

[Mining Disaster](#): A fact-gathering group activity, maintained by the National Archives.