

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF MINING HERITAGE

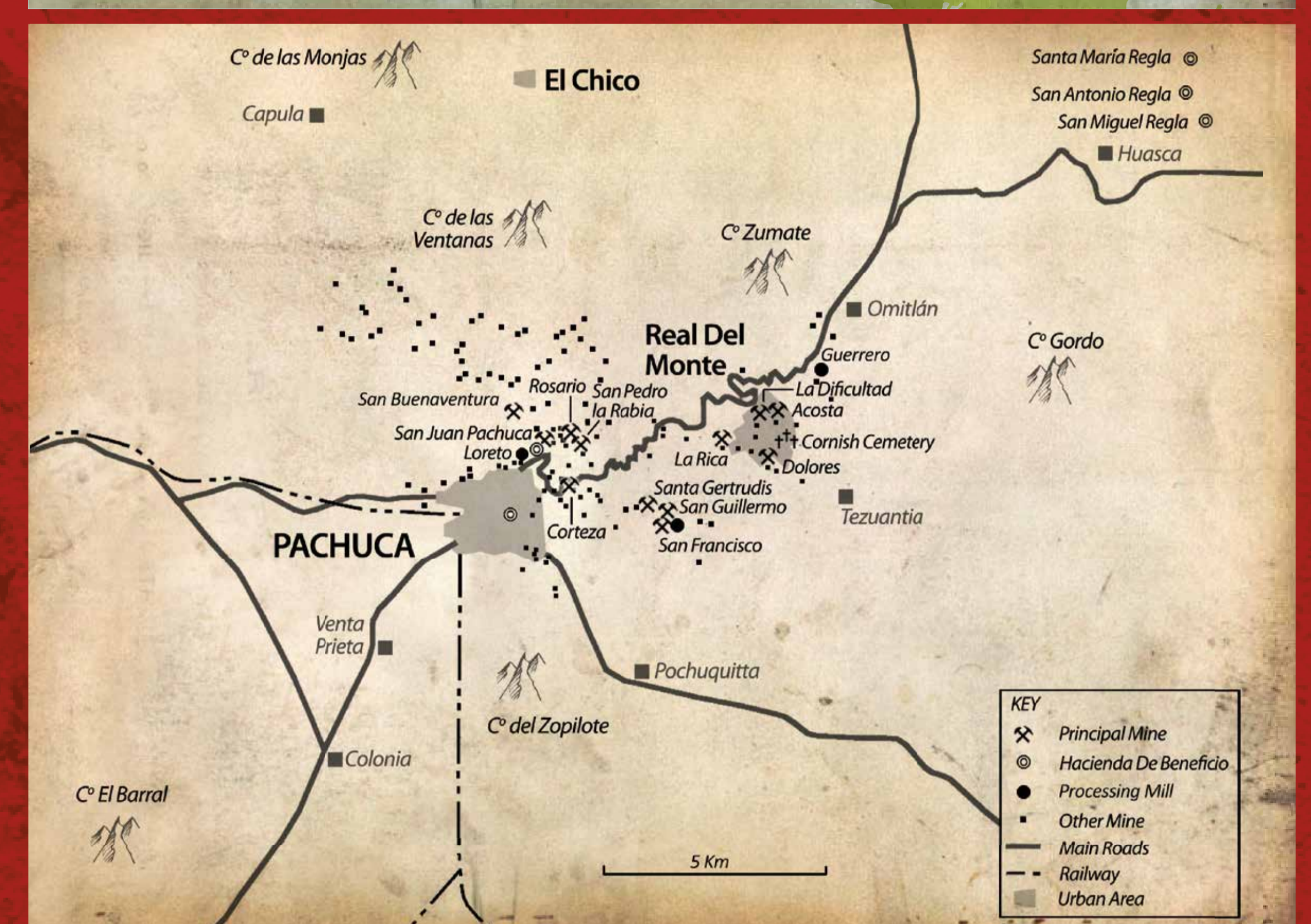


“At last we reach the top of a ridge, and see the little settlement of Real del Monte below us. It is more like a Cornish mining village than anything else; but of course, the engine-houses, chimneys and mine-sheds built by Cornishmen in true Cornish fashion, go a long way in making up the resemblance.”

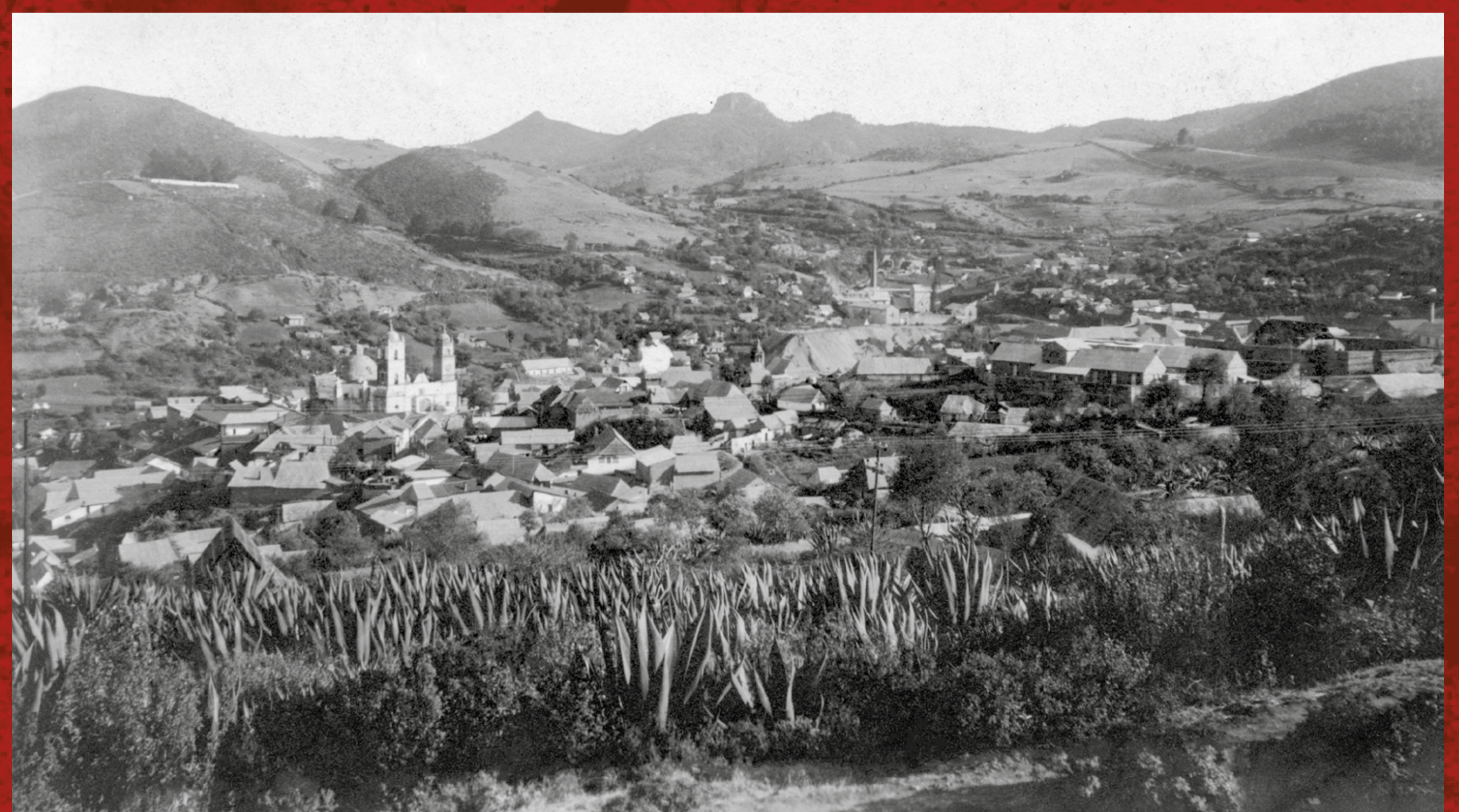
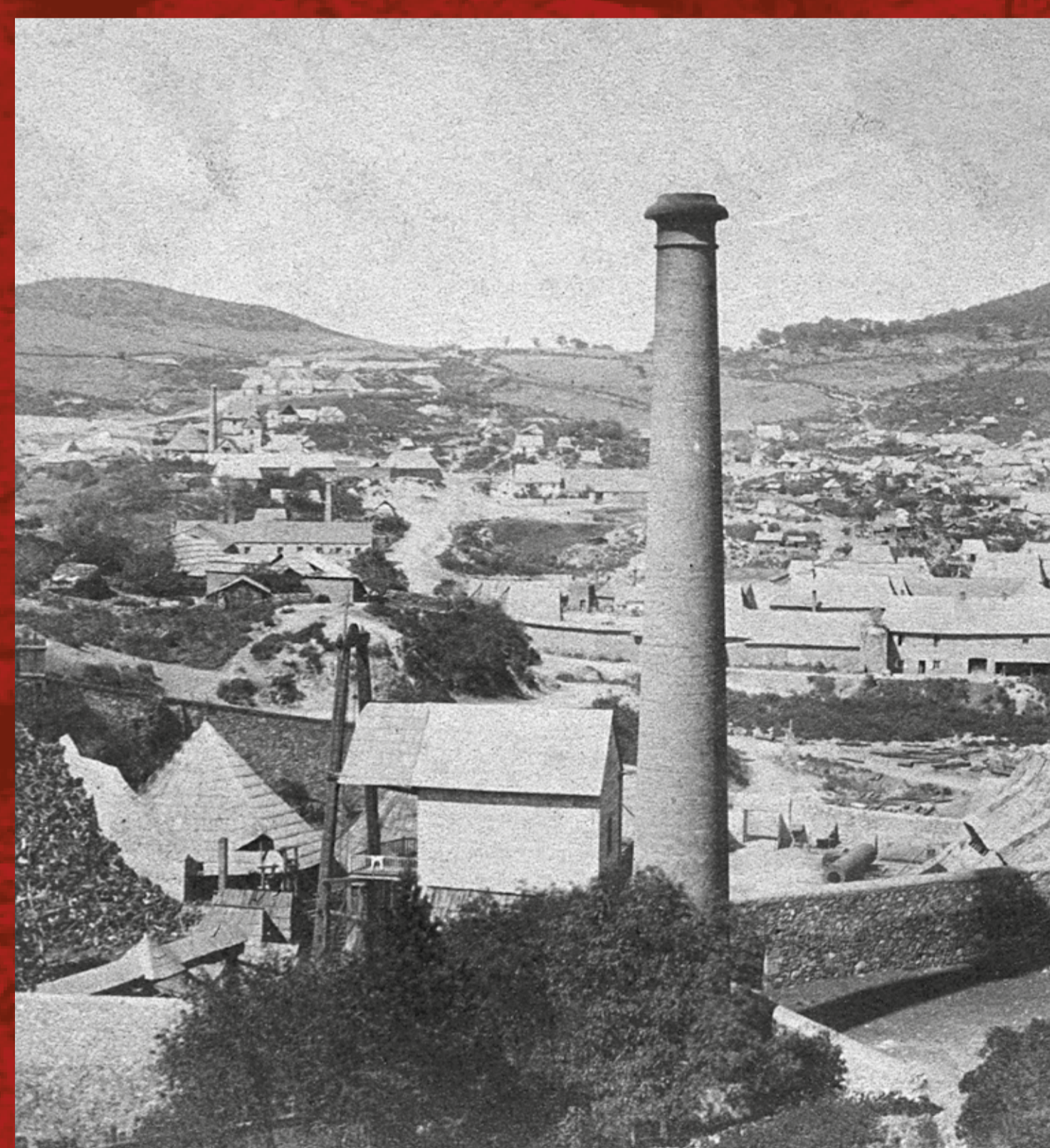
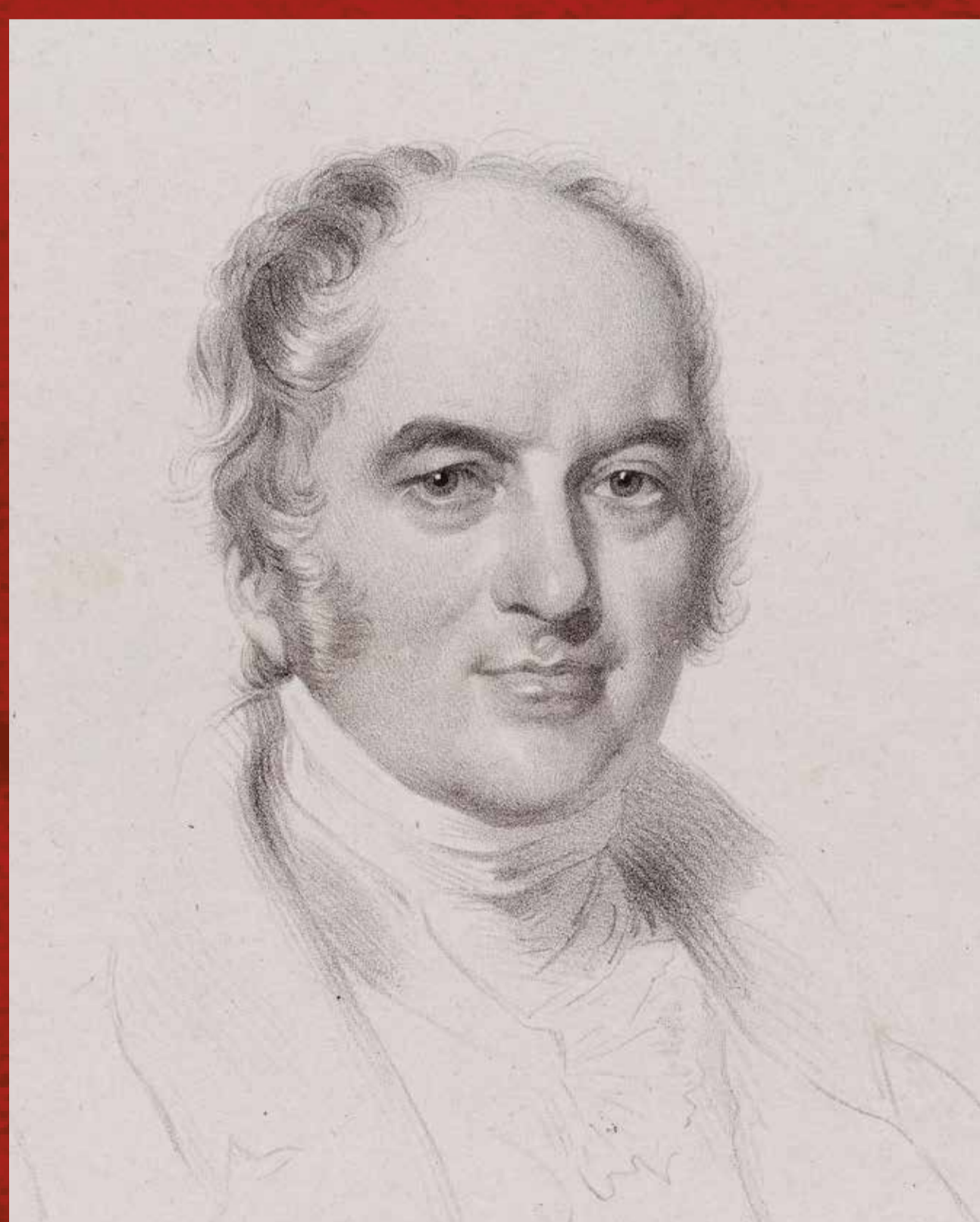
Edward Burnett Tylor, 1861

British anthropologist, E.B. Tylor, visiting Mexico in the late-1850s, was struck by the unusual landscape of Real del Monte, particularly the engine houses which accommodated high-pressure steam engines for pumping and winding. Real del Monte is known as ‘Mexico’s Little Cornwall’ in part due to its relict industrial landscape, the finest in Mexico, which closely resembles that of Cornwall and West Devon.

The arrival of steam technology there is attributable to one man: Norwich-born John Taylor (1779-1863), who had cut his teeth in mine management at Wheal Friendship, Mary Tavy, built the Tavistock Canal, and at Gwennap in Cornwall, created Consolidated Mines. He was keen to pioneer a British mining venture in Mexico and after Mexican Independence in 1821, he got his opportunity. He set up the Real del Monte Mining Company in 1824 and introduced the machinery of the Industrial Revolution to the region, beginning a world-class export trade in Cornish-made engines.



Maps: Dr Martin Critchley



Above left: Norwich-born John Taylor (1779-1863) ran the Real del Monte Mining Company from London until it passed into Mexican ownership in 1849. He never set foot in Mexico and his enterprise was condemned as a failure, but he was responsible for the introduction of steam-driven machinery in the region which pioneered a world class export market in Cornish-made high-pressure engines.

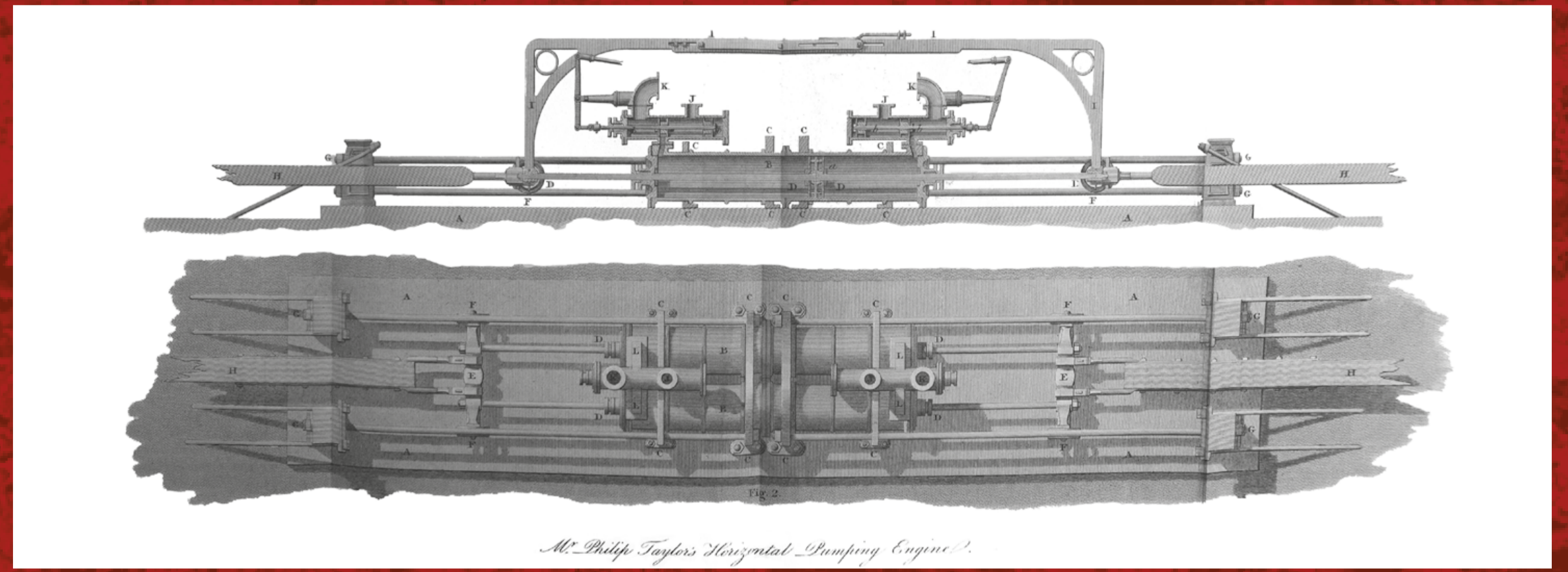
Wellcome Library London

Above middle: Mina Dolores, Real del Monte, early 1860s. The engine house of white cantera stone accommodated a 75-inch Harvey's of Hayle engine, imported in 1841. It was the heaviest piece of machinery ever to have passed over Mexican roads. The San Cayetano and Terreros Mines beyond also used Cornish-manufactured engines.

Stephen Colwill Collection

Above right: View of Real del Monte, early twentieth century. The Cornish influence is instantly betrayed by the engine houses, chimneys, industrial buildings and pitched roofs. The white line, top left, is the wall of the 'English Cemetery.'

Sharron Schwartz Collection



Above: Horizontal engine designed by Philip Taylor (1786-1870), the brother of John Taylor. He and their cousin, John Martineau, operated a foundry and engineering works at City Road, London, where the engine was built. The Martineau's had an interest in Wheal Friendship, Mary Tavy, where both John and Philip Taylor worked in the early 1800s. The engine was erected at the Mina Moran and started on 12 August 1826. It went off in style with 20 pounds steam and was 'so novel a sight it attracted vast numbers of all ranks.'

The Philosophical Magazine April 1827



www.cornishmining.org.uk
www.cousinjacksworld.com

Text: Dr Sharron P Schwartz

Engine house of the Mina San Pedro la Rabia, Pachuca, was built in 1884 to accommodate an 85-inch Harvey's of Hayle engine. It is one of the best-preserved extant engine houses in Mexico.

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