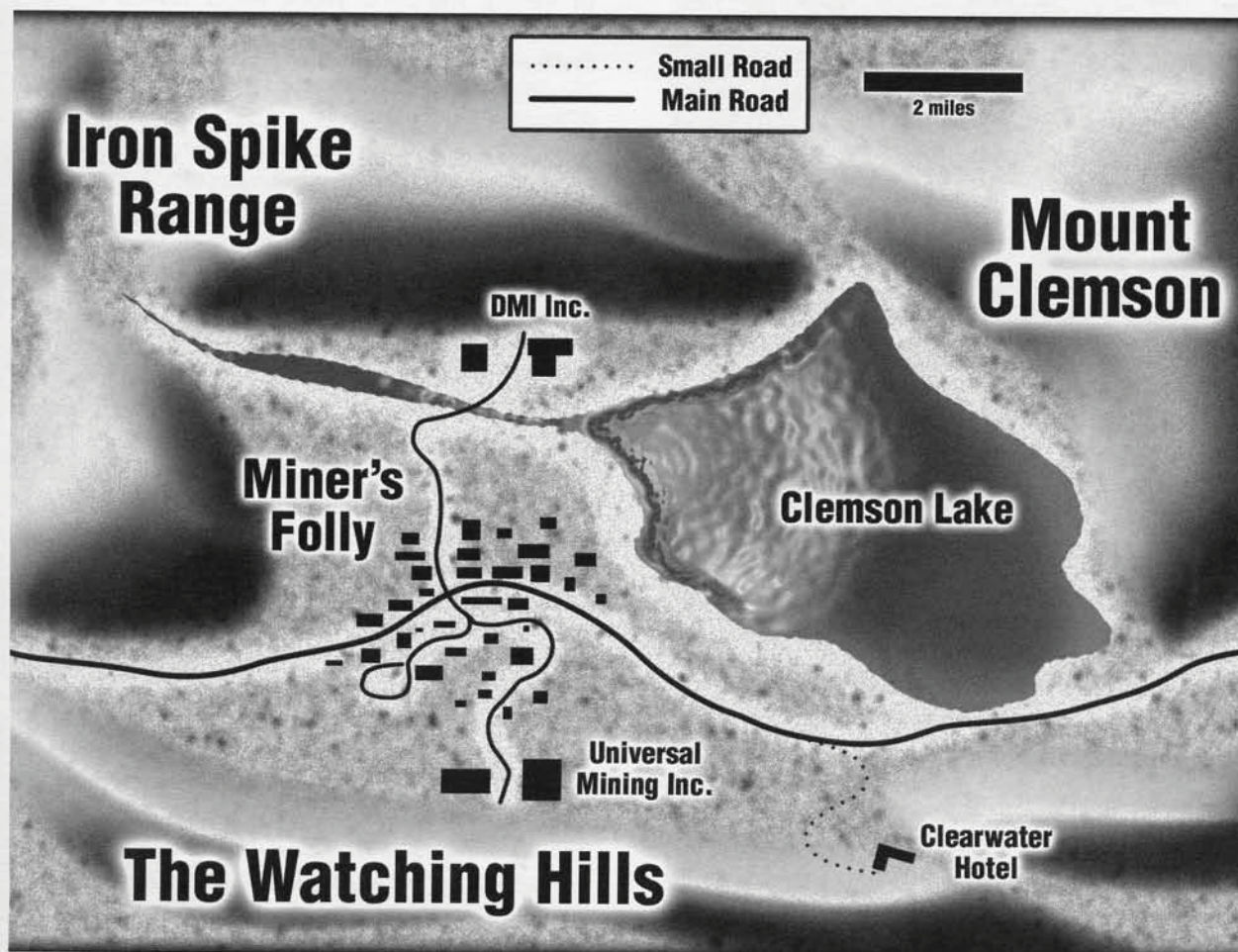


Map of Snowflake Valley



Miner's Folly

Crammed into one end of Snowflake Valley, Miner's Folly is surrounded by snow-capped mountain peaks. It shares the valley with a decent-size lake that, were it deeper and its fish worth catching, might turn the town into a tourist attraction. As it is, Clemson Lake is shallow and surprisingly still, covered with a smelly, bright green sludge during the short, hot summers. The town and valley are starkly picturesque in the summer, but desolate and foreboding in the winter.

Miner's Folly is a tiny, decrepit shell of what was once a growing boomtown. The two mines that once employed thousands have been depleted and are becoming increasingly automated; they remain the town's lifeblood, but the blood is thin and the heart is weak.

The town itself has changed very little since it was founded in the late 1800s. The streets are unpaved, and in the winter are full of frozen, muddy ruts. Gray, weathered boardwalks still line the main street. Most of the buildings are old and made of wooden clapboards. Those that should have been torn down and replaced years ago have simply been patched and repatched. The only new building is the Clearwater Hotel (see page 40).