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Audley Dean Nicols
Toscoy, New Mex.
1927

The type section of the Upper Cretaceous Tokay Tongue of the Mancos Shale (new name), Carthage coal field, Socorro County, New Mexico
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Cover Image

The coal-mining community of Tokay, Socorro County, New Mexico, which is now a ghost town, comes alive in this detail of a 1927 oil painting by the noted southwestern landscape painter Audley Dean Nicols. With smoke billowing from the power plant on the north end of a windswept mesa and dust devils whirling in the desert to the west, it is almost possible to imagine the hustle and bustle in the center of this town of approximately 600 people. Tokay, which is located about 10 miles east of San Antonio on the southwest side of the Carthage coal field, was named for a case of grapes sold in the general store. The town had a post office from 1917 to 1932 and boasted of an on-site physician and a grade school on the second floor of the two-story building in

the center of town—the first floor housed a barbershop, pool hall, and bar! Today, Tokay has two residents; the few buildings left from the original town site are part of the Fite Ranch.

The story surrounding the painting is that the artist traded it for a load of coal. Whatever the true story, Mr. Nicols has left New Mexico a beautiful legacy of its coal mining past during its early days of statehood. The original painting hangs in the home of Mr. Edward Kinney, Jr., grandson of Bartley H. Kinney, who founded and named Tokay. Mr. Kinney provided the high-resolution image of the painting and gave *New Mexico Geology* permission to publish it. (For additional information, see “Then and Now—A Brief History of Tokay, New Mexico”, this volume, p. 47.)

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