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# DEATH VALLEY



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HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY  
A HISTORY OF MINING  
IN  
DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT  
VOLUME I OF II  
Part 2 of 2

By

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## PREFACE

This Historic Resource Study is the culmination of a two-year-plus research project focusing on the mining history of Death Valley National Monument. Its purposes are manifold:

1. to comply with E. O. 11593 with respect to the monument's mining history, emphasizing hard-rock mining, by producing an overview of the various mining phases in the valley and by completing individual narratives of each camp and mine;

2. to identify sites with sufficient integrity to justify their nomination to the National Register, and to thus hopefully correct an imbalance on that official listing by adding sites and structures significant in the very important theme of westward mining expansion;

3. to provide needed information relative to the significance of historical structures and sites located on patented or valid mining claims to ensure that their continued existence is not jeopardized by further mineral development;

4. to gain for monument interpreters information that has not heretofore been compiled on the area's cultural, historical, and industrial heritage, and thus influence future park interpretive programs and visitor-use plans;

5. to enable park management to determine methods of treatment or disposal of surviving relics of the valley's mining past. This involves questions pertinent to visitor safety, such as which dangerously-exposed shafts and adits may be capped, and which dilapidated, unsightly structures are not deemed sufficiently

significant to warrant expenditure of time and money in their stabilization or restoration.

6. to furnish a sound reference base for future park planning efforts; and, last but not least,

7. to dispel or at least qualify as many as possible of the myths and legends concerning the monument's history that have been promulgated by generations of writers and that have no basis in historical fact.

The writers sincerely hope that they have succeeded in fulfilling these objectives in a helpful and satisfactory manner.

In 1975 a team of National Park Service professionals assembled to prepare a List of Classified Structures for the Western Regional Office. Utilizing Ben Levy's 1969 history study of Death Valley to determine the scope of the project in that particular area, the team then proceeded with an on-site survey of the monument in December of that year. During the next six months they performed research in mining journals and other sources as time and projects permitted, under the guidance of the regional historian. On the basis of this entire effort a revised estimate of the scope of the research problem in Death Valley was made, resulting in the funding of this more thorough mining history.

The amassing of data for this report has been an exhaustive and time-consuming task made bearable primarily by the enthusiastic cooperation of many individuals and institutions. The writers would first like to extend their thanks to former Superintendent Donald M. Spalding and to Superintendent George Von der Lippe and the various members of their staff who made our visits to the park pleasant and profitable during the course of our research and fieldwork. Chief Ranger Richard S. Rayner arranged several

times for rangers to serve as chauffeurs and guides into some of the more remote sections of the monument, and their familiarity with the area and willingness to traverse miles of rugged terrain probably saved both writers from becoming additional "Death Valley victims." Robert T. Mitcham, mining engineer, and Anne Madsen, then of the mining office, contributed information from their vast files and knowledge of the area, in addition to xeroxing services, that greatly facilitated the research effort. Mr. Mitcham's knowledge of all aspects of the park's mining operations is indeed impressive. Also to be thanked is Virgil I. Olson, Chief Interpreter, who freely lent negatives from the visitor center photograph file for use in our report and assisted in other ways with interpretive information.

Several private individuals were also consulted, who were either frequent visitors to the area or else are engaged in personal research on some facet of the valley's history. They were all most generous with their time and knowledge of the region, and include William G. Fiero, University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and Richard E. Lingenfelter, University of California at San Diego.

Many institutions also provided assistance, and the authors would like to thank the staffs of the California Historical Society; the Bancroft Library; the California State Bureau of Mines and Geology; the California State Library; the Nevada State Library; the University of Nevada-Reno Library; the Colorado School of Mines Library; the University of Colorado Library; the California Secretary of State's Office in Sacramento; the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office in Pierre; the Office of the Nye County Recorder and Auditor in Tonopah, Nevada; the Office of the Inyo County Clerk-Recorder, Independence, California; the United States Geological Survey Library in Denver; and the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration, the Library of Congress, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C.

On several occasions, certain individuals stood out from the crowd in their enthusiasm, interest, and expertise. Chief among these was Guy Rocha, Curator of Manuscripts for the Nevada State Historical Society. A special debt of gratitude also goes to Ruth Larison, the overworked Librarian of the Denver Service Center, who spent much time and effort in securing research material and microfilm copies of early mining papers and journals for our purusal.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the guidance and moral support offered by our colleagues Gordon Chappell, Western Regional Historian, San Francisco, and Erwin N. Thompson, Senior Historian, Pacific Northwest/Western Team, Denver Service Center, on this study, our first research project for the National Park Service.

Linda W. Greene  
John A. Latschar  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS  
VOLUME I  
Part 1 of 2

PREFACE . . . . .	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS . . . . .	xix
I. INTRODUCTION TO DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT . . . . .	1
A. Summary of Mining Activity . . . . .	1
1. Slow Beginnings . . . . .	1
2. A New Century Brings Renewed Interest in Metallic and Nonmetallic Resources . . . . .	3
3. Attempts are Made to Regulate Mining Within the National Monument . . . . .	5
4. Validity Tests and Stricter Land-Use Regulations are Imposed . . . . .	6
5. Controversial Aspects of Mining in NPS Areas . . . . .	7
6. Death Valley National Monument Mining Division . . . . .	8
B. Setting . . . . .	9
1. Land of Varied Attractions . . . . .	9
2. Weather and Temperature . . . . .	11
3. Topography . . . . .	11
4. Panamint Range . . . . .	12
5. Amargosa Range . . . . .	12
6. Roads and Trails . . . . .	13
7. Water Holes . . . . .	15
8. Tourism . . . . .	16
C. A Note on Historical and Archeological Resources of Death Valley . . . . .	17
1. Limited Scope of Present Study . . . . .	17
2. Archeological Research and Fieldwork . . . . .	17
II. EARLY MINING DISTRICTS IN THE OWENS AND PANAMINT VALLEYS . . . . .	23
A. Coso, Russ, Telescope Peak, and Argus Mining Districts . . . . .	24
1. Darwin French Expedition . . . . .	24
2. S. G. George and New World Mining and Exploration Company Expeditions . . . . .	25
3. Indian Depredations and Crude Mining Methods Hinder Development . . . . .	25
B. Lone Pine Mining District . . . . .	26
1. Rise and Fall of Cerro Gordo . . . . .	26
2. Reopening of Cerro Gordo . . . . .	28
C. Panamint Mining District . . . . .	29
1. Panamint City . . . . .	29
2. Ballarat . . . . .	29
D. New Coso Mining District . . . . .	30
1. Darwin . . . . .	30
2. Revitalization of the Darwin District . . . . .	38

E.	Lookout and Modoc Mining Districts . . . . .	39
1.	Short Existence of Lookout . . . . .	39
2.	Modoc District, Supported by George C. Hearst . . . . .	39
F.	Summation . . . . .	40
III.	INVENTORY OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES: THE WEST	
	SIDE . . . . .	45
A.	Southern Panamints and West Side Road . . . . .	45
1.	Panamint Mining District . . . . .	45
a)	Formation and Establishment of Boundaries . . . . .	45
b)	The District's Future Seems Assured . . . . .	47
c)	Mining Activity Spreads in Southern Inyo	
	County . . . . .	48
d)	Interest in the Panamints Spreads to Nevada . . . . .	54
e)	Consistent Production Continues into Late	
	1900s . . . . .	58
f)	Impact of Panamint and Other Early Mining	
	Districts on Southern Inyo and Death Valley	
	History . . . . .	61
g)	Panamint City . . . . .	62
h)	Personalities . . . . .	74
i)	Sites . . . . .	78
	(1) Wonder (of the World?) Mine, Bob Stewart	
	Lode, Mina Verde, and Sunnyside . . . . .	78
	(2) Ino, Jim Davis, Hill Top, Alta, Comstock,	
	Gold Star, World Beater, Big Bill, Elephant,	
	Florence, Gem, General Lee, Gold Note,	
	Golden Terry, Little Till, Lookout, Mammoth,	
	and Summit Mines . . . . .	80
	(3) Mohawk Lode . . . . .	80
	(4) Silver Queen Lode . . . . .	80
	(5) Homestake Lode, Home Stake Lode . . . . .	80
	(6) Sheba Lode . . . . .	81
	(7) Sun Set Mine . . . . .	81
	(8) Nellie M Mine . . . . .	81
	(9) Star of the West Mine . . . . .	81
	(10) Christmas Lode . . . . .	82
	(11) Christmas Gift Mine and Co., No. 1 Mine . . . . .	82
	(12) Exchequer Lode . . . . .	83
	(13) North Star Mine . . . . .	83
	(14) Argenta Lode . . . . .	83
	(15) Uncle Sam Lode . . . . .	83
	(16) Magnet Mine . . . . .	84
	(17) Grand View Mine, Anaconda Mine . . . . .	84
	(18) Willow Spring Mine . . . . .	86
	(19) Mountain Girl Mine . . . . .	86
	(20) Black Rock Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4 . . . . .	86
	(21) New York, Idaho, and Dolly Varden	
	Mines . . . . .	86
	(22) Republican Mine . . . . .	86
	(23) Cooper and Mountain Boy Mines . . . . .	88
	(24) Valley View Mine . . . . .	88

2.	Gold Hill Mining District . . . . .	88
	a) History . . . . .	88
	(1) Taylor Quartz Mine and Mill Site . . . . .	89
	(2) Gold Hill Quartz Mine and Mill Site . . . . .	90
	(3) Death Valley Mine . . . . .	92
	(4) Treasure Quartz Mine . . . . .	93
	(5) No. 1 (No One) Mine . . . . .	93
	(6) Silver Reef (Reefe) Mine . . . . .	94
	(7) Ibex Mine . . . . .	94
	(8) May Mine . . . . .	94
	(9) Breyfogle Mine . . . . .	95
	(10) Oro Grande Mine . . . . .	95
	(11) Beckerton Mine . . . . .	96
	(12) Georgia Mine . . . . .	96
	b) Present Status . . . . .	105
	(1) Gold Hill Area . . . . .	105
	(2) Panamint Treasure Claim Group . . . . .	108
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	124
	(1) Gold Hill Area . . . . .	124
	(2) Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	125
	d) Related Sites . . . . .	126
	(1) Arrastre Spring . . . . .	126
	(a) History . . . . .	126
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	127
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	132
3.	Butte Valley Mining District . . . . .	133
	a) History . . . . .	133
	(1) Warm Springs . . . . .	138
	(2) Mysic Mill Site . . . . .	138
	(3) Queen of Sheba Quartz Mining Claim . . . . .	139
	(4) Golden Eagle Claim . . . . .	139
	(5) Emigrant Mining Claim . . . . .	139
	(6) Hidden Treasure, Golden Treasure, and Bunker Hill Claims . . . . .	140
	(7) Nutmeg Mine . . . . .	140
	b) Sites . . . . .	141
	(1) Anvil Spring . . . . .	141
	(a) History . . . . .	141
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	151
	i) Anvil Spring and "Geologist's Cabin" . . . . .	151
	ii) Butte Valley Stamp Mill and Environs . . . . .	158
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	168
	i) Anvil Spring and "Geologist's Cabin" . . . . .	168
	ii) Butte Valley Stamp Mill and Environs . . . . .	172
	(2) Greater View Spring . . . . .	176
	(a) History . . . . .	176
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	178
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	183

(3)	Russell Camp . . . . .	188
(a)	History . . . . .	188
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	192
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	196
(4)	Willow Spring . . . . .	198
(a)	History . . . . .	198
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	201
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	207
(5)	Squaw Spring . . . . .	208
(a)	History . . . . .	208
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	208
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	208
4.	Anvil Spring Canyon . . . . .	212
a)	History . . . . .	212
b)	Present Status . . . . .	212
5.	Wingate Wash . . . . .	214
a)	History . . . . .	214
(1)	Location, and Derivation of Name . . . . .	214
(2)	Chloride Cliff Trail . . . . .	218
(3)	Twenty-Mule-Team Borax Route . . . . .	218
(4)	Mining Activity . . . . .	222
(5)	Epsom Salts Monorail . . . . .	225
(6)	Development of Manganese and Lead-Silver Deposits . . . . .	237
(7)	"Battle" of Wingate Pass . . . . .	240
b)	Present Status . . . . .	248
(1)	Epsom Salts Monorail . . . . .	249
(2)	DV Group of Silver-Lead Lode Mining Claims . . . . .	249
(3)	Wingate Pass "Battle" Site . . . . .	249
c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	250
(1)	Epsom Salts Monorail . . . . .	250
(2)	DV Group of Silver-Lead Lode Mining Claims . . . . .	251
(3)	Wingate Pass "Battle" Site . . . . .	251
(4)	Twenty-Mule-Team Borax Route . . . . .	252
6.	Panamint Mine . . . . .	255
a)	History . . . . .	255
b)	Present Status . . . . .	256
c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	260
7.	Warm Spring Canyon Talc Mines . . . . .	260
a)	Growth of Talc Mining in the Region . . . . .	260
b)	Growth of Talc Mining in Death Valley . . . . .	261
c)	Sites . . . . .	262
(1)	Grantham, Warm Springs, Warm Springs West, Warm Springs Nos. 2 and 3, and White Point Mines . . . . .	262
(a)	History . . . . .	262
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	271
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	282
8.	Warm Spring Camp (Gold Hill Mill Site) . . . . .	289
a)	History . . . . .	289
b)	Present Status . . . . .	290
c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	295

9.	Pink Elephant Fluorite Claim . . . . .	302
	a) History . . . . .	302
	b) Present Status . . . . .	303
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	308
10.	Other Mineral Deposits in Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	309
	a) Barite . . . . .	309
	b) Fluorite . . . . .	309
	c) Wollastonite, Feldspar, and Mercury . . . . .	309
11.	Montgomery (Panamint) Mine . . . . .	310
	a) History . . . . .	310
	b) Present Status . . . . .	311
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	316
12.	Carbonate (Carbonite) and Queen of Sheba Mines . . . . .	320
	a) History . . . . .	320
	(1) Clarence E. Eddy Locates Original Outcrop . . . . .	320
	(2) Jack Salsberry Tackles a Multitude of Problems . . . . .	320
	(3) Progress of the Carbonate Lead Mines Company . . . . .	324
	(4) New Sutherland Divide Mining Company Takes Over . . . . .	326
	(5) Waning Years . . . . .	331
	b) Present Status . . . . .	334
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	342
13.	Galena Canyon Talc Mines . . . . .	345
	a) Sites . . . . .	345
	(1) Bonny Mine . . . . .	345
	(a) History . . . . .	345
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	346
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	346
	(2) Mongolian Mine . . . . .	346
	(a) History . . . . .	346
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	348
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	348
	(3) Mammoth Mine . . . . .	348
	(a) History . . . . .	348
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	349
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	350
	(4) Death Valley Mine (White Eagle Claim) . . . . .	350
	(a) History . . . . .	350
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	353
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	356
14.	Hungry Bill's Ranch . . . . .	362
	a) History of Indian Ranching In and Near Death Valley . . . . .	362
	b) Hungry Bill and His Family . . . . .	366
	c) Hungry Bill and Death Valley Mining . . . . .	370
	d) Mining in Johnson Canyon . . . . .	371
	e) Hungry Bill's Homestead . . . . .	379
	f) Present Status of Hungry Bill's Ranch Site . . . . .	380
	g) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	390

15.	Hanaupah Canyon Mines . . . . .	399
	a) History . . . . .	399
	b) Present Status . . . . .	402
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	406
16.	Trail Canyon Mines . . . . .	409
	a) History . . . . .	409
	(1) Death Valley Wonder Mining & Milling Company . . . . .	409
	(2) Wild Rose Mining Company . . . . .	410
	(3) Trail Canyon Mining Company . . . . .	411
	(4) Old Dependable Antimony Mine . . . . .	412
	(5) Tungsten Mines . . . . .	413
	b) Present Status . . . . .	416
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	417
B.	Emigrant Wash and Wildrose Canyon . . . . .	424
1.	Thorndike Camp . . . . .	424
	a) History . . . . .	424
	b) Present Status . . . . .	431
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	431
2.	Wild Rose Mining District . . . . .	434
	a) Early Activity . . . . .	434
	b) First Locations . . . . .	435
	c) Formation of District and Establishment of Boundaries . . . . .	438
	d) Mining Companies and Further Locations . . . . .	439
	e) Heliograph Dispatches . . . . .	440
	f) Settlement of Emigrant Spring Brings Need for Road to Keeler . . . . .	441
	g) More Properties Located Throughout 1940s . . . . .	443
	h) Historic Wildrose Station . . . . .	447
	i) Sites . . . . .	452
	(1) Wildrose Canyon Antimony Mine . . . . .	452
	(a) History . . . . .	452
	i) Possible Site of Earliest Mine Location in Monument . . . . .	452
	ii) Antimony Mining in the Region . . . . .	453
	iii) Development of the Monarch, Combination, and Monopoly Mines and the Kennedy Claim . . . . .	456
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	461
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	463
	(2) Wildrose Spring Cave House . . . . .	467
	(a) History . . . . .	467
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	469
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	472
	(3) A Canyon Mine . . . . .	472
	(a) History . . . . .	472
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	473
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	476
	(4) Nemo Canyon Mines . . . . .	476
	(a) History . . . . .	476
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	482
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	482

VOLUME 1  
Part 2 of 2

(5)	Christmas (Gift) Mine . . . . .	483
	(a) History . . . . .	483
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	485
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	490
(6)	Bald Peak Mine . . . . .	494
	(a) History . . . . .	494
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	498
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	498
(7)	Argenta Mine . . . . .	498
	(a) History . . . . .	498
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	502
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	503
(8)	Napoleon Mine . . . . .	506
	(a) History . . . . .	506
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	510
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	510
(9)	Harrisburg . . . . .	510
	(a) History . . . . .	510
	i) Shorty Harris and Pete Aguereberry Strike Ore on Providence Ridge . . . . .	510
	ii) The Area Fills Up Rapidly . . . . .	512
	iii) Cashier Gold Mining Company is Formed . . . . .	513
	iv) A Multitude of Claims are Located in the Area . . . . .	515
	v) A Mill Appears Imminent . . . . .	526
	vi) Litigation Over Aguerberry's Eureka Mine . . . . .	526
	vii) Cashier Mill Opens for Business . . . . .	531
	viii) Waning Years . . . . .	534
	ix) Mines in the Harrisburg Vicinity . . . . .	536
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	538
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	546
(10)	Jordan Mine . . . . .	549
(11)	Star of the West Mine . . . . .	549
	(a) History . . . . .	549
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	550
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	550
(12)	North Star Mine . . . . .	550
	(a) History . . . . .	550
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	555
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	555
(13)	Journigan's Mill . . . . .	555
	(a) History . . . . .	555
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	566
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	567
(14)	Mill Site North of Journigan's Mill . . . . .	570
	(a) History . . . . .	570

	(b) Present Status . . . . .	570
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	570
(15)	Gold King Mine . . . . .	574
	(a) History . . . . .	574
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	575
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	578
(16)	Tiny and Sunset Mines . . . . .	578
	(a) History . . . . .	578
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	579
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	582
(17)	Cabin 1½ Miles Southeast of Skidoo . . . . .	586
(18)	Blue Bell (Garibaldi) Mine . . . . .	590
	(a) History . . . . .	590
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	600
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	601
(19)	Skidoo . . . . .	608
	(a) History . . . . .	608
	i) Ramsey and Thompson's Great Discovery . . . . .	608
	ii) E. A. Montgomery Acquires the Property . . . . .	610
	iii) Granite Contact Mines Company . . . . .	615
	iv) A Townsite is Established . . . . .	616
	v) A Communications Link to Rhyolite Needed . . . . .	618
	vi) The <u>Skidoo News</u> Arrives . . . . .	620
	vii) Conditions Continue Promising . . . . .	620
	viii) Leases Opened on the Skidoo Mines Company Property . . . . .	631
	ix) The Townsite Expands . . . . .	634
	x) Transportation Problems Arise . . . . .	640
	xi) Continuing Activity by the Skidoo Mines Company . . . . .	644
	xii) Skidoo Continues Systematic Development . . . . .	649
	xiii) The Skidoo Pipeline is Finally a Reality . . . . .	659
	xiv) The Hanging of Joe Simpson . . . . .	661
	xv) The Skidoo Mill Supports the Town . . . . .	662
	xvi) A Fire and Litigation Bring an End to Mining Activity . . . . .	670
	xvii) Revival of Mining in the Area in the Later 1900s . . . . .	675
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	680
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	690
	i) Skidoo Mine and Mill . . . . .	690
	ii) Del Norte Group . . . . .	697
	iii) Skidoo Historic District . . . . .	697
(20)	Saddle Rock (Saddlerock) Mine . . . . .	702
	(a) History . . . . .	702
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	706
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	710

(21)	Nellie Grant and Uncle Sam Mines . . . . .	711
(22)	Junietta, Blizzard, and Virgin Mines . . . . .	714
(23)	Tucki Mine . . . . .	715
	(a) History . . . . .	715
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	722
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	722
(24)	Telephone Spring . . . . .	723
	(a) History . . . . .	723
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	726
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	727
(25)	McLean Spring . . . . .	727
(26)	Lemoigne Mine and Junction Camp . . . . .	733
	(a) History . . . . .	733
	i) John Lemoigne Arrives in Death Valley . . . . .	733
	ii) Lemoigne Properties . . . . .	735
	iii) Lemoigne Castle at Garlic Spring . . . . .	738
	iv) Controversy Surrounding Lemoigne's Death . . . . .	745
	v) Later History of the Lemoigne Mine . . . . .	748
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	752
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	758
C.	Cottonwood Mountains . . . . .	765
1.	Hunter Cabin . . . . .	765
	a) History . . . . .	765
	b) Present Status . . . . .	768
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	768
2.	Ubehebe Mining District . . . . .	778
	a) Copper Veins Attract Attention . . . . .	778
	b) Boston Capitalists Become Interested . . . . .	781
	c) Rising Copper Prices Benefit Ubehebe . . . . .	783
	d) Townsites are Discussed and a Mining District Formed . . . . .	787
	e) Ubehebe Copper Mines and Smelter Company Determines to Construct Railroad into Area . . . . .	789
	f) Work Continues Despite Panic of 1907 . . . . .	792
	g) Mining in Ubehebe Hampered by Isolation and Transportation Problems . . . . .	794
	h) Variety of Metals and Nonmetals Contribute to Ubehebe's Production Record . . . . .	799
	i) Other Ubehebe Properties . . . . .	801
	j) Sites . . . . .	806
	(1) Ulida Mine and Ulida Flat Site . . . . .	806
	(a) History . . . . .	806
	(b) Present Status . . . . .	810
	i) Ulida Flat Site . . . . .	810
	ii) Ulida Mine . . . . .	810
	(c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	814
	i) Ulida Flat Site . . . . .	814
	ii) Ulida Mine . . . . .	814

(2)	Goldbelt (Gold Belt) Spring and Mining District . . . . .	815
(a)	History . . . . .	815
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	822
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	822
(3)	Ubehebe Mine . . . . .	824
(a)	History . . . . .	824
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	836
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	837
(4)	Lost Burro Mine . . . . .	837
(a)	History . . . . .	837
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	845
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	848
(5)	Lippincott (Lead King) Mine . . . . .	850
(a)	History . . . . .	850
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	862
(c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	863
(6)	Ubehebe, Keeler, and Quackenbush Talc Mines . . . . .	863
(a)	History . . . . .	863
i)	Ubehebe (Stone Pencil) Mine . . . . .	864
ii)	Keeler (White Horse) Mine . . . . .	865
iii)	Quackenbush (Gold Belt) Mine . . . . .	865
(b)	Present Status . . . . .	868
i)	Ubehebe Mine . . . . .	868
ii)	Keeler Mine . . . . .	872
iii)	Quackenbush Mine . . . . .	872
(c)	Evaluations and Recommendations . . . . .	876
3.	Skookum Mining District . . . . .	876
a)	Death Valley Gold Mining Company Working Property Near Sand Spring . . . . .	876
b)	World Exploration Company Enters Area . . . . .	878
c)	Demise of Mining Operations . . . . .	880
D.	The Valley Floor . . . . .	884
1.	Presenting Death Valley to the World . . . . .	884
a)	Resorts Open in the 1920s . . . . .	884
b)	Tourism Increases When Area Becomes National Monument . . . . .	886
2.	Stovepipe Wells Hotel . . . . .	888
a)	History . . . . .	888
(1)	Old Stovepipe Wells . . . . .	888
(2)	Eichbaum Toll Road Brings Visitors to Death Valley . . . . .	897
(3)	Construction of the Resort Begins . . . . .	901
(4)	Easter Sunrise Celebration the First of Several New Tourist Services . . . . .	908
(5)	Toll Road Abolished After Creation of National Monument . . . . .	910
b)	Present Status . . . . .	911
c)	Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	912

3.	Furnace Creek Inn . . . . .	918
	a) History . . . . .	918
	(1) Pacific Coast Borax Company Foresees Tourist Potential of Region . . . . .	918
	(2) Union Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads Encouraged to Promote Death Valley . . . . .	919
	(3) Furnace Creek Inn Opens to the Public . . . . .	920
	(4) Sightseeing in the Valley . . . . .	928
	b) Present Status . . . . .	932
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	932
4.	Furnace Creek Ranch . . . . .	934
	a) History . . . . .	934
	(1) Greenland Ranch Supplies Food to Borax Workers and Serves as Mule Train Depot . . . . .	934
	(2) Pacific Coast Borax Company Takes Over Ownership, and Ranch Becomes Friendly Oasis for Prospectors . . . . .	935
	(3) Precautions Necessary Because of Unbearable Summer Heat . . . . .	937
	(4) Indian Population . . . . .	940
	(5) Ranch Contemplated as Health Resort . . . . .	945
	(6) Official Weather Station . . . . .	946
	(7) Date Growing Introduced . . . . .	950
	(8) Ranch Turned into Tourist Resort . . . . .	951
	b) Present Status . . . . .	955
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	955
5.	Nevares Cabin and Homestead . . . . .	957
	a) History . . . . .	957
	b) Present Status . . . . .	959
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	962
6.	Corduoy Road . . . . .	967
	a) History . . . . .	967
	b) Present Status . . . . .	967
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	968
7.	Shovelton . . . . .	972
	a) History . . . . .	972
	b) Present Status . . . . .	972
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	972
E.	Furnace Creek . . . . .	976
	1. Borax Mining in Death Valley . . . . .	976
	a) Early Production in Region Limited . . . . .	976
	b) Harmony and Eagle Borax Works Process "Cottonballs" . . . . .	976
	c) Discovery of Colemanite Revolutionizes Industry . . . . .	977
	d) Pacific Coast Borax Company Turns Attention to Calico Mountain Deposits . . . . .	978
	e) Borax Mining Returns to Death Valley and the Lila C. . . . .	979
	f) The Death Valley Railroad Shifts Activity to (New) Ryan . . . . .	982

2.	Furnace Creek Wash . . . . .	984
	a) History . . . . .	984
	(1) Early Mining Districts . . . . .	984
	(2) Development of Area by Pacific Coast Borax Company . . . . .	985
	b) Present Status . . . . .	989
	(1) Dantes View Road Sites #1 and #2 . . . . .	989
	(2) DeBely Mine . . . . .	992
	(3) Corkscrew (Screw) Mine . . . . .	992
	(4) Monte Blanco . . . . .	992
	(5) Gower Gulch . . . . .	1002
	c) Evaluation and Recommendations . . . . .	1010
	(1) Importance of Borax in Death Valley Mining History . . . . .	1010
	(2) Variety of Cultural Resources Present . . . . .	1019
	(3) National Register Nominations . . . . .	1020
	APPENDIXES . . . . .	1023
	A. Mining Laws of the Panamint Mining District, 1873 . . . . .	1025
	B. Establishment of Rose Springs Mining District, 1888 . . . . .	1029
	C. Organization and Laws of Monte Blanco Borax and Salt Mining District, 1882 . . . . .	1031
	D. By-Laws of Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, 1883 . . . . .	1033

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS  
VOLUME 1  
Part 1 of 2

Illustration

1. "Mining Map of Inyo County," by J. M. Keeler, 1883 . . . . .	20
2. Ballarat in 1913 . . . . .	32
3. Ballarat in 1973 . . . . .	34
4. Darwin, about 1908 . . . . .	36
5. "Map of Inyo County Cal." 1914. . . . .	42
6. Panamint City, 1875 . . . . .	68
7. Panamint City Mill, about 1877. . . . .	72
8. Ruins of Panamint City smelter, no date. . . . .	72
9. Area of early mining camps west of Death Valley (north half) . . . . .	76
10. Area of early mining camps west of Death Valley (south half) . . . . .	77
11. Map of Gold Hill and Butte Valley mining districts . . . . .	87
12. Ruins of stone structure on Gold Hill, from northwest . . . . .	106
13. Ruins of stone structure on Gold Hill, from southwest . . . . .	106
14. Panamint Treasure Claim . . . . .	110
15. Air compressor, Panamint Treasure Mine. . . . .	110
16. Working adit, Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	114
17. Adit used as living quarters, Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	114
18. Metal tramway terminus, Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	118
19. Route of aerial tramway, Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	118
20. Tent site, Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	122
21. Adit near tent site, Panamint Treasure Mine . . . . .	122
22. Petroglyphs near Arrastre Spring . . . . .	128
23. Petroglyphs near Arrastre Spring . . . . .	128
24. Arrastra at Arrastre Spring . . . . .	130
25. Close-up view of arrastra wall, Arrastre Spring . . . . .	130
26. "Geologist's Cabin," Anvil Spring, north and east elevations . . . . .	154
27. "Geologist's Cabin," west and south elevations . . . . .	154
28. "Geologist's Cabin," interior, north wall . . . . .	156
29. "Geologist's Cabin," interior, south wall . . . . .	156
30. Butte Valley Stamp Mill . . . . .	160
31. Concrete foundations, Butte Valley Stamp Mill . . . . .	160
32. Stamp casing, Butte Valley Mill . . . . .	162
33. Water reservoir, Butte Valley . . . . .	162
34. Big Blue #1 Mine, Butte Valley . . . . .	164
35. Tent site (?), Butte Valley . . . . .	164
36. Cave house, Butte Valley . . . . .	170
37. Lead mine, Butte Valley . . . . .	170
38. Carl Mengel at his home in Butte Valley, 1940 . . . . .	180
39. Mengel cabin at Anderson Camp, Greater View Spring . . . . .	180
40. Panoramic view, Anderson Camp . . . . .	184
41. Russell Camp, Butte Valley . . . . .	190
42. Old mining equipment on display, Russell Camp . . . . .	194
43. Cabin ruins at Willow Spring, Butte Valley, 1975 . . . . .	202
44. Cabin ruins at Willow Spring, 1978 . . . . .	202

45.	Cistern near Willow Spring . . . . .	204
46.	Mill foundations east of Willow Spring . . . . .	204
47.	Cabin, Squaw Spring . . . . .	210
48.	Map of Wingate Wash area . . . . .	213
49.	Devil's Golf Course Road, pre-1930s . . . . .	216
50.	Borax routes in the Death Valley region . . . . .	219
51.	Route of Epsom salts monorail . . . . .	228
52.	Epsom salts monorail, about 1924 . . . . .	230
53.	Monorail in Wingate Pass, 1935 . . . . .	234
54.	Monorail supports in Wingate Pass . . . . .	234
55.	Map of Warm Spring Canyon mining area. . . . .	254
56.	Panamint Talc Mine . . . . .	258
57.	Buildings east of Panamint Talc Mine . . . . .	258
58.	Site map, Warm Spring Canyon talc mines . . . . .	272
59.	Adit north of Warm Spring Canyon road . . . . .	274
60.	Adit south of Warm Spring Canyon road . . . . .	274
61.	Grantham Mine, Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	278
62.	Warm Spring No. 6 Mine, Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	280
63.	Warm Spring Mine, Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	280
64.	Warm Spring West and Nos. 2 and 3 Mines, Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	284
65.	No. 4 and White Point workings, Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	284
66.	Mine adjacent to Warm Spring mining camp in Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	286
67.	Talc mines, Warm Spring Canyon . . . . .	286
68.	CCC Camp, Warm Spring, 1934 . . . . .	292
69.	Warm Spring (Grantham) mine camp . . . . .	292
70.	Warm Spring camp and former ore-processing machinery (Gold Hill Mill site) . . . . .	296
71.	Diesel engine and ore bin, Gold Hill Mill site . . . . .	296
72.	Arrastra, Gold Hill Mill site . . . . .	298
73.	Blake jaw crusher, Gold Hill Mill site . . . . .	298
74.	Ball-mill, Gold Hill Mill site . . . . .	300
75.	Cone crusher, Gold Hill Mill site . . . . .	300
76.	Pink Elephant Mine . . . . .	306
77.	Compressor house foundations, Pink Elephant Mine . . . . .	306
78.	Montgomery (Panamint) Mine . . . . .	314
79.	Miner's cabin on road to Montgomery (Panamint) Mine . . . . .	314
80.	Earliest workings at Montgomery (Panamint) Mine . . . . .	318
81.	Old ore bin, Montgomery (Panamint) Mine . . . . .	318
82.	Carbonate Mine. . . . .	336
83.	Queen of Sheba Mine and Mill site, 1962 . . . . .	336
84.	Queen of Sheba Mill site . . . . .	336
85.	Queen of Sheba ore bin and mill ruins . . . . .	340
86.	Map of Galena Canyon mining area . . . . .	344
87.	Bonny Talc Mine, Galena Canyon . . . . .	354
88.	Death Valley Talc Mine, Galena Canyon . . . . .	354
89.	Platform area, Death Valley Talc Mine . . . . .	358
90.	Kennedy Minerals Camp, Galena Canyon . . . . .	358
91.	Map of Johnson Canyon, showing area of proposed Hungry Bill's Ranch Historic District . . . . .	361
92.	Arrastra in Johnson Canyon . . . . .	384
93.	Arrastra in Johnson Canyon . . . . .	384
94.	Drift fence, Johnson Canyon . . . . .	388

95. Arrastra, Johnson Canyon . . . . .	388
96. Stone wall of corral, Johnson Canyon . . . . .	392
97. Stone pen, Hungry Bill's Ranch site . . . . .	392
98. Hungry Bill's Ranch site, view to northwest . . . . .	394
99. Stone windbreak (?), Hungry Bill's Ranch site . . . . .	394
100. Building site, Hungry Bill's Ranch site . . . . .	394
101. Map of Hanaupah Canyon mining area . . . . .	398
102. Mine camp, South Fork of Hanaupah Canyon . . . . .	404
103. Mine road in Hanaupah Canyon . . . . .	404
104. Map of Trail Canyon mining area . . . . .	408
105. Ronald "A" #1 Mine and camp, Middle Fork, Trail Canyon, 1962 . . . . .	418
106. Ronald "A" #4 Mine, Middle Fork, Trail Canyon, 1962 . . . . .	418
107. Broken Pick Millsite and Small Hill Millsite, Middle Fork, Trail Canyon, 1962 . . . . .	418
108. Broken Pick Mine, North Fork, Trail Canyon, 1962 . . . . .	420
109. Lucky Find Millsites #1 and #2, South Fork, Trail Canyon, 1962 . . . . .	420
110. Map of Wild Rose Mining District (south half). . . . .	423
111. Sleeping cabin, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	426
112. Garage and shop, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	426
113. Toilet, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	426
114. Water tank, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	426
115. Living quarters, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	428
116. Cabin, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	428
117. Kitchen and dining room, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	428
118. Laundry and shower room, Thorndike Camp . . . . .	428
119. Layout of Thorndike homestead . . . . .	430
120. Goldfish pond (?), Thorndike Campground . . . . .	432
121. Stone steps and wall, Thorndike Campground. . . . .	432
122. Emigrant Spring, no date . . . . .	448
123. Wildrose Station, Wildrose Canyon, 1964 . . . . .	448
124. Wagon roads in western Death and Panamint valleys, 1907 . . . . .	450
125. Prospect, Wildrose Antimonium Group of Mines . . . . .	464
126. Wood debris, Wildrose Antimonium Group of Mines . . . . .	464
127. Entrance to cave house, Wildrose Spring . . . . .	470
128. Cave house and adjacent building site (?) . . . . .	470
129. Headframe and tool shed, A Canyon Mine . . . . .	474
130. Forge, A Canyon Mine . . . . .	474
131. Moonlight Claims, Nemo Canyon . . . . .	480
132. Nemo #1 Mine (Christmas Mine) . . . . .	480

VOLUME 1  
Part 2 of 2

133. Christmas Mine camp . . . . .	486
134. Caved-in shaft, Christmas Mine . . . . .	486
135. Skidoo pipeline support, Christmas Mine area . . . . .	488
136. Shaft lined with pinyon pine logs, Christmas Mine . . . . .	492
137. Open stope, Christmas Mine . . . . .	492
138. Metal cabin at mine 1½ miles northwest of Bald Peak . . . . .	496
139. Ore bin at mine 1½ miles northwest of Bald Peak . . . . .	496
140. Main street, Argenta Mine, 1969 . . . . .	500

141.	Main street and upper workings, Argenta Mine, 1969	500
142.	Main street, Argenta Mine, 1978	504
143.	Upper workings, Argenta Mine, 1978	504
144.	Shaft and ore chute, Napoleon Mine	508
145.	Ore bin and collapsed chute, Napoleon Mine	508
146.	Map of Emigrant Canyon and Wild Rose Mining District (north half)	523
147.	Harrisburg Camp, 1908	524
148.	Pete Aguerberry, no date	524
149.	Cashier Mill ruin and Pete Aguerberry, 1916	528
150.	Aguereberry Camp, 1978	540
151.	Collapsed dugout, Aguerberry Camp	540
152.	Eureka Mine, Harrisburg	542
153.	Stone dugout near Cashier Mill ruin, Harrisburg	542
154.	Cashier Mill ruin	544
155.	Dugout, Harrisburg hill	544
156.	Journigan Mining and Milling Co., 1935	558
157.	Buildings on Journigan's Mill site, 1962	558
158.	Journigan's Mill ruins	564
159.	Cyanide tanks, Journigan's Mill	568
160.	Stamp on hill below cyanide tanks, Journigan's Mill ruins	568
161.	Cyanide mill ruins north of Journigan's Mill	572
162.	Cyanide tank at mill ruin north of Journigan's Mill	572
163.	Shaft, Gold King Mine	576
164.	Dugout, Gold King Mine	576
165.	Mill ruin, Tiny Mine	580
166.	Reservoir, Tiny Mine	584
167.	Building site, Tiny Mine	584
168.	Headframe, Sunset Mine	584
169.	Cabin 1½ miles southeast of Skidoo	588
170.	Cabin 1½ miles southeast of Skidoo	588
171.	Stock certificate, Garibaldi Mining Co.	593
172.	Cabin on Blue Bell mining claim	598
173.	Hanging Cliff Mill site	598
174.	Aerial tramway, Hanging Cliff Mill site	598
175-76.	Two stone dugouts, Garibaldi Mine site	602
177.	Adit, Garibaldi Mine	606
178.	Ruins of stone mill buildings, Garibaldi Mine	606
179.	Office of <u>Skidoo News</u> , 1907	622
180.	Plat of the town of Skidoo, January 1907	626
181.	Plat of the town of Skidoo, May 1907	628
182.	Rhyolite-Skidoo stage	632
183.	Skidoo Club, 1907	638
184.	Townsite of Skidoo, 1907	642
185.	Community of Emigrant Spring(s), 1907	642
186.	Skidoo Mines Co. camp, 1907	646
187.	Skidoo Mines Co. headquarters building, 1943	646
188.	Skidoo Mines Co. stock certificate	650
189.	Team hauling Skidoo pipeline, 1907	654
190.	Skidoo Mines Co. camp, 1909	668
191.	Skidoo Mines Co. mill, 1909	668

192.	Skidoo townsite, post-March 1907 . . . . .	682
193.	Skidoo townsite, 1916 . . . . .	682
194.	Skidoo Mines Company camp, 1916? . . . . .	684
195.	Skidoo main street, 1916? . . . . .	684
196.	Skidoo townsite, 1916? . . . . .	686
197.	View east of Skidoo townsite, 1978 . . . . .	686
198.	Ruins of Skidoo Mill . . . . .	688
199.	Stamps in Skidoo Mill . . . . .	688
200.	Kennedy Mine near Skidoo, 1916? . . . . .	692
201.	Remains of heap cyanide leaching process, Del Norte Mine site . . . . .	694
202.	Digging up Skidoo pipeline, CCC crew . . . . .	694
203.	Skidoo pipeline scar across Harrisburg Flat . . . . .	698
204.	Masonry support for Skidoo pipeline . . . . .	698
205.	Mining activity at Saddle Rock Mine . . . . .	708
206.	Adit, Saddle Rock Mine . . . . .	708
207.	Tucki Mine, 1975 . . . . .	720
208.	Tucki Mine, 1978 . . . . .	720
209.	Mill ruin, Telephone Spring . . . . .	724
210.	Arrastra gold mill, Telephone Spring, 1934 . . . . .	724
211.	Wooden bridge, McLean Spring . . . . .	730
212.	Map of Lemoigne Canyon . . . . .	732
213-14.	John Lemoigne, about 1915 . . . . .	740
215.	John Lemoigne, no date . . . . .	742
216.	Tramway, mine dumps, ore bin in Lemoigne Canyon . . . . .	754
217.	Building foundations and debris, Lemoigne Canyon . . . . .	754
218.	Stone dugout, Lemoigne Mine . . . . .	756
219.	Tent site, Lemoigne Canyon junction camp . . . . .	756
220.	Grave of John Lemoigne . . . . .	762
221.	Map of Hunter Mountain . . . . .	764
222.	Map showing "Hunter Ranch," 1924 . . . . .	770
223.	Map showing "Hunter Ranch," 1927 . . . . .	772
224.	Hunter cabin . . . . .	774
225.	Corral complex, Hunter cabin . . . . .	774
226.	Map of Ubehebe Mining District . . . . .	777
227.	Advertisement for Lost Spanish Mine, Ubehebe Mining District . . . . .	786
228.	Ubehebe Mining District, 1908 . . . . .	793
229.	White Top Mountain mining area . . . . .	804
230.	Tin Mountain mining area . . . . .	804
231.	Ulida Flat site . . . . .	812
232.	Stone smelter, Ulida Mine . . . . .	812
233.	Main adit, Ulida Mine . . . . .	812
234.	Garden, Goldbelt Spring, 1959 . . . . .	820
235.	Ruins of community at Goldbelt Spring . . . . .	820
236.	Loading dock, Cal-Met Mine . . . . .	820
237.	Mine workings and aerial tramway, Ubehebe Mine . . . . .	834
238.	Cabins, Ubehebe Mine . . . . .	834
239.	Cabin, Lost Burro Mine . . . . .	842
240.	Mine workings, Lost Burro Mine . . . . .	842
241.	Ruins of stamp mill, Lost Burro Mine . . . . .	846
242.	Map showing Tin and White Top Mountain mining areas and approximate route of Lost Burro Mine pipeline to Burro Spring . . . . .	849

243.	Sally Ann Copper Mine . . . . .	854
244.	Mining camp, Lippincott Lead Mine . . . . .	854
245.	Lead King Mine . . . . .	858
246.	Stope, Lippincott Lead Mine . . . . .	858
247.	Mine camp, Lippincott Lead Mine . . . . .	860
248.	Cabins, Lippincott Lead Mine . . . . .	862
249.	Cabin, Ubehebe Talc Mine . . . . .	866
250.	Mine workings, Ubehebe Talc Mine . . . . .	866
251.	Headframe and ruins, Keeler Talc Mine . . . . .	870
252.	Dozer cut, White Horse #2 Claim . . . . .	870
253.	Headframe, Quackenbush Talc Mine . . . . .	874
254.	Adit and headframe, Quackenbush Talc Mine . . . . .	874
255.	Map showing old Stovepipe Wells, Stovepipe Wells Hotel, Eichbaum Toll Road route, and McLean Spring. . . . .	883
256.	Bottle dugout, old Stovepipe Wells . . . . .	890
257.	Stovepipe Wells waystation, 1908 . . . . .	894
258.	Present old Stovepipe Wells site . . . . .	894
259.	Eichbaum toll road and "Bungalow City," ca. 1920s . . . . .	904
260.	Stovepipe Wells Hotel . . . . .	904
261.	Map showing Nevares cabin, Furnace Creek Ranch, Furnace Creek Inn, Corduroy Road, Shovelton, and Furnace Creek Wash sites . . . . .	916
262.	Union Pacific tour bus used by Death Valley Hotel Company . . . . .	922
263.	Aerial view, Furnace Creek Inn . . . . .	930
264.	Furnace Creek Inn . . . . .	930
265.	Furnace Creek Ranch, about 1909 . . . . .	942
266.	Furnace Creek Ranch, about 1915 . . . . .	948
267.	Furnace Creek Ranch, 1916 . . . . .	948
268.	Date orchard, Furnace Creek Ranch . . . . .	952
269.	Entrance, Furnace Creek Ranch . . . . .	952
270.	Dolph Nevares, no date . . . . .	960
271.	Nevares homestead, 1950 . . . . .	960
272.	Entrance to Nevares cabin . . . . .	964
273.	Entrance to root cellar, Nevares homestead . . . . .	964
274.	Pelton wheel, Nevares cabin . . . . .	964
275.	View east along Corduroy Road . . . . .	970
276.	Bridge on Corduroy Road . . . . .	970
277.	Site of Shovelton, 1969 . . . . .	974
278.	Furrowed salt mud at Shovelton, 1969 . . . . .	974
279.	Ruins of buildings, and waste dumps, at Lila C Mine, 1943 . . . . .	980
280.	Ryan, 1964 . . . . .	980
281.	Map showing (New) Ryan, Dantes View road sites, and DeBely Mine . . . . .	988
282.	Adit, Dantes View Road site #1 . . . . .	990
283.	Adits and stone mound, Dantes View Road site #2 . . . . .	990
284.	Stone wall, Dantes View Road site #2 . . . . .	990
285.	DeBely Mine . . . . .	994
286.	Corkscrew Mine . . . . .	994
287.	Adit along Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road . . . . .	998
288.	Sandbag dugout near Monte Blanco . . . . .	998
289.	Monte Blanco . . . . .	1000

290.	Stone loading platform and wooden chute on face of Monte Blanco . . . . .	1000
291.	Wagon road and mining area east of Monte Blanco . . . . .	1004
292.	Stone mounds at borax site east of Monte Blanco . . . . .	1004
293.	View of Eagle Borax Works showing stone mound similar to those found at Monte Blanco and other borax sites in monument . . . . .	1006
294.	Monte Blanco assay office/bunkhouse, Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon . . . . .	1008
295.	Cellar of Monte Blanco assay office . . . . .	1008
296.	Tent site across road from Monte Blanco assay office site . . . . .	1008
297.	Wagon road from Zabriskie Point to Gower Gulch . . . . .	1012
298.	Building site in Gower Gulch . . . . .	1012
299.	Two types of stone structures found in Gower Gulch . . . . .	1014
300.	Scene of borax mining activity at west end of Gower Gulch . . . . .	1016
301.	Trail leading over ridge from borax mining site in Gower Gulch . . . . .	1016

the "Christmas Mine" at about 6,000 feet elevation, was relocated by Ralph Pray in 1974 as the Christmas Mine. It will be discussed in the following section. The site located a mile east of the Wildrose Canyon Road and designated by three adits on the USGS Emigrant Canyon quad contains the Moonlight claims, owned originally by Heironimus and later also relocated by Pray. (A 15 April 1927 article in the Mining Journal, p. 29, mentions the Moonlight Group of seven claims in the Wild Rose Mining District, recently acquired by Long Beach, California, investors for \$755,000.) None of the mining sites in Nemo Canyon meets the criteria of evaluation for associative significance necessary for nomination to the National Register.

#### (5) Christmas (Gift) Mine

##### (a) History

A Christmas (or Christmas Gift) Mine antimony lode was reportedly discovered by Dr. S.G. George on Christmas Day 1860, during George's unsuccessful second attempt to locate the lost Gunsight lead.<sup>90</sup> Earlier that year he had headed a contingent that joined forces with the New World Mining and Exploration Company from San Francisco, headed by Col. H.P. Russ, and together they had entered Owens Valley. George and a detachment had separated from the main body here and headed east, discovering promising ledges in the rugged Panamints and organizing the Telescope Mining District. Returning to San Francisco, some unscrupulous people involved in these discoveries managed to secure investment capital there that would, they assured, be sunk into development of the Telescope District mines. Instead, most of these con artists left town with the monies; none of the original discoveries were actually placed on the market, nor were any of the companies formed to work the Telescope mines legitimate.

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90. Panamint News, 9 March 1875.

Late in 1860 the George party made another trip out from Visalia, California, into the Death Valley country, resulting in discovery of a Christmas Gift Mine on December 25. Not having the necessary equipment to work the mine, and because winter was at hand and snow was already falling, the expedition started home. The following year W.T. Henderson and three others began work on a 150-foot tunnel to tap the Christmas ledge, but they were eventually driven out by unfriendly Indians.<sup>91</sup>

It is the writer's opinion, due to personal research findings and discussions with others familiar with mining activity in this section, that the so-called Christmas lode discovered by Dr. George is not the Christmas Mine found on the USGS Emigrant Canyon quad, but is instead what is today known as the Wildrose Canyon Antimony Mine southeast of the Wildrose Ranger Station. On the basis of data procured it appears that the workings found at what is presently labelled the Christmas Mine were first excavated in connection with work in Nemo Canyon in the early 1900s. As mentioned in the Nemo Canyon section, one of the present Christmas Mine sites is a relocation of the Nemo #1 Mine. In 1906 labor was performed in this area by the Christmas Mining Company under E.F. Schooley. Notice was found in 1908 that a Dan McLeod held a two-year lease on the Christmas Gift in the Panamint Range, "probably the oldest known mine in the county," on which he intended to install a twenty-horsepower gasoline hoist. The most recent owner of this property has been the Keystone Canyon Mining Company of Pasadena, California, Ralph E. Pray, president.<sup>92</sup>

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91. Chalfant, "The Story of Inyo," in Inyo Register, 8 January 1914.

92. Index to Proof of Labor, Inyo Co., Book G, p. 220, Inyo Co. Courthouse, Independence, Ca.; Inyo Register, 9 April 1908; List of claimants and property, no date, DEVA NM mining office.

In researching the Christmas Mine it is easy to become confused initially by references to the productive and more developed Christmas Gift Mine that was part of the MacKenzie Group (including the Pluto and Lucky Jim) four miles north of Darwin. This was a silver-lead mine being worked at least by 1890 and through 1948.<sup>93</sup>

(b) Present Status

The area designated Christmas Mine on the USGS Emigrant Canyon quad consists of two sites and is reached via a dirt road leading east from the Emigrant Canyon Road about 4¼ miles south of Emigrant Pass. The mine camp is about 1-3/4 miles east of the Emigrant Canyon Road; the only extant building there is a small wood and corrugated-metal shack. The cabin is posted "Property of Christmas Mining Co." and contains only some bedsprings and chairs. Also on-site are a tin-sided pit toilet and two building sites southwest of the cabin. Nothing remains on them now but piled lumber and an old refrigerator. The burned ruins of a dugout can be found, consisting of a shallow hole filled with metal scraps. Northwest of the privy is a stone masonry support that once carried a portion of the Skidoo pipeline across a wash. The support is fifteen feet long, four feet wide, and two feet high. The pipeline scar is visible continuing on up over the hills to the southwest. Continuing east from the residential area on a four-wheel-drive road one arrives after one-half mile at the scene of some prospecting activity. Not much is left on site. Near the

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93. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Tenth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist for Year Ending Dec. 1, 1890 (Sacramento: J.D. Young, 1890), p. 210; George W. Ramage, ed., The Mining Directory and Reference Book of the United States, Canada and Mexico (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1892), p. 180; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Register of Mines and Minerals, Inyo County, California (San Francisco, 1902), p. 4; Poole Brothers, The Mining Directory and Reference Book of the United States, Canada and Mexico (Chicago: Poole Bros., 1898), p. 210; Inyo Register, 10 December 1914; Mining World, 13 February 1915; Eric, "Tabulation of Copper Deposits," in Jenkins, Copper in California, p. 240.

Illustration 133.

Christmas Mine residential area, view to east-northeast.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 134.

Caved-in shaft at prospect site due east of residential area.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

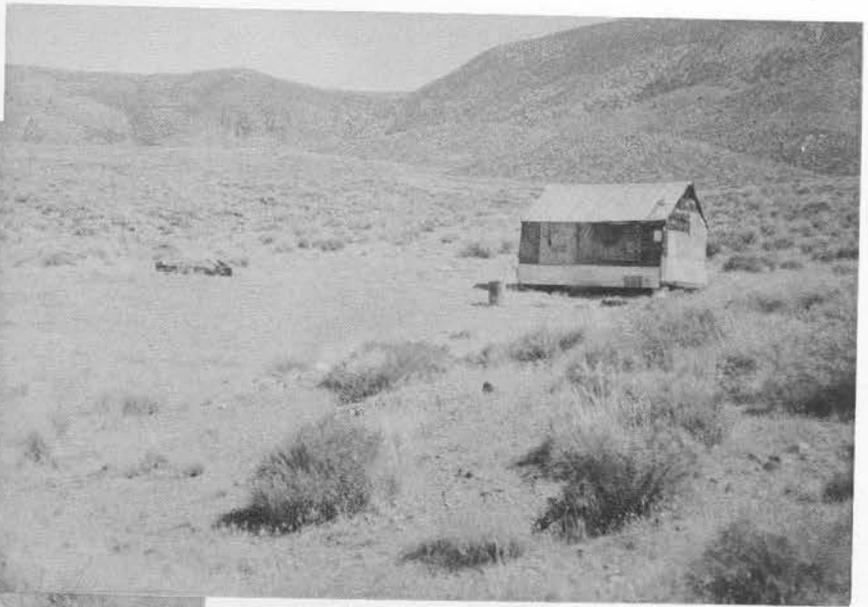
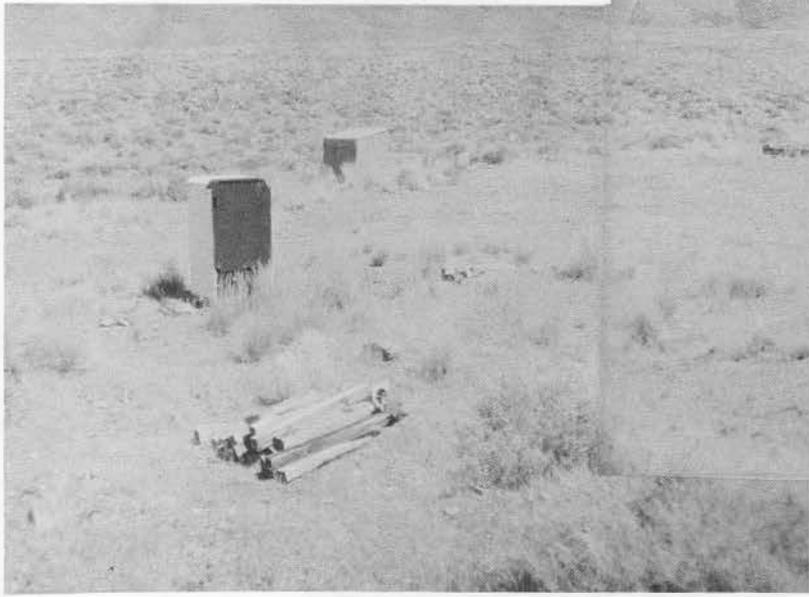


Illustration 135.

Masonry support for Skidoo pipeline, near Christmas Mine camp.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



road is the ruin of a collapsed dugout or timbered adit, with beams visible protruding from the rubble. On west, around the top of the hill, are a caved-in stope and the remains of a timbered shaft. Much metal refuse lies around, but there are no building remains.

A dirt road south from the residential area leads to a more complex mining operation, the Nemo #1 Mine that was relocated as the Christmas Mine by Ralph Pray in 1974. Remains on site consist of an ore bin, rails, trestle bents, and several small shafts, one of which was framed and timbered with pinyon pine logs, testifying to the longevity of mining operations here. Three of the shafts appeared to have been operated by means of hand winches. In 1975 some prospecting work was still being carried out in the tunnels.<sup>94</sup>

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

A history of mining activities within Nemo Canyon may be found in an earlier section. Although the spot labelled Christmas Mine on the USGS Emigrant Canyon quad map has been thought of as the site of the first claim staked within the present monument boundaries, it is fairly certain that George's early discovery was actually made further south. Sporadic attempts to work this Christmas Mine all the way up through the 1970s have been made, with its largest production during World War I. Exact output figures have not been found, however.<sup>95</sup>

The remains at both this site and at the Christmas Mine immediately south are a strong mixture of old and new, and it is difficult to determine which workings were the

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94. Field survey, September 1978, by Linda W. Greene; LCS Survey by Bill Tweed and Ken Keane, December 1975.

95. Harold O. Weight, "A Summer Visit to the Panamints," in Desert Magazine 23, no. 7 (July 1960), p. 9.



Illustration 136.

Shaft lined with pinyon pine logs, Christmas Mine (formerly Nemo #1). Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 137.

Open stope at Christmas Mine (formerly Nemo #1).

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



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associative significance. The Skidoo pipelines support near the mine  
camp will be included within the route of the pipelines on the  
revised Skidoo Historic District National Register form.

(8) Bald Peak Mine



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result of the earliest mining activity. The discovery of rounded pinyon pine log framing in the shaft at the second site indicates that this operation was underway early, with the ore bin and rail system being later additions. This site is not eligible for National Register status due to a lack of importance in Death Valley mining history. Purple glass on the residential site further north suggests an earlier occupancy than indicated by the miner's shack standing there today. Dating the workings at the Christmas Mine prospect site near the cabin is almost impossible because of the lack of physical evidence. These last two sites are not deemed eligible for nomination to the National Register due to a lack of integrity and associative significance. The Skidoo pipeline support near the mine camp will be included within the route of the pipeline on the revised Skidoo Historic District National Register form.

(6) Bald Peak Mine

(a) History

This site, located about 1½ miles northwest of Bald Peak, was not visited by this writer, both because of its inaccessibility and because it had been inspected by two members of the LCS survey crew, Bill Tweed and Ken Keane, in December 1975. The area is reached via a dirt road leading east for 2½ miles from the Emigrant Canyon Road about 1½ miles south of Emigrant Pass. This access was reportedly badly damaged by heavy rains in the fall of 1975.

The site appeared to Tweed and Keane to be a talc operation, dating from perhaps the 1940s or 1950s. On-site was a wooden-framed building with corrugated-metal walls and roof standing on a level platform area that was supported by a corrugated-metal retaining wall. A short distance further



Illustration 138.

Corrugated-metal cabin at mine  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles northwest of Bald Peak.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 139.

Ore bin at Bald Peak mine.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



(7) Argenta Mine

(a) History

The earliest reference to an Argenta Mine, albeit an ambiguous one, was in 1875 notice that "Argenta" was the new name being given to the Leichter Mine owned by the



97. Paranint News, 9 March 1875, p. 2.

southeast up the canyon was a good-sized one-chute ore bin; the mine workings were located on top of the steep slope behind.<sup>96</sup>

(b) Present Status

The present condition of the mine structures is unknown.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

This site, probably a post-Depression Era talc operation, lacks National Register eligibility. The scarcity of data on the mine suggests little production and associative connection with any of the more important miners or mining companies that operated in Death Valley.

(7) Argenta Mine

(a) History

The earliest reference to an Argenta Mine, albeit an ambiguous one, was an 1875 notice that "Argenta" was the new name being given to the Jupiter Mine owned by the Parker Company, evidently located somewhere in the Panamint region.<sup>97</sup> It is highly unlikely, however, that the Argenta Mine near Harrisburg was ever worked this early.

As far as can be determined, this latter mine was first located in 1924, was operated by the Rainbow Mining Company in 1925, and then by the Southwestern Lead Corporation from 1927 to 1928. In 1927 notice of the mine appeared in the Inyo Independent when the Argenta Nos. 1-12 mining claims in the Wild Rose District were deeded first from Ed L. and Hazel

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96. Tweed, Cultural Resources Survey, p. 295.

97. Panamint News, 9 March 1875, p. 5.

Wright of Los Angeles to Charles W. Stanley, and then by him and his wife, Lulu G., also of Los Angeles, to the Southwestern Lead Corporation of Delaware. At the same time an Alonzo and Martha E. Stewart of Los Angeles deeded the Argenta Group (Argenta, Leadfield, and Woodside mining claims) for \$5,000 to Southwestern Lead Corporation. A bit confusing is a later notice of the transfer of deeds to the Argenta, Leadfield, and Woodside mining claims for \$2,000 from a D.M. Driscoll of Los Angeles to the same Alonzo Stewart. Theoretically, this should have preceded Stewart's transfer of ownership to Southwestern Lead.<sup>98</sup>

Around 1930 George G. Greist, evidently an employee of the lead company, filed suit against C.W. Stanley and the Southwestern Lead Corporation in lieu of unpaid wages. A Decree of Foreclosure and Order of Sale were instituted against the company in May of that year for \$3,699.85, and the Argenta, Leadfield, Woodside, Thanksgiving, and Argenta Nos. 1-12 mining claims were offered for sale.<sup>99</sup> The litigation resulted in Greist becoming the new owner, relocating the property as nine silver-lead claims. This gentleman, referred to as a one-time sheriff of the Panamints, was indicated as living at the mine in 1933 and being a neighbor of Pete Aguerberry.<sup>100</sup>

In 1943 the property was owned by Greist and an Ed L. Wright and was under lease to H.T. Kaplin

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98. Deeds Filed in Office of County Recorder, Inyo Independent, 26 November, 31 December 1927.

99. Inyo Independent, 18 October 1930.

100. George Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry: Death Valley Prospector--Gold Miner (Littlerock, Ca.: South Antelope Valley Publishing Co., 1971), p. 136.

**Illustration 140.**

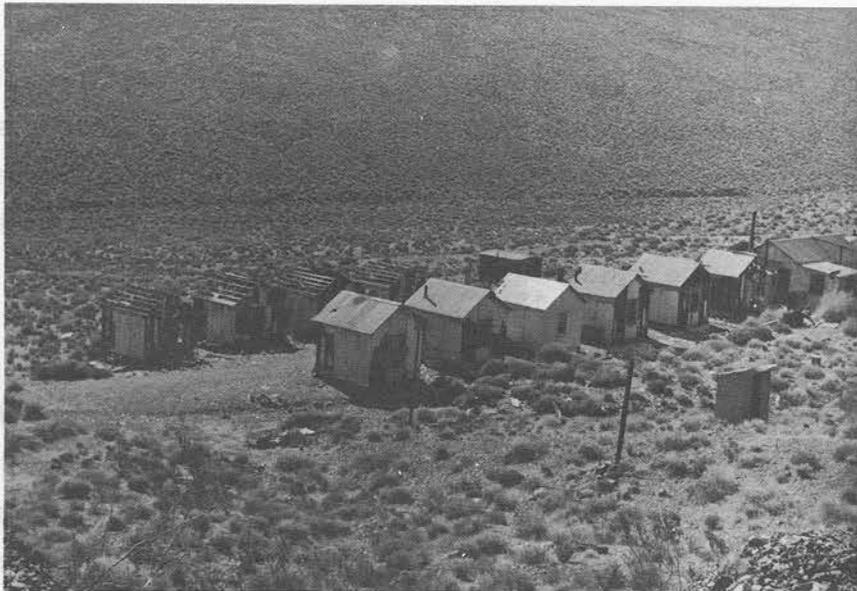
**Argenta Mine. View to southwest of main street of mine camp, February 1969.**

**Photo by Chief Ranger Homer Leach, courtesy of DEVA NM.**

**Illustration 141.**

**Argenta Mine camp, view to west-northwest showing bunkhouses and upper mining level, February 1969.**

**Photo by Chief Ranger Homer Leach, courtesy of DEVA NM.**

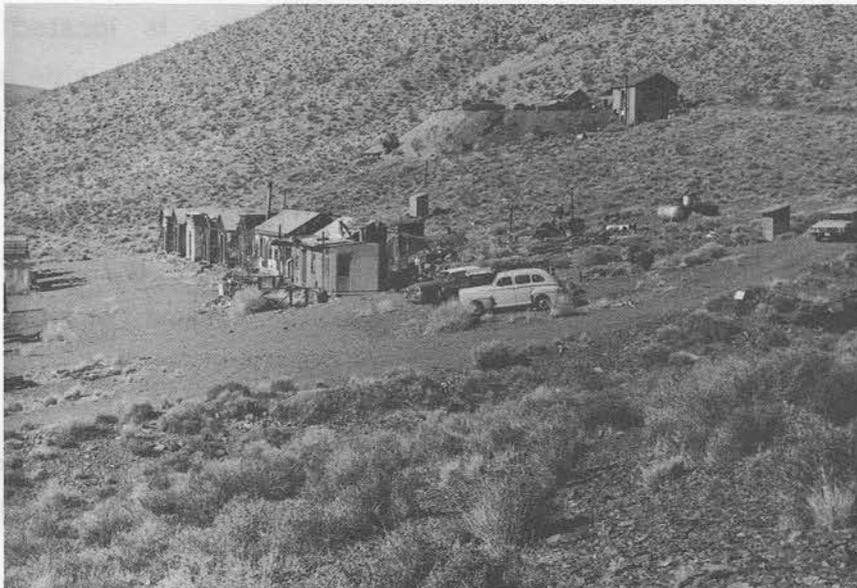


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as owner, employing two men in prospecting work at the north end of the adit.  
 Two other properties mentioned in Wood Canyon were the Combination Group, owned by Gilson and associated and worked in the early 1800s, and the Arnold Plunket claims to the south.<sup>101</sup>

(b) Present Status



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Wildn Canyon miles the ca never shan/ Calif of work

101. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 39 (January 1943): 58; 47 (January 1951): 58; Rivolve Herald, 17 June 1908.

102. Memo, Matt Ryan to C.R., on Active Mining Claims of the Emigrant District, 7 March 1982.

and Sam Nastor of Los Angeles, with Greist superintending the operation. Development at this time consisted of a 30-foot shaft on top of the ridge and a 630-foot adit with lateral workings and a crosscut. Ore assaying 17% zinc had also been found in an open cut south of the shaft. The average grade of ore shipped contained 12% zinc, 5% lead, 2.80 ozs. silver, and .08 oz. gold. Seventy tons of lead ore shipped assayed 27% lead and \$8 per ton in gold and silver. Equipment on-site included a machine shop, an electric-light plant with a Fairbanks-Morse gas engine, an Ingersoll-Rand portable compressor, an assay office, and assorted boarding- and bunkhouses. By 1950 only George Griest was named as owner, employing two men in prospecting work at the north end of the adit.

Two other properties mentioned in Wood Canyon were the Combination Group, owned by Gilson and associates and worked in the early 1900s, and the Arnold Plunket claims to the south.<sup>101</sup>

(b) Present Status

The Argenta Mine is located in the Wildrose Mining District along a ridge on the north side of Wood Canyon at an elevation of about 5,500 feet. The site is about 1¼ miles east of the Emigrant Canyon Road via a dirt cutoff just before the canyon road crosses Emigrant Pass. The owner, George Griest, never made much of an attempt to mine here, living off public charity until the early 1960s when he became eligible for a California State old-age pension.<sup>102</sup>

The mine area consists of two levels of workings. Lower on the hill is the "main street," once lined on

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101. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 39 (January 1943): 59; 47 (January 1951): 56; Rhyolite Herald, 17 June 1908.

102. Memo, Matt Ryan to C/R, on Active Mining Claims of the Emigrant District, 1 March 1962.

both sides with about twenty assorted small, one-room boarding- and bunkhouses and with other camp necessities such as a chicken coop. All buildings are presently in a shocking state of decay due to weathering and vandalism. Most of the structures, which were built of wood, plasterboard, and corrugated metal, have completely fallen in or been pulled down. The only items of any interest are on the north side of the street, in the form of remains of a stone dugout with a wooden false front, and, just southwest of this, a round, concrete cistern built underground, appearing to have a capacity for several thousand gallons of water. In the photographs of the camp site taken in 1969 the stone dugout appears to have been located behind a large building in the center of the community that probably functioned as the cookhouse. The dugout was probably the root cellar and the cistern nearby stored the camp drinking water.

Higher and further north on the hillside is a timbered adit and the ruins of at least two other buildings, one having been a two-story frame structure on the edge of the dump, and the other a smaller one-story frame building, possibly the assay office. Only the flooring and basement level framing of the larger building remain somewhat intact; the other structure is completely destroyed.

An incredible amount of refuse is evident everywhere on the site, ranging from modern garbage to old machinery parts to vintage 1940s and 1950s car bodies, the entire site resembling a tremendous junkyard.

#### (c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Argenta Mine never yielded a profitable output nor do any structures of historical significance remain on the property. The site was not an important Death Valley mining operation and is not eligible for inclusion on the National Register.

Illustration 142.

Argenta Mine. View to west-northwest down main street of mine camp showing almost total destruction of buildings.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 143.

Argenta Mine. View to northwest of mining area showing remains of two-story building.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

(B) Mountain View  
(C) House



two men who reportedly  
within a six-month period  
by improper timbering and paper holding. This large a sum  
seems open to question. In 1945, when Fife's estate was settled,  
ownership of the Tejonian No. 1-4 was divided among the heirs,  
Ardreize Agency receiving an undivided one-half interest, and  
[Ardreize]

The Tejonian Group is mentioned in  
in 1951 as consisting four  
1-4 owned by Ardreize  
of an

Vol. 15,  
dependence.

Final Distribution in  
the Estate of James F. Ardreize, Dec. 5 August  
1945 in Official Records, Vol. 85, pp. 598-97, Inyo Co.  
Courthouse, Independence, CA

(8) Napoleon Mine

(a) History

The Napoleon and Napoleon Nos. 1-2 quartz claims, situated one-half mile south of Harrisburg, were located by Pete Aguerberry on 1 January 1911 and recorded on 24 January. The location date of the Napoleon No. 3 was not found in the record books, but it was probably several years later, since it was not filed for record until 14 September 1935.<sup>103</sup> The Napoleon No. 1 is east of the Napoleon Claim and the No. 2 is south of it. The No. 3 joined the Napoleon No. 2, but on which side is unknown. The only reference to these claims in the literature was found in Pipkin, who was evidently told by Pete that after he had done some development work on the Napoleon he leased the claim to two men who reportedly removed \$35,000 in gold ore from the mine within a six-month period and then abandoned it, leaving it ruined by improper timbering and gopher holing.<sup>104</sup> This large a sum seems open to question. In 1946, when Pete's estate was settled, ownership of the Napoleon Nos. 1-4 was divided among the heirs, Ambroise Aguerberry receiving an undivided one-half interest, and the other half being given equally to Joseph, Arnaud [Arnaud], James Peter, Mariane, and Catherine Aguerberry.<sup>105</sup>

The Napoleon Group is mentioned in the Journal of Mines and Geology in 1951 as comprising four unpatented claims, the Napoleon Nos. 1-4, owned by Ambroise Aguerberry of Trona, California. Development consisted of an

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103. Notices of Location, in Inyo County Mining Locations, Vol. 12, pp. 305-6; Vol. 48, p. 385, Inyo Co. Courthouse, Independence, Ca.

104. Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry, p. 91.

105. Decree of Settlement of Account and of Final Distribution In the Matter of the Estate of James P. Aguerberry, Dec., 5 August 1946, in Official Records, Vol. 65, pp. 596-97, Inyo Co. Courthouse, Independence, Ca.



Illustration 144.

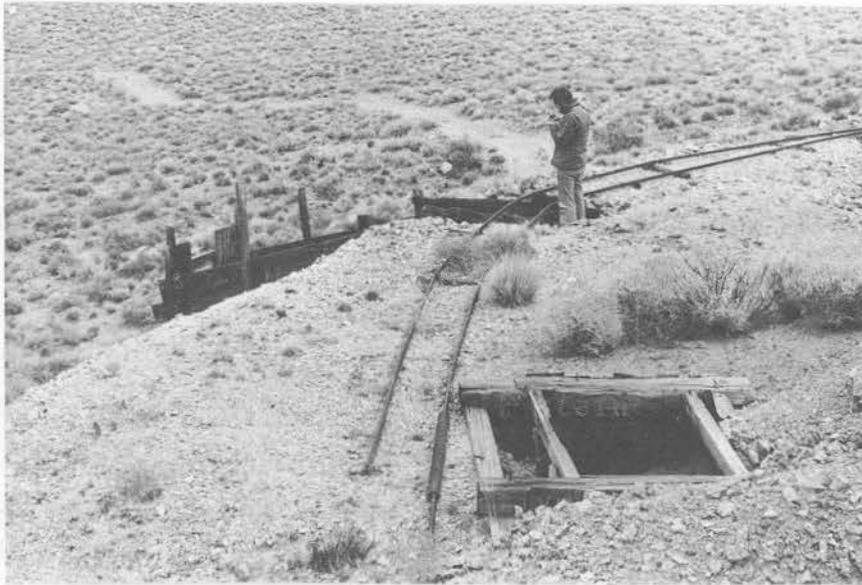
Shaft, tram rails, and ore chute at Napoleon Mine.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 145.

Ore bin and collapsed chute southwest of main adit, Napoleon Mine.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



80-foot-deep inclined shaft and several adits, all within an 800-foot radius. Most of the ore mined has been removed from three adits southwest of the shaft. During sporadic operations from 1937 to 1939 lessees had shipped fifty-five tons of gold- and silver-bearing ore to custom mills, but the operation was currently idle.<sup>106</sup>

(b) Present Status

The Napoleon Mine is situated on the north side of a ridge about one mile south-southwest of the Cashier Mine workings. The site consists of two working levels--the lower containing a main adit and an ore chute, with a timbered vertical shaft between, some dry-stone retaining walls, and the remains of a mine tramway. Uphill about one-quarter mile southwest of this first complex are a second ore bin with a collapsed chute and several adit entrances. Purple glass has been found on this site.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Napoleon Mine has no significance except for its association with Pete Aguerberry, which is minimal. The writer does not recommend that it be included within the boundaries of the proposed Harrisburg Historic District. The site does not offer potential for further research or historical archeology.

(9) Harrisburg

(a) History

i) Shorty Harris and Pete Aguerberry Strike Ore on Providence Ridge

As is the case with most important events when two or more strong-minded participants are

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106. 47 (January 1951): 46-47.

involved, the details surrounding the discovery of the first strike at Harrisburg Flats are open to controversy. The find was made by two of Death Valley's most noted mining personalities--Pete Aguerberry and Shorty Harris. The former's version of the tale is that around the first of July 1905 the two men met at Furnace Creek Ranch, by chance, and decided because of the heat of the valley to pull out for the Panamints together and do some prospecting, although Shorty was actually more interested in getting to the 4th of July celebration at Ballarat. After negotiating the old "dry trail" through Blackwater Wash, they arrived on the open plateau now known as Harrisburg Flats, about nine miles northeast of Wildrose Spring.

Shorty, being on horseback and driving his mules harder, was some distance ahead of Aguerberry, who at this point saw a promising-looking ledge on the north side of a low long hill. Chipping off a piece, he found it contained free gold. Hurriedly catching up with his companion, Pete showed him the ore sample, and the two excitedly made plans to continue on to Wildrose Spring to replenish their water and then return and stake out claims. During this time of further prospecting and exploratory work, the two divided up the outcroppings, Aguerberry staking claims on the north side of the hill, which later became known as "Providence Ridge" or "Providence Hill," including the Eureka Nos. 1-4, while Shorty took claims on the south side, which later incorporated the Providence Group. These finds were located at the extreme northeast end of an east-west ridge that rises about 200 feet from the mesa. The initial name agreed on for the camp was Harrisberry, in the hopes that a strong association with Shorty Harris would attract prospective investors.

The "partners" split up at this point, both eventually heading for Ballarat, Shorty to spread the word of his new find and Pete to pick up a grubstake that was

being sent there by money order. By the time Aguerberry returned to his hill within the next few days, the rush was on, with gold-seekers from Ballarat swarming all over the strike area, necessitating that Aguerberry reestablish his original ground by both persuasion and force. Harris's version of all this is slightly different, suggesting that he found the first evidence of riches and was forced to share the discovery with Pete. According to one newspaper, "Pete and Shorty have not flipped coins to determine who is actually responsible for the strike, but the credit is generally given to Shorty, perhaps from previous achievements."<sup>107</sup> The real facts may never be known, but however it happened, another Death Valley boom camp had been born.<sup>108</sup>

ii) The Area Fills Up Rapidly

Word of the strike spread quickly, and by August 1905 at least twenty parties were locating monuments in the surrounding hills within a three-mile radius of the original discovery, about fifty locations being made immediately. The new area was included in the Wild Rose Mining District, and Frank C. Kennedy, a prominent mining man of the region, was appointed Deputy County Recorder. Samples from the immense quartz ledge, which, it would turn out, stretched north to the future Skidoo and Emigrant Spring mining areas, were assaying from \$90 to \$200 per ton in free-milling gold, with some rumored to have values as high as \$500. It was reported that 300 men and some women were settled in the new camp, which was already organizing a townsite company, somewhat depopulating Ballarat and

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107. Rhyolite Herald, 1 September 1905.

108. Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry, pp. 55-63, 70-79; Caruthers, Loafing Along Death Valley Trails, pp. 57-58; C.B. Glasscock, Here's Death Valley (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1940), pp. 239-42; Hubbard et al., Ballarat, 1897-1917, pp. 66-68; Inyo Independent, 15 September 1905.

Darwin and also attracting many from Rhyolite, who tramped the approximately sixty-eight miles via the watering spots at Daylight Spring, Hole-in-the-Rock, Furnace Creek Ranch, and Blackwater Wash.<sup>109</sup>

As with every large strike in the Panamint Range, the call went up for Inyo County residents to rally and implement plans to assist the mining district by providing teaming services, agricultural supplies, and restaurant, hotel, and merchandising facilities to incoming miners. Ballarat was the main supply point. By September, 200 claims had been recorded in the area; with the advent of cooler weather, the camp's population was expected to triple with new arrivals from Nevada.<sup>110</sup> Timber and water, essentials to a new mining community, were near at hand, the latter available either at Emigrant Spring, seven miles northwest; at Blackwater Spring, about seven miles to the northeast; or at Wild Rose Spring, about nine miles southwest. At Emigrant Spring a new pipeline was being shipped in to funnel water from the spring to the roadside where it would be more accessible.<sup>111</sup>

iii) Cashier Gold Mining Company  
Is Formed

Four more claims mentioned in the Harrisburg area, adjoining Aguerberry's property, were the

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109. Rhyolite Herald, 18 August 1905. The new camp was referred to as Harrisberry, or Harrisbury, and in this article even as Harrisonville; Inyo Register, 24 August 1905; Rhyolite Herald, 1 September 1905.

110. Inyo Register, 14 September 1905; Inyo Independent, 15 September 1905.

111. Inyo Register, 21 September 1905.

Wild Horse, Slow Elk, Modoc, and Monarch, owned by J.W. Sellers, I.T. Davis, Bill Pollard, Ray Robinson, and W.T. Voorhees.<sup>112</sup> The intense involvement of "outsiders" in the Harrisbury discoveries and their desire to get in on the ground floor manifested itself in the immediate bonding of Shorty Harris's strikes to several millionaires from Tonopah and of Aguerberry's claims to Goldfield capitalists. A few days earlier Harris had gone to San Francisco where he succeeded in persuading some investors to visit his property in anticipation of financing development work.<sup>113</sup> The result of this visit was the formation of the Cashier Mining Company, headed by O.L. Ingalls and associates (including E.S. Shanklin, who was heavily invested in the Bullfrog National Bank Mine, and W.A. Jacobs) and owner of nine claims. A survey of the property was to be made and a company assayer moved in. More important to the residents of the area, probably, was the news that saloon supplies were on their way! A deal involving \$100,000 was rumored to be pending for the Aguerberry mine.<sup>114</sup>

The survey of the Harrisburg townsite and of the Cashier Gold Mining Company's claims was undertaken by J.H. Wilson of Cripple Creek, Colorado, who had formerly been an engineer in Goldfield. He established residence in the area and proceeded to open an engineering office (touted to be the first such business opened in the Panamint Range). The company assay work was to be done by a D.E. Blake of Denver, Colorado, who established the first assay office in the new camp. A William P. O'Brien, of Bullfrog, was put in charge of the six men

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112. Rhyolite Herald, 22 September 1905.

113. Ibid.; Inyo Register, 28 September 1905.

114. Rhyolite Herald, 6 October 1905; Inyo Register, 12 October 1905.

at work sinking three shafts on the property, and work was to be initiated by driving a tunnel at the foot of the hill to hit the vein as low as possible.<sup>115</sup>

By late October of Harrisburg's first year of existence, the land had been surveyed for a townsite and tents were constantly springing up in the business section. The Cashier Gold Mining Company now kept twenty-three men busy, at \$3.50 a day, round-the-clock, sinking two shafts, one in \$90 and the other in \$700 ore, and running a tunnel. Twenty-seven tons of high-grade ore had already been mined to be shipped to Keeler. The vast number of prospectors swarming the hills created a shortage of vegetables, fruit, ham, bacon, hay, and grain, as a consequence of which all sold for exorbitant prices. Rumors still persisted of a deal pending in Goldfield either for the Eureka Group or the Cashier Group (now said to include fourteen claims), or for both, the amount in question stated to be \$160,000. In February it was reported that owners of the Eureka Group had sold a half interest in the property to San Francisco investors who paid \$15,000 down and intended to build a mill.<sup>116</sup>

iv) A Multitude of Claims are Located  
in the Area

In December 1905 a big strike was made on the six claims of the Exjunction Group about two miles

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115. Inyo Independent, 13 October 1905. According to a later account, D.E. Blake was from Cripple Creek, and established his business in Ballarat, the first custom assay office to be opened in that town. J.H. Wilson, a civil engineer from Denver, also opened an office in that town. Which of the two accounts is accurate is not known. Inyo Independent, 20 October and 3 November 1905.

116. Inyo Independent, 3 November 1905, 16 February 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 30 November 1906.

northeast of Harris's Providence Group and owned by U.V. Withee, W.B. Gray, and W.H. Sanders. Quartz averaging \$259 in gold, silver, copper, and lead was being exposed. Stretching for five miles along this same ledge were forty other claims: beginning at the north were the Victoria Group of four claims, owned by Will Goodpasture, Dr. Kerns, and John Sellers; the Exjunction or Sanders Group of six claims owned by Withee, Gray, and Sanders; the Exjunction Extension Group of four claims owned by Goodpasture; the B & B Group of six claims owned by Brin and Blumlein; the Check Book Group of three claims owned by the Oakland Mining Company; three claims owned by the Kawich-Bullfrog Company; the Red Cross Group of seven claims owned by Tasker Oddie, Luetjens, and Webb; the Annis M. Group of six claims and the Branley, owned also by the Oakland Mining Company; the Carrie Nation and Little Hatchet, owned by Charles Nations; and the Bunker Hill owned by Andrew Deck.<sup>117</sup> The Sanders strike had so far shown the best results among all these promising operations, and the Exjunction property of six claims was the core around which the Wild Rose Mining Company would soon be incorporated. Two timber claims and a millsite with water rights would be included in the company holdings.<sup>118</sup>

A synopsis of the mining situation at Harrisburg appeared in the Herald in late December 1905, the result of observations made by some individuals owning claims there:

We found quite a stir both in the new Wild Rose (gold) district and the old Panamint (silver) district. And

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117. Rhyolite Herald, 15 December 1905.

118. Ibid.

this activity is being made principally by Rhyolite, Goldfield and Tonopah people, with whom outside parties are in some cases associated. We stopped at the Shorty Harris strike, now being worked by the Cashier Mining company, and found that a good proposition is being opened up. The ledge has been cross-cut in a tunnel, and there is about eight feet of ore carrying rich milling ore, with some shipping values of which we were not advised. Drifting is now being done on the ore. The day we were there the San Francisco people, who are intereste, [sic] came and looked over the property. The Sanders strike, which the Herald reported last week, is bona fide, as far as I was able to judge, the ore looking very good. We examined and sampled the five claims owned by Mann, Gorrill, Clemens and myself. Mr. Gorrill had not seen the ground before, and he was much pleased. These claims [on Silver Mountain] are old chloriding silver propositions, which were worked many years ago when the price of silver made profitable the mining of the ore, which had to be packed a half mile down the hill on animals, hauled in wagons 70 miles to Keeler and shipped over the C. and C. narrow gauge, a high tariff line, to Selby's smelter in Frisco. It was profitable work in those days, and with the better facilities for mining and cheaper transportation, these properties should be profitable now. . . . Johannesburg, 80 miles distant on the Santa Fe, is the shipping point for the Wild Rose district. . . .<sup>119</sup>

About forty men were now working in and near the camp.

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119. Rhyolite Herald, 22 December 1905; Inyo Register, 28 December 1905.

By spring and summer of the next year, discoveries hastening the advent of Skidoo were being made about two miles from Emigrant Spring, attracting miners from throughout the region. The Panamints were rapidly filling up, despite continuing transportation problems:

Ballarat is reached by stage from Darwin, and by the line from Randsburg. From Ballarat to Emigrant and Harrisburg transportation is effected by any sort of locomotion at command of the individual prospector or mining tourist, there being no established line of communication. Nor is there as yet any regular means of travel from the east--from Beatty or Bullfrog. . . .<sup>120</sup>

By April 1906 the Wild Rose Mining Company had been incorporated, with W.B. Gray as president, W.H. Sanders as vice-president, and Dr. U.V. Withee as secretary-treasurer. Principal place of business was at Beatty, and the seven main holdings of the company, situated about 1½ miles from Harrisburg, included the Sanders strike on the Exjunction gold, silver, copper, and lead claim.<sup>121</sup>

Shorty Harris was continuing to extoll the virtues of "his" town in the Panamints whenever he journeyed to Rhyolite or other nearby camps. In May 1906 he boasted that there were twenty tents in residence and that he was planning to try to sink for water shortly, thus negating the need to haul this precious commodity from Emigrant Spring. Not putting all his marbles in one bag, however, he had proceeded also to

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120. Inyo Register, 12 April 1906.

121. Rhyolite Herald, 13 April 1906.

locate two groups of claims near the Emigrant Spring Gold Eagle strike--the Gold Links and the Gold Eagle's Tail.<sup>122</sup> The Cashier Mining Company was still having success with the Providence Claim, which seemed to harbor steady reserves. The Ingalls interest in the company was purchased in the fall of 1906 by T.E. Crawford of Helena, Montana, making him co-partner with Shorty Harris. These two planned to immediately employ fifteen men on sinking a new shaft. Crawford was also planning to install a five-stamp mill on the property that could draw water from the Skidoo pipeline to Telescope Peak.<sup>123</sup>

By November the Emigrant Spring area was fairly bursting with mining activity. Reputedly there were 150 miners in the area, a third of whom at least were working at the Skidoo Mine and on the projected Telescope Peak pipeline. The new townsite was rapidly filling up and was the terminus of a twice-weekly stage run from Ballarat. Owners of the Denver and Tramps properties in Rhyolite were still negotiating for the purchase of some Harrisburg property for a reputed \$160,000. Meanwhile the Panamint Greenwater Gold & Copper Company, organized and financed by Denver capitalists, had purchased the Sweeney Group of four claims a mile east of Harrisburg.<sup>124</sup>

Silver Mountain, between Harrisburg and Skidoo, was still the scene of several good silver strikes at this time, which, because of the current high price for that commodity, seemed assured of a reasonably productive future.

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122. Bullfrog Miner, 11 May 1906.

123. Rhyolite Herald, 14 September 1906.

124. Inyo Independent, 16 November 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 14 December 1906, 18 January 1907.

As mentioned earlier, rumor held that the outcrops here had been worked by Mexicans in years past, with the ore being carried on mule or horseback down from the mountains and then to Keeler for shipping on the Carson and Colorado Railroad to San Francisco smelters. It was presumed now that with better transportation facilities and a higher price for silver, these old workings could be operated even more profitably. Although the wagon road from Rhyolite to Stovepipe Wells was finished, work was still continuing on the last section to Skidoo.<sup>125</sup>

Some idea of the atmosphere at Harrisburg can be gleaned from the following account of its New Year's Eve party of 1907:

There were no invitations issued, there was no one asked to go. No one cared whether any one else went but themselves. No one cared to see any one else there. Whoever wished to go, went. Many were so inclined. Most of those who did go reaped a rich reward. No one attended for the enjoyment of the affair. It was a New Year's party under cover of midnight, held in the great big outdoors. Desirable mining property was the prize and there were many prizes. So great was the desire for claims that had been neglected and allowed to expire, that the re-locators met in numbers of ten and fifteen, in several instances, at some lone monument, just as the hour of midnight heralded the birth of the new year. Of course, in such instances, the names of all present were place on the location certificate and many who expected to secure two or three full claims, considered themselves fortunate in having been figured in for a tenth interest

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125. Rhyolite Herald, 11 and 18 January 1907.

in one. . . . The re-located property is now in the hands of energetic men and development will be done. . . .<sup>126</sup>

Another large purchase in the Harrisburg area was consummated in the spring of 1907 when San Francisco and Michigan capitalists and John Stukey and his associates Kennedy, Gray, and Thurman closed two important mining deals, one involving the Ross E. (Rossie) Group of nine claims to the north of the original Harrisburg strike, purchased for \$12,000, and the other the Providential Group of six claims on the south side, bought for \$10,000. Another purchase mentioned was that of the Combination Group near Harrisburg by the California, Illinois & Wisconsin Gold Mining Company.<sup>127</sup>

The Cashier property was still undergoing active development at this time. A 165-foot tunnel had intersected a four-foot ledge of quartz showing values of from \$70 to \$100 in gold. Although just the high-grade ore was deemed sufficient to make the property a big mine, all the ore exposed was thought to be millable on the ground at a profit, which would make it an immense producer. A mill was being planned by the company, and in connection with that project they were contemplating use of the pipeline from Telescope Peak to provide the water supply. The Eureka Mine was still showing rich ledges, and ten tons of high-grade ore were ready for shipment, averaging \$150 a ton. Notice appears at this time of some litigation between Shorty Harris and Crawford, owners of the Cashier, and J.P. Aguerberry

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126. Ibid., 18 January 1907.

127. Bullfrog Miner, 5 April 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

and F. Flynn, representing the Panamint Midas property, over the Eureka Claim, with two of the properties finally being consolidated. Work was to be pushed with a force of fifteen or twenty men; later word suggested that the Cashier-Midas property had been bonded to a Chicago syndicate.<sup>128</sup>

Meanwhile W.B. Gray was still steadily developing the Wild Rose Mining Company's property two miles from Harrisburg and had driven a 150-foot adit, exposing a ledge carrying good values its entire distance. The three principal directors of the company, Edward E. Babb, W.W. Curtis, and U.V. Withee, accompanied by a mining engineer, visited the property in the fall of 1907 to formulate plans for its future development.<sup>129</sup>

The names of a few more mines in the Harrisburg vicinity now come to light: the Blue Jay Group, near the Cashier; the Jockey Club Group, adjoining the Cashier claims; and the Rosalind S., Hearst Junior, Hearst Second, and Wilson lodes in the vicinity of the Green Monster Group. These names reflect the interests of William Randolph Hearst and his father-in-law G.W. Wilson. These latter lodes were about the last to be recorded in that district, which now contained forty-three unsurveyed claims in an area of 1½ square miles. Eight men working on the Cashier Mine were sinking a shaft, and three rich gold veins had been found crossing the property. It was hoped that a 140-foot tunnel would intersect them in about seventy more feet.<sup>130</sup>

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128. Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 27 July and 3 August 1907.

129. Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 26 October 1907.

130. Bullfrog Miner, 29 February 1908.

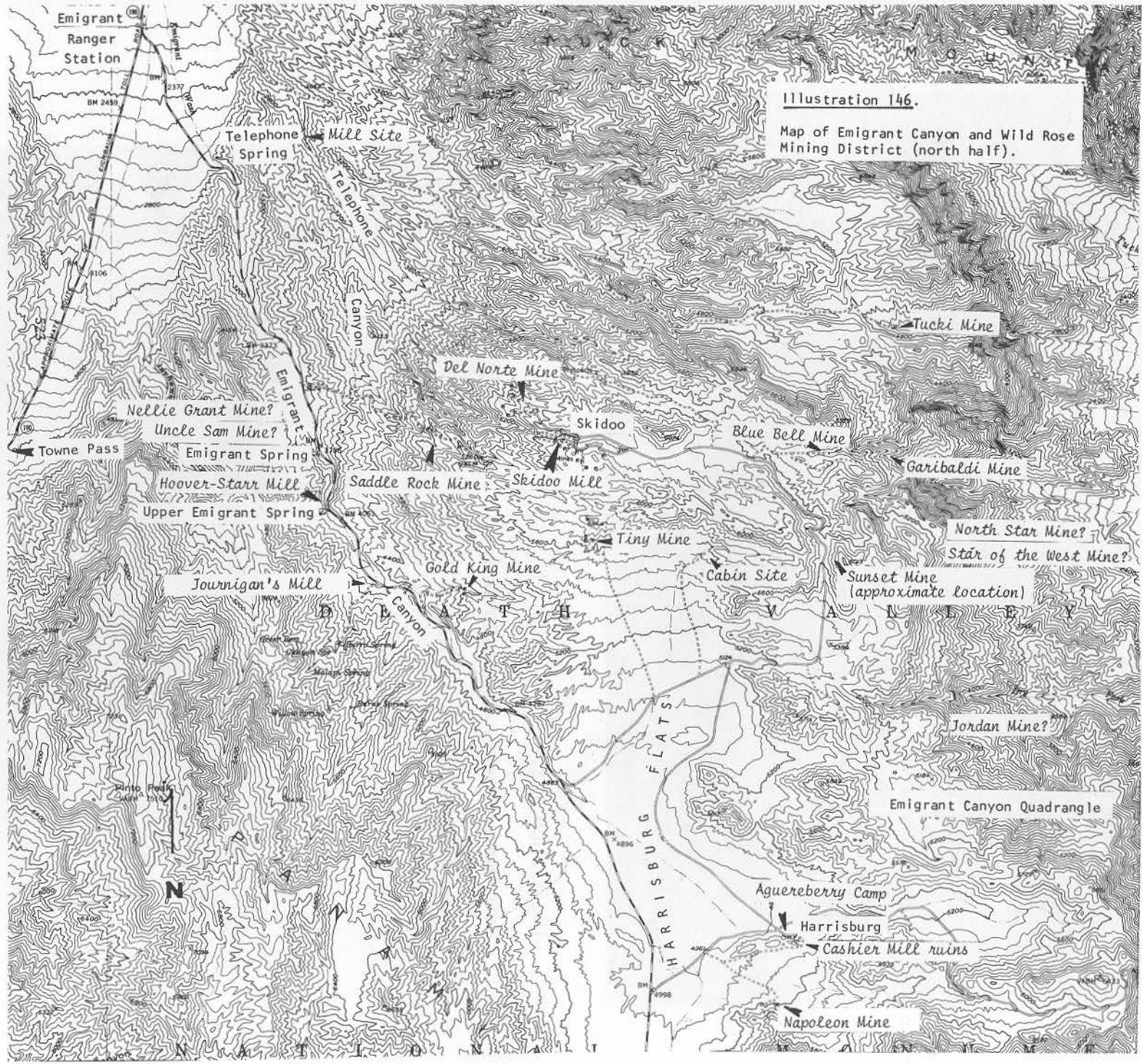


Illustration 146.  
Map of Emigrant Canyon and Wild Rose Mining District (north half).

Illustration 147.

Supposedly a view of Harrisburg Camp, taken on Death Valley Expedition by Yeager and Woodward, May 1908. Tent flap, however, identifies spot as "Emigrant Springs."

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 148.

Pete Aguerberry, date unknown.

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.



to the mill was not being constructed as well as  
construction of a tail-ramp mill in Long Canyon to the south and  
another five-story custom mill for Salton below the large mill.



These custom milling plants would  
help for further development,  
unprofitable to ship out less than

will use on its way from San Fran

1911, 1912, 28 March 1908; Astoria  
after the Harborside boom and  
declined, moved back to Harborside  
north rim about two miles from  
Aqueduct, pp. 78, 79, 151  
185 Rivoltta Herald, 18 November  
Bullington Miner, 9 January 1908

v) A Mill Appears Imminent

Because conditions at the Cashier Mine seemed so promising at this point, with ultimately thirteen men working on a shaft and tunnel in which ore values were increasing, entrepreneur George Brown was moving his rooming house and restaurant from Emigrant Spring to Harrisburg to accommodate the increasing population. The only other storekeeper in the area whose name is known is Sam Adams, who ran a general store and saloon in a large tent with supplies brought in from Ballarat. He supposedly cleared a profit of \$6,000 on the saloon in his first six months there.<sup>131</sup> Because of good showings in tunnel and shaft, the Cashier Company was still toying with the idea of erecting a ten-stamp cyanide lixiviation mill. To get the required water to run the operation, Crawford purchased from Ballarat people their water rights in Jail Canyon, amounting to eight miners' inches flow of water. This would pass through the Skidoo pipeline to Harrisburg. The addition of fifteen more stamps to the Skidoo mill was also being contemplated, as well as construction of a ten-stamp mill in Nemo Canyon to the south and another five-stamp custom mill for Skidoo below the large mill. These custom milling plants would enable small owners to obtain money for further development, for it was now considered unprofitable to ship out less than \$100 ore.<sup>132</sup>

vi) Litigation Over Aguerberry's  
Eureka Mine

By March 1909 the Harrisburg mill was on its way from San Francisco, and over 100 tons of ore

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131. Ibid., 28 March 1908; Adams moved his enterprise to Skidoo after the Harrisburg boom ended, and, when activity there declined, moved back to Harrisburg Flats and built a cabin on the north rim about two miles from Aguerberry's cabin. Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry, pp. 79, 119, 121.

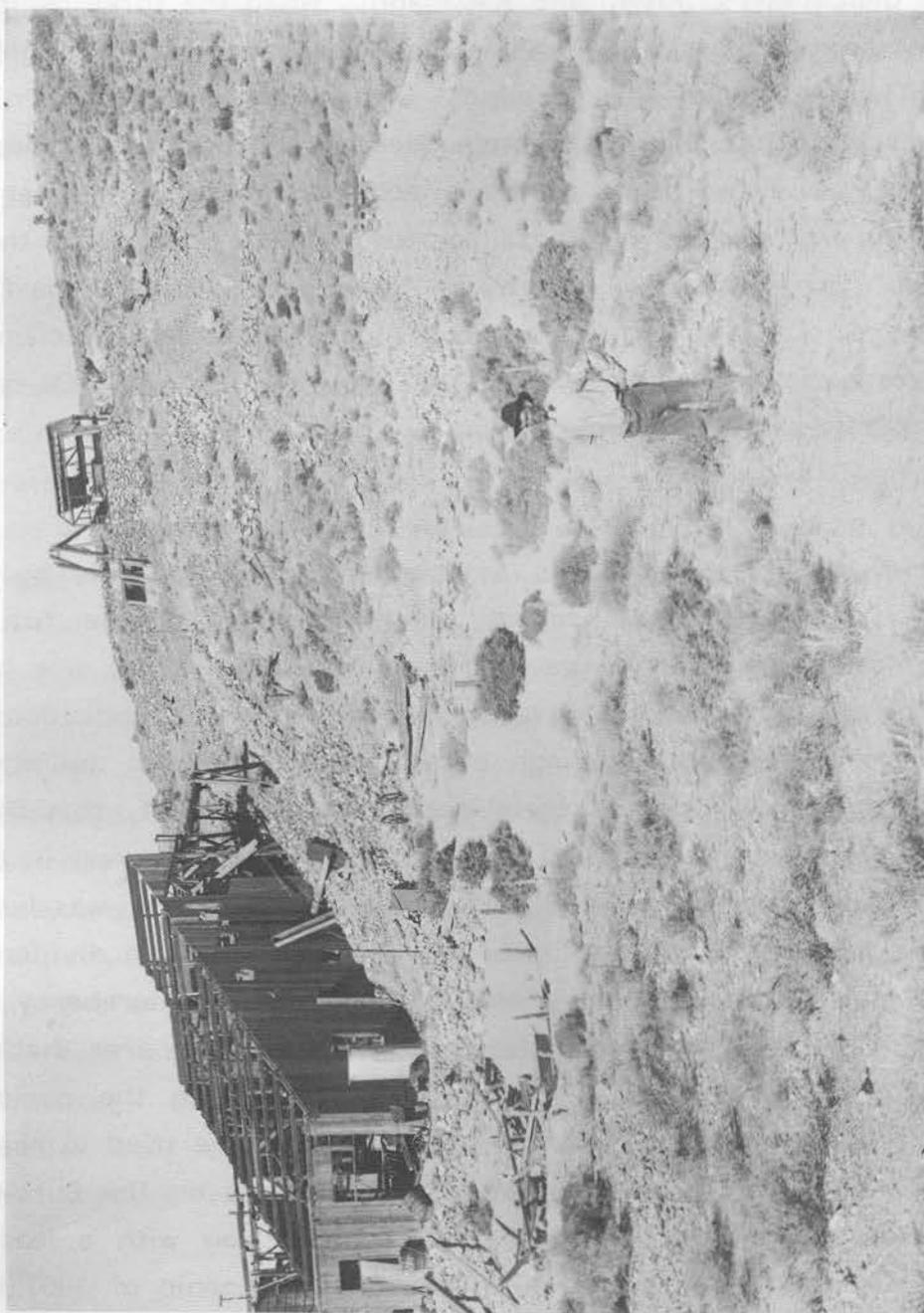
132. Rhyolite Herald, 18 November 1908, 6 and 20 January 1909; Bullfrog Miner, 9 January 1909.



Illustration 149.

Cashier Mill ruin and Pete Aguerberry, 1916.

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.



were waiting on the dump. Part of the delay in acquisition of the mill evidently concerned a dispute that had been evolving around Pete Aguerberry's claim to the adjoining Eureka Mine. Ownership of this property had originally been divided among Pete and his original grubstakers, Flynn and Kavanagh. When the three decided to sell as soon as possible, Flynn was put in charge of handling the sale. The result of his dealings with some dishonest mining promoters was that they--a Captain Fleece (appropriately named), his brother, and two other partners--acquired a one-third interest in the Eureka property but failed to come through with their promised down payment. When in November 1906 a bona-fide investor from Rhyolite named Sherwood Aldrich examined the claims, he became quite excited and offered to buy them for \$180,000 cash if a clear title could be produced.

This turned out to be impossible, for Fleece and his associates blocked the sale by so hopelessly tying up the property in litigation that the future seemed bleak indeed for its sale to anyone except Fleece, who had of course offered to buy the other two interests at a ridiculously low price. Flynn and Kavanagh became so fed up with the whole situation and discouraged at their inability to resolve it, that they drew up papers in which they relinquished all their interest in the claims to Aguerberry. The Eureka property, therefore, was lying idle while the Cashier Mining Company was producing rich dividends from Shorty Harris's original claims. Luckily for Aguerberry he still had thirty or more properties in the surrounding area that he could sell or lease, and so he managed to survive the period. Despite several trips to Los Angeles during which he tried to reach an agreement with Fleece about starting operations on the Eureka, no headway was made, Fleece being occupied now with a leased claim at Skidoo. It was not until the financial panic of 1907 hit that a way out for Pete seemed to offer itself.

After having kept up the assessment work on the mine for three years, Aguerberry let it lapse when Fleece and his brother discontinued their mining operations at Skidoo and left that part of the country. Aguerberry arranged with a friend to relocate the claims and then sell them back to him, thus establishing himself as sole owner by the spring of 1909. He immediately commenced driving a tunnel in pursuit of the gold vein and continued working the mine for the rest of his days.<sup>133</sup>

(vii) Cashier Mill Opens for Business

To pass the time until final installation of the Cashier Company mill, its employees were kept busy blocking out ore and constructing a seven-mile pipeline in connection with the mill's operation. Although little more could be done on the Harris property until erection of the mill that would process the large reserves already on hand, Aguerberry was by now steadily developing the Eureka Claim and drawing out large quantities of ore for shipment to the Skidoo mill for processing. By the middle of July the Cashier amalgamation and concentration mill was almost finished, with production expected to begin almost immediately. It was hoped that proceeds from concentrating the generous amount of high-grade ore here, running \$50 per ton, would enable construction of a larger plant later. By early August the Cashier Mine had made its first clean-up and sent out the first shipment of gold bullion. After about two weeks of operation the mill had yielded around \$2,000. It was hoped that a better percentage of recovery could be realized from the high-grade Cashier ore, and it was expected that the five-stamp mill would soon produce from \$10,000 to \$12,000 per month.<sup>134</sup>

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133. Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry, pp. 81-97.

134. Rhyolite Herald, 14 July and 7 August 1909.

A couple of weeks later the ore being treated at the mill was averaging better than \$60 a ton, mainly in gold. The plant was working about 3½ tons of ore per day, meaning a daily gross output of about \$200, or \$6,000 a month by using only one shift. Cyanide tanks had not yet been built. Ore for the mill was coming from the new tunnel above the old workings, rather than from the 100-foot shaft.<sup>135</sup> By September the plant was judged so successful an operation that the company intended to install an additional five 1,000-pound stamps within the next month, increasing the daily output from the current six tons to about twenty.<sup>136</sup>

A couple of months later a W.C. Price accompanied by a mining engineer traveled to Harrisburg to view Crawford's mine in anticipation of purchasing it. The exact condition of the mill at this time is unknown, but in January 1911 the Cashier was shipping its \$50 a ton ore to the Randsburg mill and Augereberry was shipping \$60 rock there.<sup>137</sup> In February 1911 controlling interest in the Cashier Group was acquired by Sam Godby of Pioche, T.G. Crawford having retired. A force of men sent in to explore the property by the new owner discovered more areas of ore and definitely proved extensions of the vein and shoots. This decided Godby to immediately put a ten-stamp mill into operation, suggesting that one had not been in use up to this time.<sup>138</sup>

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135. Ibid., 21 August 1909.

136. Bullfrog Miner, 11 September 1909. This article states that the mill started work with only three small stamps instead of the projected five.

137. Inyo Register, 17 November 1910; Rhyolite Herald, 14 January 1911.

138. Rhyolite Herald, 11 February 1911.

In the fall of 1911 two persons named Crowell and Lindley were slated to assume charge of the Cashier Mine, probably for the incoming owner W.C. Price, their intention being to move the hoisting plant from the Midas Mine onto the Cashier property. By late October W.C. Price had taken over direction of the Cashier Mine, and had levied an assessment of 5¢ per share on the company stock to speed up development. The twenty-five horsepower gasoline hoisting rig from the Midas was soon added to the Cashier property to facilitate ore retrieval, and machinery and supplies were being freighted to Harrisburg in preparation for the start of development work. It was rumored that the company intended to purchase the Eclipse Development Company mill and move it to the Cashier. In December it was reported that the Cashier Mine was producing so well that a mill was imperative. What happened to the earlier one, or whether it was just insufficient for the workload, is unclear. By early 1912, after development work at the mine had been carried on steadily for over two years, it was being said that the ore body was now sufficiently proven to justify erection of a (another?) mill. Possibly for this purpose, assessment no. 6 of 1½ cents per share was levied on the corporation's stock.<sup>139</sup>

The pipeline froze up during the winter of 1912-13, necessitating extensive repair work. In the summer of 1913 six leasers were reported to be working at Harrisburg and Skidoo in addition to Aguerberry, who had mined ten carloads of high-grade ore for shipment. Requests were still circulating for a custom mill for the area, indicating that any existing plants were already overloaded. By June 1914 Price had

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139. Ibid., 7, 21, 28 October, 23 December 1911, 20 January 1912; Inyo Independent, 19 July 1912.

ten or twelve men installing machinery for concentrating and working his ore; twenty-one tons of equipment were either ready for shipment to Harrisburg, on the way, or on the ground.<sup>140</sup> Then in September mention is again made of a five-stamp mill running at Harrisburg. By March 1915 the Cashier Mine reportedly had a ten-stamp mill with a cyanide plant projected for installation. Around 1916 the Cashier Mine was said to have produced 15,000 tons of ore averaging \$20 per ton, all taken from the first mine level and above since the ore body pinched out below 140 feet in the shaft. The ore was being treated in a five-stamp Joshua Hendy mill and the pulp run over amalgamation plates and the tailings cyanided. Capacity of the mill was twenty tons per twenty-four hours, with water supplied from the Skidoo pipeline two miles away and power furnished by a distillate engine. The property was under lease to P.R. Turner and Robert Weir, who were stoping on the 100-foot level and intending to run fifty tons through the mill before their lease expired in October 1916.<sup>141</sup>

(viii) Waning Years

From 1917 to 1938 Aguerberry's Eureka Mine (both the Eureka and Cashier properties were referred to now as the Harrisburg Mine) was listed as active. In 1917 it was said to show development consisting of a forty-foot crosscut tunnel and several shallow pits. Ten tons of ore treated at the Cashier mill had yielded \$50 per ton. In 1926 it was listed as idle, as was the Cashier Mine, still owned by the Cashier Mining

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140. Inyo Register, 10 July 1913, 11 June 1914.

141. Ibid., 24 September 1914; Engineering and Mining Journal 6 March 1915, p. 468; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Fifteenth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist (1917), p. 76.

Company of Los Angeles. On this latter property a 400-foot inclined shaft with four levels, at 100, 200, 300, and 400 feet, produced free-milling gold quartz ore assayed at \$20 per ton.<sup>142</sup> The Cashier was possibly being operated by Roy Journigan, who also was working the Skidoo Mine, in 1938; at least he was treating the ore in his twenty-ton cyanide plant 5½ miles northwest of Harrisburg in which he employed fifteen men. In this year the Cashier property comprised seven claims and was owned by J.P. Aguerberry. (A brief history of the mine written at this time said that it had been worked from 1906 to 1910 by the original owners, was bought by the Cashier Mining Company of Los Angeles, which operated it until 1914, and then was relocated by Aguerberry. Three thousand tons of ore were estimated to be on the dump, carrying \$15 in gold per ton. Recent ore mined from the tunnel had been hauled to the Journigan Mining and Milling Company plant at Emigrant Spring for treatment, with production estimated at \$150,000.)<sup>143</sup>

In 1951 the Independent (Cashier) Mine property of seven gold claims was owned by Ambrose Aguerberry. The workings consisted of a complex arrangement of shafts, adits, drifts, stopes, crosscuts, and winzes. Ore assaying \$7 to \$12 per ton in gold and silver had been found. Several prospect shafts and tunnels existed northwest of the main shaft near the ridge. Although an adit had been added 250 feet north of the main shaft, the property was idle.<sup>144</sup>

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142. Eakle et al, Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 75; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 22 (October 1926):466-67, 469; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):399.

143. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (January 1938):10; 34 (October 1938):391.

144. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):44.

(ix) Mines in the Harrisburg Vicinity

Many claims were located in the general vicinity of Harrisburg about which only a brief mention could be found: a company owned by one William Taylor operated the Delaware Claim; Pete Aguerberry located several claims in the area in addition to the Eureka, namely the Black Hill Mine, one-half mile east of Harrisburg, located on 1 January 1911; the Black Hill No. 1, one-half mile east from Harrisburg and joining the Black Hill Mine on the north, also located 1 January 1911; the Eagle Nos. 1 and 2 silver mines, two miles southeast of Harrisburg, located 19 May 1916; and the Jupiter Quartz Claim, situated 1-3/4 miles east of Harrisburg on the Blackwater Trail, located 10 January 1917.<sup>145</sup>

More detailed information is available on the Napoleon, Independence, and Independent mines located by Aguerberry. (The Napoleon Mine was discussed in the previous section.) The mining group consisting of the South Independence, South Independence No. 1, East Independence, Independence No. 1, Independent, and Independent Nos. 2 and 3 is unpatented and covers about 140 acres. The Independent location incorporates the old Cashier lode. The Independence Mine, later amended and renamed the Independence No. 1, was originally discovered by Martin Etcheverry in 1909. This was a relocation of the Eureka No. 1 and was joined on the south by the Providence No. 1. It was later quitclaimed to Pete Aguerberry in 1938. The East Independence, near the mouth of the Cashier Gold Mining Company tunnel and joining the east side line of the Independence Mine, was located by Martin Etcheverry in 1910 and quitclaimed to

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145. Bullfrog Miner, 12 April 1907; Notices of Location, in Inyo County Mining Locations, Vol. 12, p. 304; Vol. 12, p. 305; Book 20, p. 5; Book 20, pp. 547-48.

Aguereberry in 1938; the South Independence (abandoned mining claim known as the Providence No. 1 owned by the Cashier Gold Mining Company; had two shafts on the south side of the hill and one tunnel on the east side near the north end line and was bounded on the north end line by the Independence Mine) and the South Independence No. 1 (abandoned claim known as Providence No. 2 owned by Cashier Gold Mining Company; joined on east by South Independence Mine and on north was bounded by Independence No. 1) were both located by Pete Aguereberry in 1921; the Independent (bound on the south by the Providence No. 2 and joined on the east by the Independence Mine) and the Independent No. 2 (bound on the south by the Horn Toad No. 3 and joined on the east by the Independent No. 1) were both located by Martin Etcheverry in 1910 and quitclaimed to Aguereberry in 1938; the Independent No. 3 had been located by Etcheverry in 1910 and was relocated by Aguereberry in 1935. The Independent No. 1 (bound on the south by the Providence No. 3 and joining the Independent Mine on the east) was located in 1910 by Martin Etcheverry; as were the Independent No. 3 (bound on the south by the Horn Toad No. 4 and joining the Independent No. 2 on the east) and the Independent No. 4 (bound on the east by the Independent No. 3.) The South Independent No. 3 was located by Aguereberry and filed on in 1935.

Upon Aguereberry's death in 1945, his property descended to his heirs--Ambroise, Joseph, Arnand (Arnaud), James Peter, Mariane, and Catherine Aguereberry. Not all the heirs contributed assessment work on the claims, however, so that by the fall of 1958 only Joseph and Ambroise retained Pete's old claims, including the Napoleon.<sup>146</sup> By 1960 the Independent Mine was being used mainly as a weekend

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146. Notice of Location, Quartz Claim, Independence Mine, in Inyo County Mining Locations, Vol. 11, pp. 115-16, and Vol. 12, p. 306; Alvin H. Lense, "Mineral Report on the South Independence, South

retreat by Joe Aguerberry. Although it had produced a small amount of ore as recently as 1958, the last profitable shipment was around 1910. Assessment work in the past few years had consisted only of camp rehabilitation.<sup>147</sup>

(b) Present Status

Harrisburg is located about 1-3/4 miles east of the Emigrant Canyon Road on the way to Aguerberry Point. The first structures noticed at the site are the three houses composing Pete Aguerberry's old mining camp. The westernmost structure appears to be Pete's original two-room cabin, built about 1907, with a lean-to shed attached to the south side. The cabin still contains appliances, personal clothing, and assorted kitchen utensils. The middle cabin of the three, a guest house, was built by 1941 and contains three fully furnished bedrooms and a bathroom. The cabin on the east, a furnished two-room structure, was not standing when Aguerberry's estate was settled in 1946 and was evidently built by his nephew Joseph who became administrator of the property. All the buildings are white with green trim. Scattered elsewhere over the site are tool remnants, stone

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Independence No. 1, East Independence, Independence No. 1, Independent, Independent No. 2, and Independent No. 3 Unpatented Mining Claims in the Death Valley National Monument, Inyo County, California," July 1974, pp. 1, 11, 20-21; Notices of Location, Quartz Claims, in Inyo County Mining Locations, East Independence Mine, Vol. 10, p 469; South Independence Mine, Vol. 25, p. 234; South Independence No. 1, Vol. 25, pp. 234-35; Independent Mine, Vol. 10, pp. 466-67; Independent No. 2, Vol. 10, pp. 467-68; Independent No. 1, Vol. 10, p. 467; Independent No. 3, Vol. 10, p. 468; Independent No. 4, Vol. 10, pp. 468-69; South Independent No. 3, Vol. 48, p. 385; Decree of Settlement . . . of the Estate of James P. Aguerberry, Dec., 5 August 1946.

147. Memo, Matt Ryan to C/R, on Active Mining Claims of the Emigrant District, 1 March 1962.



Illustration 150.

Aguereberry Camp at Harrisburg, view to west.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 151.

Collapsed dugout by road, Aguereberry Camp.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 185.  
Burska Mine, site of blacksmith shop to right.  
Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 183.  
Stone building  
Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 152.

Eureka Mine, site of blacksmith shop to right.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 153.

Stone dugout between Eureka Mine and Cashier Mill ruin.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 154

Castle Hill ruin on east end of Harrisburg Hill.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 155



Dugout

Photo by

Illustration 154.

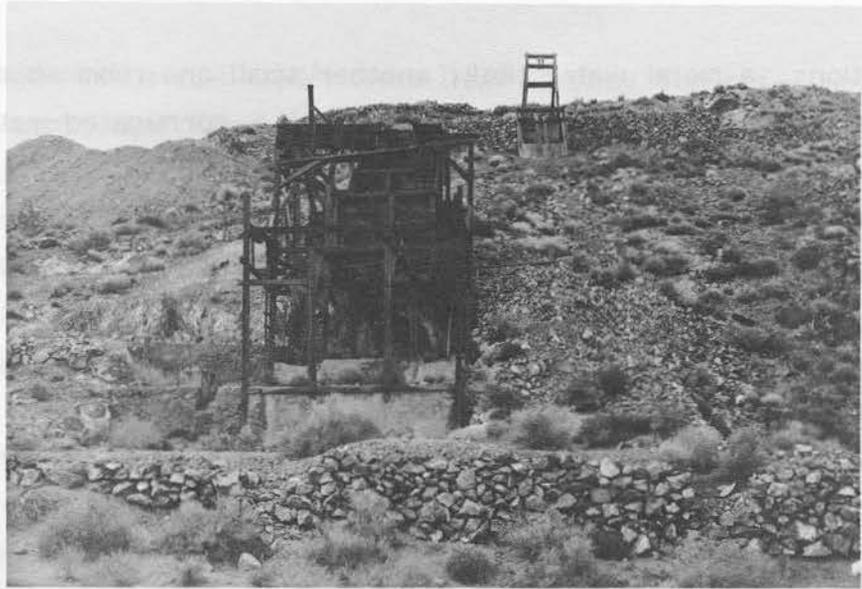
Cashier Mill ruin on east end of Harrisburg hill.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 155.

Dugout on opposite side of ridge from Aguerberry Camp.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. This nomination can be justified on several counts. First is its

foundations, a metal water tank, another small one-room shack, and a caved-in dugout that once consisted of a corrugated-metal roof over a wood frame.

Continuing eastward along the slope of the hill one comes to two metal-lined chutes serving an adit. On around the point of the ridge are another caved-in dugout ruin consisting of wood debris, corrugated-metal roof remains, and a door section; a tunnel possibly used as living quarters containing a stoped area, a wooden table, some stove remains, and a wooden frame doorway inside dividing the space into two rooms. A stove stands outside the entrance; a stone dugout with standing walls and a wooden door, reputedly lived in once by either Shorty or Pete in the early days; the ruins of Aguerberry's Eureka Mine and the remains of his blacksmith shop and compressor buildings; and the three-level ruins of the Cashier Mine and Mill, consisting of large cement foundations and an impressive one-chute ore bin.

All over the hillside and ridge are prospect holes, stone foundation walls, and evidence of underground excavations associated with the Cashier lode, in addition to a timbered 400-foot inclined shaft. Further around on the south side of the ridge is a partial wood- and tin-sided dugout, and further west another one completely in ruins with only stone walls remaining. East along the road to Aguerberry Point and south of the road is a tunnel used as living quarters--a hollowed-out area measuring about five by twelve feet--with the remains of stone walls out front. Across the gully from it are some waste dumps.

#### (c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Harrisburg site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. This nomination can be justified on several counts. First is its

association with two well-known Death Valley figures--Jean Pierre Aguerberry and Shorty Harris. Aguerberry was a Basque, born in 1874, who emigrated to the United States at the age of sixteen. He worked at many different jobs in his new home, including shepherding, stagecoach driving, haying, mining, delivering milk, etc., until short times spent in Tonopah in 1901 and Goldfield in 1902 convinced him that prospecting and mining were to be his future. When labor trouble started in the latter town, Pete pulled out, grubstaked by Frank Flynn, a rancher, and Tom Kavanagh, a restaurateur in Goldfield. Aware of the strikes that had been made in Death Valley at Bullfrog, Greenwater, the Keane Wonder, and near Ballarat, Pete decided to prospect toward Rhyolite and Ballarat, eventually winding up at Greenland (Furnace Creek) Ranch where he met Shorty Harris and began the historic journey that resulted in the discovery of Harrisburg.

Aguereberry lived on his Eureka Claim at Harrisburg for the remainder of his life, working the mine mostly by himself and reportedly recovering \$175,000 in gold. At various times he took odd jobs in the area such as stage driving, working on cattle roundups, performing road work for the county, or mining for others, simply for the sake of diversion, but he always returned to his own place when he tired of that. He often took tourists through his mine and also delighted in showing them the view over Death Valley from Aguerberry Point to which he had driven a 4½-mile-long road by pick, shovel, barrow, and blasting powder.<sup>148</sup>

At the time of Pete's death he left to his heirs in the way of personal property: one Ingersol-Rand compressor, one jackhammer, one stopper, a 1931 Ford pickup, two

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148. Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry, passim.

shacks, one toilet, one shower, four beds, one stove, and two dining tables with cooking utensils.<sup>149</sup> When this writer visited the site in 1978 the cabins were still completely furnished, complete with made-up beds, furniture, and provisions. The Eureka Mine supported Aguerberry from the time of its initial discovery up until his death in the 1940s. Connected with this one-man operation were a compressor building and blacksmith shop.

The Cashier lode claim, originally belonging to Shorty Harris, is distinctive because of the large mill ruin associated with it. It also at one time had a connected powder house and blacksmith shop built out of \$100-a-ton ore.<sup>150</sup> Although it was worked from about 1906 off and on until the late 1930s, the mine's exact production record is uncertain, ranging from a whopping \$300,000 in 1916 to \$250,000 in 1936, \$150,000 in 1938, down to a reported total of only \$70,000 in gold and silver in 1957.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to its association with Aguerberry and Harris, the townsite is an outstanding historical resource because of the variety of early mining lifestyles and technological processes displayed here. Although the short-lived camp was composed mostly of tents, several other modes of shelter were used over the years, as evidenced by the presence of structures ranging from Aguerberry's neat homestead to several small caved-in dugouts, a larger dugout with stone walls and a brush and pebble

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149. Decree of Settlement . . . of the Estate of James P. Aguerberry, Dec., 5 August 1946.

150. Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

151. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 15 (1915-16):75-76; Nolan, "Nonferrous-metal deposits," USGS Bulletin 871, p. 37; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 31 (1938):391, and Journal of Mines and Geology 53 (1957):459.

roof (especially valuable for its information on construction techniques), exploratory tunnels or adits enlarged and used as shelters, to frame and metal dugout/shacks on the south side of the ridge. Mining technology from the early 1900s on is well illustrated by a large multi-level mill ruin, a well-timbered shaft, extensive underground excavations with stone retaining walls, and adits. Not only are these interesting in and of themselves but also because of the contrast between the two mining operations involved--the Cashier Group run by large-scale commercial interests, and the adjoining Eureka Mine that was basically a one-man operation for forty years.

(10) Jordan Mine

No information on this site was found, although Benjamin Levy locates it in the Wildrose Mining District south of the Star of the West Mine.<sup>152</sup>

(11) Star of the West Mine

(a) History

This property was one of the group of silver mines located by the Nossano brothers about 1874 in the nascent Rose Springs Mining District. Not to be confused with it was a mine of the same name situated on the west side of Woodpecker Canyon in the Panamint City area in 1874.<sup>153</sup> Appearing to be a good-sized operation in 1875, the Star of the West No. 1 was producing ore assaying at \$845.13; the No. 2 was

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152. Levy, Historical Background Study, Historical Base Map No. 5.

153. Inyo Independent, 5 December 1874; Notice of Location, Panamint Mining Register (1897), Book B, p. 230. More information on the Nossano brothers will be found in the section on the Blue Bell Mine.

assaying at \$1,099.61, and the No. 3 at \$1,189.13.<sup>154</sup> Included with the properties purchased by the Inyo Mining Company in 1876, the mine had no notable production thereafter.<sup>155</sup>

(b) Present Status

The location of the Star of the West Mine was not pinpointed by this writer, although Levy places it south of the North Star Mine.<sup>156</sup>

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

Due to the paucity of documentary data on the Star of the West Mine, it was probably not a significant part of Death Valley mining history.

(12) North Star Mine

(a) History

The North Star Mine is especially difficult to research because this was a fairly common name for mines of that period. This particular claim was another one of the group of silver mines located by the Nossano brothers toward the end of 1874, and was reportedly located three to five miles south of the Garibaldi. One press report noted

That the valuable mines in the Panamint range are not confined to those located in the Panamint District alone is certain from what I have learned in the last few days, and know from ore received here from the Rose Spring District, twenty-five miles north of Panamint, in the same

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154. Certificate of Labor, Star of the West, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book B, p. 200; Mining & Scientific Press, 24 April 1875, p. 268.

155. Inyo Independent, 11 March 1876. The mine was listed as assessable property of the Inyo Consolidated Silver Mining Co. on the Inyo Co. Delinquent Tax-List for 1876. Ibid., 3 February 1877.

156. Levy, Historical Background Study, Historical Base Map No. 5. Also see Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1876, App. JJ (Washington: GPO, 1877), p. 65.

range of mountains. The ore in good part is of the same character as that of Panamint. Assays made by J. L. Porter of Cerro Gordo . . . give the very good return of \$300 to \$1,000 per ton in silver. These mines are the Star of the West, and the North Star, owned by Mr. J. Morsano [Nossano].<sup>157</sup>

One can easily be misled by numerous descriptions of activity on a North Star ledge "about 2½ miles in a Northwest direction from the town of Panamint," about which information surfaced with some frequency.<sup>158</sup> Because of certain vagaries in the boundary descriptions this may or may not be the North Star Mine in the Panamint Mining District "On which the Company are running a cut or level from the head of Marvel Canyon."<sup>159</sup> In April 1875 assays were obtained on the Nossano Brothers' newly-discovered silver ledges in the Rose Springs District, the North Star among those sampled. In this particular instance the ore ran \$1,363.23 a ton, although the correspondent adds that assays from that mine had occasionally reached as high as \$1,700 per ton.<sup>160</sup>

The North Star was one of the properties purchased by agents for the Inyo Mining Company in 1876,<sup>161</sup> and was chosen as the headquarters site for the company's

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157. Inyo Independent, 5 December 1874. Mention of this mine also appears in the Independent, 27 February 1875, and Panamint News, 9 March 1875.

158. Panamint Mining Register (1897), Book B, p. 305.

159. Panamint News, 25 February 1875; News concerning one or the other of these two North Star mines appears in Panamint News, 23 March 1875; Mining & Scientific Press, 5 June 1875, p. 364, and 26 June 1875, p. 413.

160. Mining & Scientific Press, 24 April 1875, p. 268.

161. Inyo Independent, 19 February 1876; 11 March 1876.

projected extensive operations in the area. In March the company superintendent was

only awaiting the arrival of [Remi] Nadeau's teams, with a full supply of mining tools, stores, etc., to commence active operations on their several mines. Their prospects are indeed flattering, and it is the prediction of all who have seen the property that they have purchased, that theirs will prove the most prosperous of any mining enterprise on this side of the Sierras. They secured seven well defined ledges, showing, probably, the richest average *croppings of silver ore ever found outside of Virginia City*, and much surprise is often expressed that they could have purchased it at so low a figure.<sup>162</sup>

Two travelers to the Rose Springs District in April were given a tour of the North Star Mine, "which is considered one of the best owned by this company [Inyo Consolidated Silver Mining Co.]."<sup>163</sup> Development consisted of a forty-foot tunnel run in on one vein and a shaft sunk on a second one. High-grade ore was being extracted, some of it assaying over \$2,000 and generally expected to mill over \$200 per ton.<sup>164</sup> By June a shaft had also been sunk at the mouth of the tunnel and was producing ore assaying \$301 in silver per ton.<sup>165</sup>

The North Star was probably abandoned about the same time as the Garibaldi, around 1877, when papers show the Inyo Silver Mining Company was being assessed for 3,000 feet at \$2 a foot in the North Star Mine.<sup>166</sup> Six years later

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162. Mining & Scientific Press, 18 March 1876, p. 181.

163. Coso Mining News, 29 April 1876.

164. Ibid.

165. Mining & Scientific Press, 3 June 1876, p. 357.

166. Inyo Independent, 3 February 1877.

the North Star Mine was relocated by Medbury and Hunter as the Mohawk, and its location was given as seven miles southeast of Emigrant Spring and seven airline miles north of Telescope Peak.<sup>167</sup> N. J. Medbury, W. K. Miller, and J. M. Keeler soon became partners in the Mohawk, Blue Bell (aka Garibaldi), and Argonaut (aka Nellie Grant) mines, and in 1884, interested in testing their ore's milling potential, Miller hauled 10½ tons of the material from these mines thirty miles across the Panamint Valley to a mill in Snow Canyon. Four bars of bullion, weighing 3,400 ozs. were produced,<sup>168</sup> proving that the material was of good milling quality.

For several reasons these mines should have had bright and profitable futures: the ledges were being well and continuously developed (the Mohawk supported at least a tunnel and shaft by this time), roads throughout the area were relatively functional, and wood and water could be found within a reasonable distance. What prevented all these small operations from reaching their full potential was the lack of nearby milling facilities enabling the ore to be worked profitably. Compounding the problem over the long run was the fact that although small operators could initially open the mines, turning them into paying propositions required the involvement of practical mining men with sound judgement and backed by solid investment capital.<sup>169</sup> As it turned out, most of these small mines passed into

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167. Location Notice, Mohawk Mine, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 313. Another Mohawk Lode, above the Wonder Mine near Panamint City, was filed on in 1874. Panamint Mining Register (1897), Book B, pp. 50, 152. The North Star was not referred to as the Mohawk until about 1883.

168. Inyo Independent, 26 July 1884.

169. Ibid., 2 August 1884; Report of the Director of the Mint (1885), p. 163.

oblivion, and although the North Star was still mentioned in 1889, the extent of its life beyond that date is uncertain.<sup>170</sup>

Several later miscellaneous references were found that might pertain to this property. In 1896 Charles Anthony of Darwin filed a location notice on a Morning Star Mine in the Panamint Mountains about 1½ miles north of the Consolidated or Consolidation Mine, a property formerly known as the North Star Mine. In 1903 notice of a land transaction involving the North Star and Valley View mines in the Panamint Range was found. There was a Valley View Mine operating in the Wild Rose District around 1884 in the vicinity of the Blue Bell, Argonaut, Mohawk, Blizzard, and Jeanette mines. Its 1883 location notice specifies it as being six miles east of Emigrant Spring on Mineral Hill on the right-hand side of the trail leading from the spring to the Blue Bell Mine. It seems to have been operating during the Skidoo period also. The transaction mentioned might, however, refer to the Valley View Mine discovered about 1896 east of Post Office Spring on the west side of the Panamints, and if so, the North Star property mentioned is probably one of those in the vicinity of Panamint City.<sup>171</sup> This latter seems the most probable since the 1903 article suggests that much development work had been done on the Valley View; the mine by that name located within the monument probably could not boast much progress until after 1907. Open to question is a location

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170. Mining & Scientific Press, 14 September 1889, p. 204.

171. Location Notice, Morning Star Mine, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book I, p. 44; Inyo Independent, 21 August 1903; Ibid., 22 November 1884; Report of the Director of the Mint (1885), p. 163; Notice of Location, Valley View Mine, recorded 24 March 1883, located by Medbury and Hunter, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 314; See also "Geographical Map of Skidoo," 1907, published in George Koenig, "23" Skidoo and Panamint, Too!, Death Valley '49ers Keepsake No. 11 (San Bernardino, Ca.: Inland Printing & Engraving Co., 1971), p. 9.

notice for the North Star Nos. 1-6, situated one mile east of "Kennedy's Springs Wild Rose Canyon," located in April 1907.<sup>172</sup>

(b) Present Status

The exact location of the North Star Mine was not found by this writer. The property seems to have undergone no intensive mining since its early days, at least not under its original name, and it is entirely possible that no recognizable remains exist. Or, more recent mining operations may have completely obliterated the original workings.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The lack of information found on the property is probably indicative of its lack of historical significance.

(13) Journigan's Mill

(a) History

The early history of activities on, and ownership of, this site, located in the Panamint Range two miles south of Emigrant Spring on the west side of the Emigrant Canyon Road, is a rather confusing chronicle of the juggling of titles to water rights to any or all of the six springs located near the mill site. These springs and the mill site were involved in intermittent mining and milling operations from at least the early 1920s through the early 1970s. According to a monument memo a one-stamp mill was processing Skidoo ore here around 1909, but this allegation was not substantiated by data found during the course of this study. Carl R. Suksdorf and Frank (Shorty) Harris purportedly ran a ball mill here in 1918 while performing custom work for miners in the vicinity. Suksdorf, at least, was still in control of the property in April 1923 when he filed for the water

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172. Notices of Location, North Star Nos. 1-6, Wild Rose Mining District, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book F, pp. 146-51.

rights to the six nearby springs (Green, Canyon, Burro, Malapi, Burns, and Willow) for use at his five-acre Gold Dollar Millsite and camp where he was presumably processing ore from his Gold Dollar Mine about one mile northwest of Skidoo. This application was revoked in February 1926 for failure to develop the water source and use it beneficially. In 1924 Shorty Borden and Harris are said to have run a five-stamp mill on the site to process ore from Skidoo and the Poppy Mine.<sup>173</sup>

A Dr. Archibald owned the property in 1926 and a Mr. Hoover was milling there until 1932. Beginning in 1934, prompted by passage of the Gold Reserve Act, gold mining activity in the United States began to accelerate with the increase in the price of gold to \$35 per ounce. In March of that year Roy Journigan, E. L. Journigan, and L. E. Steinberger located the five-acre Gold Bottom Mill Site Claim. (No chain of title exists between Suksdorf and Journigan, the latter not relocating the Gold Dollar Millsite, but merely locating in the same general area.) Roy Journigan acquired the interests of his partners in the mill site sometime prior to April 1939 and possibly as early as May 1937 when

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173. James H. Bennett and Roy Journigan Correspondence, cited in Memo, Park Naturalist, DEVA NM, to Supt., DEVA NM, on Interpretive Signs, 16 May 1952; Acting Assoc. Reg. Dir., WRO, to Field Solicitor's Office, San Francisco, 2 January 1975, p. 1, DEVA NM mining office; Inyo Independent, 7 July, 25 August, 20 October, 24 November 1923. A single stamp remaining from one of the site's stamping operations lies alongside the Emigrant Canyon Road below the present mill ruins. A 1908 issue of the Inyo Register notes that John Hoppes (Hobbs?) Wilson and associates (assayers and mining engineers at Skidoo) had acquired the water rights to Burro and Quail springs and were planning to open a custom mill in Emigrant Canyon about one-half mile above Jack Hartigan's roadhouse at an elevation of 4,365 feet. Water was to be piped to the ten-stamp mill via Burro Canyon. A small electrical plant would be operated in addition to the reduction works. 23 January 1908. The Poppy Group was located two miles west of the Skidoo camp. Bullfrog Miner, 25 January 1908.

he applied for the water rights to Green, Burro, Willow, and Burns springs for use at the Gold Bottom Mill Site, which at present was receiving an insufficient supply from just one spring in the area. On 20 December 1937 the Journigan Mining and Milling Company requested a permit to construct a small pipeline to divert these waters to the mill across monument property. This group of springs evidently supplied Journigan's Mill up until World War II.

Many formerly productive gold mines in the Death Valley and surrounding regions opened up again during these prewar years, given impetus by the presence of a custom mill in the area. As a result, Journigan and Judge Gray, operator of the Skidoo Mine, entered into a business arrangement for the reduction of the latter's ores at the former's custom mill, which was also processing ore hauled by truck from the Cashier Mine at Harrisburg.<sup>174</sup>

In January 1937 Roy Journigan secured a lease on the Skidoo Mine, about 2½ airline miles northeast of his mill, from the Gray and Worcester Mining Company, which had operated the mine for the last two years and used Journigan's Mill to process the ore. Journigan employed five men to work the old stopes on the property, and old dump tailings were also being hauled to Journigan's amalgamation and cyanide plant for treatment. Machinery at the plant consisted now of a twenty-five-ton ore bin, a 6 in. by 8 in. Blake crusher, a twenty-five-ton fire ore bin, a 3 x 4 ft. Straub cone-type ball mill, seven 14 x 5-ft. cyanide tanks, 4 x 8-foot amalgamation plates, and four-compartment zinc boxes,

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174. Memo, Park Naturalist, DEVA NM, to Supt., DEVA NM, 16 May 1952; Land and Water Claims, Inyo Co., Book C, p. 288; Record of Ownership of Gold Bottom Mill Site, DEVA NM mining office; Actg. Assoc. Reg. Dir., WRO, to Field Solicitor's Office, 2 January 1975, p. 2; John R. White, Supt., DEVA NM, to the Dir., NPS, 31 December 1937.

Illustration 156.

Journigan Mining and Milling Co., 1935. Note stamp mill to right of lower entrance road.

Photo by George Grant, courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 157.

Buildings on mill site south of plant, 1962.

Photo by Matt Ryan, courtesy of DEVA NM.



the entire operation being powered by a fifteen h.p. Fairbanks-Morse gasoline engine. Four men were employed working the Skidoo ore and performing custom work for other mines in the area. The plant's capacity was twenty-five tons per day.<sup>175</sup>

On 14 April 1939 Roy Journigan and his wife Mary agreed to sell the Gold Bottom Mill Site to J. E. O'Donnell, who assigned the agreement to C. O. Mittendorf, who, on 12 February 1940 proceeded to assign his interest in the 14 April agreements to the Del Norte Mining Company, a Nevada corporation. The Del Norte Group of mines, just north of the Skidoo Mine operation, had been the site of an important low-grade gold ore discovery in 1936, and a short while later were being actively developed, the ore being trucked to the Keeler Gold Company's mill for treatment. During World War II, on 20 May 1943, the Journigans quitclaimed all interest in the mill site and the water rights to the Del Norte Company,<sup>176</sup> whose owners were John M. Rogers, Joe Stivers, and Roy C. Troeger. According to the Journal Stivers and Rogers used the water from the springs acquired in their purchase to operate the mill at Skidoo.

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175. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):420-21.

176. Journigan to O'Donnell, Agreement of Sale, in Official Records, Inyo Co., recorded 31 January 1940, Book 48, p. 1, amended 18 January 1940, and recorded 31 January 1940, Book 48, p. 5, in Record of Ownership of Gold Bottom Mill Site, DEVA NM mining office; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):381; Ibid., 36 (January 1940):10; Actg. Assoc. Reg. Dir., WRO, to Field Solicitor's Office, 2 January 1975; Journigans to Del Norte Mining Co., in Official Records, Inyo Co., deed recorded 6 January 1958, Vol. 130, p. 397, in Record of Ownership, DEVA NM mining office; Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (1951):45.

On 1 March 1951 the Del Norte Corporation quitclaimed a 45/100 undivided interest in the mill site and its other property to Joe W. Stivers and a 55/100 undivided interest to Roy C. Troeger. These two, in turn, leased the Gold Bottom Mill Site Claim on a year-to-year basis to James H. Bennett and Max Barginski, who proceeded to locate three other mill sites--the B & B, B & B #1, and B & B #2--contiguous to each other and to the Gold Bottom Mill Site and located up the Burro Canyon branch off Emigrant Canyon toward the mill water sources. The B & B Group was later quitclaimed to Art Detloff.<sup>177</sup>

On 28 November 1953 the Gold Bottom Mill Site and other properties were quitclaimed to Art Detloff and Donald A. Dobbins, who by the next year were busy rebuilding the mill site, which by now consisted of only a few tanks and buildings. A crew of married men and their families were constructing houses and erecting concrete foundations and piers for the cyanide solution plant. The mill was expected to be in operation in three to four months and producing 100 tons per day. The milling process involved sending Skidoo ore through a 16 x 24-inch Wheeling crusher to two 36-inch Allis-Chalmers rolls that would reduce the rock to ¼-inch size. From there it would go to a large Harding ball mill and be ground to a hundred mesh, then on to agitation in a cyanide solution tank. It would then be pumped in sequence to three Dorr thickeners, two of them sixty feet in diameter and twelve feet high. The recovered gold, in solution, would then be pumped from the tanks through an automatic Denver

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177. Quitclaim to Stivers, in Official Records, Inyo Co., recorded 6 January 1958, Vol. 130, p. 410; Quitclaim to Troeger, in Official Records, Inyo Co., recorded 6 January 1958, Vol. 130, p. 406; Lease, in Official Records, Inyo Co., recorded 29 October 1951, Book 94, p. 157; James B. Thompson, Supt., DEVA NM, to Reg. Dir., WRO, 20 December 1974.

gold precipitation unit in a locked room. The gold would then be retorted into bullion bricks and shipped to the mint. Tailings would go to the Oliver filters and be conveyed by belt to the dump. The Skidoo ore was being mined by the Golden Queen Mining Company of Mojave, who had extensively sampled the Skidoo ore bodies and found them ranging in value from \$14 to \$28 per ton. Already 250,000 tons of the ore were ready for breaking and to be hauled to the mill, hauling and milling expenses totalling about \$7.50 per ton with gold recovery running about 90%. The profit on a 100-ton-per-day schedule was expected to be \$7 per ton.<sup>178</sup> Detloff also filed on another mill site, called the "Detloff," adjoining the Journigan site and northeast of it in November 1953. The camp buildings were located on this later claim.

Meanwhile, on 9 March 1954, Joe Stivers and his wife quitclaimed to Roy C. Troeger all their rights in the mill site and other property.<sup>179</sup> By 1959, because Detloff and Dobbins defaulted in the payment of royalties and in other particulars, their Gold Bottom lease was terminated and they quitclaimed all their interests in the mill site to Troeger in February.<sup>180</sup> In September of that year the machinery at Journigan's Mill was purchased by the Argentum Mining Company and was dismantled and moved to Columbia Flats, Nevada, southwest of Mina. Only the two water tanks were left. By 1960 the "Detloff Mill," owned by Roy Troeger, was considered an eyesore, largely due to the ramshackle condition of the remaining buildings.

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178. Ridgecrest (Ca.) Times-Herald, 11 February 1954; Fred W. Binnewies, Supt., DEVA NM, to Reg. Dir., Region Four, 6 January 1955.

179. Quitclaim deed, in Official Records, Inyo Co., recorded 8 April 1954, Vol. 109, p. 327.

180. David E. Hinckle to Robert Mitcham, 31 January 1974.



Illustration 158.

Journigan's Mill ruins. California State Route 8 in background.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



From 1962 to 1964 a contractor, Carl Dresselhaus, and his crew, who were performing annual assessment work on the Del Norte and Skidoo claims, held water rights to Burro Spring, but no milling activity was taking place here. On 1 May 1967 Roy Troeger deeded to David E. and Elisabeth Hinckle an undivided 25% interest in the mill site and his mining claims. (Troeger held the remaining 75% undivided interest until his death in 1973.)<sup>181</sup> Also in 1967 Troeger entered into a use agreement on the Gold Bottom Mill Site with the unregistered Nemo Silver Corporation, O. L. Heironimus, president. This company, which in the lease obtained water rights to one of the nearby springs, intended to install pipelines from the springs to connect to the remaining cyanide tanks. Heironimus and his partner Bill Stapleton then would attempt to cyanide the tailings dump, and hopefully the gold and silver recovered would provide them with enough capital to mine their gold and silver claims in Nemo Canyon. At that time the property supported a frame building, two 25,000-gallon water tanks, and eight old concrete cyanide tanks.<sup>182</sup> This appears to have been the last spate of activity on the site.

(b) Present Status

The only building remaining on the site today is a large white plywood building covered with tarpaper and with a composition-paper roof. Originally it appears to have been divided into three rooms. Inside are a mattress, bedsprings, and an old icebox. Southeast of this structure are wooden foundations of another building, identified in one photograph found by the writer as a CCC building. Northwest of the first building are two cement foundations for other structures (see Illus. 157).

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181. Deed, in Official Records, Inyo Co., recorded 9 May 1967, Vol. 177, p. 947.

182. Sonora (Ca.) Daily Union Democrat, 22 September 1971; Harold E. Thompson, Actg. Supt., DEVA NM, to Larry E. Moss, Sierra Club, 8 September 1971.

Further northwest and around the point of a ridge are the ruin of a collapsed residence and some old car wreckage.

The mill site itself consists of two steel water tanks, an extensive layout of concrete foundations and machinery pillars, and seven concrete cyanide tanks. The concrete ruins are in stable condition.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Journigan's Mill ruins are considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places as being of local significance. The site has been used sporadically for milling purposes from the first decade of the twentieth century up until the early 1970s--the longest continuous usage of a site for milling-related activities within the monument. In addition to its early association with such Death Valley luminaries as Frank Harris and Shorty Borden, it is especially significant because as the largest and best-equipped custom mill in the Wildrose area, its presence in the 1930s stimulated gold-mining activity around Emigrant Spring and provided impetus and encouragement to the reopening of mines in the Skidoo/Harrisburg areas by cutting down markedly on their production costs. Journigan's Mill is the largest ruin of an amalgamation and cyanide plant of the 1930s-1950s period left within the monument boundaries.

The concrete ruins are in good shape and do not require stabilization work. The erection date of the frame building on the site is uncertain, though it appears in a 1954 picture. It might have been one of the structures erected during the Dobbins-Detloff period of ownership in the early 1950s. An interpretive sign on this site presenting a capsulized account of the mill's operation and perhaps an early picture would be of great value, since visitors passing by now have little idea of the type of structure that once stood here.

Illustration 159.

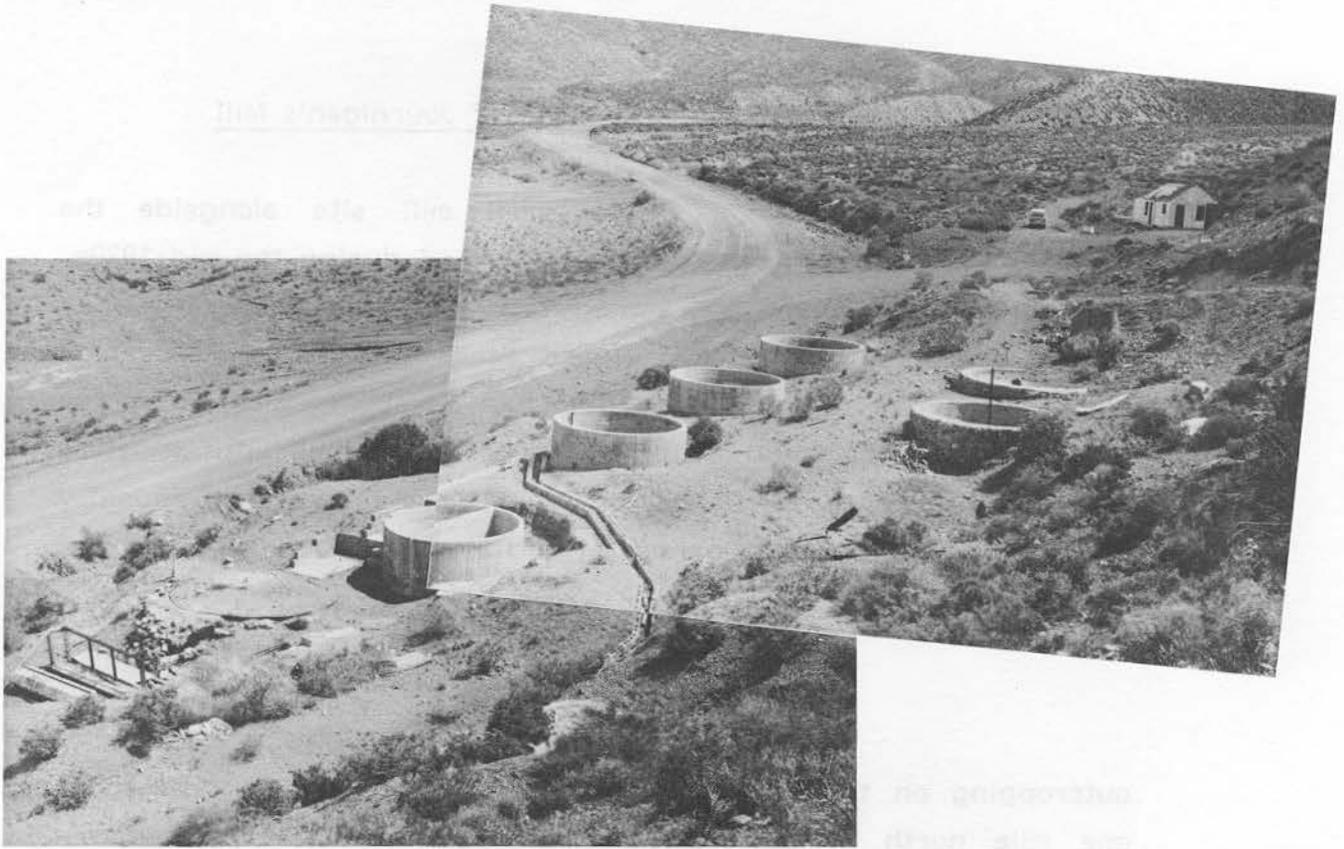
View south down California State Route 8 of Journigan's Mill cyanide tanks. Foundations in preceeding photo are up hill to right.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 160.

Stamp lying on bank by side of road below cyanide tanks.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



outcropping on  
 one side with  
 tanks connected with the concrete pipes, are still present, one  
 being at least twenty feet in diameter, and still containing remnants of



the wooden grid that once  
 foundations and concrete  
 southwest of the mill and  
 appear to be well built on  
 some low stone walls and

(c)  
 adjacent to the mill  
 1935, but the mine etc.  
 no stabilization work is  
 foundations should be left  
 never erected identifying  
 milling operation. The

120 T. B. Goodwin, State  
 June 1941

(14) Mill Site North of Journigan's Mill

(a) History

This small mill site alongside the Wildrose-Emigrant Canyon Road was operated during the mid-1930s. Walter M. Hoover, who has owned several pieces of Death Valley mining property, and a man named Starr ran the small cyanide plant here on ore hauled from Nemo Canyon about 1935. After the partners split up, Starr continued to operate the mill until sometime in the fall when he left California. The area was subsequently cleaned up by monument personnel and a small amount of pipes and fittings removed.<sup>183</sup>

(b) Present Status

The mill straddles a rocky outcropping on the west side of the Emigrant Canyon Road about one mile north of Journigan's Mill. Four cement-lined masonry tanks connected with the cyanide process are still present, one being at least twenty feet in diameter and still containing remains of the wooden grid that once covered the bottom. Stone dry-wall foundations and concrete machinery pilings are also in evidence. Southwest of the mill and along the edge of the ridge are what appear to be small adits or holes of some kind in the rock face. Some low stone walls are associated with them.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

This site is not historically significant. The mill operated for only a short period during the 1930s, but the ruins are interesting and have interpretive value. No stabilization work is thought necessary. The remaining foundations should be left to benign neglect and an interpretive marker erected identifying the area as the site of a 1930s cyanide milling operation. The purpose of the low walls southwest along the

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183. T. R. Goodwin, Supt., DEVA NM, to Dir., WRO, 21 June 1940.



Illustration 161.

Cyanide mill ruins on west side of Emigrant Canyon Road 1 to 1½ miles north of Journigan's Mill.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 162.

Cyanide tank on mill site. Note wooden slats remaining.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



184. DEVA 6M mining shaft; long lead-sulfide, 10 March 1937.

185. Long Independent, 27 March 1937; 27 June 1937.

186. DEVA 6M mining shaft; long lead-sulfide, 10 March 1937.

hillside is unknown, the writer having been unable to examine them closely. They and the nearby caves (?) should be examined for archeological significance.

(15) Gold King Mine

(a) History

The original location of the Gold King lode was made on 29 August 1936 by C. O. Mittendorf, who, along with a fellow Los Angelan, P. H. Greer, bought the property formerly leased by Walter M. Hoover of Lone Pine.<sup>184</sup> Serious mining activity on the site apparently began in 1938, after 200 tons of ore from the mine, whose showings were said to be unusually good, had been found to run \$25.50 per ton at the mill. This encouraging discovery spurred development and resulted in the opening of an extensive ore body by early 1939. As a result the owners decided to send a test run of one thousand tons of extracted ore to the Golden Queen Mill south of Mojave, over 150 miles away, in order to determine the type of milling most suited to this particular ore. Seven ore trucks were needed for the long haul to Lone Pine and then south. This circuitous route was necessitated by the distressing condition of the shorter road south through Emigrant Canyon and the Panamint Valley that made it unfit for use as a mine-to-market road.<sup>185</sup> During this time the Gold King was extensively developed and ore was being produced for shipment on a regular basis. On completion of loading and hauling the 1,000-ton test shipment, mine workers were given a well-deserved vacation, five men finally resuming development work again toward the end of June.<sup>186</sup>

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184. DEVA NM mining office; Inyo Independent, 18 March 1938.

185. Inyo Independent, 24 March 1939; 2 June 1939.

186. Ibid., 23 June 1939.

In late summer the mill of the Del Norte Mining Company, which was operating near Skidoo, was anticipating the arrival of ore for treatment not only from the Del Norte Mine, but also a minimum of 300 tons a month from the nearby Gold King,<sup>187</sup> which, indeed, supplied most of the mill's custom work--1,300 tons of ore--until the arrival of winter forced a cessation of all mining and milling activity.<sup>188</sup> Shipments resumed again in April, when it was also reported that a contract had been let for sinking a new shaft at the mine.<sup>189</sup> The Gold King lode was patented in March 1944, but no data was found about any further mining activity over the next thirty years. A lease/option agreement was executed in 1975 between W. M. Hoover and a Mr. Crowe, with the former again acquiring leasing privileges over the site.<sup>190</sup> In April of this year the Gold King Extension lode was located by Hoover joining the east end of the Gold King.

(b) Present Status

The Gold King patented lode mining claim is located about one mile east of Journigan's Mill in Emigrant Canyon in the hills southwest of Skidoo, and is reached by a rough trail leading east about 6½ miles south of the Emigrant Canyon Road intersection with California State Highway 190. Due to recent washing activity, the trail's merger with the Emigrant Canyon Road is difficult to detect. According to a plat of the property dated 29 May 1942 (Mineral Survey No. 6289), underground workings consisted of a discovery shaft, three short adits, and three inclined shafts, each intersected by short crosscuts, comprising an estimated total footage of 640 linear feet. Although this 1942 plat

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187. Mining Journal, 15 August 1940, p. 17.

188. Ibid., 30 December 1940, p. 16.

189. Ibid., 15 April 1941, p. 23.

190. Crowe to James B. Thompson, Supt., DEVA NM, 12 June 1975.

Illustration 163.

View southeast of shaft and dump in wash, Gold King Mine.

Photo by John A. Latschar, 1978.

Illustration 164.

Collapsed dugout on edge of wash, Gold King Mine.

Photo by John A. Latschar, 1978.



187. (Continued) - See page 186.



187. Inyoite Herald, 19 August 1908.  
188. Mining & Scientific Press, 12 July 1911, p. 11. See also p. 146.  
189. Wells of Inyo County, Southern California, by Land, Water and Mining Claims, from 1860 to 1910.

also lists such improvements as a blacksmith shop, bunkhouse, cookhouse, and office, they are not now extant. In 1975 the remains of a cabin site, a collapsed dugout, and a small powder house were found.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Gold King Mine site has no historical significance. Early 1900 references to a Gold King Mine were found to refer to one by that name in the Bullfrog District.<sup>191</sup> The subject property was not developed until the 1930s, and during that time supported a small mining camp for its employees. Because the underground workings are located in a wash, they have been filled in through the years with sand, gravel, and silt, making the site fairly safe for monument visitors, probably few of whom, however, are aware of its existence. The small powder house and dugout ruin, if still on site, do not appear to pose safety hazards.

(16) Tiny and Sunset Mines

(a) History

A Sunset silver mine was mentioned in the Panamint District as early as 1873, in the vicinity of a Blue Belle Mine; it is fairly certain, however, that this refers to a location near Panamint City.<sup>192</sup> The only other early citation to a mine of that name found by this writer is a location notice for a Sunset Silver Mine in the Rose Spring Mining District 3½ miles northeast from Rose Spring Garden and about ½ mile north of the Virgin Mine.<sup>193</sup> According to the LCS crew who visited the mill ruin site 1½ miles south of Skidoo in 1975, that area had been referred to in the past as the Sunset Mine. No data was found conclusively supporting this designation, although an article in the

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191. Rhyolite Herald, 10 August 1906.

192. Mining & Scientific Press, 19 July 1873, p. 87.

193. Notice of Location, Sunset Silver Mine, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 317.

Mining Journal does mention a gentleman from Barstow, California, who "has been carrying on gold production on a small scale at his Sunset mine in the Panamint district of California for the past six years. His equipment includes a five-ton Straub ball mill, Economy concentrator and amalgamation plates."<sup>194</sup> The monument mining office had no information on this mine, or on who had worked it, although activity evidently took place here as late as the 1940s--a claim marker for a "Tiny Mine" was found by this writer on the site, dated 11 October 1945.

A bona-fide Sunset Mine is located on the south side of the gravel Skidoo Road about three miles east of the Wildrose-Emigrant Canyon Road. Last worked about 1940, its four claims produced about 100 tons of ore averaging \$20 worth of gold per ton for custom mills. Small amounts of silver were also recovered.<sup>195</sup>

(b) Present Status

Approximately 1¼ miles east of the Skidoo-Emigrant Canyon road junction a dirt track leads north for about 1-3/4 miles to the Tiny (Sunset?) Mine site. A trail continues north beyond the mine turnoff across the ridge to Skidoo. The area of mining activity covers the south slope of this ridge, facing Harrisburg Flats, and comprises two sites. About ¼ mile east of the mill site and adjacent to the road continuing on to Skidoo are the remains of a collapsed wooden shack. Of some interest is the road leading from here to the mill site, whose edges and curves have been shorn up and reinforced by a tremendous amount of dry-wall masonry. Basically three levels of mine workings exist, the access road entering on the second level alongside an adit that has been closed off with a tin door. On the

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194. 15 December 1940, p. 18.

195. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):52.

Illustration 165.

Mill ruin at Tiny Mine, one mile south of Skidoo.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1978.



182. Excavation Mine, 2 July 1938

lower level below this adit are the ruins of a milling operation, with cement machinery pilings, dry-wall masonry foundations, and a portion of a wooden ore bin still extant. Built into the hillside a few yards northwest of the mill is a cistern with a cement floor and plastered masonry walls on three sides, the hillside forming the north end. A pipe leads from this reservoir to the mill, probably once supplying the power to run it. The upper level of workings above the access road consists mainly of caved-in stopes, some containing rotted timbers. Ruins of a small tool shed or blacksmith shop are also found on this upper level. A series of stone walls advancing down the hillside suggest that some type of chute arrangement once descended toward the mill. Below the mill ruins is a dry-stone silt dam.

The Sunset Mine about 2½ miles southeast of this site consists only of a timbered vertical shaft with drifts run on three levels. Downhill (northwest) from the mine and across the Skidoo road is a house possibly associated with the mining operation that appears to be of 1930s or 1940s vintage.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

Insufficient data exists on the Tiny Mine site either to provide associative significance or to properly place it in the context of Death Valley mining history. During the LCS survey of the site, purple glass was found on a dump in the area along with hand-finished bottle necks, suggesting an occupancy period from the 1880s up to approximately 1920. The site's proximity to Skidoo and location adjacent to the Skidoo-Harrisburg road suggest that the site might have been prospected in the early 1900s during Skidoo's heyday. At least one set of claims during that period--the Rag Time Group--was reported as lying about two miles south of Skidoo.<sup>196</sup>

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196. Bullfrog Miner, 6 July 1907.



Illustration 166.

Masonry-walled reservoir northwest of mill ruins, Tiny Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 167.

Building site along road to Tiny Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 168.

Sunset Mine headframe on road to Skidoo.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



In the spring of 1909 it was announced that the Skidoo Mines Company planned erection of an additional mill on its property to treat ore from the Wilkinson lease, situated on the north side of Skidoo hill. This lease location was too far from the Skidoo mill to afford hauling of ore from that point, so the company was considering locating a new plant about a mile from the present mill (in which direction was not stated). Water used in the present plant would be conserved and used again at the new structure. The Wilkinson lease, however, was a near neighbor of the Granite Contact property, which was located north of town, so it is doubtful that the new mill would have been built even further south.<sup>197</sup>

The other possibility is that the mill is of a later construction date and associated with the 1930s era of mining activity in the monument. The present southern boundary of the Skidoo Historic District passes through the middle of this site. Since these mill ruins have interpretive value, it is recommended that the site be left in a state of benign neglect and that the southern boundary of the Skidoo Historic District be expanded slightly to include the ruins and the impressive stonework retaining walls.

#### (17) Cabin 1½ Miles Southeast of Skidoo

This site is reached via a 1¼-mile-long track, now almost indistinguishable, leading north from the gravel Skidoo road about 1-¾ miles east of its junction with the paved Emigrant Canyon Road. The area was visited by members of the LCS survey crew in 1975. The only extant structure was a rude miner's cabin of tarpaper and corrugated metal probably built during the 1930s or possibly associated with the 1950s tungsten activity in the area. Miscellaneous debris littered the site.

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197. Inyo Register, 25 March 1909; Rhyolite Herald, 7 April 1909.



Illustration 169.

Cabin 1½ miles southeast of Skidoo.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 170.

Cabin 1½ miles southeast of Skidoo.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



Adjacent to the shack a portion of the Skidoo pipeline scar was visible.

The cabin is not historically significant, but the Skidoo pipeline route scar will be included on the revised Skidoo Historic District National Register form.

(18) Blue Bell (Garibaldi) Mine

(a) History

Historical records and early newspaper accounts provide only fragmentary data on this site. Around 1874-75, shortly after the discovery of Panamint City, a party of Italians--Joe and Zeff Nossano, Joe Lanji, and Charles Andrietta--discovered a group of eight silver mines in the new Wild Rose Spring District in the vicinity of present-day Harrisburg.<sup>198</sup> These new properties included the North Star, Star of the West, Maria, and Polar Star mines, all located in the northeast portion of the district, five miles east of Emigrant Spring, and overlooking Death Valley:

Among them is the 'Garibaldi' mine, a very large lode, showing on the surface hundreds of tons of rich ore. An average sample of the ores of this mine, assayed by J. L. Porter, of Cerro Gordo, yielded \$238.16 per ton in silver.

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198. Milo Page, "Old Panamint History," in Inyo Register, 19 July 1906. Inyo Independent, 5 December 1874. Mention was found as early as 1873 of a Blue Belle Mine in the Panamint District, but this probably refers to the property of that name situated on the east side of Marvel Canyon near the Wyoming Mine, just south of Panamint City. The Garibaldi Mine was not referred to as the Blue Bell until the early 1880s. Mining & Scientific Press, 19 July 1873, p. 87. Notice of Location, Blue Bell Mine, filed 2 January 1882, in Panamint Mining Register (1897), Book C, p. 304; In 1872 the Inyo Range contained a Blue Bell (Belle) Mine that was being worked by one or two men and occasionally reported on. Mining & Scientific Press, 3 February 1872, p. 68; By 1899 a Blue Bell Mine was operating in Snow Canyon, fourteen miles southeast of Darwin. Engineering and Mining Journal, 25 February 1899.

This remarkable discovery has been visited by a number of mining men from Panamint, Cerro Gordo and elsewhere, all of whom pronounce it as showing on the surface a larger amount of rich ore than they have ever seen before.<sup>199</sup>

Two months later a correspondent of the Panamint News visited the Nossano brothers' property, which he said included about twenty mines, and wrote that

Their principal mine, the Garibaldi, has an outcrop of an average width of sixty feet; with metallic ore assaying from \$400 to \$1,800 per ton, the greater portion of which is free milling ore; a large percentage of the ore can be sorted and worked by smelting.<sup>200</sup>

Because it was still a relatively new location, excavations in the area only penetrated about eight feet. An interesting sidelight to the Garibaldi's history is that Dr. S. G. George, early pioneer into the Wild Rose area and discoverer of the Christmas lode in 1860, was working with another gentleman from Visalia, E. M. (F. M.?) Bently (or Bentley), on the eastern portion of the Garibaldi--referred to as the Lady Ethel--during this time.<sup>201</sup>

Reportedly during the seventies ore from the Garibaldi and probably from some neighboring properties was sent by muletrain over a Walker's Pass to the railroad several hundred miles away. By the spring of 1875 the Garibaldi was still

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199. Inyo Independent, 2 January 1875; Panamint News, 9 March 1875.

200. Inyo Independent, 6 March 1875.

201. Panamint News, 9 March 1875.

upholding its reputation as "the most promising location in the district, if not in the entire county,"<sup>202</sup> even though little development work had been done. Ore from here was generally averaging \$628 to \$1,600 per ton.<sup>203</sup> It was no surprise, therefore, when the Garibaldi, North Star, Polar Star, Star of the West, and Maria mines were sold by the Nossano brothers to a San Francisco syndicate for \$70,000. Incorporated under the name of the Garibaldi Mining Company, the group's board of directors included A. J. Bowie, Jr.; Arch. Borlands, William M. Lent; N. B. Stone; and John F. Boyd. They evidently only acted as agents for the Inyo Mining Company, because the latter's superintendent, a William Irwin, immediately took over development of the Garibaldi, spending about \$30,000 on the project.<sup>204</sup> The future not only of this mine but of the entire Rose Springs district seemed extremely promising now:

Since the Inyo mining company made the purchase of the Nassano [sic] company's mines, the camp has changed its appearance, and, instead of being the resort of a few prospectors, is shaping itself into a busy mining camp. A town site has already been laid out, a station erected for the accommodation of those visiting the district, the wagon road from Warren springs improved, and work on the Garibaldi and North Star mines commenced.<sup>205</sup>

Although from the meager information presented here it is difficult to determine the exact location of this main camp, presumably the

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202. Inyo Independent, 3 April 1875.

203. Bullfrog Miner, 26 October 1907; Mining & Scientific Press, 24 April 1875, p. 268.

204. Inyo Independent, 19 February 1876; 26 February 1876; 11 March 1876; Page, in Inyo Register, 19 July 1906.

205. Mining & Scientific Press, 18 March 1876, p. 181.



Illustration 171.

Stock certificate, Garibaldi Mining Company.

Courtesy of Richard E. Lingenfelter, Univ. of Calif. at San Diego.

focal point for prospecting activities in the Rose Spring District, it is known that the Inyo Mining Company headquarters were established at the North Star Mine, three to five miles south of the Garibaldi.<sup>206</sup>

By April 1876 the Garibaldi Mine workings consisted of a 100-foot incline run down on the hanging wall and an 18-foot tunnel that had been started to tap the rich ledge. Superintendent Irwin was now contemplating erection of a mill on the site, to be powered possibly by water piped over from the vicinity of Furnace Creek, fifteen to twenty miles east.<sup>207</sup> In June the vein was struck at the bottom of the shaft and ore recovered assaying \$600 a ton. Twelve men were employed in drifting, crosscutting, and other development work.<sup>208</sup> Despite the impression that work was progressing well here, before long Irwin decided the ledge had petered out. According to Milo Page, Irwin, who had previously mined in Oregon, simply did not know how to mine under California's geological conditions; others said he miscalculated and, veering away from the ledge by mistake, concluded that the ore had run out. Whatever the reason, the mine was abandoned, Irwin leaving for Bodie to work on the Standard Mine. Several sacks of high-grade ore were left behind on the dump.<sup>209</sup>

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206. Ibid.; Coso Mining News, 29 April 1876.

207. Coso Mining News, 29 April 1876; 6 May 1876.

208. Inyo Independent, 3 June 1876.

209. Page, in Inyo Register, 19 July 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 26 October 1907. The property was probably abandoned around 1877, for in that year the Inyo Consolidated Silver Mining Company appeared on the Inyo Co. Delinquent Tax-List for 1876. In addition to other properties, they were being assessed for 1,500 feet at \$2 per foot in the Garibaldi Mine. Inyo Independent, 3 February 1877.

Later in 1877 it appears that W. L. Hunter picked up this mine, along with the Argonaut, Junietta, Blizzard, and Virgin, later selling interests in them to W. K. Miller and E. N. Medburg (N. J. Medbury) of Lone Pine, these three then proceeding on development work together.<sup>210</sup> No further mention was found of the Garibaldi Mine until a formal notice of location for the Blue Bell Mine was filed in 1883 by N. J. Medbury and W. L. Hunter, "8 miles East from Emigrant Spring on south side of canon emptying into Death Valley. Is about opposite to Mouth of Furnace Ck. and about 10 miles air line north of Telescope Peak and is relocation of Exchequer or Garabali [sic] Mine."<sup>211</sup> According to the U.S. Mint several high-grade silver mines were being operated in the Wild Rose District in that year, some of which had been discovered ten years or so before during the height of the Panamint City excitement. These included the Virgin, Peru, Kuler, Silver Star, Mohawk (aka North Star), Valley View, Umpire, Argonaut (aka Nellie Grant), Genette (Junietta?), and Empire State. Ore was also being recovered from the old workings on the Garibaldi; 150 tons of material on the dump had assayed \$100 per ton on the average and were being shipped to San Francisco for treatment. Development work was being financed solely by proceeds from the ore shipments.<sup>212</sup>

By the time another year had passed several thousand dollars had been expended on development of the Argonaut, Junietta, Blue Bell, Blizzard, and Virgin mines by Hunter, Miller, and Medbury. The Blue Bell reportedly contained a

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210. Mining & Scientific Press, 10 May 1884, p. 324.

211. Land, Water and Mining Locations, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 316.

212. Report of the Director of the Mint (1884), p. 163.

well-defined twenty-foot ledge showing ore averaging \$80 per ton, with over 100 tons of ore lying on the dump. Over \$1,000 had been spent on development of this property alone. In the late summer of 1884 10½ tons of ore from the Mohawk, Blue Bell, and Argonaut mines were sent to the Snow Canyon mill for treatment in order to determine the ore's milling quality; about 3,400 ozs. of silver bullion were produced.<sup>213</sup>

In November 1884 Medbury and Miller sold a J. M. Keeler one-half interest in the Blue Bell, Mohawk, Valley View, Blizzard, Argonaut, and Jeanette (sic) mines for \$1,600.<sup>214</sup> Evidently the mine underwent yet another name change, because two years later a notice of location for the Silver Queen Mine was filed, located in Rose Springs Mining District and "formerly known as the Blue Bell Mine or Garibaldia." The property in question had been located 2 April 1886 by M. M. Beatty (probably Beatty) and Joseph Danielson. Again on 1 January 1888 a Silver Queen Mine on the east side of the Panamint Range and about twelve miles northwest of Coleman's borax works in Death Valley, "formerly known as the Blue Bell or Garabaldia mine" was located by Paul Pfefferle and Joseph Danielson.<sup>215</sup> In 1902 the Garibaldi Mine, now including an 80-foot shaft and 150-foot tunnel, was linked to Charles Anthony of Darwin.<sup>216</sup> It is more uncertain

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213. Mining & Scientific Press, 10 May 1884, p. 324; Inyo Independent, 26 July 1884; 2 August 1884.

214. Inyo Independent, 22 November 1884.

215. Notice of Location, Silver Queen Mine, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book E; Notice of Location, Silver Queen Mine, in ibid., Inyo Co., Book D.

216. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Register of Mines and Minerals (1902), p. 5.

whether a 1906 discovery of a Blue Bell No. 1 and No. 2 claim took place at this site. Their location is given as "between the Casa Diablo Company's mines and the old Wild Rose property. . . ." and "are about four miles south of the old Wild Rose. . . ."217 Because of the vague description of boundaries it would be difficult to determine the area involved without further research into the Casa Diablo Company and its holdings. It is the writer's opinion, however, that this refers to claims further south and west, possibly outside the present national monument.

In 1906 the old Garibaldi Mine near Skidoo, possessing numerous long tunnels and shafts, was owned by Kennedy (probably F. C.) and Gray, who had performed limited development work. It was during this year that the first reference was found to "stone mill buildings" on the property.<sup>218</sup> Kennedy received an offer for the mine at this time, a sale that might have been consummated, since in 1911, Mr. Ball was working the "Giribaldi" and had several tons of ore ready for shipment.<sup>219</sup> Before long the mine was again abandoned, and no record of any mill or smelter returns for the next several years has been found. One memo in the mining office file lists the Garibaldi as being worked in 1953 for gold. A later list shows W. M. Hoover as owner of the Garibaldi and E. H. McGlothlin and Earl Enger as owners of the Blue Bell.<sup>220</sup> According to McGlothlin, who by 1974 was one of

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217. Engineering and Mining Journal, 25 February 1899; Inyo Register, 2 August 1906.

218. Rhyolite Herald, 3 August 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 26 October 1907.

219. Rhyolite Herald, 31 August 1906; 14 January 1911; Bullfrog Miner, 26 October 1907.

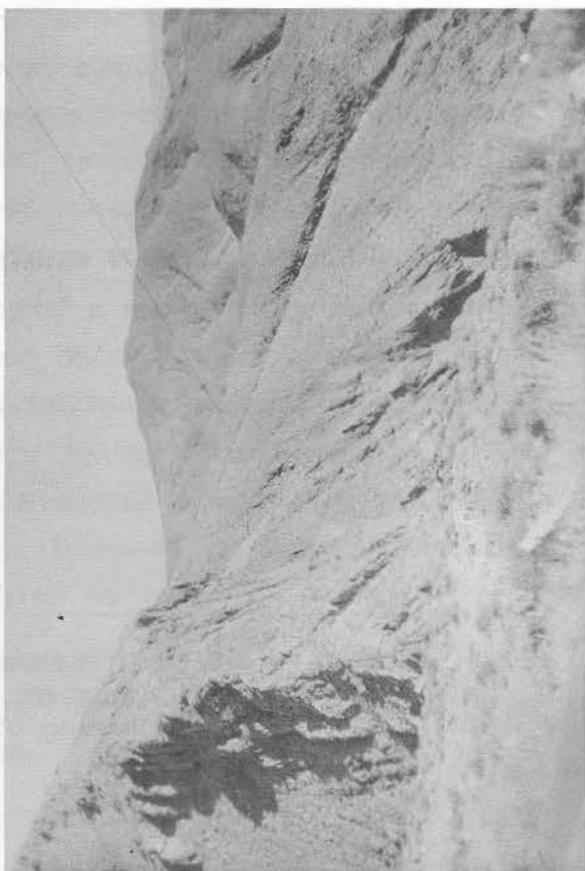
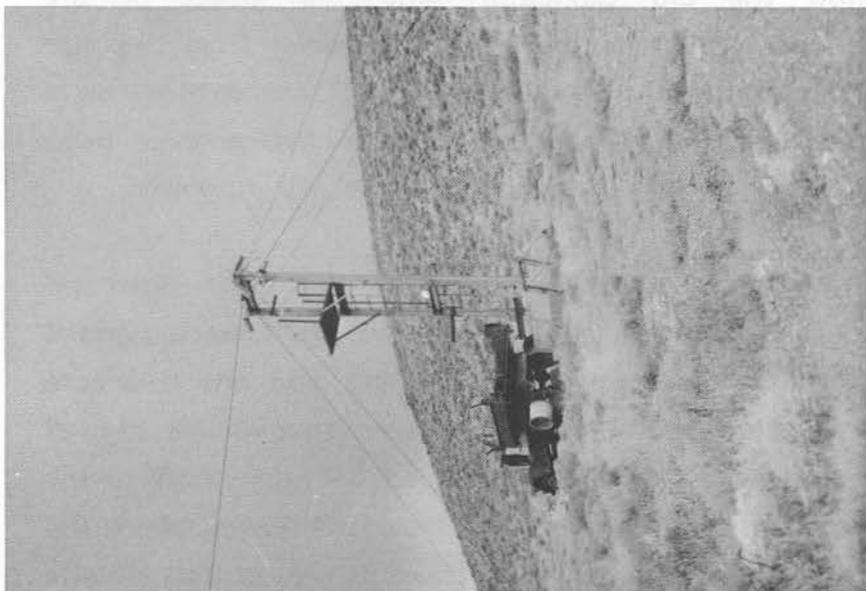
220. Memo, DEVA NM mining office, 6 April 1960; List of Claimants and Property, no date, DEVA NM mining office.

Illus. 172: Cabin on Blue Bell mining claim.

Illus. 174: Tramway support, Hanging Cliff Millsite.

All photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illus. 173: Cable heading north across gulch toward Hanging Cliff Millsite. Light area on far cliff is mine dump.



four claimants of the Blue Bell Millsite and the Blue Bell #1 lode claim (encompassing the old Garibaldi Mine), a lessee of the property shipped about 150 tons of selected material from the site in 1967, and he himself had shipped nine to ten tons to Barstow a year later. No documented production for the mine has been found.<sup>221</sup>

(b) Present Status

The Blue Bell Group, comprising one twenty-acre unpatented lode claim (Blue Bell #1) and one five-acre unpatented mill site (Blue Bell Millsite), is about three miles east of Skidoo and reached via the gravel Skidoo Road. The turnoff to the mine is about five miles east and north from the junction of the Skidoo and Emigrant Canyon roads; from there the Blue Bell Millsite lies about one-half mile down the slope. Here claimants have erected their tin shack headquarters, still furnished, and identified on its side as "Hidden Wash, McFarlin and Durham Mining." Probably built in the 1950s or 1960s, the cabin and surrounding ground resemble all mine camps of that period within the monument--assorted debris and trash, old appliances, and a dilapidated vehicle litter the ground.

From here a road trends southeasterly toward the Hanging Cliff Millsite, which, located at the crest of a hill, is distinguished by a large metal support for a cable tramway that crosses a small, though deep, canyon toward the Hanging Cliff Claim, appropriately named for its precarious location on the side of a very steep rock wall. Further east and at the bottom of a precipitous jeep road is the Blue Bell Claim (Garibaldi Mine). Its

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221. Paul H. Knowles, "Mineral Report of the Blue Bell Group, Death Valley National Monument, Inyo County, California," 29 March 1974, p. 11, DEVA NM mining office.

situation is best described, though slightly exaggerated, by a visitor in 1876 who remarked that

the descent from the mine to the valley is so abrupt that a stone can be thrown with ease into the valley below, although the mine lies several thousand feet above it.<sup>222</sup>

No mine structures are extant; indeed, the main shaft itself is barely discernible to the untrained eye because of the efforts made to fill it in. Of greater interest are the remains of several rock houses or dugouts visible in the canyon a short distance below. Two others are built against a hillside near the road between the Hanging Cliff Millsite and the Blue Bell Claim.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Blue Bell (Garibaldi) Mine is determined to be of local significance and eligible for inclusion on the National Register. It is one of a group of very early silver mines in the Wild Rose area, all discovered during the rash of exploratory activity prompted by the excitement over Panamint City's unfolding riches, and all worked intermittently over the next several years. Making it somewhat unique is the fact that it evidently proved profitable enough to mine, or at least periodically explore, over the next almost forty years so that its location is still known today.

What makes the site especially significant, of course, are the associated stone ruins, which in the early 1900s were identified as mill buildings; no specific date for their construction was mentioned, however. They should be researched further and in closer detail by historical archeologists.

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222. Coso Mining News, 29 April 1876.

Illustrations 175-176.

Two stone dugouts to north of road between Blue Bell and Garibaldi mines.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

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section suggests that the Garibaldi ore  
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brothers. When the Inyo Silver Mining Company took over the  
property and initiated extensive development procedures, such  
stone structures might have been erected to house employees as



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Due to time limitations the writer was only able to examine the two more accessible dugouts near the Garibaldi Mine road: one is about eleven feet square in dimension and is surrounded on three sides by a five-foot-high wall with two entrances; the other was circular in shape with about twelve feet of five-foot-high curved wall remaining. The structures lower on the canyon floor appear to be ten to fifteen feet in diameter.

*It has been hypothesized that these ruins date from early Spanish exploratory or mining activities in the region; reportedly an old trail can still be seen leading from the vicinity of these structures to the floor of Death Valley. It is this writer's feeling, however, that they are probably of later construction and associated with early mining endeavors at the Garibaldi during the 1870s. The limited historical data available seem to agree that the Garibaldi was one of the more prominent mines in the early Rose Spring Mining District for several years. The 1875 Inyo Independent newspaper article quoted earlier in this section suggests that the Garibaldi ore warranted smelting works of some kind, and these might have been built by the Nossano brothers. When the Inyo Silver Mining Company took over the property and initiated extensive development procedures, such stone structures might have been erected to house employees as well as milling operations.*

Further conjecture about the ruins is not only time-consuming but also meaningless until the site is investigated further by historians and historical archeologists; hopefully the discovery of artifacts in association with the structures will enable their more precise dating. Because of the presence of several ruins, of varying shapes and sizes, possibilities exist here for comparative study of early Death Valley stone structures, some of which might have been connected with early milling operations. Such an opportunity should not be overlooked.



Illustration 177.

Adit associated with Garibaldi Mine Claim.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 178.

Ruins of stone mill buildings in valley below Garibaldi Mine. Death Valley salt pan seen in distance.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



On the road near the Garibaldi Mine is an old rubber-wheeled, wooden-sided ore wagon, probably dating from the early 1900s, and possessing interpretive value. A tag on the vehicle provides full information on its maker, model number, etc.

The Blue Bell Millsite and Hanging Cliff Millsite and Claim possess no demonstrable historical significance.

(19) Skidoo

(a) History

i) Ramsey and Thompson's Great  
Discovery

Right here on the border line between California and Nevada, just a few miles from and within speaking distance of Nevada's big, bonanza gold camps of Goldfield, Rhyolite, Tonopah, California promises to give birth to the most wonderful gold mines America has yet produced. . . . Here the golden goddess is again singing her siren song of enchantment and California is again beckoning to the world with a finger of gold: and the world is listening, and looking, and coming--TO SKIDOO!<sup>223</sup>

By 1907 when this enticingly optimistic editorial appeared, Skidoo was a thriving year-old mining camp. Her cramped townsite, dizzyingly nestled on top of the Panamint Range, already proudly possessed over thirty tents, several frame buildings, and many of the amenities of civilization, including restaurants, hotels, and a newspaper. It was a far cry from the desolate and lonely conditions existing here in January

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223. Rhyolite Herald, 4 January 1907.

1906 as two wandering desert prospectors, John Ramsey and John ("One Eye") Thompson, wended their slow way up Emigrant Canyon toward the newly-discovered gold strike at Harrisburg.

Although the Panamint Range for almost its entire length had been known since the early 1850s to contain gold- and silver-bearing veins, early mining efforts had centered mostly around silver and lead, the gold veins being largely overlooked and unprospected. Only now, in the early 1900s, was this precious metal becoming a highly-prized and sought-after commodity. Both Skidoo and Harrisburg, discovered about six months earlier and located about 5½ miles further south, were the direct offshoots of the big Nevada bonanzas of Tonopah, Goldfield, and Rhyolite. Excited and encouraged by the seemingly quick riches exposed in these areas, the desert mining community became hungry for more, and prospectors began gravitating westward across Death Valley in search of rumored treasures in the Panamints.

The long trek of Ramsey and Thompson toward Harrisburg was suddenly interrupted by a rare freak of nature in the Death Valley region--a blinding fog. Quickly becoming disoriented in the murky light, and afraid of getting lost in one of the many surrounding canyons, the two decided to encamp near Emigrant Spring and proceed on their way in the morning. By the next day the fog had lifted, enabling a view of some nearby ledges whose color appeared promising. A true desert prospector always had time for even a brief survey of such formations. What Ramsey and Thompson found completely dismissed all thought of a further journey, and precipitated their prompt location of several claims in the vicinity. Comprising the Gold Eagle Group, this series of rich ledges appeared to stretch north-south for a distance of about 1½ miles, varying from two to twelve feet wide, and showing \$82 in gold per ton.

Somehow managing to keep their new discoveries secret until their claims had been properly monumented and recorded (luckily they did not run into Shorty Harris here!), it was not until a couple of months later that news of the strike began to spread. Immediately realizing that these veins were probably located in the same mineral belt that had been the source of riches for Panamint City over thirty years earlier and that was now proving so productive in the Harrisburg vicinity, hordes of miners turned their burros toward Emigrant Spring, hoping to be early enough to cash in on the bonanza. Though located in California, the camp soon fell almost completely into the hands of Nevada capital and enterprise. As soon as word of the strike reached the ears of the pioneers of the Bullfrog District, the area's future was assured, for it was their intervention and investment that made Skidoo one of the longest-lived and most successful Death Valley mining camps.

ii) E. A. Montgomery Acquires the Property

The Nevada mogul most responsible for Skidoo's success was E. A. (Bob) Montgomery, who immediately purchased the original Gold Eagle Group of claims from Ramsey and Thompson. As was not at all unusual on the desert mining frontier, where the thrilling prospect of untold wealth often precipitated fast and loose business deals, some hint of scandal did revolve around the negotiations for the property. One version of the transactions states that a representative of Captain DeLamar, a well-known mining magnate of the region, being one of the first on the scene with money enough to act, promptly secured an option for a one-half interest in the property for \$100,000. Following on his heels came E. Oscar (Bob) Hart, a Goldfield pioneer, mine owner, and New York promoter, who subsequently secured the former's option and bonded the property for \$20,000.

From this point on the facts are hazy, probably deliberately so. According to some, Montgomery eventually intercepted Hart and for his option offered him a sum he couldn't refuse--\$100,000 extra--and then proposed to the discoverers another large sum for their remaining interest. Upon the latter's acceptance of same he was put in sole ownership of this phenomenal discovery. Some doubt is cast on this tale of completely orthodox business proceedings by a second account to the effect that Hart made the original deal with Ramsey and Thompson to bond the claims for \$23,000, after which, forking over the option money and rightly assuming he had an ironclad contract, he returned to the East to attempt to interest Schwab's bankers in the property, leaving matters for the most part in the hands of his business associate George M. Ottis. This was his first mistake, for Ottis, not above playing both sides of the fence, apparently turned around and struck up a partnership with Montgomery (or so he claimed in a lawsuit two years later), betraying Hart's option for the claims in return for a one-eighth interest in the mine and any ensuing profits. Montgomery was thus enabled to pick up Hart's option before his time expired, gladly paying a bonus therefor.<sup>224</sup>

However it happened, by May 1906 the Schwab crowd and Bob Montgomery and his associates had gained undisputed control over the original twenty-odd claims of Ramsey and Thompson, and Matt Hoveck, Montgomery's competent former manager of the Montgomery-Shoshone Mine, was put in

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224. Inyo Register, 8 June 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 29 June 1906; Inyo Independent, 24 April 1908. One of the best known mining men of the West, Montgomery had been engaged in California and Nevada mining since 1891. He was a pioneer of Tonopah and Goldfield and also heavily interested in the Bullfrog District, where he had located the fabulous Montgomery-Shoshone Mine. Previous to this he had been involved in mining activities in Washington and Idaho.

charge of development. Nevada capital was now pouring into the district from such investors as Senator Nixon and George Wingfield of Tonopah, who bought the Green Monster Group of fifteen claims adjoining the Gold Eagle, and Hudson Goodpasture, John W. Seller (one of the original locators of Bonanza Mountain and an investor in several big enterprises in the Bullfrog District), and A. V. Carpenter, who secured the Contact Group of seven claims in these early days, believed by some to be next in importance to the original strike.<sup>225</sup>

It was the news of Montgomery's entrance into the new field, however, and of his initiation of development, that practically emptied Harrisburg and provided the impetus for a mass location of new claims, everyone vying to acquire a site as close to his works as possible and within the prosperous mineral zone that was now estimated to measure about six miles wide by fifteen miles long. Considered part of the Wild Rose Mining District, the new Emigrant section was immediately provided with a deputy district recorder to handle the expected increased work load; a voting precinct was also established here.

An astute and competent businessman, E. A. Montgomery intended to waste no time in the development of his Skidoo interests, future plans for the site involving installation by 1 January 1907 of a quartz mill (variously projected as holding thirty, forty, or sixty stamps) to be run by water and hopefully later by electric power. Although sufficient water for domestic purposes could be acquired from Emigrant Spring, approximately five miles away by trail and seven by wagon,

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225. Bullfrog Miner, 13 July 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 6 April 1906, 27 July 1906.

a more abundant water supply would be needed to provide the hydraulic force necessary to run the milling plant. Accordingly, water rights to the springs near Telescope Peak, at an elevation of about 7,400 feet, were acquired from a Fred Gray of Ballarat, enabling the release of about forty miner's inches from Birch Spring at the head of Jail Canyon, and north of Telescope Peak, to be conveyed by gravity pressure to the mill and townsite in a long pipeline ranging in diameter from six to eight and ten inches, estimated to cost about \$150,000 and intended with a fall of 1,800 feet to provide enough force to generate about sixty horsepower for mining and milling purposes. The water was harnessed at the springs in a four-by-eight sandbox. Pressure would be reduced somewhat along the line, there being places where the water would drop lower than Skidoo's elevation. The high-pressure quality pipeline would be strung along the route in twenty-foot lengths. It weighed 650 pounds to the length, with eighteen miles worth weighing 1,544-2/5 tons. It was expected that because of this water supply all ore running above \$4 a ton could be treated at a profit in the mill. Water from the line would be free for domestic purposes.<sup>226</sup>

A negotiable road from Emigrant Spring was also needed to facilitate the importation of construction supplies, and for this task Montgomery employed 20 men, expecting

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226. Figures given for this pipeline are at best approximations. Little agreement could be found on any of the figures relating either to the length of the pipeline (18 to 30 miles), the amount of water tapped (30 to 50 miner's inches), the amount of pressure to be sustained (350 to 800 feet per square inch), the amount of horsepower to be generated (38 to 60-h.p.), or the final cost (\$250,000 to \$375,000). Bullfrog Miner, 13 July, 3 August 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 3 August 1906, 19 April 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 26 April, 14 December 1907; Inyo Independent, 31 January 1908; Report on Granite Contact Mines Co., 1 March 1908, MS #833 in Nevada Historical Society, Reno; Rhyolite Herald, 13 January 1909, and Pictorial Supplement, March 1909.

to increase this force soon to 75 and later to 250 when the mill was in operation. The promoter and backer of all this initial development work was the Skidoo Mines Company, an unincorporated and closed association operating on a partnership basis. No stock offerings were ever made, the individual members contributing all necessary monies. A capitalization of \$250,000 would hopefully cover all initial costs.

By the Fourth of July 1906 a real spirit of optimism pervaded the camp, its over-abundance of energy and enthusiasm finding an outlet in the discharge of guns and the explosion of gunpowder in front of buildings gaily decorated with bunting and flags. Such optimism seemed duly warranted, for arrangements were already being made for an auto line into the district from Beatty, a stage line seemed assured, a post office had been applied for, mine options were being taken up right and left, and several companies expected to start production soon. The high altitude of Skidoo (5,600 feet) and its relatively protected position in a saddle on the southwest slope of Tucki Mountain meant that prospecting and development work could continue all summer.

On Montgomery's property, now rechristened the Eagle Mine, a spate of construction activity was currently underway, resulting in erection of several matched lumber buildings, including a bunkhouse (eighteen by eighty feet), a cookhouse, a boarding house (twenty by forty feet) with a twenty by thirty-foot kitchen, an office, and a blacksmith shop, in the company camp located on the hilltop above (south of) the mine workings where thirty men were busily employed in development work and in laying the foundations of the stamp mill. Communications with Ballarat had been substantially improved by the initiation of a tri-weekly stage line, but in order for the new

camp to reach its full potential it was concluded that a communication and transportation line with Rhyolite was needed, necessitating much work on the road crossing Death Valley that at this point was so sandy it could not support loaded wagons.<sup>227</sup> A telephone line to the Bullfrog District was also considered essential to keep mining men in Skidoo apprised of the rise and fall of shares.

iii) Granite Contact Mines Company

Touted as the Emigrant Spring section's first stock offering, the Granite Contact Mines Company, one-half mile north of town and still considered second in anticipated wealth to the Skidoo Mine, with an almost comparable surface showing, was incorporated under the laws of South Dakota in the summer of 1906 and was offering stock at 15¢ a share by August. Capitalized at \$1,250,000 with 500,000 shares in the treasury for development purposes, the company was backed by a string of solid Bullfrog businessmen: John W. Seller, president; Clay Tallman, a prominent Rhyolite attorney, vice-president; J. J. Fagan, pioneer broker and real estate man of the Bullfrog District, secretary; and treasurer G. B. Keenan, cashier of the Bullfrog Bank and Trust Company of Rhyolite.<sup>228</sup>

Prospective purchasers were completely assured by the company of the systematic development campaign that would be undertaken on its seven claims (adjoining the Skidoo Mine on the north, the Blue Jay Mining Company on the east, and the Skidoo Contact Mining Company grounds on the south and west) in what was

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227. Bullfrog Miner, 13, 20 July 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 20 July 1906.

228. Bullfrog Miner, 31 August 1906.

Without question . . . destined to be one of the best high grade and leasing camps on the desert gold fields; situated as it is at an altitude of 6500 [5600] feet, with a delightful climate, with an abundance of water for mining and milling purposes, with a plentiful supply of timber for fuel and lumber, with ideal free milling ores and with precipitous mountains particularly adapted to mining by tunnel, mining operations can be conducted by the most economical methods known to mining.<sup>229</sup>

Many people evidently were won over by the eye-catching and flamboyant ads appearing in the Bullfrog Miner and Rhyolite Herald, for the demand for stock was far greater than anticipated, no doubt prompted in great part by the already heavy and continuing investments in the area by prominent Nevada operators.

iv) A Townsite is Established

From its very beginning Skidoo displayed a definite tendency toward an organized and systematic development pattern that no doubt played a great part in helping sustain it through the rough years ahead. The rapid influx of mining men to the vicinity, some with families, made the establishment of a townsite and the dispersement of residential and business lots the next natural step in the area's growth. By the end of August 1906 a townsite, variously designated as Montgomery and later Hoveck, was platted just east of the Skidoo Mine, which was functioning as the center of milling operations. Neither "Montgomery" nor "Hoveck" captured the imagination of the townspeople, however, nor did either of those two solid citizens particularly desire to be so memorialized. The details of the debate

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229. Rhyolite Herald, 3 August 1906.

resulting in the colorful designation of "Skidoo" have been lost to history and open to conjecture for years, the linking of the then popular slang term "23 Skidoo" with the townsite having been variously attributed to: 1) the length of the Skidoo pipeline; 2) a total of twenty-three claims in the original discovery group, coincident with twenty-three surveyed blocks in the new townsite (this seems the most likely suggestion, though newspaper reports mention twenty-four claims), prompting Mrs. Montgomery to suggest the appellation; 3) the location of the original mineral discoveries on the twenty-third of the month; 4) the twenty-three men who supposedly founded the town; etc. Whichever fact prompted the suggestion, the new name was wholeheartedly approved by all.

Lots on Skidoo Street went almost in a day. The coming of winter would delay new construction, but by spring large and substantial frame buildings would be rising. An important drawing card for the area was its relative accessibility compared to the inconveniences experienced by earlier and smaller mining ventures in this region. Emigrant Spring(s) rapidly became the distributing point for Skidoo and Harrisburg, boasting now a general store and three saloons for those who needed to slake their thirst before attempting the last few miles to either of those places. The rate of fare to Johannesburg from Los Angeles was only \$6 and the stage rate to Ballarat, on the threshold of the Wildrose and Emigrant districts, only \$8. The ride from Ballarat to Skidoo was another \$6, the stage leaving every Tuesday and Saturday. Freight to Skidoo cost about 3½ cents per pound and entered the region from the railroad terminus via Barstow and Johannesburg, hauled by ten-, twelve-, and fourteen-horse teams. Other assets of the region were free-milling ores, extremely rich formations, and the ability

afforded by the high mountains to utilize tunneling methods rather than expensive shaft work.<sup>230</sup>

v) A Communications Link to Rhyolite Needed

The arguments put forth earlier in favor of establishing a communications link with Rhyolite--a move now considered even more logical because it would put Skidoo about forty-five miles closer to a railhead--were revived, and in the course of the discussion it was pointed out that a decent automobile road already existed to Stovepipe Springs (Wells), twenty-eight miles northeast. If a good dependable water supply and a waystation could be developed there, travelers and freight supplies should be able to negotiate the burning desert sands in relative comfort. While plans for this project were being hashed and rehashed, a new gold strike in the fall of 1906 on the north end of Sheep Mountain added to the mining excitement. (This area later proved to also contain sizeable quantities of copper ore.)<sup>231</sup>

Meanwhile work on the Skidoo pipeline was progressing. Grading was finished and the laying would commence as soon as the eighteen freight outfits engaged in transporting the material could deliver it. The first consignment of pipe arrived from Johannesburg in the middle of September. Seventy-five men were at work on the water system and at the mine where the main shaft, already down sixty feet, was exposing magnificent ore filled with free gold.<sup>232</sup>

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230. Inyo Register, 6 September 1906; Inyo Independent, 30 November 1906.

231. Rhyolite Herald, 7 September 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 5 October 1906.

232. Rhyolite Herald, 14 September 1906.

Further discussion on the Skidoo-Rhyolite road had resulted in the decision to commence work almost immediately on the proposed route. Matt Hoveck, manager of the Skidoo Mine, committed the company to construction of the road up to the sand dunes, a project estimated to entail an expenditure of several thousand dollars, if Rhyolite businessmen would build from the east to that point. J. R. Clark, brother of the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad head, was appointed to supervise this second construction phase, selling subscriptions in Rhyolite to finance the work. (This scheme was not completely foolproof, for expenditures always outweighed contributions. The total amount donated was \$1,045, while expenditures for picks, shovels, rakes, wages, teams, and lumber for culverts were \$1,525.90. In addition, some further work became necessary and was expected to result in a final deficit of \$750.90.) Hopes were also high at this time that Borax Smith's railroad would be extended westward from his Lila C borax mine, past his Furnace Creek properties, on north to Cow Creek, and if the Emigrant Spring ore continued to show promise, on to Skidoo.<sup>233</sup>

Meanwhile slow but steady work continued at the Skidoo Mines Company site where two shafts and as many tunnels were producing high-grade ore with values ranging from \$100 to \$1200 per ton, precipitating the receipt by Hoveck of at least twenty-five lease applications from Goldfield and Tonopah people. Because it seemed inevitable that the number of ore deposits would far outstrip the capacity of the company mill to handle them, it was already assumed that a second mill of fifty stamps would have to be established at the lower end of the

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233. Ibid., 21, 28 September 1906, 15 February 1907.

property, utilizing the same water after it had performed its duty above, the fall between the two mills being about 1,000 feet.<sup>234</sup>

vi) The Skidoo News Arrives

One of the more important events in Skidoo's early days, and one ensuring the dissemination of her virtues far and wide, was the arrival in November of a four-horse load of printing material, transported to the isolated town by James G. Sterrett and Edwin S. Drury of *Encampment, Wyoming--the Skidoo News* was born! During the ensuing months other businesses mushroomed in the vicinity, all owing their existence to the Skidoo Mine: an engineering and assay office was opened in that town by two mining engineers, John H. Wilson of Rhyolite (formerly of Greenwater?) and R. H. Earle of New York; Lawrence Kimball of the Kimball Bros. stage line began canvassing the wagon road between Rhyolite and Skidoo preparatory to the establishment of regular stage and express service; a water station was established at Stovepipe Wells and an eating house and feed stable were projected; John Calloway began running a six-horse bi-weekly stage from Ballarat; and Jack Hartigan further developed his Emigrant Spring facilities and was liberally dispensing spirits, general merchandise, and stock feed.

vii) Conditions Continue Promising

Actually, mining conditions throughout Inyo County as a whole were healthy during the closing months of 1906, with 150 miners reportedly working the Emigrant District, where investment capital seemed always available. Harrisburg was taking on a new lease of life due to all the activity in the surrounding region, and Ballarat was thriving as the distribution point for supplies for a vast mining section including not only the Wild Rose District but also the revitalized camps in the

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234. Ibid., 28 September 1906; Inyo Register, 4 October 1906.



Illustration 179.

Office of Skidoo News, 1907. Note Matt Hoveck and Bob Montgomery in picture.

From Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

Darwin, Hobart, and Coast districts. To the north numerous valuable copper properties in the Ulsdale and Saline Valley regions were drawing much attention at this time, and to the east Greenwater, the site of a bonanza copper strike, was attracting investors from all over the country.

Over the next few months slow but steady progress took place in the efforts to improve conditions at the new camp. Although five miles of pipeline had been laid by



In front of the "Skidoo News" Office, April 1, 1907. From left to right—Hon. George A. Bartlett, Edwin S. Drury, William L. Sill, Jas. G. Sterrett, Matt Hoveck, "Bob" Montgomery, A. W. Redman.

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J. R. Clark had by now also taken charge of the road work on the Skidoo end of the line being

November 1907, 18 April 1907, November 1907, 18 November 1907, Inyo Independent, 16, 30 November 1907, 5 November 1907, Bullfrog Miner, 5 November

Darwin, Modoc, and Coso districts. To the north numerous valuable copper properties in the Ubehebe and Saline Valley regions were drawing much attention at this time, and to the east Greenwater, the site of a bonanza copper strike, was attracting investors from all over the country.<sup>235</sup>

Over the next few months slow but steady progress took place in the efforts to improve conditions at the new camp. Although five miles of pipeline had been laid by the end of November 1906, the early days of December brought heavy snows, sometimes as deep as three feet around Skidoo and Harrisburg. The unbearable cold, lack of fuel, and poor housing accelerated an exodus from the Emigrant Spring area. The Skidoo News even froze up, and work on the mines and pipeline had to be temporarily interrupted. Toward the end of December weather conditions had improved to the extent that twenty-seven laborers could resume work on the pipeline, while a forty-horsepower hoist was installed on the main shaft of the Skidoo Mine, now down 120 feet and exposing ore running from \$60 to \$200 per ton. By early January the first power hoisting plant to be installed in camp, a new eighteen-horsepower one hauled by fourteen-mule team from the railroad, was installed at the mine. An iron-clad engine house was erected at the No. 1 shaft and the hoist was working steadily. Although large surface showings were present on the Granite Contact, permanent work had not yet been started. The need for a mill and treating machinery on the property was already being hinted at, however.

J. R. Clark had by now also taken charge of the road work on the Skidoo end of the line being

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235. Rhyolite Herald, 2 November 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 2 November 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 16 November 1906; Inyo Independent, 16, 30 November 1906, 19 April 1907.



**Illustration 180.**

**Plat of the town of Skidoo, Inyo Co., Ca., filed 10 January 1907.**

**Courtesy of Inyo Co. Clerk and Recorder, Independence, Ca.**



Illustration 181.

Plat of the town of Skidoo, Inyo Co., Ca., filed 6 May 1907.

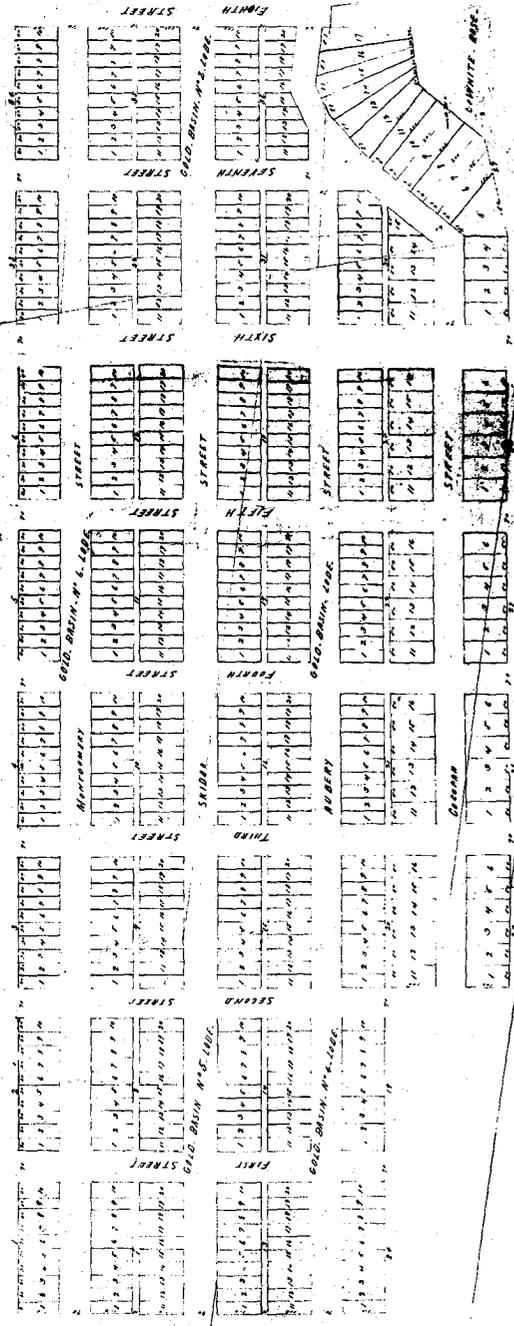
Courtesy of Inyo Co. Clerk and Recorder, Independence, Ca.

Old map (ca. 1907)  
C.S. McLean  
Tract, SK1000

INTO COUNTY, CAL

SCALE: 1 INCH = 100 FEET

CALIF. BRUSH, MAP 7, 1908



1000' DISTANCE

CONCRETE

OLD BRUSH SIDE

OLD BRUSH, N. 4, 1908

SR 1004

NEIGHBORHOOD

OLD BRUSH, N. 4, 1908

STREET

OLD BRUSH, N. 4, 1908

STREET

CONCRETE, WIDE

constructed between Rhyolite and the new town, which, now boasting thirty-three tents, several frame buildings, a big general mercantile store, a lodging house, a restaurant, a newspaper, and several saloons, was eagerly anticipating increased trade from the new association. By the middle of January men were working at four places along the road, which had been finished so far only over the Funeral Range to Stovepipe Wells. Here, nearly two miles out of a necessary five of the road had been corduroyed with mesquite.<sup>236</sup> Although the road still needed some finishing touches, it was negotiable by motorcycle, stage, or auto. Crossing of the sand dunes took a good two hours, however, and from Stovepipe to Emigrant, a distance of twenty-one miles, about seven hours. The route from Skidoo to the railroad via Ballarat was badly deteriorating and rapidly becoming impassable for teams with heavy loads, causing Superintendent Hoveck to contemplate bringing the rest of the pipeline in over the new road from the north. Work on the project had been delayed already for six weeks during the end of December and first of January because of the inability to transport supplies over the road now being used.

The Kimball Bros. stage line lost no time in initiating a five-day round-trip service from Rhyolite to Skidoo via Stovepipe and Emigrant Spring, with a one-night stopover at the former. A one-way fare cost \$20, and the express rate was 5¢ per pound. During this same time a telephone line from Rhyolite was nearing completion to Stovepipe Wells. The connection had reached there by March 1907 and was already extending nearly five miles up the Panamint slope toward Skidoo. Completion of this communication link would do much toward ending some lingering feelings of isolation at the townsite.

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236. Bullfrog Miner, 30 November, 7 December 1906; Inyo Independent, 21 December 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 4 January 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 11 January 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 18 January 1907.

viii) Leases Opened on the Skidoo  
Mines Company Property

To return briefly to mining operations at Skidoo, a new and extremely profitable phase of activity began with the opening of leasing opportunities on the Skidoo Mines Company property to interested parties. According to Hoveck the company would eventually lease everything except for the three big ledges on the Skidoo and the three on the Cocopah that the company was working. (The Cocopah Group of fifteen claims was not included in the Skidoo Mines Company organization, but did have the same directorate. It was later consolidated with the Skidoo Mine.) The awarding of these leases offered the possibility of quick fortunes for many, because rich values could easily be drawn from the surface without tedious preliminary development work. Royalites agreed on were 10% on \$25 ore or less with a graduate scale up to 25% on \$100 or better.

On the Skidoo itself, the No. 2 shaft was now a double compartment sixty feet deep; another forty-horsepower gas hoist was soon to be erected over it to increase production capacity. In February 1907 a new venture, the Skidoo Contact Mining Company, was organized under the laws of South Dakota with a capitalization of \$1,000,000. Comprising five claims (Gold Ledge #1-4 and Doctor) 1½ miles north of Skidoo, the Skidoo Contact Group lay adjacent to the Golden Eagle Group (Skidoo Mine) and the Granite Contact, and was considered third in importance to these two. President of the company was O. O. Kincaid, cashier of the John S. Cook & Co. Bank of Rhyolite; vice-president was John W. Seller.<sup>237</sup>

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237. Rhyolite Herald, 18 January, 8, 15, 22 February, 22 March 1907.

Illustration 182.

Rhyolite-Skidoo stage, on exhibit at Borax Museum, Furnace Creek Ranch.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, UNLV.

The first of these was a horse-drawn carriage, which was used for the purpose of carrying passengers. It was built in 1850 and was the first of its kind in the United States. The carriage was made of wood and had a canopy supported by four posts. It was pulled by a single horse and had a driver's seat at the front. The carriage was used for many years and was a popular mode of transportation.



The second of these was a horse-drawn carriage, which was used for the purpose of carrying passengers. It was built in 1850 and was the first of its kind in the United States. The carriage was made of wood and had a canopy supported by four posts. It was pulled by a single horse and had a driver's seat at the front. The carriage was used for many years and was a popular mode of transportation.

328 Building Street, 22 February 1907, Boylston Herald, 14 Boston, 1907.

It was anticipated that the first shipment of gold bullion from the Skidoo Mine would be made before the end of July, test samples of ore having been shipped to Taylor & Company milling machinery house in St. Louis and to Denver in an attempt to determine the best method of treatment. According to Hoveck, an eighty-stamp mill operating by the summer would reserve ten of its stamps for custom work, entailing at least three years of steady use for the other seventy stamps. Hoping to facilitate operations elsewhere, the company offered to furnish water and electric power to any surrounding properties desiring it. Ore was to be purchased from leasers or operators, all ore running above \$5 per ton to be bought and paid for at the mill. By March leasing offers for Skidoo ground were withdrawn, the Skidoo Mines Company undergoing a formal incorporation encompassing all twenty-three Cocopah and Gold Eagle locations in one organization.<sup>238</sup>

ix) The Townsite Expands

Skidoo townsite was thriving now, and a great morale boost was provided when the U.S. Government withdrew its aesthetic objections and officially recognized the appellation Skidoo. In March the Skidoo Bank and Trust Company, with a paid-up capitalization of \$25,000, took up temporary quarters in the general store. Due to numerous delays, however, it was not until May that the renamed Bank of Southern California opened its doors for business. The first day's transactions carried deposits up to almost \$10,000. The future looked so rosy that stone masons imported from Los Angeles were already quarrying the native white stone for use in a new two-story-high building costing \$12,000, with lodge rooms on the second floor for Masons and with a 60 by 100-foot ground floor to house a large store and several business offices in addition to the

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238. Bullfrog Miner, 22 February 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 15 March 1907.

bank. In February the Panamint Artificial Ice Company had been formed by Salt Lake parties who intended to divert water from the Telescope Peak pipeline to their \$5,000 ice plant situated on four town lots. Two men already managing large businesses at Tonopah and Greenwater were planning the establishment of the Skidoo Lumber Company, intending to supply this commodity from Rhyolite via big freighting outfits at from \$15 to \$25 cheaper than the prices now being paid of \$130 per thousand board feet.

Investments in mining properties and real estate were the order of the day, the latter transactions being ably conducted by Capt. W. R. Wharton, a Pennsylvania capitalist and stockholder in the Skidoo Mines Company, who bought the Skidoo townsite in March 1907 from Matt Hoveck who had acquired the original one from James Arnold, the locator. Wharton proceeded to plat a new residential addition east of the original townsite, where he himself erected two portable houses, and sell business lots as well as oversee development work on those promising claims embraced within the townsite. It was expected that such development work would soon open up an extension of the Gold Eagle ledges within the city limits. The Skidoo Townsite & Mining Company, with a capital stock of 1,000,000 shares, was organized, with Montgomery as president; Matt Hoveck, vice-president; and Wharton as secretary-treasurer. It owned eight full claims and one fraction adjoining the Skidoo Mines Company property and, in addition, sold townsites ranging in price from \$100 to \$1,000 each, depending on location.

Skidoo's population had reached 400 to 500 citizens, who were being served by L. E. Thompson's large general merchandise store, supplying everything from mining necessities to hardware, clothing, drygoods, and groceries, four saloons, a meat market, laundry, bakery, newspaper, and lumber

yard, lodging houses, three restaurants, assayers, surveyors, a physician, lawyers, brokers, and more. Social activities were held in the Skidoo Club, measuring twenty by fifty feet and costing about \$3,000, and in the more elite Panamint Club, which demanded an initiation fee of \$100. By April the town contained altogether about 130 residences and business houses of frame, wood, and iron.

Because the Telescope Peak pipeline was not yet finished, water continued to be hauled in wagons from Emigrant Spring by ten-horse team and was sold for \$4 a barrel or three to ten cents a gallon or higher to the townspeople. It was hauled to the Skidoo Mine in an iron tank on wheels. Groceries, supplies, and the cost of living were about equal to Rhyolite. Mail was being hauled on the Kimball Bros. stage from that town, while fresh meat and vegetables arrived by the same means and were then peddled. A Death Valley Forwarding Company had been established in Rhyolite to forward freight to Skidoo. Emigrant Spring now was a small camp of framed tents with traveler accommodations in the form of a store, a saloon, a lodging house, and restaurant. Water was piped from the spring to a point in front of the main building. Several prospectors called this place home, as did Frank C. Kennedy, the district mining recorder.<sup>239</sup>

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239. Rhyolite Herald, 15, 22 March, 19 April 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 22 February, 12, 26 April, 17, 24 May 1907; Inyo Independent, 19 April 1907. Shorty Harris was one of the miners residing at Emigrant Spring. An amusing story found in the Bullfrog Miner relates that on 7 March 1907 he was instructed at gunpoint by two desperadoes who had invaded his room in Jack Hartigan's lodging house to turn over a quitclaim deed for his interest in the Bullfrog Miner and Bullfrog Miner No. 1 claims, located on Sheep Mountain in the Wild Rose Mining District, under threat of "scattering his brains about the room." Shorty reported the deed at once to authorities in Rhyolite and it is assumed that the wrong was somehow rectified. It is one of the few instances in which Shorty seemed unable to talk himself out of a tight situation. 15 March 1907.

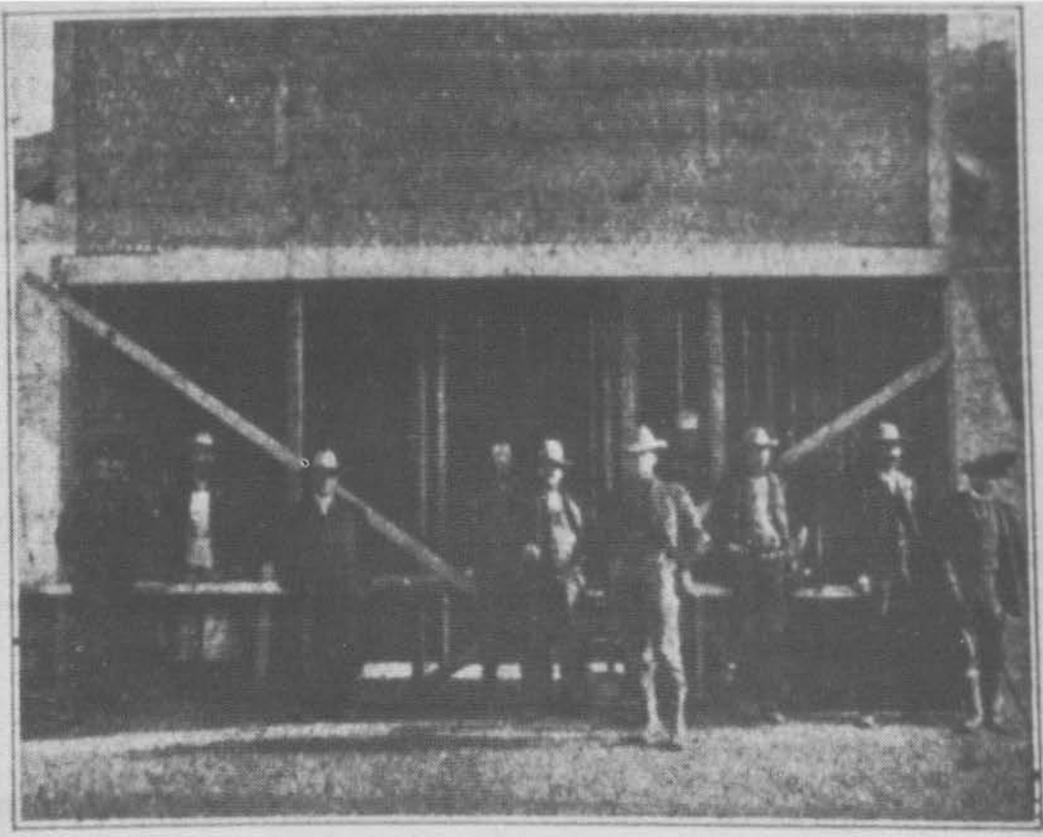


Illustration 183.

Proud cardholders of the Skidoo Club, 1907.

From Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

The Skidoo Club was organized in 1907. It was the first of its kind in the Northwest. The club was organized to provide a means of transportation for the members of the club. The club was organized to provide a means of transportation for the members of the club. The club was organized to provide a means of transportation for the members of the club.



The Skidoo Club.

The Skidoo Club was organized in 1907. It was the first of its kind in the Northwest. The club was organized to provide a means of transportation for the members of the club. The club was organized to provide a means of transportation for the members of the club. The club was organized to provide a means of transportation for the members of the club.

See Inyo Register, 7 March 1907, Inyo Independent, 2 April 1907.

x) Transportation Problems Arise

Skidoo and the surrounding

Emigrant District were now accessible by stage both from Ballarat (four-horse, tri-weekly service arriving on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays) and Rhyolite (now on a four-horse, three-day round-trip schedule), and it was being rumored that a stage company in Johannesburg was planning a line to Skidoo, making the 110-mile trip in two days, a stage going each way daily. This would mean three regular stages into the town as well as several private cars, such as J. W. Calloway's sixty-horsepower auto with a capacity for ten passengers.<sup>240</sup>

The recently-completed Rhyolite-Skidoo road was proving a boon in many ways, but unforeseen problems soon arose that for a while were seriously detrimental to the freighting business. The trouble was first perceived when J. R. Clark, who had been hauling pipe, telephone poles, and other miscellaneous freight for Montgomery and Hoveck was warned by freighters doing business between Rhyolite and Skidoo not to haul any more freight for less than 3½ cents per pound, even though the distance was less than fifty miles. This action justifiably angered the Skidoo Mines Company, which had just initiated a shipment of 500 tons, or ten carloads, of pipe, lumber, hay, and grain from Los Angeles to Skidoo via Rhyolite. Upon learning that hauling the supplies from the latter place to Skidoo would cost \$3.50 per hundred, the shipment was stopped and ordered to go via Johannesburg instead, where the freight charge was only 2½ cents per pound although the distance was 120 miles. It was not until the following October that arrangements were made among the local Rhyolite freighters to allow open competition for the Skidoo business and to do away with the prohibitory tariffs. This would ensure the rerouting of freight for the Skidoo Mine (especially the lucrative

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240. Inyo Register, 7 March 1907; Inyo Independent, 5 April 1907.

mill shipments) back through Rhyolite and necessitated the laying off of many of the freight handlers and railroad men who had been involved in the Death Valley business at Johannesburg.<sup>241</sup>

An important milestone in the town's history was reached in early spring 1907 when Skidoo became connected to Rhyolite by phone, one of the first messages relayed concerning a new strike on the Granite Contact. According to the Skidoo News

The telephone from Rhyolite has reached Skidoo and a flood of business between the Bullfrog metropolis and this place is keeping the wires busy. The first message flashed across the wires from here last Monday announcing that communication was opened and that conversation could now be carried on with the Panamint camp.<sup>242</sup>

The line, built by the Skidoo Mines Company, again under Clark's supervision, had a halfway phone station at Stovepipe. The cost of talking with Skidoo was a mere dollar. By the end of April a similar 7½-mile-long line was about to be completed to the Keane Wonder northeast across the valley that would connect with the Rhyolite-Skidoo line, thus making a second phone office in the valley.<sup>243</sup>

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241. Bullfrog Miner, 22 February 1907; Rhyolite Daily Bulletin, 9 October 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 18 October 1907.

242. Reported in the Bullfrog Miner, 12 April 1907. Rhyolite Herald, 29 March 1907.

243. Inyo Independent, 19 April 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 26 April 1907.

"Away up at the top of the Panamints where the western wall of Death Valley fades off into thin air; that's where Skidoo is . . . the little strip of country in Inyo county, California, where the geography shows blank."

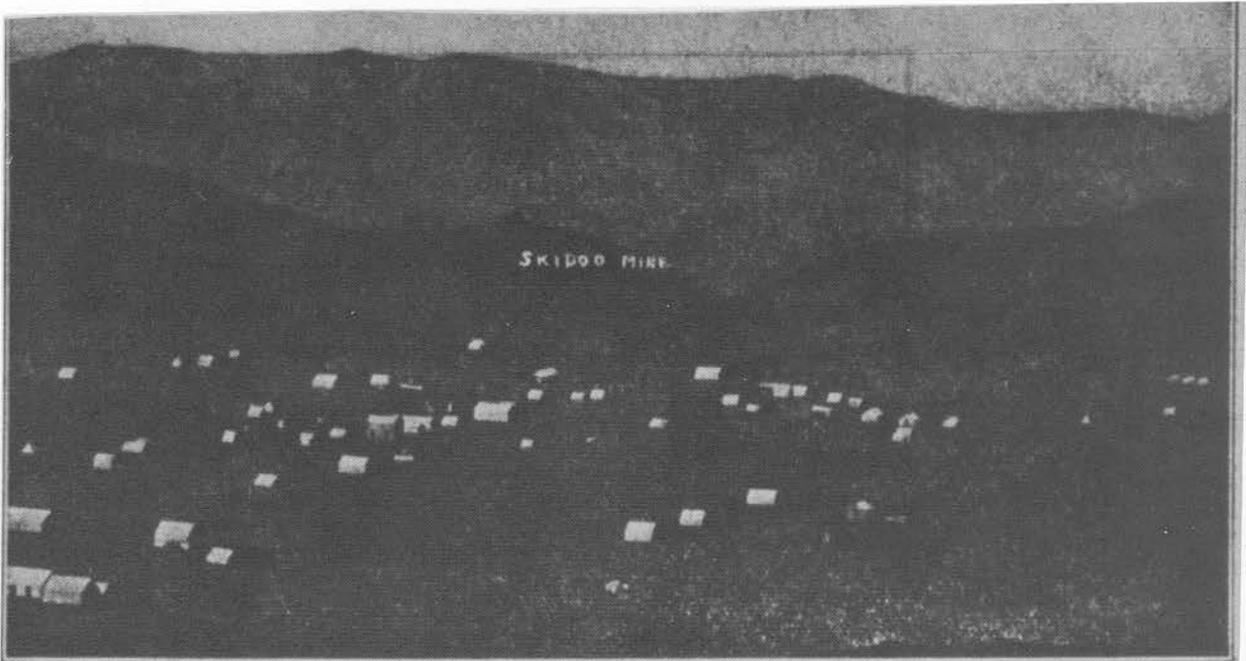
From Inyo Register, 17 January 1907

Illustration 184. Townsite of Skidoo, 1907. From Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

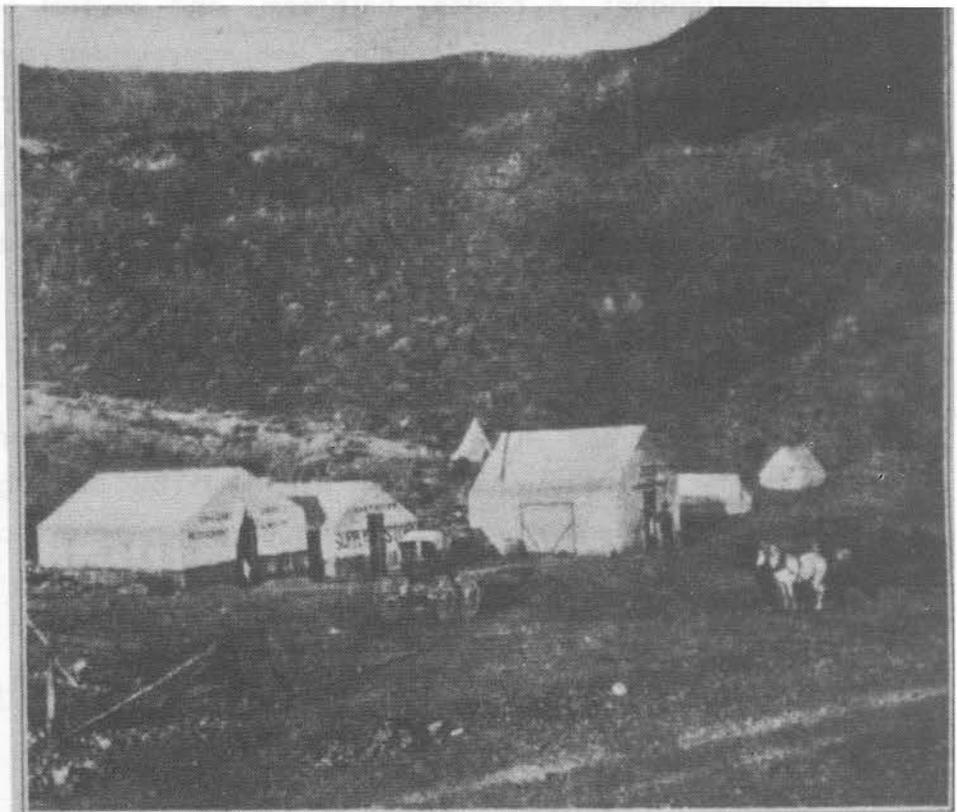
Illustration 185.

Community of Emigrant Spring(s), 1907.

From Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.



The town of Skidoo a month ago. Several substantial buildings have since been erected. Photo by E. Weyle.



Emigrant Springs

xi) Continuing Activity by the  
Skidoo Mines Company

All this thriving progress by the town of Skidoo was, of course, directly attributable to a surge of profitable and systematically-planned development at the great Skidoo Mine. The parent mining company was still carrying out its plans with its own money, offering no stock on the market except for 20,000 shares that were sold to friends as a favor for \$30,000. Like Goldfield, Skidoo was fast becoming famous for her leases (of which she now had five), the most famous of which were the Shackett and Hoyt ones. Next to the Skidoo and Granite Contact mines, these were most important in proving the richness of the district. Figures vary considerably as to the number of men actually employed by the Skidoo Mines Company at any one time, ranging from forty to seventy for the month of April alone. By spring, several thousand dollars had been expended on the mine camp, where the company headquarters were now housed in a fine building containing a large main office, a private office for the superintendent, a parlor, bathroom, and several private bedrooms for employees. The structure was surrounded by a large porch and finished throughout in excellent style. Workers were boarded and lodged for \$1 each per day. Other recent improvements at the camp site consisted of a twenty by ninety-foot boarding house, a bunkhouse and another building, an eighteen by twenty-four-foot reading room, an officers' dining room, and a lady cooks' room.<sup>244</sup>

The Skidoo mill was to be built near the mouth of Tunnel No. 3. Here the ore's free-milling character made it easy to treat, and by stoping and tramming directly to the mill and not using wagons, the ore could be cheaply

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244. Bullfrog Miner, 12, 26 April 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.



Illustration 186.

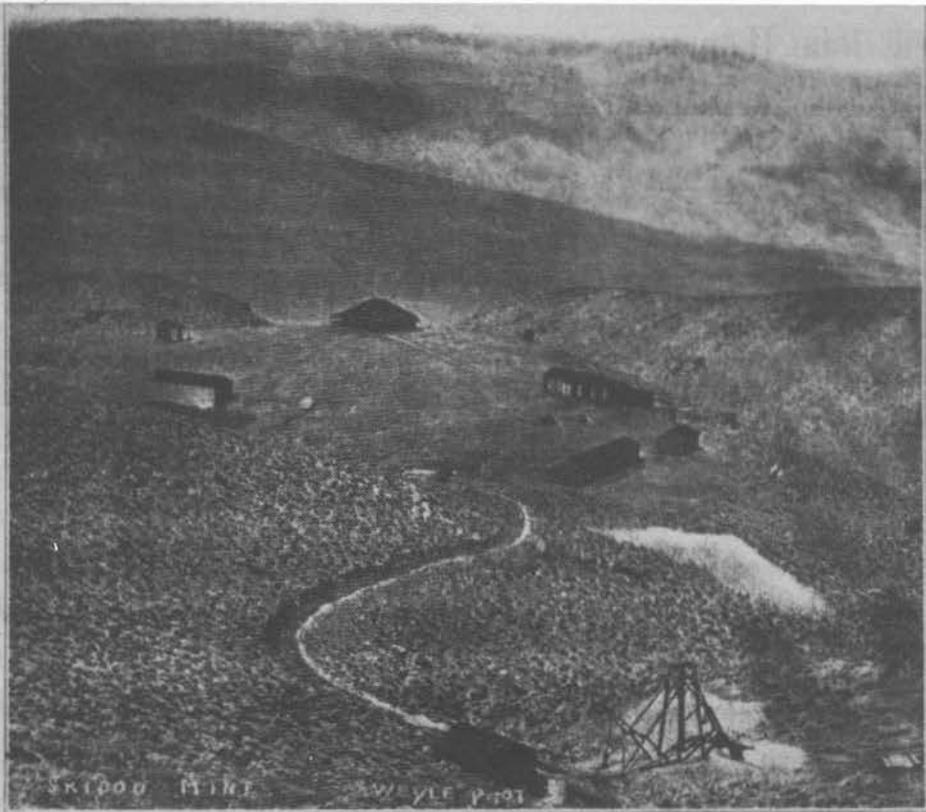
Skidoo Mines Company camp, 1907.

From Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

Illustration 187.

Skidoo Mines Company headquarters building, 1943.

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.



7001 Dept. of Agriculture, 19 April 1907.

mined also. The No. 1 shaft was driven to a 200-foot depth and was equipped with a twenty-five-horsepower gasoline hoist, while the double-compartment shaft, in April, was still awaiting its forty-horsepower hoist. At this time the Skidoo Mines Company completed its formal organization. Still a closed corporation, it had a capitalization of \$5,000,000, with the capital stock divided among the incorporators. Montgomery was president; Capt. W. R. Wharton, vice-president; and Matt Hoveck, treasurer and general manager. Ten claims were included in the mine holdings, and it was fully understood by the men involved that close to half a million dollars would probably be expended on the installation of water, an electric plant, the mill, etc., before any return on the investment would be realized. The Cocopah Mines Company was organized by the same people and financed in the same manner. This company controlled fourteen of the Gold Eagle locations, including the extremely rich 22 and 23 claims. It intended installation of a twenty-stamp mill to handle customers, but this project as well as further development would be delayed until the Skidoo Mine enterprise was in full swing.

By the middle of April eight leases, each a 400 by 600-foot plot, had been given out on the Skidoo Mines Company property, each one expiring 1 April 1908 with the probability of being renewed. The terms of lease stated that two persons must be employed twenty shifts each per month. On ore running \$20 or under per ton, the company would receive a royalty of 10%; from \$20 to \$30, 15%; above \$30, 20%. In addition, it was promised that when the Skidoo mill was finally installed, ore taken out by the lessees would be given preference over company ore. Not intending to make any profit on the work, the company would charge only enough more than the milling cost to allow for wear and tear on the machinery, interest on their investment, and other contingencies.<sup>245</sup>

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245. Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

xii) Skidoo Continues Systematic  
Development

Mining speculators, investors, and owners from all over the country were clearly visualizing the immense profits to be made at Skidoo. Among the camp's visitors during the spring of 1907 was a representative of Lindblom, Linderberg & Co., multimillionaire mine owners of Alaska, who steadfastly announced their intention of becoming involved in the section's mining activity. An important aspect of Skidoo's dynamic mining community and the one that was probably responsible for attracting so many people to her properties was that her business elite were well and widely known for their conservative judgement and legitimate, businesslike mining methods,

men who investigate thoroughly and then support their opinion with capital as strong as the Bank of England; this is the class of men who are making of Skidoo the most wonderful gold camp ever known. . . . Skidoo is not alone great through its gold; it is great in the possession of financial backing which mine and produce that gold.<sup>246</sup>

This is the feature that gave Skidoo her truly unique standing in Death Valley mining history. A short tally of some of the "greats" associated with Skidoo produces the following impressive list:

1. E. A. (Bob) Montgomery, Nevada mining king
2. Matt Hoveck
3. Capt. W. R. Wharton, closely associated with Charles M. Schwab and his enterprises

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246. Inyo Independent, 19 April 1907.

Incorporated under the Laws of South Dakota March 13<sup>th</sup> 1907

NUMBER

52

100 SHARES



SHARES \$5.00 EACH

CAPITAL STOCK \$5000000



This Certifies that Charles Albert Shumate  
is the owner of One Hundred Shares of Five Dollars each of the Capital Stock of  
The Skidoo Mines Company, Fully Paid and Non assessable transferable only on the books of the Corporation  
by the holder hereof in person or by Attorney upon surrender of this Certificate properly endorsed

In Witness Whereof the said Corporation has caused this Certificate to be signed by its duly authorized officers and  
to be sealed with the Seal of the Corporation this 10th day of Nov A.D. 1927

Walter Hoover  
SECRETARY

E. W. Montgomery  
PRESIDENT

Illustration 188.

Skidoo Mines Company stock certificate.

From Historical Mining Certificates folder issued by The Book Club of California, 1971, edited by Albert Shumate and printed by Ward Ritchie Press.

Courtesy of Richard E. Lingenfelter, Univ. of Calif. at San Diego.

4. Capt. John L. Armit of Colorado Springs, actively engaged in mining throughout the West
  5. John W. Seller(s), Goldfield operator
  6. various officials of the John S. Cook & Co. Bank of Rhyolite
  7. Sherwood Aldrich of Colorado Springs, involved in the Bullfrog Tramp Consolidated
  8. Patsy Clark, the copper king involved in Greenwater mining
  9. Poulson & Weaver, Salt Lake City capitalists
  10. Busch brothers, founders and promoters of Rhyolite
- Countless others were also involved in various Skidoo operations.<sup>247</sup>

By early May 1907 the citizens of Skidoo, in accordance with their already proven desire to create a law-abiding and orderly camp, petitioned the county for the appointment of peace officers. A brief visit by the county district attorney and sheriff confirmed the need, and a deputy sheriff and justice of the peace were duly appointed. Another tie with the county seat was suggested in the form of a Skidoo-Keeler road, providing another railroad outlet for the growing community. A second attraction of the proposed project would be a consequent drop in the local cost of hay, grain, and vegetables due to the new access to Owens Valley products.<sup>248</sup>

The establishment of a Skidoo board of trade was another innovation. With Matt Hoveck as president, the organization not only monitored sanitary conditions in the camp, but also created a set of rules by which Skidoovians

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247. Ibid.

248. Ibid.; Ibid., 3 May 1907.

were expected to abide:

That all citizens pledge themselves to assist the officers of the law in maintaining law, order and decency in this camp, especially in the following particulars:

The prevention of shooting firearms within the boundaries of the townsite.

To discourage the carrying of concealed weapons therein.

The orderly conduct of all persons upon the streets of the town.

Preventing the use of vulgar and indecent language in places likely to be within the hearing of ladies and children.

The prevention of women and minors from entering barrooms.<sup>249</sup>

The first of summer saw frustrating problems on the Skidoo pipeline. The heat and scarcity of water across Death Valley were preventing the hauling of heavy freight from Rhyolite, necessitating utilization of the longer route through Johannesburg and Ballarat. One hundred sixty horses were on the road hauling pipe in the first week of June, and the wagon trains hauling supplies for the construction gang were increased to speed up work. Numerous delays had plagued the project, the result of railroad tie-ups, of the inabilities of factories to make prompt shipments of material, and of numerous other factors over which the Skidoo Mines Company had no control. Material for the line filled forty railroad cars; after its arrival at the depot it had to be freighted by wagon over 100 miles and packed on burro trains up mountain trails where it was laid in solid

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249. Bullfrog Miner, 10 May 1907.



Illustration 189.

Team hauling water line pipe from Rhyolite to Skidoo, 1907.

From Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.



rock in almost inaccessible places. Despite the holdups and obstacles, five miles of the line had been completed, over the hardest piece of country through which the line would pass, and water was now running into Tuber Canyon. A Mr. Maren, who had previously laid pipe for Standard Oil Company, was in charge of the work and intended to have his crew of thirty men lay not less than one-quarter of a mile per day from now on. It was not until the first week of September, however, that the line was completed to Harrisburg, and by the end of November the pipeline was still two miles and one hill away from Skidoo.<sup>250</sup>

One proof of Skidoo's durability was the fact that it was not experiencing the usual "hot weather slump" that so often invaded mining camps in Death Valley during the summer quiet season and that many times presaged the end of less stable communities. Here, however, the mines were increasing their forces, new buildings were going up, and autos filled with speculators and sightseers arrived every day. To handle the increased activity, the Kimball Bros. stage now left Rhyolite six times a week, leaving there every day but Sunday at 5:30 P.M. and leaving Skidoo every day but Monday at the same hour. During the hot summer months, nighttime was the only period in which to travel.

Most interesting, though, is the realization that a great depression had been sweeping the country for the past several weeks. With the exception of Skidoo, where there was no cessation or lessening of activity through the summer, there had already been a general closing of mines in practically every camp on the desert. Not more than half the mines were

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250. Ibid., 8 June, 7 September 1907; Inyo Independent, 14, 21 June 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 22 November 1907.

working now in Goldfield, Tonopah, Manhattan, and other northern Nevada camps, and those that were able to keep going had greatly reduced work forces. These dull times would continue for most of the large mining camps in Arizona, California, and Nevada into the fall. The lively town in the Panamints had experienced only a slight reduction in population, now holding probably less than 300 people, of whom 100 were employed at various properties. An estimate at this time arrived at nearly 2,000 claims in the district. The fact that the Skidoo Mines Company expended three months time and \$4,000 on grading a new road around the big Skidoo hill, long a terror to freighters and visitors, was testimony to its continued commitment to the area.<sup>251</sup>

A change of policy occurred in Skidoo during the fall when the camp, heretofore a non-union one, elected to organize a local branch of the Western Federation of Miners:

The name of Skidoo camp has been as a challenge to I.W.W. men for a good while, it having been the policy of owners there to limit the stay of agitators to the length of time from the stage on which they arrived to the next one going out.<sup>252</sup>

The thirty-five charter members next proceeded to formulate a policy of liberal, non-coercive elements that were truly unique in labor history and that greatly enhanced the WFM image, at least in this section of the Panamints. These instructions to the membership included:

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251. Bullfrog Miner, 15, 22 June, 6 July, 14 September 1907; Inyo Independent, 13 September 1907.

252. Inyo Register, 17 October 1907.

1. no attempt to dictate policy to mine owners
2. acceptance of no one as a member unless he was a practical miner (that is, actively engaged in mining work)
3. encourage and bring in to the district good miners who were already union members
4. cease reports that had been circulated through union channels detrimental to Skidoo.<sup>253</sup>

This action by Skidoo miners greatly augmented the high esteem in which the area was held by important individuals whose support meant so much to the town. J. J. Taylor, a well-known mining engineer in the firm of Voorhees & Taylor of Rhyolite, voiced the widely-held opinion that

Skidoo has a better reputation, from a mining standpoint, than any other new camp in the country, and from what I have seen in the few days here, I consider that the reputation is fully justified, and merited. The camp has the mineral, beyond question. But aside from that all important fact, it has been thus far entirely free from any wildcat or stock jobbing promotions which have given black eyes to every other mining district on the desert. Up to the present time Skidoo mining has all been on a clean, legitimate basis. The biggest mine in the camp, the Skidoo, is under the management of one of the most thorough mining men of the country, Matt Hoveck, and honest work is every where in evidence.<sup>254</sup>

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253. Ibid.; Rhyolite Herald, 18 October 1907.

254. Rhyolite Herald, 25 October 1907.

The desire of Skidoovians to keep this statement accurate extended to the calling of a miner's meeting in November to frame new district laws and select an arbitration committee of ten to settle any disputes arising over mining claims.<sup>255</sup>

xiii) The Skidoo Pipeline is Finally a Reality

"Yes, the streets of Skidoo are running full of water, enough for swimming pools or skating rinks."<sup>256</sup> Thus did Bob Montgomery announce the long-awaited event as water piped from Telescope Peak was turned into a big reservoir above town, from which it ran freely through the unpiped city streets. The line awaited continuance to the town, mine, and mill until the latter was further advanced. The twenty-two-mile-long line of six-inch pipe, with eight- and ten-inch mains in the draws, was said to have cost around \$250,000. Other sources said the total bill for wagon haulage from the railroad at Johannesburg to the road nearest the pipeline was \$75,000, and the line itself cost nearly \$300,000. Montgomery's elaborate plans of development had of necessity to undergo some modifications and retrenching of policy because of the 1907 financial panic, and as a result a substitution was made in the pipeline of a number of miles of steel spiral pipe for the heavy eight-inch steel screw pipe used throughout most of the length. A big electric station had to be cut out as well as private lines to other springs. So far five teams of the Tonopah Lumber Company had transported 100,000 feet of lumber to Skidoo for the mill, material for which was coming from Los Angeles, and grading for a sixty-stamp mill, that being the determined capacity upon completion (reduced from the last-mentioned eighty because of financial conditions), had been

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255. Bullfrog Miner, 23 November 1907.

256. Rhyolite Herald, 13 December 1907.

finished.<sup>257</sup> Construction work was being rushed, but the heavy mill timbers could not be set until the concrete beds had hardened sufficiently to support them. A steel cable strung across the gulch would be used to hoist the heavy machinery. A dam in the gulch below the millsite formed a pool where tailings would be saved until the cyanide process was installed.

Financial problems had started to affect the camp now, and the depression that led to a reduction in the projected size of the Skidoo mill also was the excuse for the holding of a "Hard Times Frolic," a newspaper account of which gives some indication of the town's erstwhile optimism and general spirit of good humor that accompanied the patient wait for a return of solid business conditions. Invitations to the party read:

WHEREAS, In a burst of defiance against the solemn depression thrust upon our beloved Death valley region by the heartlessness of Wall street and high finance generally, we, the free and independent citizens of Skidoo have resolved to hold a "hard times frolic" in the Eschwig grand opera house. . . . To this you are heartily invited that you may join in the good cheer, good drinkables and eatables provided. And enjoy the greatest terpsichorean, literary, musical and freakish exhibition ever devised by man on the ragged edge of Death valley.<sup>258</sup>

The arrival of the new year in Skidoo saw the continuance of positive and improving conditions.

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257. Bullfrog Miner, 26 October, 14 December 1907, 25 January 1908; Rhyolite Herald, 13 December 1907, 13 January 1909; Mining & Scientific Press, 1 April 1911, p. 479.

258. Bullfrog Miner, 4 January 1908.

Immediate need was seen for a school district, census returns of which in June showed a healthy attendance of thirty-nine white children, twenty boys and nineteen girls. Work progressed on the Keeler-Skidoo or "Zinc Hill Road," as eight men and two teams struggled to blast a 3½-mile section out of solid rock and cement through Darwin Wash by means of mules, scrapers, jack-hammers, and blasting powder. Efforts at the Skidoo Mine were directed toward getting the ore in shape for stoping and toward exploring new bodies that could be conveniently transmitted to the mill; much good milling ore was present on the dumps and a ready water supply was at hand. The main problem was that all available cash had been used, and more capital was necessary.<sup>259</sup>

xiv) The Hanging of Joe Simpson

Because of this charged atmosphere, when tempers possibly were temporarily strained by more doubts about the future than were usually entertained, and in light of the town's reputation for decency and law-abiding behavior, it was less than prudent for Joe "Hooch" Simpson, a gambler hailing from Reno, though a resident of Skidoo for some time, with a reputation for a surly character and drinking to excess, to enter the store of James Arnold, one of the town's founding fathers and one of the best-liked men around, and proceed to deliberately shoot him to death. The motivation for this action is not completely clear, but it was evidently on account of some fancied wrong that Simpson felt had been done him by the victim. He was immediately arrested, and upon Arnold's death a few hours later, it was only by some of the greatest diplomacy that law officers were able to avert an immediate lynching.

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259. Inyo Independent, 7 February 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 28 March 1908; Inyo Register 9 April, 25 June 1908.

As it was, only a temporary stay of execution had been granted, for on 22 April Simpson was dragged from confinement and efficiently and unceremoniously attached by the neck to a telephone pole. Word of the deed spread quickly. When newsmen arrived from other parts wanting pictures of the event, Simpson was rehanged with pleasure, and the photo taken that appears in practically every volume on Death Valley. As would be expected in this town, the entire project was undertaken in an organized fashion, and when the misdeed had been avenged, normal conditions rapidly resumed.<sup>260</sup> An official investigation of the affair determined that Joe Simpson, one-time consort of "Skidoo Babe" and regarded as really nothing more than an ordinary pimp, had met death "by strangulation at the hands of unknown parties,"<sup>261</sup> while "the opinion of the Skidoo people appears to be that the lynchers did a justifiable piece of business."<sup>262</sup>

xv) The Skidoo Mill Supports the  
Town

Late spring of 1908 brought the commencement of teaming between Owens Valley and Skidoo along a route vastly improved but still marred by a few steep grades and curves where top-heavy loads found the going particularly harrowing. This section of road from Darwin Wash connected with the old Nadeau freight road into Panamint Valley and with the Wild Rose road constructed by the Modoc Company when it was hauling ore from the charcoal kilns in Wildrose Canyon to its mining

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260. Rhyolite Daily Bulletin, 20, 22, 23 April 1908; Inyo Register, 30 April 1908. Lovers of the perverse may check Cronkhite, Death Valley's Victims, p. 15, for a look at the famous photo.

261. Inyo Independent, 1 May 1908. A full account of the testimony of a few principal witnesses to the shooting before a coroner's jury may be found here.

262. Inyo Register, 30 April 1908.

property. May also saw the first stamps fall on high-grade rock at the Skidoo mill. The attachment of a Pelton water wheel would soon enable the addition of five more stamps. In early June the first gold brick from the Skidoo Mine, representing the cleanup for the first few days of operation and estimated to be worth \$4,000, was transported to Rhyolite and then shipped to the mint by Wells Fargo express. Ten stamps were now in operation and the full process at the mill encompassed crushing, amalgamation, and concentration, with cyanide still to be added. The second brick from May production was valued at \$7,000. By the end of June the mill was treating around thirty-five tons daily with an increase to twenty stamps planned when the demands of the mine justified the additional expenditure.<sup>263</sup>

It was considered unprofitable to ship less than \$100 ore from the area, prompting the frequent voicing of the need in Skidoo for a small custom mill, which could secure water by contract from the Skidoo Company and thereby enable more lessees to start work. This was deemed especially essential when in July the Skidoo Mines Company decided to throw open more than half its estate for leasing purposes, wisely realizing that it would be years before it could work all its territory. The lessees' ore would be treated by the company at a maximum rate of \$3.50 per ton, including cyaniding, or at only \$3 per ton if the run was made with water power. Leasing royalties were raised only slightly: ore under \$20 a ton, 10%; ore over \$20, 15%; ore over \$30, 20%; ore over \$50, 25%. The company's action here was expected to have a tremendous influence on the prosperity of the camp. Numerous advantages would revert to the company, the expired leases already handed over to them having greatly

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263. Inyo Independent, 15 May 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 23 May, 6, 20 June 1908; Rhyolite Herald, 3 June 1908.

enhanced the value of the property; when the new leases expired, the Skidoo Mine would be in control of a tremendous output that would keep the mill running steadily. The great factor sustaining the mine's value was that ore bodies were increasing and their average value was remaining steady. The mine's future was dependent on the fact that the ore bodies would persist with depth and that enough large-capacity reduction plants could be installed to handle large reserves of milling ore at a profit to offset high operating costs. The June cleanup resulted in a \$13,000 brick.<sup>264</sup>

A Presidential year is usually fairly lean for business, and coupled with this particular one was the unfortunate fact that effects of the past financial panic could still be felt during the traditionally quiet midsummer time. Having been without adequate water for eighteen months and for so long without a reduction plant, and crippled now by the failure of its bank, the withdrawal of the Nevada stage line, and the closing down of the Skidoo News (all due primarily to the stringency of the money market), it was truly amazing that the camp of 150 people was still able to function. It was supported singlehandedly by the Skidoo Mines Company, which was amazingly still able to increase its output, put a cyanide plant in operation, and keep fifty men employed on its own business while twenty-five or so others worked on leases.<sup>265</sup> It was agreed by all that "lack of a sufficient water supply and power to work her ores is the only the sole reason why Skidoo is not one of the foremost producers on the Pacific coast."<sup>266</sup>

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264. Rhyolite Herald, 24 June, 29 July 1908; Mining World, 31 October 1908, p. 682.

265. Inyo Independent, 31 July, 4 September 1908; Inyo Register, 6 August 1908; Engineering and Mining Journal, 15 August 1908, p. 345.

266. Inyo Independent, 4 September 1908.

Although Montgomery had once hoped that the Nevada-California Power Company would extend electrical service into Skidoo and into other sections in the district south of Rhyolite, thereby furnishing power for his mill and enabling the present water line to be freed for use by other mills in the area, this never came to pass. The cost estimated by the power company for the project was approximately \$1,000 or more per mile, and most of that would have had to be paid by the Skidoo Mines Company itself.<sup>267</sup>

Due to the lack of mills in the vicinity, little mining activity was being conducted in Skidoo in the fall of 1908. Their mine's great production rate (\$20,000 a month) prevented the Skidoo Company from donating more than three months time to reduction of the ore worked by its lessees, all of whom had been mining for more than a year with no opportunity to extract the gold. Renewed isolation of the town meant that mining timbers were costing \$400 per thousand running feet, potatoes sold for eight cents a pound, and hay for \$100 per ton.<sup>268</sup>

By October 1908, in an attempt to alleviate somewhat the problems caused by a lack of reduction plants, E. M. Tracey, assayer for the Skidoo Mines Company, was promoting the erection of a five-stamp custom mill in the gulch below the main Skidoo mill in a location enabling it to utilize the latter's waste water, which, with a fall of 800 feet or more, could generate enough power for further ore reduction. This mill,

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267. Ibid., 11 December 1908; Rhyolite Herald, 10 March 1909; Bullfrog Miner, 13 March 1909.

268. Inyo Independent, 28 August 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 19 September 1908; Rhyolite Herald, 23 September 1908.

powered by a twenty-five-horsepower oil engine, would be for use on the ore of Skidoo Mine lessees only. After four months the company would take over the plant, paying the cost price less 6%.<sup>269</sup>

Thus gradually the Skidoo Mines will augment their reduction works on a very economical basis, and eventually achieve the ambition of Bob Montgomery of having a big mine operated at a very low cost, although isolated in an expensive section of difficult access.<sup>270</sup>

At the same time work was proceeding on this project, grading was being done to enable an increase in the Skidoo mill from ten to twenty-five stamps. The cyanide plant was functioning extremely well, with a total savings now being secured of almost 95%. The water necessary to run the larger mill was being obtained by increasing the head of the present supply at the spring near Telescope Peak.<sup>271</sup>

By January 1909 the route from Stovepipe station to Skidoo had been shortened by fifteen miles by completion of a light road up Telephone Wash, making the Rhyolite-Skidoo trip only about forty miles long; despite this, the freight, mail, and stage route had reverted to the long and expensive Johannesburg road, over 100 miles long. Carloads of pipe were still being delivered to the Skidoo Mine as efforts were being made to furnish power for additional machinery, electric lights, etc. The total cost of all these improvements--the

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269. Rhyolite Herald, 14 October, 25 November 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 28 November 1908.

270. Bullfrog Miner, 28 November 1908.

271. Inyo Register, 12 November 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 14 November 1908.

additional pipe, additional water and machinery, financing of leases, construction of transportation tunnels, etc.--had to this date exceeded production. By March a second, lower mill of five stamps was in operation, as were six concentrators and fifteen cyanide tanks. Around seventy men were employed at the mine, where a healthy state of affairs seemed to exist. Despite the town's drop in population and generally quiet atmosphere, holidays were still important, and Washington's birthday was celebrated with a literary program and grand ball lasting far into the night.

According to current estimates, in the months since the Skidoo plant started operation, about 5,000 tons of ore had been milled. There were estimated to be 49,320 tons in sight averaging nearly \$20 a ton with a large tonnage running below \$10. The bullion output for the six months of the previous year reached \$110,000. The total cost per ton produced was \$8.69, but it was anticipated that this would soon be reduced to \$5.10. (By January 1910 the total cost of mining and milling ores was under \$8 a ton.) Ore reserves were placed at between \$812,500 and \$1,000,000.<sup>272</sup>

The Skidoo Mine operation, encompassing twenty-three claims and fractions, consisted now of the mill, a laboratory, office, lodging and boarding houses, an approximately fifty-mile-long telegraph line, machine shop, large ore bins, tramway, etc. Underground workings ran 5,000 feet, largely confined to about sixty of the company's 240 acres. Enough ore was in sight to keep the mill running full capacity for the next three years. Shipments from Harrisburg were also being processed

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272. Rhyolite Herald, 13, 20 January 1909, 8 January 1910; Inyo Independent, 5 March 1909; Inyo Register, 18 March 1909.

Illustration 190.

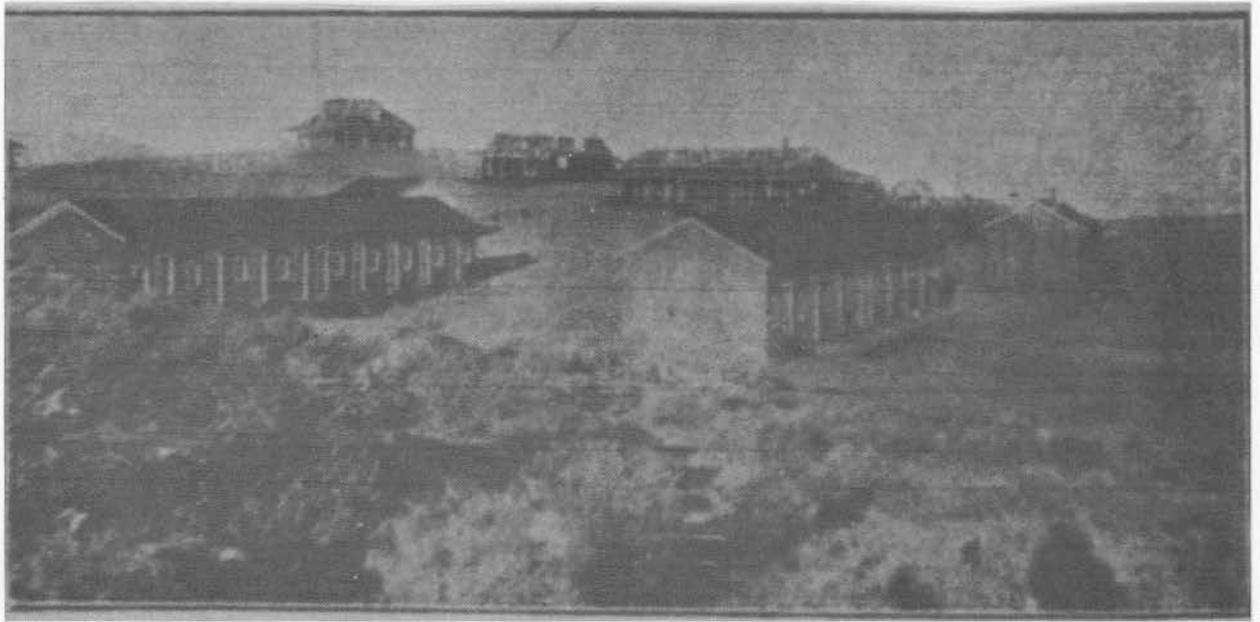
Skidoo Mines Company camp, 1909.

From Rhyolite Herald Pictorial Supplement, March 1909.

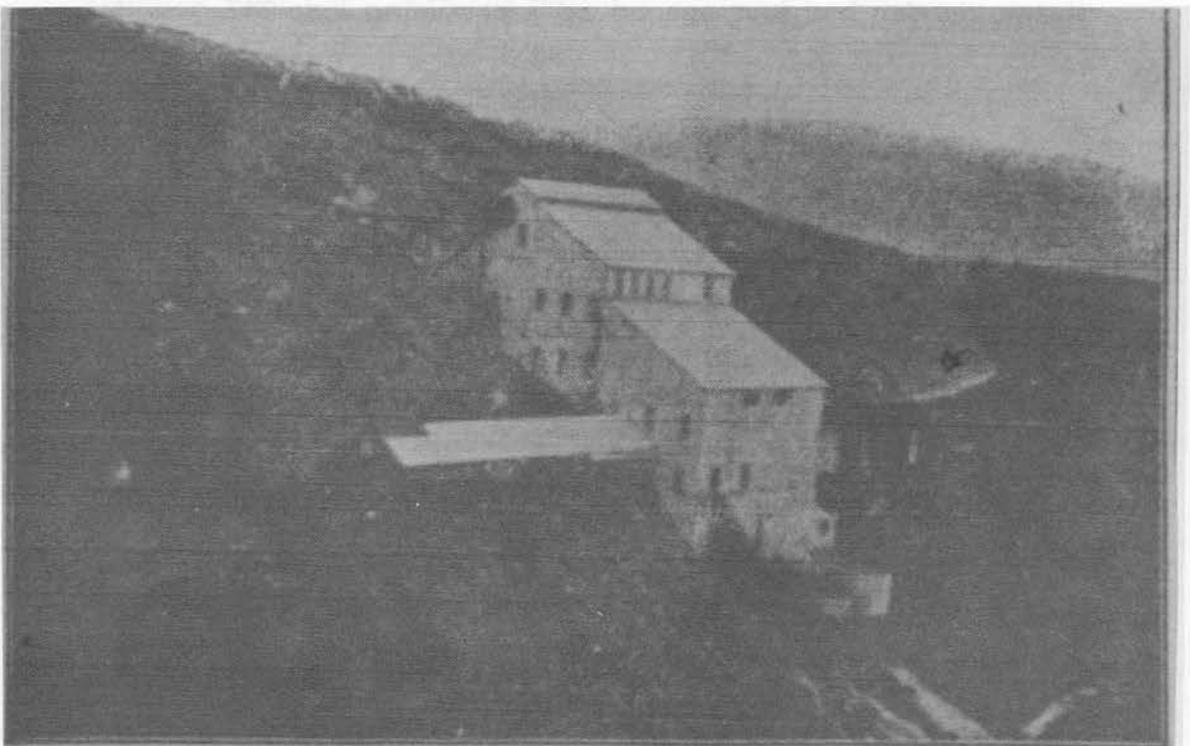
Illustration 191.

Skidoo Mines Company mill, 1909.

From Rhyolite Herald Pictorial Supplement, March 1909.



with a stream that flows through the valley. The buildings are arranged in a line, and the foreground is a steep, rocky slope. The photograph is oriented horizontally on the page.



here. No renewal of leases was being extended. In July the Los Angeles Mining Review reported that in the last three months the net profits from mines operating in the Skidoo region had been from \$15,417.46 to \$17,981.57, with gross extraction averaging \$24,859.41 a month. This made the Skidoo Mine second only to the Keane Wonder in production in California in 1909. The net profit for the last three months was \$49,019.96, or an average of \$26,339.98 a month, or \$196,079.84 per year. All indebtedness of the Skidoo Mines Company was cleared away by this time, and the first dividend, aggregating \$50,000, was being paid in July at the rate of five cents a share.

This success was corresponding with the return to the limelight of several southwest Nevada districts, which were only now recovering from the setback dealt their development by irresponsible promoters and poorly-managed mining operations in earlier days. The Montgomery-Shoshone, for instance, was in the process of paying off its indebtedness and the Keane Wonder had just opened up a promising lode.<sup>273</sup>

xvi) A Fire and Litigation Bring an  
End to Mining Activity

Despite the ongoing and successful development at the Skidoo Mine, however, it was obvious that the town itself was becoming more and more depleted, the supervisors' proceedings of 20 September 1909 ruling that "It appearing to the Board that the attendance of pupils in the Skidoo School District for the past year has been below the required

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273. Rhyolite Herald, March 1909 (Pictorial Supplement), 21 April, 7, 31 July 1909; Bullfrog Miner, 24 April 1909; Inyo Register, 1 July 1909; Inyo Independent, 2 July 1909; Mining World, 22 January 1910, p. 172.

number for maintaining a school, motion was made and carried that the District be declared lapsed."<sup>274</sup>

When Frank Montgomery, nephew of E. A., took over management of the Skidoo Mine in the winter of 1909-10, a new era of productivity arrived. More aggressive than his uncle, he put half the work force on development and the other half he charged with supplying ore to the mill. It was not long before the most extensive and richest ore body yet was located. Better returns were the result, acquired in spite of some pipeline troubles due to expansion and contraction and sometimes even freezing that temporarily lessened the hydraulic power supply for the mill during extreme seasons of the year. Although the mine was able to keep up production for several years yet, monthly net profits seemed to suddenly start a downhill slide, broken only temporarily by an occasional banner year:

September 1909 --	\$10,000
October 1909 --	\$11,507.22
November 1909 --	\$ 6,508.82
March 1910 --	\$ 8,116.66
April 1910 --	\$ 6,878.78
July 1910 --	\$ 7,798.41
October 1910 --	\$ 5,212.73
November 1910 --	\$13,280.03 <sup>275</sup>

A second dividend of five cents a share (\$50,000 total) was paid by the company on 1 July 1910.

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274. Inyo Independent, 24 September 1909.

275. Inyo Register, 28 October, 2 December 1909, 28 April, 1 December 1910; Rhyolite Herald, 1, 8 January, 28 May, 27 August, 31 December 1910.

A report on the Skidoo Mine appeared in the Mining and Scientific Press in August 1910 and presented the following brief summary of its operations: work was being pursued on four veins, with two tunnels and two shafts having attained a maximum depth of 300 feet. Ore averaging \$15 a ton was recovered and treated by amalgamation, concentration, and cyanidation in a fifty-ton mill, with about 65% of the gold recovered on the plates. The concentrate was shipped to the Midvale, Utah, plant of the United States Smelting, Refining & Milling Company. Cyanidation of the tailings recovered 90% of the gold. Forty men were employed at the mine and mill, and a power plant consisting of several gasoline engines was on hand in case of severe trouble with the pipeline. The company's statement of operations from June 1909 to June 1910 inclusive showed profits of \$92,617, with the total cost of mining and milling at \$6.88 per ton.<sup>276</sup>

At the start of 1911 there were three producing companies and five producing lessees operating on the Skidoo Mines Company property, shipping to outside smelters at Salt Lake City, Needles, and Keeler, and to Johannesburg, Rhyolite, Beatty, and Skidoo mills. January and February of 1911 each netted only about \$8,000 from the Skidoo, but the last year's production had totalled \$108,000.<sup>277</sup> July recorded the largest run in the life of the mine--\$18,000.

Another five-cent dividend was paid by the company in October 1911, and again in May 1912, by which time it was reported that the company was maintaining an

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276. Mining & Scientific Press, 20 August 1910, p. 242. It should be noted also that the Granite Contact property of eight claims was still active at this time and being advertised for patent. Rhyolite Herald, 14 January 1911.

277. Rhyolite Herald, 21 January, 1 April 1911.

approximate production of \$14,400 a month and earning net profits of about \$4,800.<sup>278</sup> A blow to production fell in January 1913 when the pipeline froze and burst in several places, necessitating the shutdown of the mill and consequent discharge of forty miners. (The cyanide plant had already been closed for the winter.) Because future operations appeared in doubt, most men left camp, leaving only a few lessees on the property. Undaunted, the company began the slow process of hauling in wagonloads of material to repair the pipeline, but when half the repairs had been accomplished, a more serious calamity befell the operation when most of the mill structure was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin on 2 June 1913. The loss was reported at a staggering \$50,000, with only one battery of five stamps being saved. Although parts of the old structure could be reused, a large amount of new material was necessary to modernize the mill. By October 1913 a new ten-stamp mill was in commission and a heavy winter yield was expected. Company ore would be processed the first month and then the mill would turn to steady processing of lessees' ore until all stockpiled material was cleaned up.<sup>279</sup>

Production progressed well enough that by July 1914 another dividend could be declared, proving the fantastic resiliency of the company and the resources of its mine. Another one-cent dividend in October 1914 brought the total dividends to a reported \$365,000.<sup>280</sup> Thirty-five men were again on the company payroll involved in exploration and development work. Plans were being perfected for adding another

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278. Mining World, 25 May 1912, p. 1109.

279. Engineering and Mining Journal, 5 July 1913, p. 42; 13 September 1913, p. 520; 4 October 1913, p. 665; Mining World, 4 October 1913, p. 611.

280. Mining World, 7 November 1914, p. 902.

five stamps and increasing production by fifty per cent, for the Skidoo property seemed destined to continue operations for many years to come. J. H. Cooper, who took over management of the mine in 1914, said that during more than half of this year the best sections of the mine were in the hands of lessees who were profiting highly at the expense of the company. Also during this year pending litigation prevented work on two known ore bodies of excellent grade. Still the company remained free of debt with substantial reserves in the treasury.<sup>281</sup> In April 1915 five 1,250-pound stamps were added to the ten-stamp mill, along with two Deister concentrators. In December the cyanide plant was housed and insulated with paper, and an oil-fired boiler was installed to heat the cyanide solution. Leases were not being renewed, the owners determined to run the mine themselves.

The town of Skidoo still supported a small population, although several lots were being offered for sale. It was still reached by a horse stage from Ballarat costing \$34 per person. Upon completion of the Trona Railroad it was possible to go directly from there to Skidoo, bypassing Ballarat completely. Freight from Johannesburg was costing \$50 to \$70 a ton, although parcel post would bring it for \$21 a ton. Accordingly coal, barley, canned goods, and every other type of freight imaginable that could be compressed into fifty-pound lots was being sent by mail!<sup>282</sup>

Skidoo's days were numbered, however, and in September 1917 it was reported that the Skidoo's

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281. J. H. Cooper, "The Skidoo Gold Mines, Data Supplemental to General Report," n.d., n.p., DEVA NM mining office.

282. Inyo Register, 21 January 1915; Engineering and Mining Journal, 20 November 1915, p. 835.

rich vein had pinched out and the mine had closed down permanently, coincident with the demise of Rhyolite and Greenwater about this time. Current prices for iron and steel remnants made the prospect of salvaging them attractive, so that by October Trona was gearing up for bustling railroad activity after receiving word that the contract for dismantling and shipping the mill, machinery, and pipe from Skidoo would soon be awarded. It was estimated that 160 cars would be needed for the pipe alone, sold to Standard Oil Company, which along with other scrap metal would be hauled to Trona by teams and motor trucks.<sup>283</sup> (Short sections of the pipe left on the ground were later taken out by CCC labor and used for various purposes.)

xvii) Revival of Mining in the Area in  
the Later 1900s

When Edna Perkins visited the site of Skidoo in 1922 on her trip through the Mojave Desert, several buildings were still standing along one wide street and a mass of stoves, broken chairs, and cooking utensils were strewn around. A neatly-piled wall of bottles, five feet high and several feet wide, still stood behind the saloon. "Old Tom Adams," an old desert prospector, was the sole inhabitant of the area, guarding his mine and Skidoo.<sup>284</sup> The peacefully slow decaying process of the site was only slightly interrupted in 1923 by the Eric Von Stroheim Company from Goldwyn Studio in Hollywood, headquartered at Lone Pine, which began location work in Darwin, Skidoo, and Death Valley generally for final scenes of "Greed," an adaptation of Frank Norris's book "McTeague."

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283. Engineering and Mining Journal, 22 September 1917, p. 539, 6 October 1917, p. 621; Inyo Register, 4 October 1917; Memo, Supt., DEVA NM, to Reg. Dir., 12 May 1952.

284. Perkins, White Heart of Mojave, pp. 160, 164. Could this have been Sam Adams who lived at Harrisburg?

In January 1926 the Skidoo mines were to be reopened under the management of Ogden, Utah, men who bought control from Judge William B. Gray of Beatty, a justice of the peace who had earlier acquired the property when he sued Montgomery in U.S. District Court, claiming ownership of ten fractional claims that had been operated as a part of the Skidoo Mine. Rather than pay a \$300,000 judgement, Montgomery had given the mines to the judge, who later operated them throughout the 1930s. The new company would function under the name of Golden Glow Mines Corporation. In October the workings consisted of an inclined shaft 300 feet deep and a 300-foot-deep vertical shaft. The ten-stamp mill and cyanide plant were still on site. Three years later H.W. Eichbaum, controlling the Emigrant Springs Mining and Milling Company, tried to revive the Skidoo mines, but with little success.<sup>285</sup>

The Skidoo Mine enjoyed a revival of production, and the nearby Del Norte Mine at the northern end of the Skidoo gold mining district most of its activity and production, following passage of the 1934 Gold Act. Whereas prior to that, from about 1837 to 1934, the price of gold had been restricted to a little over \$20 an ounce, it now jumped to \$35. Judge Gray, in the spring of 1936, began employing sixteen men in the mine and mill of Skidoo in removing ore averaging \$30 a ton in gold at the rate of ten tons per day; by summer some thirty other men were employed on various surrounding properties. In July a strike was made on the Del Norte Group of claims two miles north of the old Skidoo Mine, and Gray entered into an agreement with the U.S. Smelting and Refining Company of Salt Lake City to sample

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285. Inyo Independent, 9 January 1926; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Report 22 of the State Mineralogist (1926), p. 473; Mining Journal, 28 February 1929, p. 33. See the following section on the Saddle Rock Mine.

the two mines. The Del Norte was subsequently taken under option by Roy Troeger, whose cyanide mill at the Keeler gold mine could process the ore. Two years later the group of six claims was still under bond to the Panamint Milling Company, of which Troeger was secretary and manager. They had been developed to the extent of ten shafts from ten to fifty feet deep and many long trenches. Six men were employed. In 1939 a Morris Albertoli and John Rogers of Mojave leased the mine, employing ten to twelve men and producing twenty to twenty-five tons of gold ore daily. Later that year Rogers and Joe Stivers, also of Mojave, purchased Albertoli's one-third interest and formed the Del Norte Mining Company, operating the property until 1942. The \$30-a-ton ore they mined was treated at the Skidoo mill. It was hauled by truck to the fifty-ton ore bin, crushed to ¼-inch size by two jaw crushers, reduced to 16-mesh by stamps, and the coarse gold concentrated and removed. The pulp was then thickened, the slimes going to waste and the sands leached.<sup>286</sup>

Back in June 1937, according to one newspaper account, a lease with an option to purchase the Skidoo Mine had been given to some eastern interests by the Gray and Worcester Mining Company, which for the previous eighteen months had been making regular shipments of a good-grade milling ore to Journigan's Mill in Emigrant Canyon. A memo found in the monument files stated the sale was to Colorado parties. Whoever it was, their projected plan of operations included relaying the Telescope Peak pipeline with a four- or five-inch-diameter pipe, in the old ditch, at an estimated cost of \$100,000, in order to

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286. Inyo Independent, 10 April, 29 May, 10 July 1936; Memo, Robert Mitcham, "Historical Information on Del Norte and Skidoo Mines," DEVA NM mining office; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):379, 394-95, 420-21; Mining Journal, 30 June 1939, p. 24; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):43, 51.

economically treat the large bodies of milling ore still available in the Skidoo Mine and some recently developed on the Inyo and Del Norte groups of claims. According to the Journal of Mines and Geology, Roy Journigan leased the Skidoo Mine in January 1937 and with a crew of five removed a small amount of ore from the old stopes, which he treated at his plant in Emigrant Canyon. Meanwhile Roy Troeger, who held interests in the Del Norte claims, continued efforts to push through reconstruction of the pipeline, hoping to attract Mojave capital to his Golden Queen and Inyo claims. The pipe would have two terminuses--one at the old Skidoo mill and the other at a new 300-ton mill to be located near the Del Norte Mine, which would be worked by an open-pit method.<sup>287</sup>

In March 1938 it was announced that the Golden Queen Mining Company of Mojave, a subsidiary of Goldfields Consolidated, a British mining firm, and owners also of American Potash and Chemical Company, had taken over 60% ownership of the Inyo Group of claims at Skidoo owned by Roy Troeger.<sup>288</sup> With permission supposedly granted by the Department of Interior for construction of the pipeline, the Golden Queen imported twenty-five miners and placed them on the job of development, intending to prove the ore bodies before beginning a major construction program. Materials for camp buildings were ordered from the Lone Pine Lumber and Supply Company, and the

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287. Inyo Independent, 18 June, 8 October, 19 November 1937; Memo, T. R. Goodwin to Joseph E. Taylor, 13 June 1937; Roy C. Troeger to Col. John R. White, regarding application for permit to reconstruct Telescope Peak pipeline, 20 November 1937; John R. White, Memorandum regarding application of Roy Troeger to reconstruct Telescope Peak-Skidoo pipe line, 15 December 1937; J. Volney Lewis, "The Application for a Permit to Re-build the Skidoo Pipe-Line in Death Valley National Monument," 5 January 1938.

288. Inyo Independent, 18 March 1938.

first truck shipments were made immediately. New York interests also joined in the venture.

By 1940 there was a renewal of mining activity in the Argus Range and in the Skidoo District in Inyo County. The Del Norte was being actively developed and the Del Norte Mining Company was preparing to operate its mill on ore from the mine, including its own plus lessees' ore, and a minimum of 300 tons monthly from the nearby Gold King Mine. The Skidoo Mine was still being worked by lessees and ore treated at the Journigan Mining and Milling Company plant in Emigrant Canyon. All operations shut down in December for the winter months, with about \$90,000 having been taken off the Skidoo property since the last May. The Del Norte Mining Company mill at Mojave had processed in the last eight months approximately 7,000 tons of ore from the Del Norte, Gold King, and other mines in the district.<sup>289</sup>

From 1942 to 1969 the Del Norte property as a whole was essentially inactive. In the early 1950s the Del Norte Group of six claims was only sporadically worked, Troeger still owning and maintaining the Del Norte and Inyo groups of mining claims with their large deposits of low-grade gold ore. Prior to World War II these could be profitably mined, but the War Production Board had caused a cessation of gold mining during the war and since that time the government had held down the price of gold to such a degree, while other prices had gone up, that it was unprofitable to mine. Troeger, who also owned the Skidoo mill and appurtenances that he had purchased from Gray, was holding on to the property hoping the price of gold would rise or the price of

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289. Journal of Mines and Geology 36 (January 1940):10; Mining Journal, 15 August 1940, p. 17, 30 December 1940, p. 16; Inyo Independent, 20 December 1940.

commodities fall. The twelve claims of the Skidoo Mine were still owned by W. Howard Gray.<sup>290</sup>

Also in the early 1950s (1949-56) a tungsten boom hit the Skidoo area. There were large deposits of low-grade ore but no material of commercial quality. Although several hundred claims were located, and in the process many scars left on the hillsides, the flurry was mainly promotion-oriented with little or no output. The last measurable production from the Skidoo Mine took place about 1941, while the Del Norte lasted until about 1954. In the early 1970s when gold was at \$38 an ounce and low-cost open-pit operations afforded the best opportunity of producing gold profitably, Mineral Associates of Battle Mountain, Nevada, obtained a lease/purchase option on the old Skidoo gold mining property, and Amberson Construction Company of Nevada conducted drilling operations. In 1970 the Del Norte Group was leased by Carl Dresselhaus and Mrs. Virginia Troeger to Bell Mountain Silver Mines, Inc., of New York, who undertook an extensive sampling program of the low-grade gold deposits on the property and then proposed to mine and crush the ore, recovering gold by cyanide heap leaching in an open pit, but this was not successful. The work resulted in thirty shafts and seven open cuts sampled over a four-acre area.<sup>291</sup>

(b) Present Status

The old Skidoo townsite and mill are reached via an unimproved dirt road leading east off the Emigrant

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290. Troeger to Goodwin, 11 January 1952; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):43, 51.

291. Memo, 1 March 1962, DEVA NM mining office; Supt., DEVA NM, to Dir., WRO, on mining activity in Death Valley, 1 April 1971; Evans et al., Special Report 125, p. 19.

Canyon Road at the north edge of Harrisburg Flats, approximately 9½ miles south of the intersection of that road and California State Highway 190. In the course of the next seven miles this eastward-trending road turns north and then westerly before ascending to the high plateau housing the deserted townsite. Time, weather, vandals, and modern mining activity have all taken their toll of the area, which is marked by an interpretive sign. Open shafts, adits, and stopes dot the hillsides and ridges, posing a grave threat to careless sightseers. Only a very few structural remnants remain, in the form of collapsed ore bins and stone building or tent foundations. Liberal quantities of the usual junk cars and assorted metal debris can also be spotted.

Only one structure of determined significance remains--the Skidoo Mines Company quartz stamp mill. The attractively-verandahed company office building that stood on the hilltop above the mill burned a few years ago. Still sitting on the Del Norte Mine site, on the next ridge north, are the vats and the large pit utilized in its short-lived leaching operation.

The present Skidoo-Del Norte Group of mining claims consists of thirty-one unpatented, contiguous, and often overlapping lode claims. Located during the mid-1920s and 1930s they overlie the historical, early 1900 workings and are included within the boundaries of the Skidoo Historic District. The group covers approximately 600 acres of land, and, stretching diagonally across the ridges from the northwest to the southeast, encompasses the old Skidoo mill and part of the townsite. The Skidoo-Del Norte Group was closed to further mineral entry in 1976, and the claims are being contested by the Department of the Interior. One mile north of the townsite near the head of a wash are the nine patented Contact and Gold Bird claims.

Illustration 192.

Skidoo townsite. Date unknown, but post-March 1907.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, UNLV.

Illustration 193.

Skidoo townsite, 1916.

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.



Illustration 194.

Skidoo Mines Company camp, 1916?

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.

Illustration 195.

Skidoo main street, 1916?

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.



Illustration 196.

Skidoo townsite, 1916?

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.

Illustration 197.

View east of Skidoo townsite, 1978.

Photo by Linda W. Greene.



Illustration 198.

Ruins of Skidoo mill.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 199.

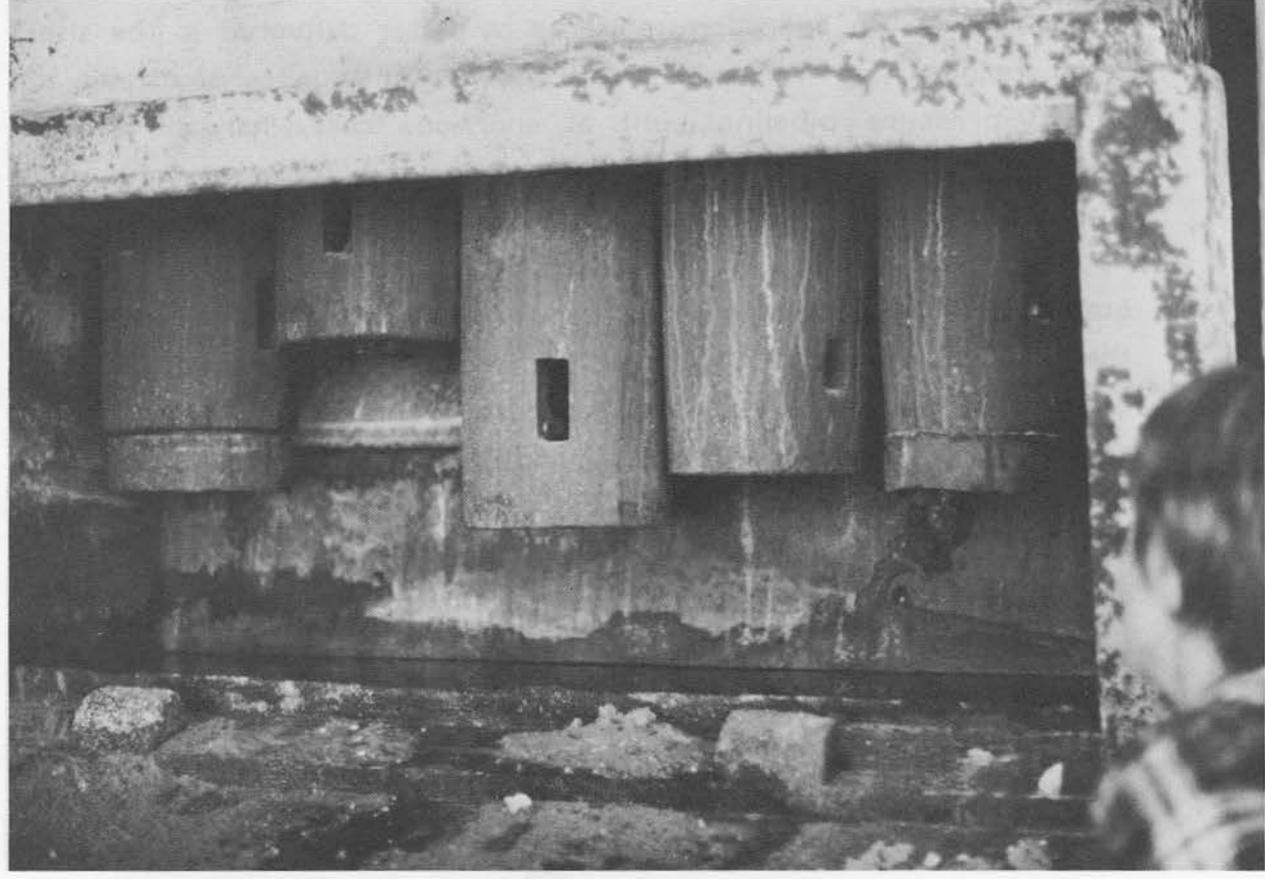
Stamps in Skidoo mill.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, UNLV, 1972.



(c) Evaluation and...  
1) Skidoo, the nearby Skidoo Mine...  
surrounding ruins are, some of...  
historical resources. Located in...  
ten years, Skidoo owed its...  
concern--that run by E. A. ...  
Company. This one ran from...  
expanding over \$500,000 on the...  
his purchase of 400,000 shares...  
and an additional loan of \$150,000...  
Skidoo Mine came from two fairly...  
eighteen to twenty-four inches...  
test, and averaging anywhere from...  
of gold per ton.

The ore was mined by overhand...  
stamps, with timber used only sparingly. By May 1900 the Skidoo...



(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

i) Skidoo Mine and Mill

The abandoned townsite of Skidoo, the nearby Skidoo Mines Company stamp mill, and the surrounding ruins are some of the monument's most important historical resources. Located in 1906 and flourishing for the next ten years, Skidoo owed its existence primarily to one mining concern--that run by E. A. Montgomery and the Skidoo Mines Company. This one man financed the entire operation, initially expending over \$500,000 on the property. The money came from his purchase of 400,000 shares of treasury stock at \$1 per share and an additional loan of \$150,000. The ore produced from the Skidoo Mine came from two fairly narrow vein systems ranging from eighteen to twenty-four inches in width and sometimes up to four feet, and averaging anywhere from one-third to one-half an ounce of gold per ton.

The ore was mined by overhand stoping, with timber used only sparingly. By May 1908 the Skidoo stamp mill was in operation, powered by water delivered to the site from springs near Telescope Peak about twenty miles south via a gravity-pressure pipeline built at enormous cost, hardship, and frustration. The ore was collected on the tunnel levels and trammed in trains of mine cars by mules directly to ore bins in the upper part of the mill. A description of the mill operation in 1911 states that the water pressure upon reaching the Pelton wheel in the plant was about 300 pounds per square inch due to its being reduced at two or three points enroute. This wheel, assisted by one or two gas engines (40 h.p. and 18 h.p.), ran the mine and mill machinery, the latter consisting of two Blake jaw crushers, two five-stamp batteries of 1,050-pound stamps, built by Hendy, and one five-stamp battery of 1,300-pound stamps built by the Union Iron Works. This latter set was the one bought and erected by company lessees about a year after the other two batteries started,



Illustration 200.

Kennedy Mine near Skidoo, 1916?

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.



Illustration 201.

Remains of heap cyanide leaching process, Del Norte Mine site.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 202.

Digging up Skidoo pipeline south of Wood Canyon, probably by CCC crew.

Photo by T. J. Williams, courtesy of DEVA NM.



and which was then sold to the Skidoo Mines Company. Below the apron plates of the mill were three Deister tables that during the month collected a limited tonnage of sulphide concentrate worth about \$450 per ton. The tailings went directly to dewatering and percolation tanks. The earlier tailing, held in ponds, was sporadically elevated and run through extra cyanide tanks. The mill, including its cyanide annex and concentrators, cost about \$60,000, while the twenty-mile-or-so long pipeline cost from \$250,000 to \$300,000.

By 1911 a total production of over \$500,000 had enabled the repayment of the original \$150,000 loan and the payment of two \$50,000 dividends. By January 1913 the mine had produced almost \$1,000,000 and paid six dividends aggregating \$325,000. The fire that year reduced the mill capacity to only ten stamps, although the cyanide plant still operated. Despite the problems of this year another dividend was paid, bringing the total to date to \$365,000, amounting to \$385,000 by January 1915. The total ore milled by that time had been 74,380 tons with a gross return of about \$1,250,000. In December 1917, about the time the mine was shut down and the mill dismantled, the state mineralogist listed the mill equipment as ten 850-pound stamps and five 1,150-pound stamps plus amalgamation tables. These last five stamps (possibly 1,250 pounds instead) were said to have been added around the spring of 1915.

From 1908 until its shutdown in 1917 the Skidoo Mine produced a total of 92,479.5 tons of ore (\$1,344,500), with returns averaging \$14.54 a ton and 90% recovery in the mill. According to the mine manager the mine had not been worked out by 1917 but had to close due to litigation, disputes with lessees, and bad management. The mine was then inactive until about 1935 or 1936 when it was reopened and worked for five years as the Silver Bell Mine. The period from 1940 to 1947 was

relatively quiet, and production from 1948 to the mid-1950s was sporadic. During 1940 to 1942 when the Del Norte Mining Company mined about 3,000 tons of ore from the Skidoo Mine, it was treated at the Skidoo mill, which had been acquired by surface easement.

The State Division of Mines's estimate of \$1,500,000 as the value of Skidoo ore produced through 1916 approximates that given by the USDI Regional Bureau of Mines. The latter states that the actual value of all gold and silver reported to them as coming from this mine during 1908 to 1917 was about \$1,600,000. Applying present-day values for gold and silver this would mean a total output of \$2.5 million.

ii) Del Norte Group

The Del Norte Group, not worked, as far as can be ascertained, during the early 1900s, was mined by means of an open pit during 1937-38 with no economic success. Between 1971 and 1975 Bell Mountain Silver Mines, Inc., proposed installation of a heap cyanide leaching process. The site was graded and a neoprene apron laid in anticipation of mining a proposed 10,000 tons of rock, crushing it, and piling it on a prepared pad lined with plastic sheeting. A cyanide solution would then be sprayed on the heap to dissolve the gold, which would then be collected as it drained off the pad. The solution would then be passed through specially-treated charcoal filter cylinders to extract the dissolved gold, which would then be sent for refinement. Only 5,000 tons of quartzite were ever placed on the pad, and the project came to naught because of troubles in crushing the rock to the desired size.

iii) Skidoo Historic District

Although Skidoo's meteoric rise to prominence was contemporary with that of Greenwater, far more has been written about the latter, because it was a bona fide boom

Illustration 203.

Scar of Skidoo pipeline route across Harrisburg Flats; can be seen best in distance heading north toward Skidoo.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 204.

Masonry support for Skidoo pipeline, 1½ miles southeast of town.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



town. Characterized as having few parallels in its "sudden rise, great outlays, small returns and quick decline," it played out its life in sharp contrast to its sister city on the western edge of the Panamints. More law-abiding and attracting a more conservative element than Greenwater, Skidoo's only black mark in the annals of history was her refusal to forgive Joe Simpson for his rash act one pleasant spring day. Unfortunately, because this sort of "shoot-'em-up" action with its final inevitable result has always held more romantic appeal than quiet and honest hard work, this one deed has been publicized more than Skidoo's lucrative gold production.

Two unique items are associated with Skidoo's mining heyday. First, the town possessed the only milling plant in the desert operated almost completely by water power, making it one of the most economical operations around. Its cost of mining and milling reached a miraculous \$7 a ton, below that of any of its neighbors. Today the mill's basic structure remains in place cascading down the hillside just west of the townsite. Most of the machinery has either been removed by salvage operations or has succumbed to weathering and decay. The ten-stamp battery still remains and is of much interpretive value. The structure is, however, dangerous for inquisitive visitors, the timbers appearing shaky and infirm. Secondly, the construction of the pipeline was a phenomenal engineering feat; its scar can still be seen crossing from Skidoo over Harrisburg Flats and Wood, Nemo, and Wildrose canyons to the Telescope Peak area. Some interesting remnants of the line remain, such as masonry troughs, at least one round pillar that supported the pipe as it passed over washes, and broken iron clamps. Although the line was frequently susceptible to breakage during periods of expansion and contraction, and totally useless when the water supply from the mountains was low, these problems

were overcome by the dauntless tenacity of its builders and a little auxiliary help from gas engines.

The townsite of Skidoo was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in April 1974 as being of local significance, its inclusion based on its importance as a representative example of the last gold mining towns in Death Valley flourishing during the early twentieth century, and as one of the few mining towns in the region that produced significant amounts of gold ore, primarily by undertaking the uncommon large-scale mining of narrow ore veins. The stamp mill on the edge of the townsite, built by the Skidoo Mines Company, is a comparatively-rare surviving example of an early twentieth-century stamp mill and is the only gold-mining mill of this size located in a National Park Service area. Its stamp batteries and much of its other equipment are still in place. Skidoo is now considered to be of regional significance because of its production record, the presence of the mill structure, and the innovative manner in which a water supply was brought to the area to serve the town and run the mill. The Skidoo National Register form will be revised to include the pipeline route, the Saddle Rock and Tiny mines, and the Telephone Spring arrastra site.

The frame stamp mill structure, with its concrete base, was constructed against a steep hillside so that, although it is equal in height to a five-story building, no part is actually more than three stories high. Of the four levels of construction, the upper two appear to be structurally sound while the lower ones are in poor condition. Exterior sheathing and roofing are of corrugated metal. The plank floor of the structure is decaying, the wooden floor girders are loose and cracked, and the heavy wood columns supporting the structure are deteriorated, with several pulled out of alignment. The mill framework has been weakened through the years by the action of the stamps, age,

deterioration, and the removal of machinery for scrap by literally dragging it out through the walls.

Due to the growing realization of the importance of mining history within areas administered by the National Park Service, and in an attempt to provide a better theme balance in the interpretation and preservation of historical sites, it is recommended that the first task at Skidoo be to resolve the ownership question on the mill property and, if it can be acquired, the second task should be to accomplish emergency stabilization with eventual limited restoration. A Historic Structure Report, especially an Architectural Data Section, should be funded for the mill, although it is doubtful if much more historical data can be found than has been included in this study. Blueprints of the mill plant would be an invaluable research and interpretive aid if they could be located. Opportunities in this area for on-site interpretation of more modern mining methods and of ore-processing techniques using a gravity feed system should be exploited. Skidoo's distance from the visitor center makes management of the site a problem, especially from the aspects of protection of resources and visitor safety. The area's importance, however, demands that an attempt be made to not only successfully fulfill these obligations but also accurately and completely interpret the town, mill site, and pipeline ruins.

## (20) Saddle Rock (Saddlerock) Mine

### (a) History

The famous Gold Eagle strike in January 1906 that precipitated the rush to Skidoo resulted from the discovery of free gold on the Saddlerock Claim by John L. Ramsey and John A. Thompson. By 23 February the Palma lode claim had been discovered and at various dates throughout that year the claims included in the Saddle Rock Consolidated Mine--the Saddle

Rock, Chesapeake Fraction, Pima, and K.K.--were located.<sup>292</sup> Because Ramsey and Thompson kept the news of their new discoveries to themselves for the next two months or so until they had finished staking all the claims they wanted, and were therefore the only prospectors in that particular area for awhile, it is probable that they were the original owners of the property.

At the end of 1906, or in early 1907, the Saddlerock Group, reportedly including only three claims and bordering the famous Skidoo Mine on the west, was purchased by Sherwood Aldrich of Colorado Springs and Hector McKenzie and Russell F. Sutherland of Rhyolite for \$25,000 cash. At this time the property's principal ledge, varying from three to five feet in width, was giving returns of \$41 to the ton.<sup>293</sup> By June 1907 Aldrich's company, the Skidoo Saddle Rock Mining Company, a South Dakota incorporation, was developing the property by means of three tunnels (two being dug under contract) and two shafts. The company-worked tunnel was now in over fifty feet and the other two extended for about thirty-five feet. The thirty-foot main shaft was disclosing ore similar to that on the Skidoo Claim, "and it is the opinion of all who know the property that the Saddle Rock will develop a mine second only to the Skidoo."<sup>294</sup> Unnamed

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292. "Field Notes of the Survey of the Mining Claim of The Skidoo Saddle Rock Mining Company Known as the Palma," Mineral Survey No. 4669, surveyed under instructions dated 2 October 1907"; "Field Notes of the Survey of the Mining Claim of The Skidoo Saddle Rock Mining Company Known as the Saddle Rock Consolidated Mine . . .," Mineral Survey No. 4670, surveyed under instructions dated 2 October 1907.

293. Bullfrog Miner, 30 November 1906; Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907; Mining World, 11 May 1907, p. 606. Somewhat confusing is a January 1907 notice that Arthur Holliday, a mining and newspaper man of Los Angeles, had just purchased the interests of John A. Thompson in several claims, three of which were the Saddle Rock, Pima, and Palma. Rhyolite Herald, 11 January 1907. It is possible that Aldrich's purchase of the property was not actually consummated until spring of 1907.

294. Bullfrog Miner, 8 June 1907.

Nevada mine promoters were backing the company, but keeping their future plans for the operation cloaked in secrecy. Encouraged by the ore showings so far, they were attempting to get the most work done in the fastest possible manner, and therefore were paying miners wages far above the ordinary scale. The only building on the property so far was a blacksmith shop.<sup>295</sup>

By the middle of the summer the Saddlerock shaft extended down sixty feet, and sixty tons of ore lay on the dump. The shaft was sinking in solid ore its entire width, but assay returns from the ledge, which could be traced along the surface of the claim for nearly a mile, were still being kept secret. Two more shafts were being sunk on other ledges, and three tunnels were attempting to open up the ore shoots at depth. A camp had been established, and arrangements were being made with E.A. Montgomery for water, hopefully enabling erection of a mill later in the fall.<sup>296</sup>

When the Palma and Saddle Rock Combination were surveyed in 1907, the former had a cut and tunnel and the latter was developed by several cuts, tunnels, and shafts.<sup>297</sup> By April 1909 the Saddlerock still had excellent ore showings but had not been worked since the first of the year.<sup>298</sup> In August the Skidoo Saddle Rock Mining Company applied for a

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295. Ibid.

296. Ibid., 29 June 1907.

297. Plat of the Claim of the Skidoo Saddle Rock Mining Company Known as the Palma, Mineral Survey No. 4669, Surveyed October 1907; Plat of the Claim of the Skidoo Saddle Rock Mining Company Known as the Saddle Rock Consolidated Mine, Embracing the Saddle Rock Mine, Chespeak Fraction, and the Pima and K.K. Mines, Mineral Survey No. 4670, Surveyed October 1907.

298. Rhyolite Herald, 21 April 1909.

patent on the K.K., Pima, Chesapeake Fraction, Saddle Rock, and Palma gold- and silver-bearing lodes, veins, and deposits.<sup>299</sup>

From 1910 on up to the present day, information pertaining to the Saddlerock Group is very piecemeal. The next reference to the property is a notification in 1928 that the State of California had deeded to the Sterling Bros. the Palms (Palma) lode claim and the Saddle Rock, Chesapeake [sic] Fraction, Prima (Pima), and K.K. claims.<sup>300</sup> In an attempt to revitalize mining activity in the Skidoo region by successfully working the rich deposits of gold known to exist on this particular site, H.W. Eichbaum and associates (William Corcoran, Bourke Lee, and Jess Hession) in 1929 organized the Emigrant Springs Mining and Milling Company, incorporated for \$100,000 and including the Pima, Emigrant Fraction (Palma?), Saddle Rock, Chesapeake [sic] Fraction, and K.M. [K.K.] mines near Emigrant Spring. The company had \$25,000 available for immediate use toward construction of a new mill, purchase of machinery, etc. Reportedly over thirty old-time prospectors, including Shorty Harris, arduously constructed a road during the heat of the summer to the mouth of Eichbaum's Emigrant Springs Mine tunnel, blasting it out of solid rock from the bottom of Emigrant Canyon 1½ miles up the steep slope to the property. The strike here reportedly yielded ore assaying up to \$10,000 per ton. Ultimately machinery was transported on burros to the mine site, where one tunnel had already reached the main ore body. Stopping was soon to commence, with initiation of the milling process projected for 1 January 1930.<sup>301</sup>

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299. Inyo Independent, 27 August 1909.

300. Ibid., 8 September 1928.

301. Ibid., 16 February 1929; Long Beach (Ca.) Press-Telegram, 31 July 1929; Mining Journal, 30 August 1929, p. 33, and 30 December 1929, p. 33; World's Work 49 (July 1930), p. 51.

In 1938 the Emigrant Springs (Saddle Rock) Mine consisted of four patented claims and twelve held by location, and was owned by the Emigrant Springs Mining Company, H.W. Eichbaum, president, and Mrs. Eichbaum, secretary. Gold values ranging from \$4 to \$6 a ton were being found on the property, which was being developed by three tunnels and five shallow shafts. The mine was thought to have good potential as a large, low-grade gold deposit, but was idle at this particular time.<sup>302</sup> William C. Thompson of San Fernando, California, purchased the Saddle Rock property from a Helene West in 1945. Five patented claims were involved, producing ore assaying \$30 a ton in gold. Earlier in the year Thompson had bought Shorty Harris's gold and tungsten property in the Goldbelt area further north.<sup>303</sup> Records in the monument mining office files show that in 1959 the Saddle Rock Mine consisted of sixteen gold claims, four of which were patented. By 1962 the four patented claims were included in the Harry Hamlin estate and had seen no production within the last twenty-five years. The current owner, David L. Dotson, purchased the property from the Hamlin family in 1967 for a reported consideration of \$1,000.<sup>304</sup>

(b) Present Status

Located on the eastern slope of Emigrant Canyon in the Panamint Range, about 1½ miles east of Emigrant Spring and at an altitude of 4,800 to 5,400 feet, the Saddle Rock Group today consists of two adjacent, irregularly shaped parcels of land. They are reached by a 1½-mile-long unimproved jeep trail leading easterly from the paved Emigrant

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302. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):395-96.

303. Mining Journal, 30 July 1945, p. 20.

304. Memo, 6 April 1960; Memo, 1 March 1962; Mark Massie, "Appraisal of Patented Mining Claims, David L. Dotson Property, Death Valley National Monument, Inyo County, California, As of April 16, 1972," p. 10.



**Illustration 205.**

**Remains of mining activity on Saddle Rock property.**

**Photo by John A. Latschar, 1978.**

**Illustration 206.**

**Adit, Saddle Rock mining claim.**

**Photo by John A. Latschar, 1978.**



305. Muzzle, "Appraisal of," David L. Dotson property, p. 10.  
306. Paul H. Knowles, "Appraisal of Mineral Interests Inherent in the Saddleback-Dotson Claims (Skidoo-District), Death Valley National Monument, California," 2 July 1977, p. 8.

Canyon Road. An attempt to locate the site was made by the co-author of this study. He is uncertain, however, whether or not he actually reached the subject claims. The area had recently undergone heavy washing and as a consequence the claim boundaries were difficult to ascertain. Only one adit was spotted. During a survey of the site in 1972 the only extant building was an outhouse on the Pima Claim, although nearby were the scattered remains of several collapsed wooden frame buildings. Some shafts and an adit were also visible.<sup>305</sup>

A second site examination in 1972 disclosed two 75-foot-deep shafts in fair condition for the first 25 or 30 feet but appearing extremely dangerous below that point. Two 50- to 150-foot adits and some open cuts had been driven on the K.K. and Pima claims, and the latter site also contained a 60-foot adit. The leveled remains of the old mine camp were seen near the center of the property.<sup>306</sup>

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The significance of the Saddle Rock Group today lies in its being the site of the initial gold strike responsible for the creation of Skidoo and the evolution of the surrounding mining district. Although passing through the hands of several owners, some of whom spent a considerable sum on development work, from the early 1900s on up to the 1960s the mine itself has had no production record and seems to consist only of exploratory workings. The site is considered locally significant and eligible for inclusion within the revised boundaries of the Skidoo Historic District.

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305. Massie, "Appraisal of . . . David L. Dotson Property," p. 10.

306. Paul H. Knowles, "Appraisal of Mineral Interests Inherent in the Saddlerock-Dotson Claims (Skidoo District), Death Valley National Monument, California," 3 July 1972, p. 8.

(21) Nellie Grant and Uncle Sam Mines

Little information has been found on these mines, permitting only a brief survey of what were some of the very earliest mines in the Wild Rose area. The Nellie Grant and Uncle Sam mines, in the vicinity of Emigrant Spring, were located by W.L. Hunter, whose early presence in the area is attested to by a newspaper statement to the effect that Rose Springs District was

the same where Messrs. Hunter & Porter have been operating for a long time past, and where we are satisfied from all accounts there are numerous silver ledges as promising as any in the whole country. Among them are the Nellie Grant, belonging to Hunter & Porter. . . . 307

Hunter & Company were working the Nellie Grant Nos. 1-3 in 1874, as well as the Uncle Sam Nos. 1 and 2, North Corner Nos. 1 and 2, the Theodore Wibbeth, and the Silver Bluff. Several men were at work, with development being subsidized by proceeds from the ore. According to the Inyo Independent

The following assays, made by Mr. J.L. Porter and F.F. Thomas, will satisfy any judge of ores as to value: Nellie Grant No. 1, four assays, respectively, \$459 62, \$659 57, \$754 and \$479 11; No. 2, \$274 81. North Corner, three assays, \$212 05, \$150 82 and \$403 69. Silver Bluff, \$180 84. Wibbeth, three assays, \$801 33, \$493 58 and \$95 81, silver per ton. The ore was sold to M.W. Belshaw and Co.'s furnace on the 24th instant. The amount sold was fourteen mule loads, the product of three men for two days, and was from the different mines as follows: Nellie Grant, five parts; Uncle Sam, one part; North Corner, one part; Silver Bluff, two parts. The whole

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307. Inyo Independent, 11 September 1875.

crushed and sampled as one lot yielded \$323 54 per ton, silver. Mr. Porter has been at these mines for the last ten days, and he says as far as developed they are the best average prospect that he has ever seen. All are free milling ores, and the country is of such a nature as to admit of large teams going to the mines without any road making.<sup>308</sup>

Mining was facilitated by a plentiful supply of water, but wood had to be hauled about twelve miles from Telescope Peak.<sup>309</sup>

It has been a common occurrence and a prevailing frustration throughout this study that just when this writer feels some progress has been made toward sorting out the many disparate references to a mine, further information turns up that completely invalidates the conclusions. A Nellie Grant Mine appears on the 1877 Wheeler Survey Map Sheet 65D. An 1883 location notice states that an Argonaut Mine was "situated about four and one-half miles South, from the Mouth of Emigrant Canon at what is known as Hunter & Porters rock house near Emigrant Spring & is immediately South of the Jeannetta Mine and is a relocation of the Uncle Sam Mine." That same year a notice of location for the Jeanetta Mine was filed noting "This location is on the West side of Emigrant Canon . . . the same is near Emigrant Spring and is a relocation of the Nellie Grant Mine."<sup>310</sup> By 1884 a local newspaper was referring to the "Mohawk, Blue Bell and

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308. Ibid., 5 December 1874.

309. Ibid., 27 February 1875.

310. Notice of Location, Argonaut Mine, recorded 24 March 1883, located by J. Medbury and W.L. Hunter, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 312; Notice of Location, Jeanetta Mine, recorded 24 March 1883, located by J. Medburry (sic) and W.L. Hunter, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 311.

Argonaut mines, formerly known as the North Star, Garibaldi, and Nellie Grant."<sup>311</sup> The Nellie Grant was described here as one of the properties owned by W.K. Miller, J.M. Keeler, and N.J. Medbury. According to Palmer, in Place Names, the Nellie Grant was located south of Emigrant Spring. However, a notice of location for the Susan B. Anthony Mine, located on 1 April 1886 by M.M. Beatty and Jos. Danielson, describes it as being north of Emigrant Spring and formerly known as the Nellie Grant. Then on 1 January 1888 Paul Pfefferle and Jos. Danielson filed a notice of location for the Maud S. Mine, "on a line with Emigrant Springs in Emigrant Canon and was formerly known as Susan B. Anthony or better known as Nellie Grant."<sup>312</sup>

An 1889 article on mining mentions the Nellie Grant, "with its big body of free ores" and a nearby spring that furnished enough water for a large mill.<sup>313</sup> In 1896 a Nellie Grant Mine "situated in Emigrant Springs Canon in Wild Rose Mng. Dist. Formerly Known as Emigrant Springs Mine" was relocated by Charles Anthony.<sup>314</sup> In 1906 a proof of labor was filed on an Argonaut Mine owned by W.L. Skinner, but whether this has any relation to the Nellie Grant is conjectural.<sup>315</sup> Further records on the mine were not pursued by this writer.

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311. Inyo Independent, 26 July 1884.

312. Palmer, Place Names, p. 53; Notice of Location, Susan B. Anthony Mine, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book E, n.p.; Notice of Location, Maud S. Mine, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book E, p. 413.

313. Mining & Scientific Press, 14 September 1889, p. 204.

314. Location Notice, Nellie Grant Mine, located 3 January 1896, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book I, pp. 45-46.

315. Proof of Labor Books, Inyo Co., Book G, p. 190.

(22) Junietta, Blizzard, and Virgin Mines

These properties in the Wild Rose District were also located by W.L. Hunter of Lone Pine around 1877.<sup>316</sup> Interests in them were acquired by W.K. Miller and N.J. Medbury, and the three pursued a course of strenuous development work:

The Junietta has a six-foot ledge which gives an average assay of \$50 per ton. There are 100 tons of assorted ore now on the dump that will yield \$100 per ton. The Argonaut [Uncle Sam?] joins the Junietta on the south. . . . The Blue Belle [Garibaldi] is situated about six miles distant from the two former mines. . . . The Blizzard and Virgin are close to the Blue Belle. The former claim has a four-foot ledge of fine horn silver ore.<sup>317</sup>

The 1884 Report of the Director of the Mint mentions the Virgin as carrying high-grade ores, and states that the Genette [sic], "the best developed of the group, has a shaft 100 feet deep, with a 4-foot vein of free-milling chloride of silver ore . . . and assays from 50 to 100 ounces per ton of

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316. According to its Notice of Location filed on 24 March 1883, the Blizzard Mine was located by Medbury and Hunter 5-1/2 miles east of Emigrant Spring on the right-hand side of a trail leading from the Mohawk (North Star) Mine to the Blue Bell (Garibaldi) Mine, and about eight airline miles north of Telescope Peak. In Inyo Co. Land, Water and Mining Claims, Book D, p. 315. An 1883 location notice for an Inyo Silver Mine states it is three miles north of Rose Spring (Emigrant Spring?) and adjoins the southeast quarter of the Virgin Mine. In ibid., p. 154.

317. Mining & Scientific Press, 10 May 1884, p. 324.

silver."<sup>318</sup> In this year Medbury and Miller transferred to J.M. Keeler a one-half interest in the Blizzard and Jeanette mines.<sup>319</sup> No more information was found on these properties, primarily because there was no time for a strenuous search of county records pertaining to them. It can be assumed, however, that Milo Page's assessment of their lives is accurate:

At Emigrant Springs there was also a group of silver mines, yielding ore of high grade, owned by Wm. L. Hunter and J.L. Porter, of Cerro Gordo fame. These, like the Garibaldi claims, received the usual amount, or scarcity, of "development."<sup>320</sup>

(23) Tucki Mine

(a) History

Record books of the Wild Rose Mining District contain a Notice of Location for a Tucki No. 1 Mine, "located about 3 miles NE of Skidoo," dated 12 April 1909, and filed by Henry W. Britt (or Birtt; writing illegible). By the location given it would appear that this is the same property later located by John Millett, Samuel E. Ball, and Charles G. Walker in September 1927 encompassing a group of claims about 2-1/2 miles southwest of Tucki Wash and 4 airline miles north-northeast of Skidoo. If so, the area's early activity must have been sporadic and inconsequential, for no information on it has been found. By

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318. P. 163.

319. Inyo Independent, 22 November 1884.

320. Page, in Inyo Register, 19 July 1906.

October 1927 an Edward R. Attaway was deeded a one-fourth interest in the Tucki and Tucki Nos. 2, 3, and 4 mining claims.<sup>321</sup>

Specific details even on these more modern mining operations at the site are negligible until the 1930s, when a few newspaper articles appear recounting progress there. In 1937 Ed Attaway and Sam Ball, at least, were working the gold mine and trucking their ore to Death Valley Junction for shipment to the smelter. By 1938 ore from the Tucki Mine was being treated by Roy Troeger in the fifty-ton cyanide plant of Keeler Gold Mines, Inc.<sup>322</sup> Four months later, in August, Attaway and Ball gave a lease/bond agreement on the property, referred to as the Tuck-I Mine, to the Lane Development Company of Hollywood for a total consideration of \$25,000. According to the newspaper article on the transaction, the two lessees had been working the property for the past fourteen years and shipping ore running \$100 to \$700 per ton. Roy Journigan became part owner of the mine, along with Ball and Attaway, by April 1939, and these three proceeded to lease the property to a Felix Castro, Fred Bunting, and Fred Mastagan.<sup>323</sup>

A year later the Tucki, still owned by Attaway, Journigan, and the Sam Ball estate, was handed over in another lease/bond agreement to Warnken, Potter, and associates. Working six men, Potter began securing a return of about \$846 in gold every two weeks. By 1951 the Tucki Mine included four unpatented lode claims owned by Journigan and

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321. Record Book F, Wild Rose Mining District, p. 509; Inyo Independent, 29 October 1927.

322. Inyo Independent, 10 December 1937; 22 April 1938.

323. Ibid., 5 August 1938; 7 April 1939.

Attaway. Workings comprised an inclined shaft and several drifts. The earliest openings on the property were the two adits northwest of the shaft. Total gold production to that date is unknown, but from August 1940 to April 1941 lessees had sold \$5,200 worth of ore averaging \$20 per ton, with a gold content ranging from \$12 to \$60 per ton. Immediately prior to 1940 ore recovered at the mine had been sent to Journigan's Mill in Emigrant Canyon for processing; after that year it was treated in a small cyanide plant on the property. The Tucki was idle in the early 1950s and continued that way for the next several years, Journigan evidently deciding to keep the property in abeyance while waiting for an increase in the price of gold.<sup>324</sup> Activity continued in suspension throughout the 1960s, with only occasional visits to the site by Journigan each year.

Early in 1974 Russ Journigan relinquished the Tucki No. 4 and #4 mining claims adjacent to the Tucki Mine, retaining only the Tucki, Tucki No. 2, and Tucki No. 3 property originally located in 1927. At this time he and his wife held complete title to each of the three claims on which most of the development and production work had been done through the years. In 1975 the Journigans and the Barnetts, affiliated as the Tucki Mining Company, decided to reopen the mine and begin construction of a gold recovery plant to leach oversized material from the old tailing dumps and process it by the carbon filtration method. The process was a complicated one: material from the source dump below the plant was fed via a chute into a 10-1/2-inch jaw crusher and then into an 18-inch cone; from there the crushed ore was conveyed by dump truck to the vat storage bin. A solution of the

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324. Ibid., 29 March 1940; 9 May 1941; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):52-53.

old tailing material would be circulated through activated charcoal cartridges, there being one cartridge for each of the four concrete leach vats. A sand/gravel bed in the floor of each vat was to filter the pregnant solution. Counter-circulation of sodium hydroxide would strip the gold from the cartridges, and it would then be precipitated. The two-man operation required 1,000 gallons of water per day, and this had to be transported by truck from Panamint Springs, thirty-four miles to the west. The water and solution were stored at the site in 12,000- and 18,000-gallon swimming pools. A front-end loader emptied the vats by removing their steel end gates, a single one being unloaded and reloaded in less than a day. Allowing a percolation rate of eight days, production was projected at twenty-five tons a day.<sup>325</sup>

Although this operation was expected to take four years, only a few dozen ounces of gold were actually recovered. The crusher and other miscellaneous equipment were finally removed in March 1976. By May Journigan was leasing the mine to Barnett and a partner for a percentage of the gross; these latter two contemplated continuing the leaching process using zinc instead of carbon in the refining of the ore. They were also hopeful that by driving a new adit to intersect the main inclined shaft they could open the lower workings and stope the upper ones and still make the operation pay. By the summer of 1978 Journigan had evidently acquired new financial backing and anticipated continuing mine operations, but work was suspended during the monument moratorium on mining.

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325. Russ Journigan to Harold E. Thompson, Actg. Supt., DEVA NM, 11 February 1974; Evans et al., Special Report 125, pp. 17, 19; Robert Mitcham, Mining Engineer, to Supt., DEVA NM, 25 April 1975.



**Illustration 207.**

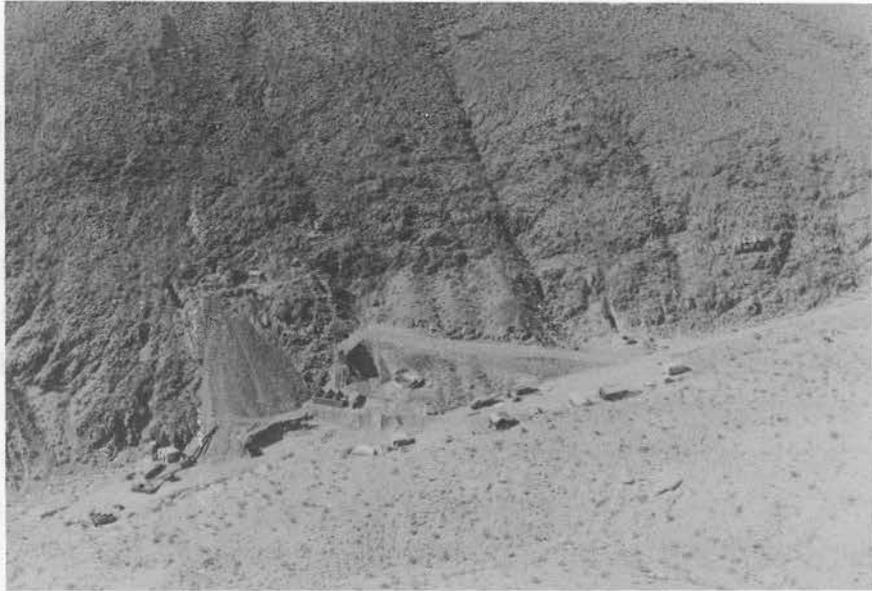
**Tucki Mine, 1975, showing leaching operation and mine camp.**

**Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.**

**Illustration 208.**

**Tucki Mine, 1978. Cabins in ramshackle condition and much debris on site.**

**Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.**



352 U.S. Geol. Survey, Mineral Report for the Toluca Group of Lodes  
Mining Claims in Santa Fe, New Mexico, "California," 18  
March 1918, p. 5.

(b) Present Status

The Tucki Mine is located on Tucki Mountain and is reached by an unimproved 10-mile-long dirt road from Emigrant Wash. It has been basically an underground operation that has produced some ore from shallow stopes. The last recorded production was in December 1971. Although no figures for total production have been found, mine receipts from gold bullion delivered in 1941 amounted to almost \$18,000.<sup>326</sup>

Today the site contains cabins, concrete pads, and sheds ranged along the east side of a narrow gully, and assorted mine workings covering the west hillside. The residences still contain furniture and household goods and the sheds and workshops are full of small supplies used in the leaching process. The workings themselves include a fairly modern large ore bin, four fifty-ton leach tanks, measuring nine feet by twenty feet by six feet, and further south against the hill the ruins of a chute and a concrete platform that once held a building connected with the crushing operations. Sprawled over the hillside are the remains of older diggings--adits, an inclined timbered shaft, and an old ore chute.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Tucki Mine is not considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register, possessing no associative significance and no buildings, structures, or objects of historical importance.

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326. L.S. Zentner, "Mineral Report for the Tucki Group of Lode Mining Claims in Death Valley National Monument, California," 14 March 1978, p. 2.

## (24) Telephone Spring

### (a) History

Telephone Spring is located toward the north end of Telephone Canyon in the northern Panamint Range, about four miles northwest of Skidoo and slightly over three miles directly north of Emigrant Spring, on the southwest slope of Tucki Mountain. The canyon, actually more of a wash, derives its name from the Rhyolite-Skidoo telephone line, constructed in March 1907, that passed through here on its way to the telephone station that had been established at Stovepipe Springs (old Stovepipe Wells). By 1909 this wash had been graded to accommodate a light freight road between Rhyolite and Skidoo that shortened the trip to about forty miles, twelve to fifteen miles less than by the old route via Emigrant Spring.<sup>327</sup>

Although entrance to Telephone Canyon is now possible via a washed-out and barely discernible road entering the Emigrant Canyon Road about 1-1/2 miles south of its junction with California State Highway 190, during the Skidoo era the trail undoubtedly led from the canyon directly onto the flats toward the sand dunes and Stovepipe Wells. In 1910 Telephone Canyon was suggested as one segment of "Alkali Bill" Brong's proposed auto service between Rhyolite and Skidoo. Under this plan, two men would be kept busy at Stovepipe cutting mesquite with which to surface the road so that autos could pass. The Skidoo Mines Company would then, under contract, construct the auto road through the canyon, a modicum of safety being afforded by its accessibility to the phone line in case of trouble. Two men and two cars were expected to make the trip in eight hours, each carrying three tons of perishable supplies daily in both directions.

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327. Rhyolite Herald, 13 and 20 January, 1909.

Illustration 209.

View east toward wash of mill ruin at Telephone Spring. Note arrastra and diversion channel to right leading muddy mixture of crushed ore and water to pond disposal area behind embankment in lower left corner. Note also masonry water tank support in center and other stone foundations to left of picture.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 210.

Arrastra gold mill at Telephone Spring, 1934, "still in use."

Photo by A.E. Borell, courtesy of DEVA NM.



The service could also include mail and passengers. Whether this service was ever actually implemented is unknown.<sup>328</sup> Trails leading off the Telephone Canyon road ended at various small mining operations along the slopes of Tucki Mountain,<sup>329</sup> while a well-defined branch road leads off in a southeasterly direction toward the Tucki Mine about nine miles further up the road.

(b) Present Status

The Telephone Spring area at one time supported a small mining operation, possibly during the Skidoo era, but more probably during the revival of mining activity in this region during the 1930s. Strangely, no mention of who built the large arrastra whose ruins are found here, or when, has been found by this writer. According to the caption on a monument photo of the structure, it was definitely operating in 1934.

The mill lies on the edge of the wash, and therefore is quite susceptible to erosion. Nevertheless, the site, embracing a large arrastra basin with a flume or drainage channel leading off toward three tailing dams, a shallow cement trough for holding a water tank, some leveled terraces overlooking the arrastra, and several machinery pilings and stone foundation walls, appears in remarkably good condition. Farther upstream (south), on the west side of the wash, are some stone tent foundation levels and a crude shelter set against the wall and

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328. Ibid., 19 March 1910.

329. J.J. Vance, comp., "Geographical Map of Skidoo, Wild Rose Mining District, Inyo Co. California," 1907, in Koenig, "23" Skidoo, p. 9.

fashioned from F.W. Woolworth packing crates. Purple glass and fragments of insulator from the telephone system have been found on various parts of the site, indicative of activity prior to 1920.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

It is conceivable that the packing crate shelter and stone foundations in Telephone Canyon are indicative of limited settlement in the area, dating from the pre-1917 period of activity at Skidoo when the route through here served as an important link in the Skidoo-Rhyolite transportation and communication system. It is the writer's opinion, however, that the mill was probably a later addition of the 1930s, a conjecture based on several factors: the surprisingly undamaged condition of the dams and stone walls; the fact that the operation was machine driven and fairly extensive in size; plus the later date on the monument photo of the arrastra. The lack of information available on the mill is its most puzzling aspect.

The Telephone Canyon ruins contain another good example of a machine-driven arrastra used within the Panamint Range in the 1930s. It is difficult to determine whether the site was as complex an operation as the one at Warm Spring since all its machinery has long since been removed. The mill's location within Telephone Canyon, which has interpretive significance itself as the route of a freight road and phone line between Skidoo and Rhyolite--the latter project being one of the more interesting engineering feats of Skidoo's heyday and one on which little has been written--justifies the recommendation that this stretch of the canyon containing the mill and tent foundation levels be left to benign neglect.

(25) McLean Spring

A brief mention should be made of the McLean Spring site, slightly over seven miles east of the Stovepipe

Wells Hotel and adjacent to Burned Wagons Point. According to one writer who visited the scene, a faint trail could be discerned passing south of the spring, and also in the vicinity were three wooden footbridges, indicating semi-permanent occupation or at the very least fairly heavy travel through the area. This same source states without hesitation that a "trading post" existed here in the early 1900s to cater to prospectors, presumably crossing over into the Panamint Range or merely passing between the northern and southern sections of the main valley.<sup>330</sup> Wooden bridges would certainly be necessary if people were attempting to carry on business over any extended period of time on this sandy plain that can become quite sticky and intractable, especially during rainstorms. Burr Belden also asserts that historically a trail led south from old Stovepipe Wells to Salt Creek and McLean's Well, and from there a path ascended the Panamints via Blackwater Canyon.<sup>331</sup> No mining camp paper or other source found by this writer mentions a supply point at McLean Spring, but some operation of more than temporary status appears to have existed here as evidenced by the wooden bridge remains. They should be left to benign neglect.

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330. Chuck Gebhardt, Backpacking Death Valley (San Jose: Mastergraphics, 1975), p. 74.

331. Belden, Historical Report, p. X-13.



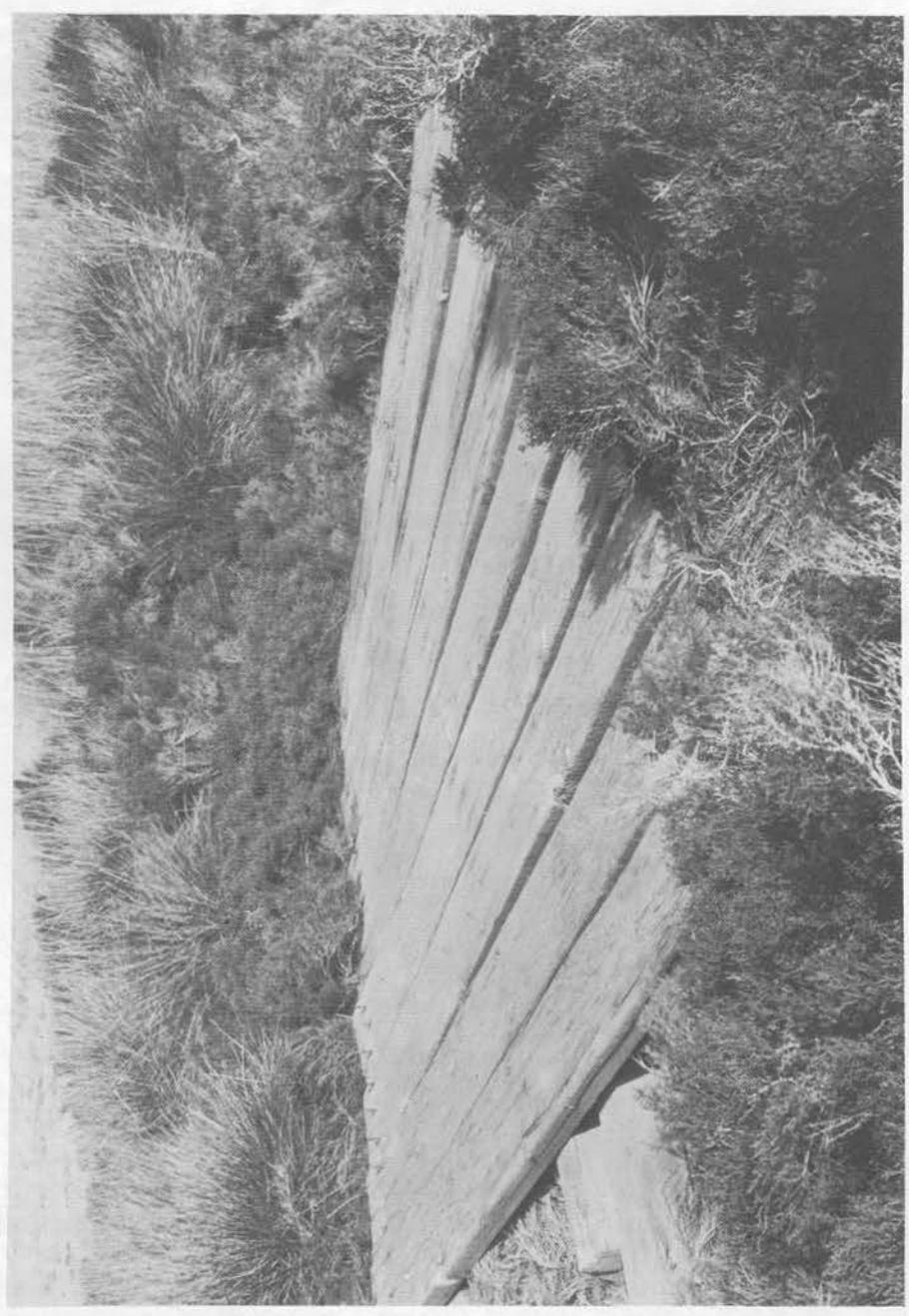
Illustration 211.

Bridge to trading post (?) standing at McLean Spring around 1902.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, UNLV.

LAURENCEVILLE BRIDGE

1900



LAURENCEVILLE BRIDGE

1900

LAURENCEVILLE BRIDGE

1900

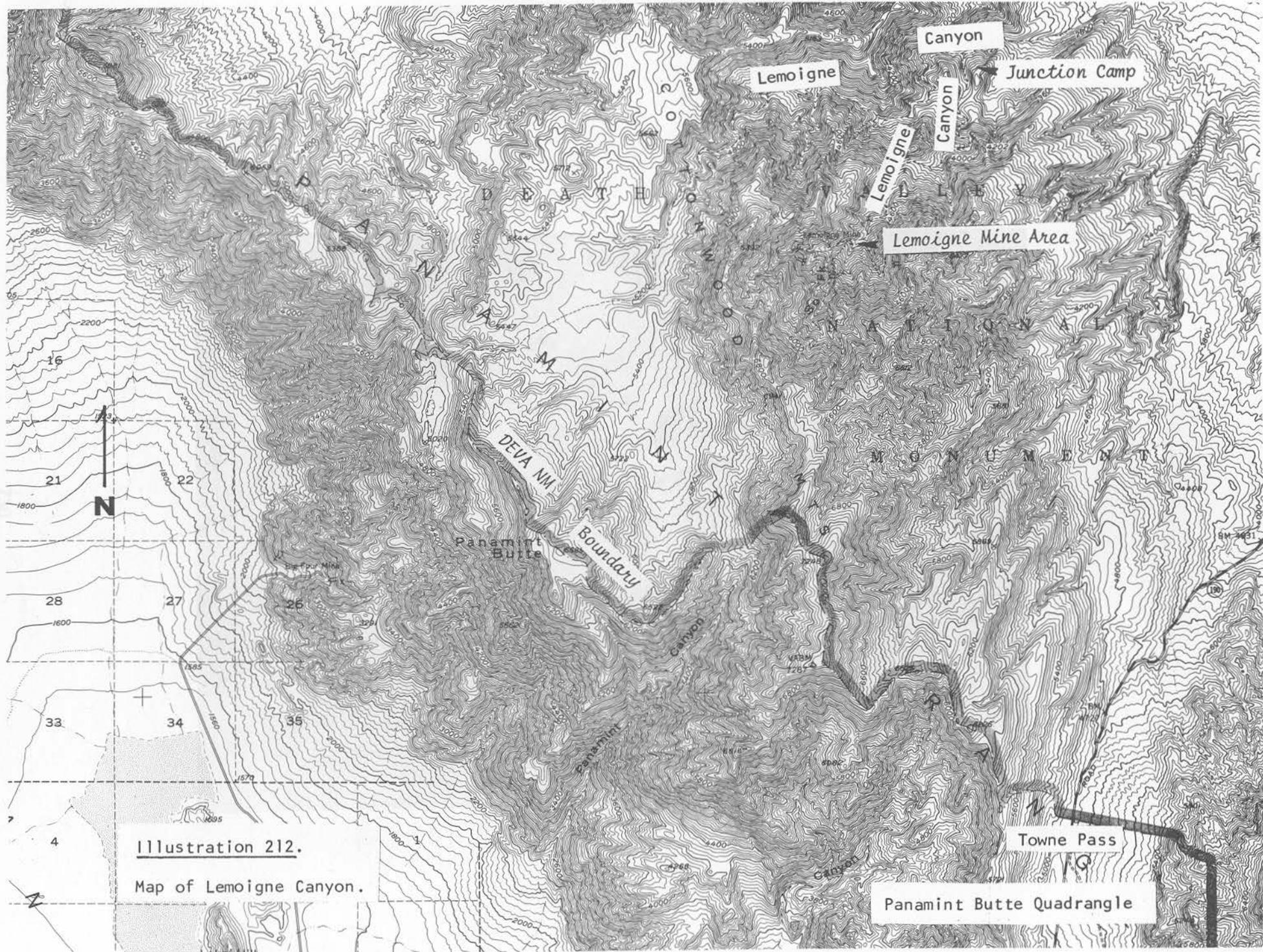


Illustration 212.

Map of Lemoigne Canyon.

(26) Lemoigne Mine and Junction Camp

(a) History

i) John Lemoigne Arrives in Death Valley

The stark, simple beauty of Death Valley has often captured the imagination and the hearts of unwary visitors and held them in its spell for their lifetime. Such an unwitting victim of this desert magic was Jean Francois de Lamoignon, born in February 1857<sup>332</sup> at Lamoignon, France, and educated in England, Paris, and Germany as a mining engineer. As seems to be the case with all Death Valley folk heroes, controversy and irreconcilable discrepancies surround every aspect of his life in the region. Initial disagreement arises over the date of the tall, white-bearded, genial Frenchman's arrival in the Death Valley region and the impetus behind his long journey. While some sources suggest that he served as a sailor before coming to America to work in the mines around Darwin in the early 1870s, it has been most commonly assumed that he arrived here around 1882 to 1884 at the behest of Isadore Daunet, who, hearing about the young mining student through mutual friends, suggested that he take over supervision of the new borax works in the southern part of the

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332. Frank A. Crampton, Deep Enough: A Working Stiff in the Western Mine Camps (Denver: Sage Books, 1956), Preface. This date is open to question. One writer has stated that Lemoigne died in June 1918 at eighty-two years of age (Cronkhite, Death Valley's Victims, p. 21) while another mentions that in 1898 Lemoigne was registered in the voting precinct at Ballarat as a miner, age fifty-six (Hubbard et al., Ballarat: 1897-1917, p. 71). Death Valley Scotty remarked that he died in June 1918 at the age of seventy-seven (Houston, Death Valley Scotty Told Me--, p. 85).

valley.<sup>333</sup> By the time Lemoigne arrived in this country, however, Daunet had taken his own life, depressed by the failure of both his business venture and his recent marriage.<sup>334</sup>

Once in this country, and possibly forced to stay by a lack of money, Lemoigne quickly became Americanized and acculturated, dropping his aristocratic name and donning the garb and life-style of a Death Valley prospector, although never completely losing his distinctive aura of education and intellect. Reportedly meeting some Indians in the Cottonwood area of the Panamint Range and learning from them the location of a silver-lead mine at which they fashioned bullets for their muzzle-loaders, he filed on this property, known as the Bullet Mine, about 1882, although one source stated it was not located until 1887.<sup>335</sup>

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333. Lee, Death Valley Men, p. 171; WPA, Death Valley: A Guide, p. 32; James B. Nossler, "The Story of 'Cap' Lemoigne," in Phil Townsend Hanna et al., Death Valley Tales, Death Valley '49ers Keepsake No. 3 (Palm Desert, Ca.: Desert Magazine Press, 1955), p. 40; Crampton, Deep Enough, p. 257; Frank A. Crampton to Fred W. Binnewies, Supt., DEVA NM, 15 May 1956. One fact supporting an earlier arrival date in America for Lemoigne is a location notice for a mine filed by him in 1880.

334. It is interesting to note here that Frank Crampton, an acquaintance and biographer of Lemoigne, asserts that he read some of these letters from Daunet to Lemoigne requesting his presence and stating his confidence in the young man's ability to instill new life into the venture. Crampton also remarks that Lemoigne did not feel Daunet was the type of person to kill himself, and always suspected he was "done in" by people interested in his borax property. Crampton to Binnewies, 15 May 1956.

335. Lee, Death Valley Men, pp. 171-72; Nossler, in Death Valley Tales, pp. 40, 41; Inyo Independent, 28 August 1920.

Lemoigne covered a lot of territory in his peregrinations throughout the California and Nevada mining districts, prospecting from Barstow, California, east toward Virginia City and Ely, Nevada, and west toward the high Sierra Nevadas. He seems to have had fairly good luck, for his name is connected with several claims in the Death Valley region alone: the Uncle Sam Lode in the Panamint Mining District, located 11 April 1880 (which, as mentioned, would seem to imply that Lemoigne did arrive prior to Daunet's ill-fated borax venture); the Independence, located on 14 January 1884, and the Alaska, discovered on 24 January 1884, both in the Union Mining District; the Washington, Robespierre, and Lafayette, located 28 April 1885, in the Deep Spring Mining District; and the Egle and Union mines, two relocations on 3 January 1887, and the Bullion, Stare, Hop, and Ouray, discovered 4 February 1889 in the Furnace Creek Mining District.<sup>336</sup> In early 1890 Lemoigne and Richard Decker were involved together in a chloriding operation at the Hemlock Mine near old Panamint City, though five years later he was working his lead mine and talking some of erecting a smelter for his ore near Keeler. By 1896 he had filed location notices for three quartz claims in Cottonwood Canyon.<sup>337</sup>

ii) Lemoigne Properties

It is rather difficult because of the variety of locations given to determine the exact extent of

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336. John Southworth, Death Valley in 1849: The Luck of the Gold Rush Emigrants (Burbank: Pegleg Books, 1978), p. 118; Index to Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, p. 457, and Book E, pp. 17, 155-56, 535-36, and Land, Water and Mining Claims, Book E, p. 324.

337. Mining & Scientific Press, 12 April 1890, p. 250; Inyo Independent, 5 April 1895, and 7 February 1896.

Lemoigne's holdings. His lead mine, which remained active through the 1950s, was located in present-day Lemoigne Canyon. According to Crampton, Lemoigne's silver prospect, complete with shack, was located north of Skidoo, and it was this property that actually supported him and paid his bills and grubstakes.<sup>338</sup> This is at variance with Southworth's assertion that "He [Lemoigne] was known to depend entirely upon his highgrade silver property in Lemoigne Canyon whenever ready funds ran low."<sup>339</sup> George Pipkin states that Lemoigne opened the "LeMoigne Silver Mine at the extreme north end of the Panamint Mountains in Cottonwood Canyon," and also discovered lead "in what is known today as LeMoigne Canyon northwest of Emigrant Springs. LeMoigne's silver mine could have been the 'Lost Gunsight Lode'. . . ."<sup>340</sup> The 1896 location notices indicate that he did have property in Cottonwood Canyon, and, indeed, evidence of mining activity was found here in 1899 where

the ruins of an old log cabin stand near to where considerable work has been done in former years by some prospectors. A large pile of lead ore lies upon the dump. Cuts have been run and shafts sunk. . . .<sup>341</sup>

In 1897 Lemoigne's property was mentioned as one incentive for construction of a transcontinental

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338. Crampton to Binnewiess, 24 May 1956; Crampton, Deep Enough, p. 257.

339. Southworth, Death Valley in 1849, p. 113.

340. Pete Aguerberry, p. 126.

341. Mining & Scientific Press, 14 September 1899, p. 204.

route from Kramer Station on the Santa Fe and Pacific line to Randsburg and on to Salt Lake City that would tap the untouched mineral resources in the Panamint Valley area. It would, it was argued, facilitate shipping from the Kennedy Antimony Mine at Wild Rose, the Ubehebe copper mines, and would put within reach "the apparently inexhaustible 'low-grade'--worth \$50 per ton, with lead accounted at 5¢ per lb and silver at 70¢ per oz.--argentiferous galena ores of Cottonwood, known as the Lemoigne mines."<sup>342</sup>

In 1899 Lemoigne found a large body of high-grade lead ore on his property, but was still hindered by transportation problems and hoping for completion of a railroad into the area so that large quantities could be shipped at a profit. The lead mine was producing so well in 1904 that it was reported that Lemoigne had gone to San Francisco to negotiate its sale: "This property is said by experts to be the biggest body of lead ore ever uncovered on the coast."<sup>343</sup> Reportedly any grade of lead, up as high as 75% even, could be obtained by handsorting, the silver content varying from 15 to 83 ozs. and gold from \$5 to \$20.<sup>344</sup> The sale was not consummated, however, and perhaps this was the basis for the oft-repeated tale of how old John, reasserting his often-voiced contempt for negotiable paper, turned down several thousand dollars for his mine because he was offered a check instead of cold hard cash.

Lemoigne was reputedly a very simple, honest man with no particular need or desire for life's

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342. Inyo Independent, 6 August 1897.

343. Ibid., 29 December 1899, and 15 April 1904.

344. Inyo Register, 26 October 1905.

luxuries. Money was relatively unimportant and only necessary to finance his long prospecting trips or to grubstake one or another of his friends. Since it appeared that he would be returning periodically to his lead mine, Lemoigne proceeded to erect a stone cabin there. Frank Crampton recalls:

Often I stopped at the lead prospect, almost as often as at the silver prospect Old John worked, alternately with the lead [the mine near Skidoo]. In the old stone cabin (house I presume might be better) he passed some of his time particularly when the weather was cold. He had built the stone house soon after he discovered the lead outcrops and realized they were good possibilities of ore. It was winter he told me when the stone house was built and water could be had from a creek bed that flowed some water. In the spring when the water either was insufficient, [sic] after his first winter at the lead prospect he went up the canyon and built himself a shack. In the shack was the shelf of classics, French, German, English, which he dusted every day and often when I remained a few days with him he would read one of them, as I did also.<sup>345</sup>

iii) Lemoigne Castle at Garlic Spring

In addition to the monetary sustenance afforded him by his mine, Old John also thrived on the goodwill of a host of fellow miners in the surrounding desert region, who considered him a gentleman and true friend. Their ready offers of food and friendship were reciprocated by John's

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345. Crampton to Binnewiess, 15 May 1956.



Illustrations 213-214.

John Lemoigne, about 1915.

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.

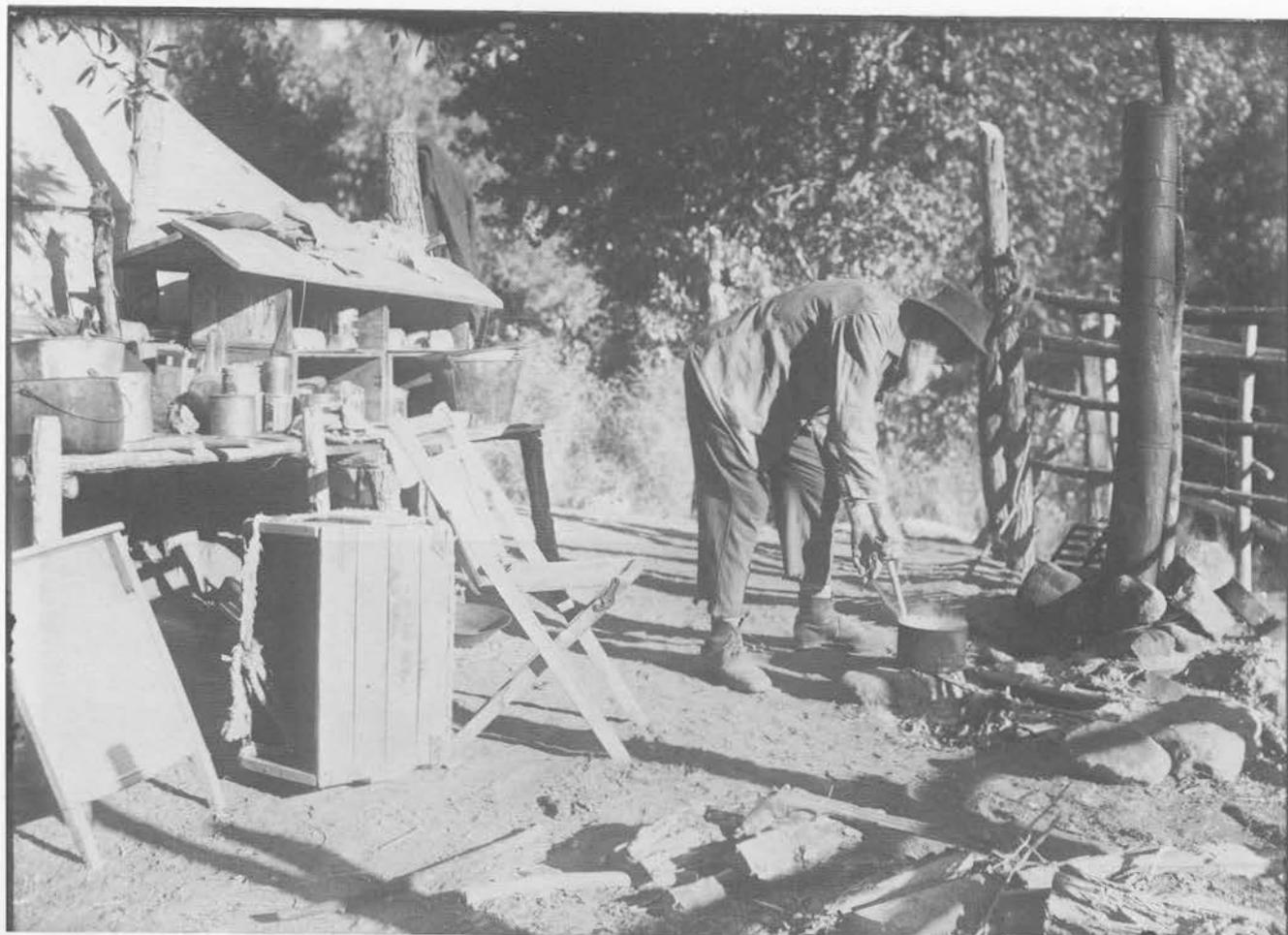


Illustration 215.

John Lemoigne, no date.

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.



grubstaking offers. Sometimes this generosity brought amazing and unwelcome results.

One of the stranger stories connected with John Lemoigne and that sounds as if it might have enjoyed some slight embellishment at the hands of Frank Crampton, who first reported it, concerns a construction project at Garlic Spring on the old road between Barstow and Death Valley, where Lemoigne was camped around 1914. Two men whom he had grubstaked brought him a contract to sign, having not only located a mine but also attracted a buyer. Firm persuasion was required to secure Lemoigne's reluctant signature on the necessary instruments, and his worst fears were soon realized when to his acute embarrassment a steady flow of grubstake profits began pouring in. Because of his strong distrust of banking institutions, Old John persuaded the local storekeeper to take charge of these funds, but that individual soon became nervous because of the large sums he was being entrusted with and the proximity of Barstow and its rough-neck railroad men and other strangers who might be tempted to avail themselves of these riches in an ungentlemanly manner.

To remedy the situation the storekeeper's wife suggested that she be allowed to construct and furnish a large house for John in the area and thereby utilize the money. Consent was reluctantly given the lady, who proceeded to supervise the erection of "Old John's Castle," a monstrosity that daily grew more unwieldy and unattractive. What she lacked in expertise in architectural design and construction, she compensated for in flamboyance and general bad taste. The large, two-story square building soon sported turrets, a spire, dormer windows, gables, and a multitude of chimneys. A covered porch surrounded the bright red structure on four sides, and the whole was accented by green-trimmed windows with blue shutters. Dozens of mail-

order catalogs were perused, resulting in acquisition of heavy oak furniture, a completely furnished library, a huge kitchen with hot and cold water, wallpaper, and fine carpeting. Pre-dating Scotty's Castle, this structure reportedly displayed none of the latter's fine attributes, and was considered nothing more than a white elephant by its owner. The only way to forget such a structure is to blow it off the face of the earth, and that is precisely what Old John did one night with the aid of several boxes of dynamite.<sup>346</sup>

iv) Controversy Surrounding  
Lemoigne's Death

That incident, if true, was about the only undignified moment in Lemoigne's life, which came to an end tragically in 1919. In death as in life Lemoigne has been the subject of considerable controversy. Many cannot even agree on the date of his demise, while, as Southworth writes, the number of people who claimed to have found and buried John Lemoigne reads like a Who's Who of the desert region. Why Old John was heading toward Furnace Creek Ranch, or away from it, is not definitely known, although reportedly he had not been feeling well for some time and was journeying there to seek medical advice. Whatever the reason, he never reached his destination. According to Crampton he and Shorty Harris found the body lying under a mesquite bush about nine miles northwest of Furnace Creek Ranch near Salt Well. Apparently overcome by the heat or a sudden heart attack, Lemoigne had been unable to untie his burros, who perished with him. Proving his personal involvement in the event, Crampton

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346. Southworth, Death Valley in 1849, pp. 119-24; Crampton, Deep Enough, n.p., contains a picture of the castle site at Garlic Spring.

says, are pictures he took of Old John and one of his burros as they lay when found. Reporting the incident at Furnace Creek Ranch, Crampton and Harris returned with Harry Gower, Oscar Denton, Tom Wilson, and a couple of other Indians for the burial, with Gower carving a grave marker.<sup>347</sup>

According to Harry Gower, however, it was Death Valley Scotty who found Lemoigne eleven miles north of Furnace Creek and returned to the ranch to report it. Upon receiving the message at Ryan, Gower contacted the coroner at Independence and was told to go ahead and bury the body. Arriving at the scene with an Indian companion, Gower found the body partially eaten by coyotes and John's gold watch hanging in a mesquite bush. Because of the hardness of the ground and the intense heat, the grave was only dug about two feet deep and was quite narrow. Lemoigne was wrapped in a blanket and lowered into the grave, over which a mound was erected and marked with stones and a board. Gower later sent the coroner the watch and a bill for \$40 to cover costs of the burial detail. Gower states he was told later that Scotty felt he should have gotten the money, but no words ever passed between the two on the subject. Gower evidently did have some strong feelings about Crampton's declared part in the whole affair:

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347. Crampton to Binnewiess, 15 May 1956. Although Crampton insists on 1919 as Lemoigne's death date, a variety of other writers give June 1918 as the correct one. See Pipkin, Pete Aguerberry, p. 127, and also WPA, Death Valley: A Guide, p. 32; Cronkhite, Death Valley's Victims, p. 21, and Lee, Death Valley Men, p. 173, provide varying versions of this story. Southworth, Death Valley in 1849, p. 116, suggests 1917 as the date of death, with the body not being found until two years later.

The guy who is going to have a tough time getting squared with me is the alleged author who claims to have been associated with Le Moigne, and buried him on the desert. If he gains a bit of notoriety by his statement I have no objection as I got paid for my work. I'm sore because I doubt if he ever had the guts to dig a hole two feet deep in Death Valley in August.<sup>348</sup>

Adding further confusion is Scotty's version:

In June 1918, I found him [Lemoigne] stretched out dead. He must have been on his way to Furnace Creek with his burros. I dug a hole and buried him right there by a clump of mesquite. Then I went on to Furnace Creek to give the notice. Cost me twenty dollars for feed for my string of mules. Gower got the ten-dollar fee for burying old John when the work was already done. I got nothing!<sup>349</sup>

In 1922 when Sarah Perkins traveled through Death Valley, she by chance stumbled upon a sun-bleached board set in the sand. Written on it in pencil, she said, were the words "John Lemoigne, Died Aug. 1919." Nearby were the skeletons of two burros and a coffeepot beside a fireplace. This supports Gower's contention that he buried John in August 1919, and pretty conclusively disputes Southworth's romantic statement that "in deference to Old John, who always believed his

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348. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 90-92; Southworth, Death Valley in 1849, p. 116.

349. Houston, Death Valley Scotty Told Me--, p. 85.

burros were human, each body was buried in a separate grave."<sup>350</sup>  
At the time of his death John Lemoigne's estate was valued at about \$10.00 after all expenses were paid.<sup>351</sup>

v) Later History of the Lemoigne Mine

Because no heirs were known to exist, Beveridge Hunter and Bill Corcoran relocated Lemoigne's eight mining claims, soon disposing of the property to a W.J. Loring and associates. Because of the area's remote location, Hunter and Corcoran realized they would either have to sell the mine outright or enlist the cooperation of someone with the investment capital necessary to turn the property into a paying concern. A Brandon & Co. of Boston had an option on the group, but Brandon was killed before a sale could be consummated. Corcoran and Hunter then managed to interest Harry C. Stemler and Associates of Tonopah, who were in some way connected with the Loring interests, in the property, but they insisted on visiting the mine before making a firm decision. Despite a harrowing experience during the return from the mine, during which Stemler and Corcoran almost died from thirst and exhaustion, the former decided to take a bond on the property. The claims deeded to him in Lemoigne Canyon were the Blossom, Captain, Captain No. 2, Captain No. 3, Hunter, Atlantic, Pacific, and Sunshine.<sup>352</sup>

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350. Southworth, Death Valley in 1849, p. 116; Perkins, White Heart of Mojave, p. 138.

351. Inyo Independent, 21 February 1920.

352. Ibid., 14, 28 August, 11 September 1920; Inyo Co. Deed Book 34, p. 217; Inyo Co. Mining Locations, Book 23, pp. 579-81.

In August, despite the heat, Corcoran was told to take charge of development work and intended despite the 132-degree temperature to begin a force immediately at three places on the ledge; ore would be hauled to Beatty by tractor across the floor of Death Valley. Incentive to begin operations was provided by an engineer for the Loring interests who declared that the ore in the mine would average 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ % lead for the full length of the three claims, and who also estimated that there was \$2,500,000 worth of ore in sight. Development work already consisted of a twenty-five-foot tunnel previously excavated by Hunter and Corcoran and a twenty-five-foot-deep shaft, plus several cuts made to keep track of the vein's course and of the consistency of its values.<sup>353</sup>

The eight claims acquired by Stimler were later quitclaimed to the Interstate Silver Lead Mines Corporation of Nevada, but by 1923 a W.R. McCrea of Reno and a John J. Reilly, who once leased on the Florence Mine at Goldfield, were developing the property, on which they held a lease with option to buy, and were driving a crosscut tunnel to intersect the rich ledge.<sup>354</sup> In May 1924 it was thought that the main lode was discovered when a rich strike, "bigger than anything before encountered in any of the workings at the mine," was made on the Birthday Claim west of the old workings.<sup>355</sup>

By June Corcoran had purchased more machinery for the mine and, in addition, all the buildings and pipelines belonging to Carl Suksdorf at Emigrant Spring, with plans underway to make this one of the biggest lead-producing mines in

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353. Inyo Independent, 28 August 1920.

354. Ibid., 2 October 1920, 1 December 1923.

355. Ibid., 17 May 1924.

the western United States. A year later John Reilly had organized the Buckhorn Humboldt Mining Company and had purchased the Lemoigne Mine from Corcoran and Hunter for a substantial amount of cash and stock. McCrea became the company's manager and principal owner and, later, president, after Reilly's death in March 1925. Immediate plans were made to construct an eight-mile auto truck route to the Trona-Beatty Road in order to facilitate shipping to the smelters. Four leasers were also working on ground near the company property, though by April the number had increased to ten, forcing two trucks to leave every day loaded with shipping ore. Property of the Lemoigne South Extension Mining Company (composed of Messrs. Turner, Burke, McDonald, Clark, and Smith) adjoined the Lemoigne Mine proper and was uncovering ore running up to 80% lead.<sup>356</sup>

Development was still being steadily pushed by the Buckhorn Humboldt people in the spring of 1926 to uncover the large amount of high-grade ore in sight as well as the vast quantities of low-grade milling ore that seemed to be present. Several lessees were at work, notably on the Miller Lease and the Dollar Bill Matthews ground. By May only four sets of leasers were operating, and the number was evidently reduced to three by June.<sup>357</sup> In 1926 the California Journal of Mines and Geology described the mine as located in the LeMoigne District and still owned by the Buckhorn Humboldt Mining Company. It was under lease to L.P. (?) McCrea, M. L. Miller, and associates of Beatty, Nevada. A twenty-five-foot tunnel had been driven west in the canyon north of the main camp and was intersecting an ore lens from which 150 tons of ore had been shipped running 50% lead and

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356. Ibid., 28 June 1924, and 7 February, 4 April 1925.

357. Ibid., 20 March 1926, 22 May 1926; Mining Journal, 15 June 1926, p. 35.

three to five ounces of silver per ton. South of these workings on a ridge above Lemoigne Canyon a 165-foot tunnel had developed a lens from which 100 tons of ore had been shipped averaging 50% lead with five ounces of silver per ton. The ore was being hauled by truck to Beatty at a cost of \$18 per ton. Two men were employed at the mine.<sup>358</sup> The property must still have been active in 1928, because in May of that year Margaret Long mentions a road that was washed out and would have to be regraded by the next truck through to "Lemoign."<sup>359</sup>

McCrae and the Buckhorn Humboldt Mining Company continued to hold the Lemoigne Mine from 1937 through 1948, although by 1938 the twelve claims were reported as idle.<sup>360</sup> Bev Hunter later refiled on the property, subsequently leasing it to W. V. Skinner of Lone Pine, who produced a little ore in 1953. By 1962 Roy Hunter was evidently attempting some sporadic mining activity at the old mine. Total

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358. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Report 22 of the State Mineralogist (1926) p. 488. The Kerdell lead Mine is the property located just southeast of the Lemoigne Mine, at about 5,800 feet elevation. The property was relocated as the Lone Ear Claim on 10 December 1954 by Roy Hunter. It is accessible by trail from the Lemoigne road about 1,000 feet below the mouth of Lemoigne Canyon from the parking area. It consisted at one time of twelve unpatented claims owned by the Gold Hill Dredging Co. and was worked on beginning in March 1949 when two adits and some drifts were dug. No record of production exists. Wayne E. Hall and Hal G. Stephens, Economic Geology of the Panamint Butte Quadrangle and Modoc District, Inyo County, California, Special Report 73 (San Francisco: Calif. Div. of Mines and Geology, 1963), p. 36, hereafter cited as Special Report 73.

359. Long, "The Woman of Death Valley," p. 63.

360. Inyo Independent, 3 September 1937; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):443; Jenkins, Copper in California, p. 246.

production from the property was said to have a gross value of approximately \$38,000, realized from the shipment of over 600 tons of ore containing 30% lead, 7% zinc, and 4 ozs. of silver per ton. During its active lifetime up to 1963, the Lemoigne Mine was developed by about 500 feet of workings taking place on three levels and one sublevel, which were connected by a vertical shaft, and by three stopes. The shaft on the property had been extended to about eighty feet in depth.<sup>361</sup> Again in 1974 mining activity resumed on the site, and by December 1975 a Harold Pischel was working on a previously unexplored hillside looking for sulfide ore. Material reportedly carrying 14 ozs. of silver per ton was being stockpiled at the adit entrance.<sup>362</sup>

(b) Present Status

The Lemoigne Mine is located in Lemoigne Canyon, the southernmost canyon of the Cottonwood Mountains, which form the northerly extension of the Panamint Range. The claims, ranging in elevation from 4,950 to 5,700 feet, are reached via a jeep trail, crossing an alluvial fan, that is often subject to severe washing and that trends north off of California State Highway 190 approximately three miles east of the Emigrant Ranger Station. The claim area is reached after about 9½ miles of very rough 4-wheel driving. This writer was unable to personally view the mine because the road into Lemoigne Wash was barely visible following a series of heavy downpours in the area during the early fall of 1978. The site was visited by the LCS crew in 1975

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361. Hall and Stephens, Special Report 73, p. 36. See chart on that page for annual production from the mine during period 1925 to 1953; Memo, 1 March 1962, DEVA NM mining office; "Geology, Ore Reserves and Development Program, Lemoigne Mining Claims, Inyo County, California," n.p., in mining office, WRO, San Francisco.

362. Evans et al., Special Report 125, p. 19.

and the following account of structures found is based on their data and on that collected during an archeological reconnaissance of the area.<sup>363</sup>

Near the junction of the North and South forks of Lemoigne Canyon are the remains of a campsite appearing to date from the 1930s. Only a leveled tent site and assorted debris were found. On up the road at the entrance to the Lemoigne claim the trail forks again into two short smaller canyons, both showing evidence of occupation by man. The southern or left one contains a relatively new corrugated-metal structure with a nearby pit toilet, a metal trailer, and the only structure of real historic significance in the area--the rock cabin built by John Lemoigne in the 1880s. This latter is a partial dugout, carved into the bedrock and lined with wooden cribbing. The front is part stone and part wood, with flattened five-gallon metal cans being used for paneling in some areas. Shelves are built into some of the walls, which tends to verify this as Old John's home:

When Jean arrived in America, he had with him volumes of the classics in French, English, and German, which he kept on shelves in the stone cabin he built below his lead prospect in a canyon west of Emigrant wash. . . .<sup>364</sup>

The cabin structure itself is intact but filled with garbage and debris. Crampton states that when he visited Lemoigne's lead

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363. Tweed, Cultural Resources Survey, pp. 233-41; Richard H. Brooks, Richard A. Wilson, Joseph P. King, Matt McMakin, A Historic and Prehistoric Reconnaissance of Four Mining Claims in Death Valley National Monument. Prepared for NPS, WAC, by contract with Arch. Research Center, UNLV Mus. of Nat. History, November 1977, pp. 4-5, 22-29, 40.

364. Crampton, Deep Enough, p. 257.

**Illustration 216.**

**View showing tramway, mine dumps,  
and ore bin in fork of Lemoigne  
Canyon.**

**Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.**

**Illustration 217.**

**Foundations of building and debris at site below ore bin in picture  
above.**

**Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.**



Illustration 218.

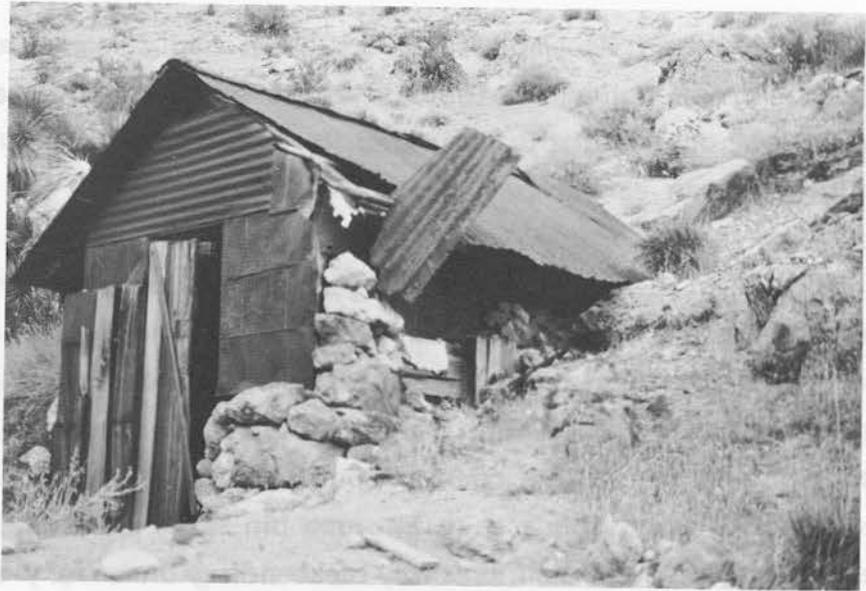
Stone dugout of John Lemoigne in Lemoigne Canyon.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 219.

Leveled site at Lemoigne Canyon junction camp.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



365. Cranton to Blyewass, 24 May 1926.  
367. "Geology, Ore Reserves, and Development of the  
368. Lead and Zinc Deposits of the Colorado  
369. 367. "Geology, Ore Reserves, and Development of the  
370. Lead and Zinc Deposits of the Colorado

property around December 1919 the cabin had already been rifled of everything of value.<sup>365</sup> Beyond these buildings the road leads to an active mine adit surrounded by some five other small adits dating from an earlier period.

The northern canyon fork leads up past the site of at least four leveled habitation sites, about eight feet square, either for tent houses or wooden buildings, set against a cliff and about one-tenth of a mile below a one-chute ore bin. Wooden boards, stove parts, and old bedsprings were found scattered through the area. The ore bin is in a narrow box canyon and at the foot of a rail tramway descending on a very steep incline from a mine tunnel on the ridge above. The tramway was controlled by a gasoline-powered winch still in place at the entrance to the tunnel.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Lemoigne silver-lead-zinc Mine was probably first worked in the late 1880s, though the exact location date was not found by this writer. The mine was only sporadically worked by Lemoigne, who spent most of his forty years in the Death Valley region searching for minerals and performing assessment work for fellow miners. A newspaper article in 1923, in fact, mentioned that Lemoigne had confined his development of the area to shallow surface holes.<sup>366</sup> According to a recent study of the claims, they have been developed through the years by about 1,300 feet of workings. Most ore removed was high-grade, the many low- and medium-grade pockets being considered economically infeasible to mine during the 1920s when

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365. Crampton to Binnewiess, 24 May 1956.

366. Inyo Independent, 1 December 1923.

the mine saw its highest production rate. According to a 1976 report, the total value of all metals recovered at the Lemoigne Mine, based on January 1976 prices, would be about \$116,000.<sup>367</sup>

The historical significance of this site is not based on the volume of ore produced at the mine or on its monetary value. Its importance lies in its early discovery date and especially in its associations with John Lemoigne, considered by many to be the dean of Death Valley prospectors. It is not that Old John is completely forgotten--his lead mine is shown on the USGS Panamint Butte quad at the end of a canyon that also bears his name. His gravesite is marked on the Chloride Cliff quad just south of the Salt Springs jeep trail. (Attempts to locate the site by this writer were unsuccessful, though the wooden cross was still in place in February 1973.) It is simply that he is often overshadowed by the braggadocio of such highly-publicized wanderers of the desert as Death Valley Scotty and Shorty Harris. Lemoigne was a completely different breed, more attune in tastes and life-style to Pete Aguerberry, the other transplanted Frenchman in the valley who, like Old John, stayed to pursue a quiet and uneventful life in the desert they both loved so well.

Lemoigne's biographer, Frank Crampton, expressed his appraisal of the man this way:

Old John typified the breed of prospectors and old-timers and the Desert Rats who centered on Death Valley. Few, if any, did any prospecting of any consequence in the valley, they were not looking for non-metallics but for gold, silver, lead, copper or one of

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367. "Geology, Ore Reserves and Development Program, Lemoigne Mining Claims," n.p.; Evans et al., Special Report 125, p. 19.

the other of the lesser metals. Death Valley was not the place where metals were found in paying quantities and the breed knew it. . . . Old John was the best of them all. He had the knowledge of a highly educated man, and the fortitude to accept the fate that had befallen him when he arrived at Death Valley and learned that Daunet was dead. But the greatest of all attributes was that he loved the desert, and Death Valley best of all, and without effort adapted himself to it. Old John Lamoigne [sic] deserves imortality [sic]. He was the epitome of them all and represents the best of a breed of men who are no longer.<sup>368</sup>

Because the Lemoigne Mine was the scene of some of the earliest mining activity within the monument and the home of John Lemoigne until his death in 1919, the mine area and the stone cabin that Lemoigne built are considered to be locally significant and eligible for inclusion on the National Register. The leveled tent or house sites and ore bin in the box canyon probably date from the 1920s era of mining activity when the mine was being developed and was shipping ore. Some sort of camp had to have been situated here to house the Buckhorn Humboldt Mining Company employees and the various lessees. Based on the 1975 LCS research notes, these structures are not considered significant.

An interpretive marker near the stone cabin identifying the site would be appropriate. The tent foundations and old ore bin should be mentioned as probable vestiges of early twentieth-century activity in the area. An exhibit at the visitor center might dwell further on Lemoigne's life,

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368. Crampton to Binnewiess, 15 May 1956.

emphasizing his long tenure in the valley, his knowledge of the classics, and his degrees as a mining engineer--traits which set him apart from his desert comrades.

Attempts were made by this writer to determine the extent of mining enterprises in Cottonwood Canyon further north where Lemoigne had filed on some quartz claims in the late 1880s. An arduous all-day hiking trip failed to turn up any signs of such activity. A monument employee, however, stated that about 1976 the remains of two buildings were found at Cottonwood Springs. One corrugated-steel and tin shack contained a wood-burning stove and a set of bedsprings. No evidence of mining was seen in the immediate area, and no prospect sites are shown on the USGS Marble Canyon quad.

Illustration 220.

Grave of John Lemoigne near Salt Springs road.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, UNLV, 1973.

Monte de la Cruz, Sonora, México

1937



PHOTO  
PLATE 100  
1937

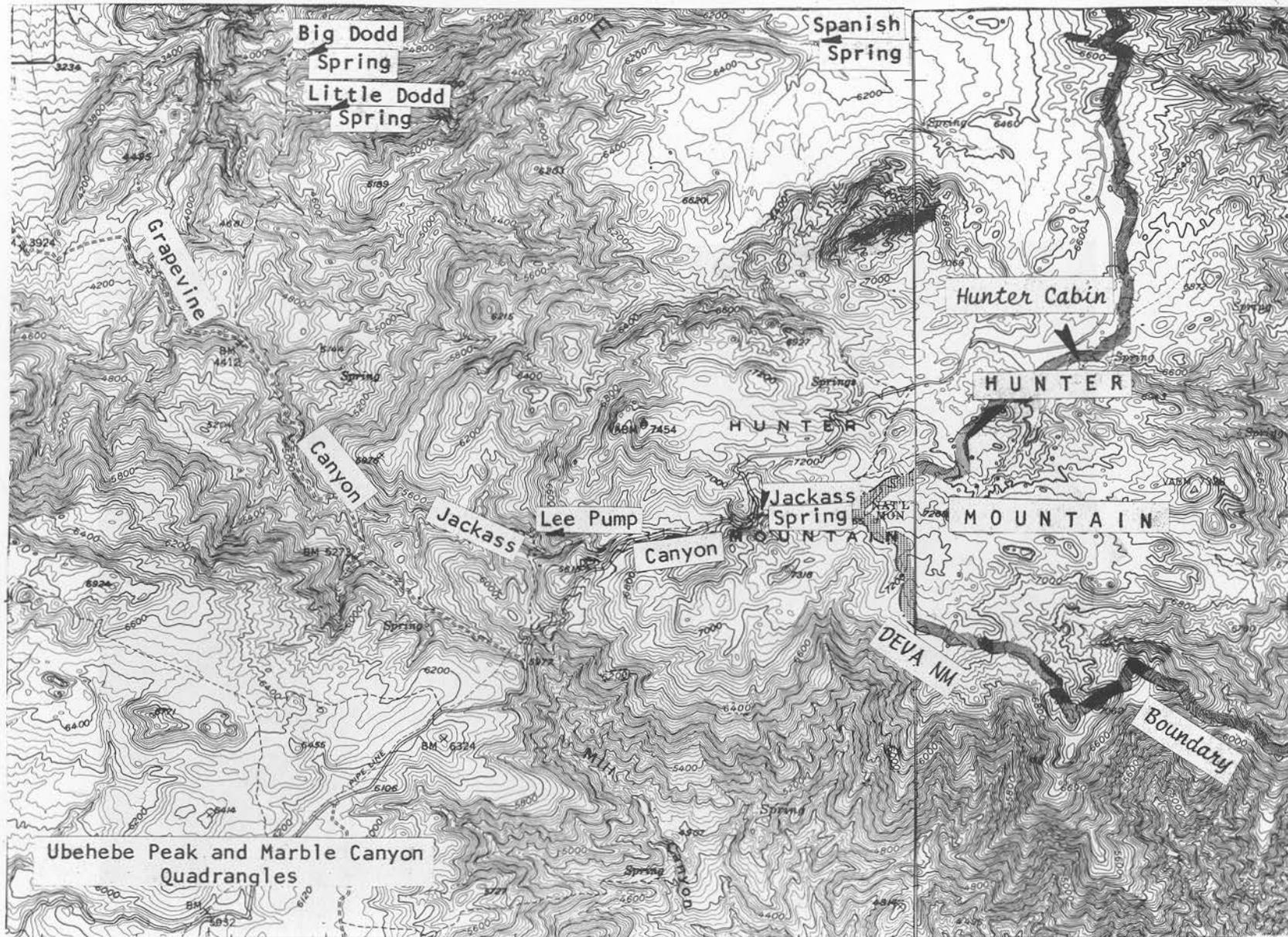


Illustration 221.

Map of Hunter Mountain.

## C. Cottonwood Mountains

### 1. Hunter Cabin

#### a) History

William Lyle Hunter, born in Virginia in 1842, came to the Death Valley region in the late 1860s. Marrying a girl from Virginia City, Nevada, Hunter subsequently settled down to a life as stockman, miner, and explorer. During the Cerro Gordo excitement he drove a large train of pack mules, realizing a considerable profit from this venture. Exploring widely in the surrounding region during these years, Hunter was among the first to penetrate the Ubehebe section (referred to then as part of the Rose Springs Mining District) in 1875, locating some valuable copper claims there. He and his compatriots are said to be responsible for changing the name of the area to "Ubehebe." In the lush green hills and forested area south of the Ubehebe District, where a variety of springs provide an abundance of water, Hunter grazed the mules and horses he raised and no doubt used in his pack trains. This green swath later became known as Hunter's Ranch Mountain, and was still being used many years later by his grandson Roy as pasture land for his cattle. Among other discoveries made by Hunter and his partner John Beveridge were those of the Belmont silver Mine east of Cerro Gordo and the Beveridge District in 1877.<sup>1</sup>

In 1897 Hunter and Reuben Spear, with whom he worked the Ulida Mine, were still performing development work "on old claims at 'Hunter's ranch.'"<sup>2</sup> The property was at this time

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1. Southern Inyo American Association of Retired Persons, Chapter 183, Saga of Inyo County (Covina, Ca.: Taylor Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 163-64. Chalfant, Story of Inyo, p. 267.

2. Inyo Independent, 6 August 1897.

crossed by an early mining trail leading east from Keeler to the Ubehebe region. Traversing the Inyo Range south of Cerro Gordo, it crossed the head of Panamint Valley "and finally ascends a superbly wooded and amply watered upland for many years known as Hunter's Ranch."<sup>3</sup> From the area of today's Lee Pump trails led to Saline Valley to the north, to the Lee Flat Mining District to the southwest, and on to Furnace Creek to the southeast via Cottonwood Canyon. Another reference to what is believed to be this area mentions the "several good camping grounds around the nut-laden trees and bunch grass of Hunter's Ranch."<sup>4</sup>

By 1900 Hunter and his family were living at George's Creek south of Independence, where he died in 1902 at the relatively young age of 59. In 1907 water from Hunter Ranch Creek  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile above Hunter Ranch was filed on for use by the Ulida Copper Company, which intended to pipe the water to its Ubehebe mine. Another location was filed five days later requesting 100 miner's inches on Hunter Ranch Creek  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles above "Indian Garden," the water to be piped to the Ulida Copper Company property for mining purposes.<sup>5</sup>

Three early survey maps were found, two of which show an irregularly-shaped plot of ground labelled "Hunter Ranch." The earliest map, dated 1924, presents a confusing array of buildings. It shows, for instance, a "Hunter Ranch" plot, complete

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3. Ibid., 30 March 1900.

4. Ibid.

5. Water Location, dated 26 May 1907, in Inyo Co., Land and Water Claims, Mill Sites, Book B, p. 84; Water Location, dated 31 May 1907, in ibid.

with house, nearby Indian camp, and an extensive reservoir system, located between a ranch to the east (probably Steininger's) and another site referred to as "Scott's Old Ranch." The accuracy of this survey is extremely doubtful. Actually what is designated as "Hunter Ranch" on this map seems to refer to what is the Lower Grapevine complex today, with the "Scott's Old Ranch" site located about where the present swimming pond is (see Illus. 222). The township lines shown support this assumption.

A 1927 survey again shows a Hunter Ranch in the vicinity of an "Indian Gardens" as mentioned in the water location notices filed by the Ulida Copper Company in the early 1900s. Otherwise, the same features are noted as in 1924: a house, an Indian camp site, and the reservoir. No corral complex is shown. On the same plat is the layout of the old Steininger place. The plot referred to on the earlier map as Scotty's old ranch appears on this survey but is unnamed, suggesting that an attempt was made to correct the earlier survey (see Illustration 223).<sup>6</sup> Some puzzling questions remain, however. Julian Steward, in his study on the Indian populations of the Great Basin/Plateau area does not mention the Hunter Mountain region as being home to any particular group of Death Valley Indians, although the presence of "Indian Gardens" might indicate that some occasionally occupied the lush area to avail themselves of the pinyon nuts and cooler air (see Illustration 223). An Indian camp did exist near Death Valley Ranch during construction of the castle, however, to house the Indian laborers.

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6. The sources of these maps are unknown, having been found in a crate of papers (presumably in the monument) labeled "Unrelated to Castle." The 1927 one is supposedly a Lida quad topo map, edition of October 1931. See Wm. C. Bolton to Ross Holland, 23 March 1972.

As late as 1955 Hunter's Ranch was sporadically utilized as a cattle ranch.<sup>7</sup>

b) Present Status

Hunter Cabin is located on Hunter Mountain on the west side of Death Valley immediately inside the National Monument boundaries and about 3/4 mile south of the Hidden Valley road that passes via Jackass Canyon to California State Highway 190. Although not inspected by this writer, the site was visited by the LCS crew in December 1975. Development at the site consisted of a one-room log cabin constructed of pinyon pine and measuring approximately twelve by twenty feet, a spring twenty yards uphill that had been opened up into a watering trough, and a primitive corral about one hundred yards northeast of the cabin. Visitors obviously have used the area in the past as a campground.

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

Either a "Hunters" or a "Hunters Ranch" is located on the "Itinerary of Scout made by Co. D, 12th U.S. Infantry, Commenced April 30th and ending May 25th 1875," the "Itinerary of Scouts made by Co. "D," 12th U.S. Infantry [sic], during May, June, July and August 1875," and "Route marched by Co. I, First Cavalry, Commanded by Capt. C. C. Carr, First Cav. from June 8th to June 25th [1875]."<sup>8</sup> According to Levy, however, the present Hunter Cabin was built by a "packer" named John in 1910, using materials salvaged from an earlier cabin at Lee Pump.<sup>9</sup> That

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7. James F. McAllister, Geology of Mineral Deposits in the Ubehebe Peak Quadrangle, Inyo County, California, Special Report 42 (San Francisco: Calif. Div. of Mines and Geology, 1955), p. 7, hereafter cited as Special Report 42.

8. Levy, Historical Background Study, Illustrations 2-4.

9. Beveridge Porter Hunter to Matt Ryan, 8 January 1969, cited in ibid., p. 92.



Illustration 222.

Map dated 1924 showing "Hunter Ranch."

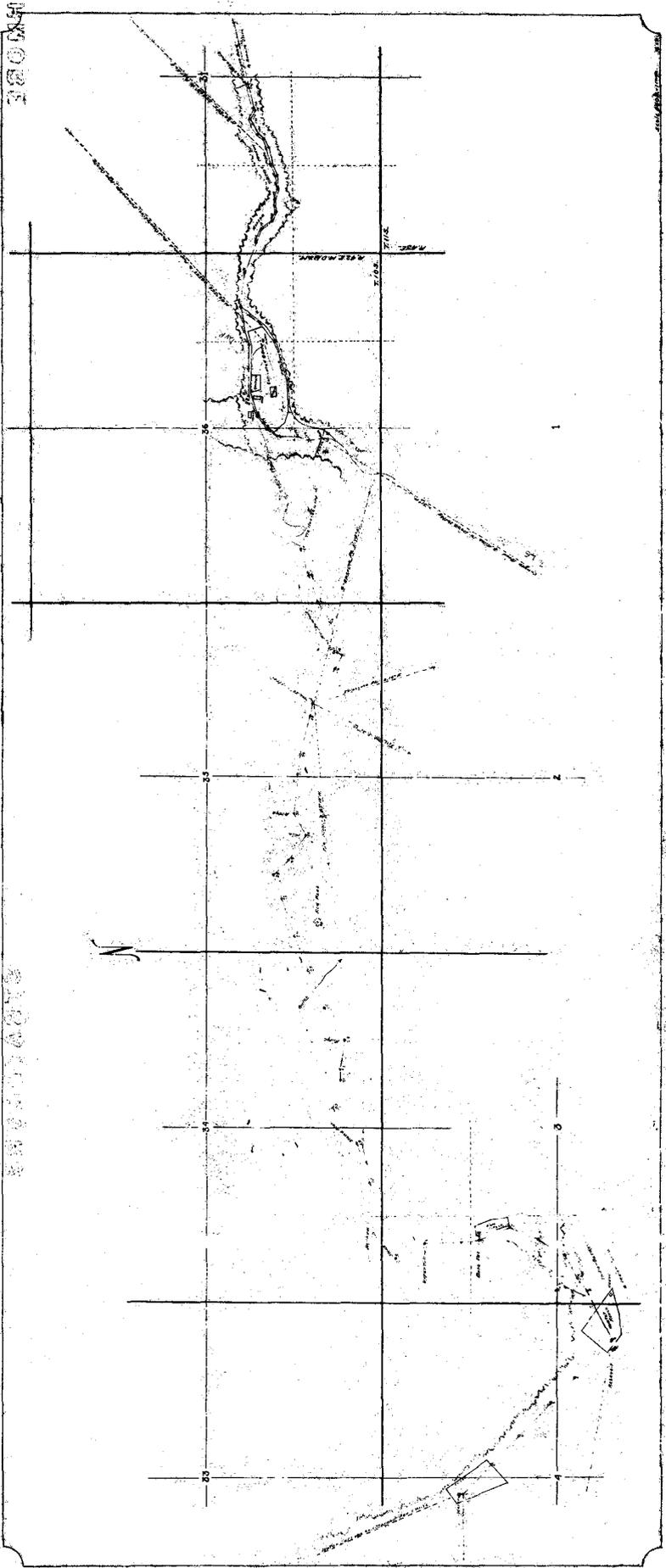
From history files, DSC.



Illustration 223.

Map dated 1927 showing "Hunter Ranch."

From history files, DSC.



PORT

STARBOARD

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A

B

C

D

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1

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Illustration 224.

William Lyle Hunter cabin located just inside monument boundary northeast of Hunter Mountain. Later lived in by Bev Hunter.

Photo by Wm. C. Bullard and Dan Farrell, 1959, courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 225.

Corral complex at ranch, 1959.

Photo by Wm. C. Bullard and Dan Farrell, courtesy of DEVA NM.



place, however, is west of Jackass Spring, while the ranch site shown on the military reconnaissance maps is definitely east of this waterhole, implying that some sort of ranch layout existed at this precise location as early as 1875. The ranch area as far as can be ascertained was primarily used for grazing of the mules and horses that Hunter used in his pack trains or supplied to the army.<sup>10</sup> It is doubtful that it was ever occupied for any extended period of time, but was instead used mostly as a line camp.

The Hunter Ranch complex is of more than passing interest for several reasons: first, because it was built by W. L. Hunter, father of one of Inyo County's foremost pioneer families and a founder of the Ubehebe Mining District; secondly, because of its location along an early historic military route from Camp Independence to Nevada, which later became a heavily-traveled trail into the mining areas of northern Death Valley, and because of its reputed status as a supplier of horses to the army troops; and thirdly, because of its interesting construction of pinyon pine logs. Because insufficient data exists to properly evaluate the ranch's role in Death Valley history or to justify placement of it on the National Register, it is recommended that it be accorded treatment of benign neglect. Camping in the area should be discouraged in order to lessen the dangers of fire and vandalism.

Hunter Ranch is one of only two small early homestead or ranching cabins viewed by this writer during survey trips to Death Valley, the other being the Nevares Cabin near Cow Creek. The Hunter cabin appears more rustic than the other, being built of pinyon pine logs squared on three sides to ensure a

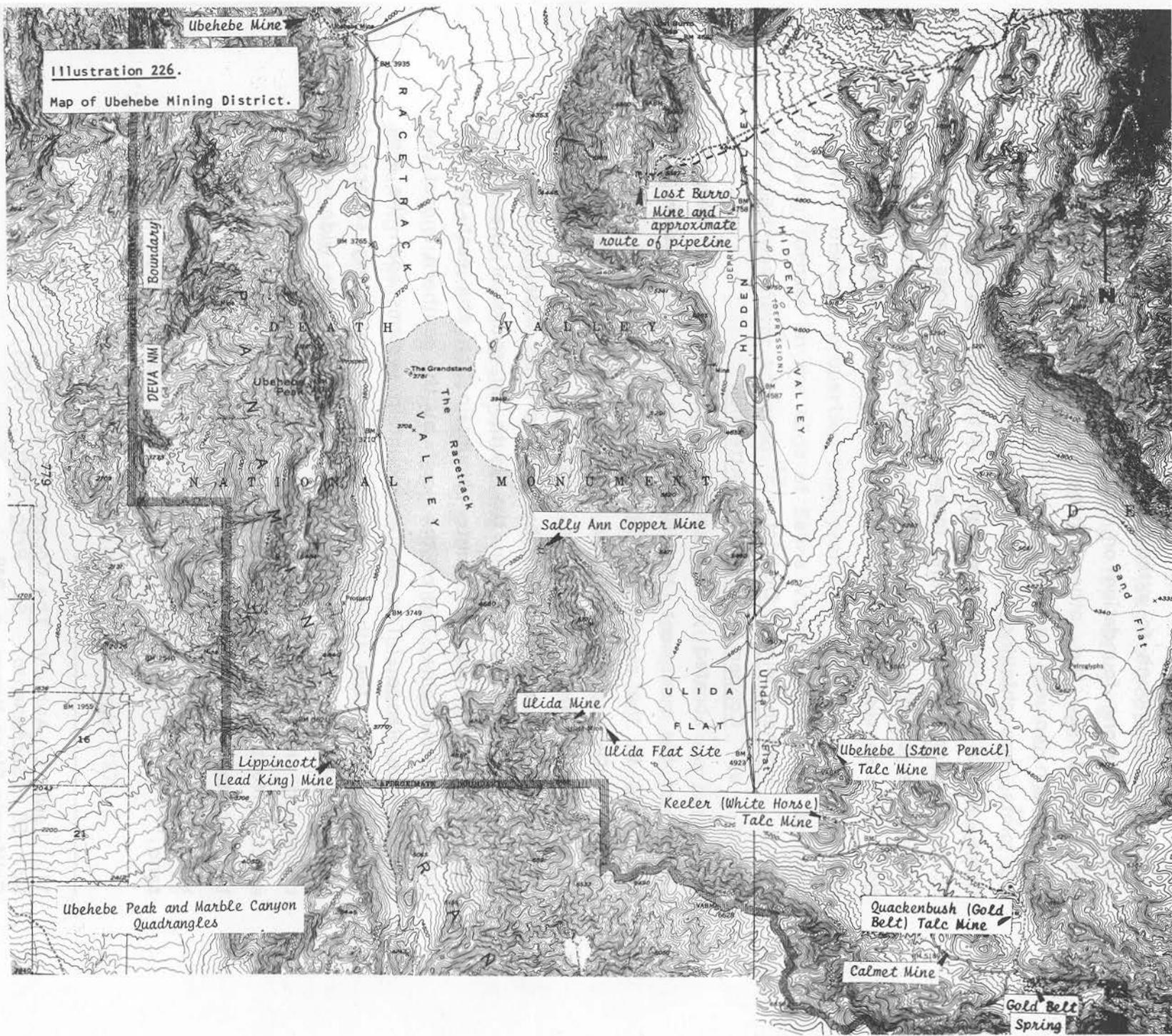
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10. Levy, Historical Background Study, p. 92.

Ubehebe Mine

Illustration 226.

Map of Ubehebe Mining District.



Boundary

DEVA NATIONAL MONUMENT

Lippincott (Lead King) Mine

Ubehebe Peak and Marble Canyon  
Quadrangles

Ulida Mine

Ulida Flat Site

Sally Ann Copper Mine

Lost Burro Mine and  
approximate  
route of pipeline

Keeler (White Horse)  
Talc Mine

Ubehebe (Stone Pencil)  
Talc Mine

Quackenbush (Gold  
Belt) Talc Mine

Calmet Mine

Gold Belt  
Spring

RACETRACK VALLEY

THE RACETRACK VALLEY

MONUMENT

HIDDEN VALLEY

ULIDA FLAT

Sand Flat

719

16

21

Ubehebe Peak

The Grandstand

BM 3759

tight fit. Some of these have been spliced together because they were not long enough to extend the entire wall length. The cabin rests on a stone foundation on the downhill slope and directly on the ground on the other three sides. Other features of construction include: a one-by-two plank floor, square-cut corner log joints, rag chinking, a corrugated-iron roof resting on a pole frame, and a board-and-batten gable. Although somewhat protected by its location in a thick pine forest, a few conditions are leading toward the cabin's ultimate demise: decaying logs, an unstable floor, a loose roof, insect infestation, and water seepage from the nearby spring.

## 2. Ubehebe Mining District

### a) Copper Veins Attract Attention

Located in one of the most remote and beautiful corners of the monument, the initial claims of this area were first discovered in the summer of 1875 by W. L. and J. B. Hunter, Thomas McDonough, and J. L. Porter. The Ubehebe mineral district, about thirty-five miles northeast of Keeler, includes an area about eighteen miles long by thirteen miles wide, bounded on the west by Saline Valley, on the south by spurs of the Nelson Range extending east to Hunter Mountain, on the east by the Cottonwood Mountains, and on the north by the southern end of the Last Chance Range. Two smaller mountain systems span the area north to south, the Ubehebe Range on the west being separated from the Dutton Range on the east by a two-mile wide valley containing the dried-up lake bed known as the Racetrack. The exact derivation of the name "Ubehebe" is unknown, although it is thought to be Shoshonean, meaning "big basket." It has been variously translated as "basket in the rock" or "basket in the sand."<sup>11</sup>

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11. Lewis E. Aubury, The Copper Resources of California, Bulletin No. 50 (Sacramento: St. Prtg. Off., 1908), p. 301; Gudde, California Place Names, p. 349.

The principal find of the 1875 explorations in the area was an enormous eighty-foot-wide ledge of copper, referred to as the Piute Lode and showing ore assaying 15% to 67%. Immediately after its discovery on 2 July, Porter began experiments to determine the best method of ore reduction, ultimately concluding that it could be smelted profitably right on the grounds.<sup>12</sup> The famous Cerro Gordo Mine near Keeler was in a very prosperous condition at this time, and probably encouraged by its success and the general air of prosperity in the area, M. W. Belshaw, operator of a smelter at Keeler, purchased at least a portion of Hunter and Porter's Ubehebe properties that year and proposed erection of a smelting furnace on the edge of Saline Valley before early spring. This goal was never achieved.<sup>13</sup>

For many years thereafter little work was performed on the large and promising copper veins of the Ubehebe district, the problems characterizing all desert mining--lack of water and wood near the deposits, their isolation from rail centers and supply points, the difficulties of constructing and maintaining adequate roads through a hostile environment, the uneconomical methods of ore removal and transport--being present here in abundance. Reportedly the famous New York artist Albert Bierstadt became interested in the Ubehebe mines around 1886 and spent several days examining them. Although he made definite plans to purchase some property, for unknown reasons the deal was never consummated. Perhaps he too realized the many factors still militating against the success of mining ventures in the region.<sup>14</sup>

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12. Inyo Independent, 17 July 1875; Mining & Scientific Press, 25 September 1875, p. 196.

13. Inyo Independent, 3 November 1875; 11 December 1875.

14. Ibid., 5 February 1897.

Not until the late 1890s did activity surface again. In 1897 a W. J. Ryan of Denver, representing Mr. N. D. Moore, one of the country's leading mining experts, bonded the copper mines of A. F. Mairs and J. F. Welsh for \$15,000, with the promise that active development would commence immediately. True to his word, by early March Ryan had departed for the mine with a load of provisions and supplies to sustain the eight-man crew he intended to set to work on a large vein that showed promising amounts of gold as well as of high-grade copper.<sup>15</sup> Undeterred by the area's remoteness, Moore was overly and prematurely optimistic in his assurances that a railroad would penetrate the area if the copper deposits proved as extensive as they appeared. The first serious mention of a railroad connection again concerned the Randsburg Railway, which at this time stretched from Kramer station on the Santa Fe and Pacific only as far north as Johannesburg. If the line was extended to Keeler via Ballarat, it had been suggested, it could service also the Wildrose and Lemoigne Mine areas. A thirty-mile wagon road constructed from the Cottonwood Mountains south to some agreed-upon point on the line would then open up the Ubehebe copper region and provide the necessary incentive for developing these mines whose ores were carrying from 20% to 60% copper and from \$6 to \$32 per ton in gold.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to this suggestion for a possible railroad connection to the Ubehebe, a proposal was made two years later that residents of the Owens Valley region unite in construction of a road across the Inyo Mountains to the borax, copper, and gold deposits of the Saline Valley and Ubehebe regions. Another

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15. Ibid., 19 February 1897, 5 March 1897.

16. Report of the Director of the Mint (1885), p. 158; Inyo Independent, 6 August 1897.

possibility mentioned in 1899 was that the Carson and Colorado Railway would eventually be extended into the Panamint Valley and tap the Ubehebe region along the way. Despite the prevailing lack of transportation facilities, however, development was proceeding in the 1890s on the one big copper mine in the Ubehebe, whose workings already included a seventy-five-foot tunnel and a thirty-seven-foot-deep shaft with crosscut. Water had to be piped in from a nearby spring and the ore transported to the railroad over a rough wagon road, probably west through Saline Valley.<sup>17</sup>

b) Boston Capitalists Become Interested

Around the late 1890s and early 1900s many Boston capitalists became interested in the copper mines of the Ubehebe region and the adjacent Saline Valley, probably as a result of the record price for copper (19¼¢/lb.) reached in 1899. In that year a representative of certain Salt Lake City parties, after a detailed preliminary examination of the Ubehebe area, reported to his employers that the copper deposits in the Saline Valley region--primarily the Ubehebe, Sanger Group, and Hunter and

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17. Inyo Independent, 20 January 1899; 18 August 1899. Extension of the Randsburg Railway still appeared a distinct possibility at this time, especially with the arrival of the line's general manager and superintendent to examine the copper mines of the Saline Valley and determine the advisability of extending their system further north. Ibid., 6 October 1899, 24 November 1899. Lands in Saline Valley had been located for borax at least as early as 1895 and borax works constructed later. The copper camps in the same area were just starting to come into their own now, four years later, spurred on by Greenwater's success, and along with the Western Borax Co., which held interests in the area, were extremely anxious to form closer ties with the Owens Valley and Keeler. Hence their determination to see a road built from Independence through Mazourka Canyon to the Saline Valley deposits. Such a project would also ameliorate somewhat the Ubehebe area's shipping problems. Ibid., 20 October, 27 October 1899.

Spear properties--appeared to be of sizable value. One of these capitalists, a Mr. Scheu, came to the area to inspect the property firsthand and took options on a great number of locations in the district. Subsequently all parties from whom options had been acquired were summoned to meet with Scheu and an S. H. Mackay and transfer the subject properties. The syndicate purchasing them was reportedly capitalized for \$75 million, and intended to hire miners and begin development at once to determine the depth and extent of the ore bodies. A railroad connection was deemed essential for the success of the venture. A 1,000-ton-per-day-capacity reduction plant was even anticipated if water could be found; otherwise the ore would be shipped to smelters. An initial sum of \$5,000 was paid toward purchase of the Sanger Group, with other transactions to follow. The ultimate outcome of the whole venture, however, was that Scheu and Mackay embezzled some of the money due the Eastern backers, disgusting the Boston group to such a degree that they washed their hands of the whole enterprise.<sup>18</sup>

In 1901 George McConnell and his associates bonded a group of mining claims at Ubehebe to a Boston syndicate for \$125,000. About a half dozen groups of claims here, in fact, were under bond, for amounts varying from \$25,000 to \$50,000, when a financial panic of sorts enveloped the Boston commodities market, and the deals were never concluded. Copper prices reached rock bottom in 1902, when only 11¢/lb. was offered. Due largely to this copper slump, in that year the approximately eighty copper, gold, and silver claims in the Ubehebe, located within a radius of about six miles of each other, were only touched by assessment work, though results were still encouraging.<sup>19</sup>

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18. Ibid., 21 July, 11 August 1899, 16 September 1904.

19. Inyo Register, 28 November 1901; Lewis E. Aubury, The Copper Resources of California, Bulletin No. 23 (Sacramento: St. Prtg. Off., 1902), p. 245; Inyo Register, 4 June 1903; Inyo Independent, 5 January 1906.

A description of the Ubehebe area in 1903 again mentions its inaccessibility, despite which regular assessment work on all the main ledges and deposits had been regularly performed for the past several years. One pleasing aspect of mining in the district was that the mountainous terrain permitted mining by drift tunnels rather than shafts and hoisting methods, which was much more economical and a great deal less time consuming. The mineral-bearing zone was reached by only one wagon road, stretching from the Inyo Mountain Range across Saline Valley, its primary drawback being the extreme heat encountered along its course during the summer months. Properties in the north end of Ubehebe were at this time producing ore assaying \$12 to \$18 in gold, carrying some silver, and ranging from 5% to 20% in copper. Ore in the middle sections carried 4% or 80 lbs. pure metal to the ton, while the southern section was mostly idle. Railroad access was still necessary for realization of the region's full potential, and it was remarked at this time that if the Los Angeles, Daggett and Salt Lake Railroad was constructed, a forty- or forty-five-mile spur could open up the whole Ubehebe to the world market. As had been stressed often before during discussions of possible routes into the area, the best way to spark the interest of Eastern mining capitalists was to be able to offer better ingress and egress routes than the rough trails currently in use.<sup>20</sup>

c) Rising Copper Prices Benefit Ubehebe

Starting about 1904 the price of copper and of shares of copper-producing companies began a slow but steady rise. By 1905 the Ubehebe copper district was industriously active, and several properties were producing: the Spear brothers and W. L.

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20. Inyo Register, 4 June 1903.

Hunter had made three ore shipments returning 26.24% copper, \$8 in gold, and 3 ozs. of silver per ton from their Ulida property; R.G. Paddock and H.L. Wrinkle of Keeler were beginning development of thirty claims; and S. H. Reynolds owned a group of claims from which he was procuring a more than satisfactory showing. A new record price for copper of 19-3/4¢/lb. was reached in 1906, and future prospects appeared bright indeed. Several factors were responsible for this dramatic change in the market: an increase in the amount of copper needed for electrical conduction purposes, the escalation in the building of trolley lines, the electrification of steam railroads, and the pressing need for copper in China and throughout the Far East for recoinage use after the Russo-Japanese War.

Finally consumption had overtaken production and created a strong demand both here and abroad for immediate delivery:

At the price copper is selling at the present time, it is no wonder that the mammoth copper properties of Saline valley and the Ubehebe districts are claiming the attention of mining men from all parts of America. These properties are reported as carrying a very high percentage in copper, and the only reason and drawback that keeps them from ranking as the foremost copper properties of America, is their isolated position, lack of water, and being owned by people who have not sufficient means to enable them to build plants and furnish cheap transportation facilities. Men of capital are sending their agents here to investigate, and in every instance they seem to be much impressed by the magnitude and high values of the properties. If copper continues to hold to nearly the high figure it has attained, we feel confident

that in the near future, the mines will be in charge of people who have ample means to bring the product of these properties in touch with the market.<sup>21</sup>

One of the large mining transactions that took place at this time was the sale of the Sanger and Mairs copper-silver-gold properties to a New York businessman for a reported \$200,000. Coincidental with the impetus to copper mining provided by the advance in prices was the rising enthusiasm for the metal among the desert community, and on the East Coast especially, generated by the discovery of rich lodes such as those at Greenwater that created a new town practically overnight. Some of that bonanza camp's most prominent backers, such as John Salsberry from Tonopah, Jack Gunn of Independence, and Arthur Kunze also sent prospectors into the Ubehebe area.<sup>22</sup>

Almost instantaneously Ubehebe mining properties began to move. McConnell and associates again bonded some copper properties to a Salt Lake City firm; A. F. Mairs received a payment for his property adjacent to Saline Valley and also bonded seven claims to Goldfield people; a Salt Lake group was employing eight men on the Ulida Mine; a Mr. Whittier and associates discovered and filed on the Rio Pinto Group or Lost Spanish gold and silver mine north of Hunter's Ranch; the Guggenheim Smelter Company of the American Smelter Trust Company purchased forty of W. A. Sanger's claims, intending to erect a smelter twenty miles away in Deep Springs Valley; Goldfield people took a \$100,000 option on a group of claims owned by John Miller, one of the pioneer locators in the area; and Senator Nixon and George Wingfield even acquired an

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21. Inyo Independent, 5 January 1906; Inyo Register, 30 November 1905.

22. Inyo Register, 2 August 1906; Death Valley Chuck-Walla, 1 April 1907.

Illustration 227.

Advertisement for Lost Spanish Mine, Ubehebe Mining District.

From Bullfrog Miner, 24 May 1907.

**UBEHEBE** IT'S NEW IT'S OLD IT'S RICH

**GET IN RIGHT GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR GET IN NOW**

## The "Rio Pinto" or Lost Spanish Mine

With its ruins and romance; its ancient dumps of copper and gold ores; its strong ledges and surface indications of hidden mineral wealth, is now the property of



RIO PINTO, OR LOST SPANISH MINE - UBEHEBE, CALIF.  
SHOWING RUINS OF ORE ROASTER AND ARASTRAS.  
ALSO VEIN AND DUMPS OF OLD WORKINGS ON  
HILL TO RIGHT OF SKETCH - A. D. Whittier, Rhyolite, Nev. 1907.

# THE UBEHEBE MINING CO.

Capitalization 1,000,000 Shares Par Value \$1.00 400,000 Shares in Treasury

### OFFICERS

President - - - - -	JOS. A. SMALL	Treasurer - - - - -	Hon. L. O. RAY
Cashier John S. Cook & Co's Bank, Rhyolite		Millionaire Bullfrog Mine Owner, Rhyolite	
Vice-President - - - - -	A. D. WHITTIER	Secretary - - - - -	F. B. ANDERSON
Artist and locator of the Lost Spanish Mine, Rhyolite		Broker, Rhyolite	
Additional Directors: JOHN W. FINCH, Geologist and Mine Operator, Goldfield, Nev.; D. L. McCLARAN, Cashier Rhyolite Light, Heat and Power Co., and FRANK P. MANNIX			

**50,000 Shares Treasury Stock** of the Ubehebe Mining Co., the first in the new district, will be sold at **15 Cents per Share**

Stock Registered and Countersigned by John S. Cook & Co., Bankers, Rhyolite, Nev. Make applications for stock to

**ANDERSON & TRACEY, Fiscal Agents, RHYOLITE, NEV.**

interest in some area copper claims for \$70,000. Except for six treacherous miles, a decent road now existed from Montana Station via Steininger's Ranch (later Scotty's Ranch near Grapevine Canyon), providing access to the region from Rhyolite and Greenwater.<sup>23</sup>

d) Townsites are Discussed and a Mining District Formed

The spring of 1907 saw the systematic continuance of development in the Ubehebe area. Although as many as two townsites had been proposed, so far the only population centers were the small camps and groups of prospectors scattered here and there one-quarter to four miles apart from each other. Jack Salsberry, in the meantime, had bought Sanger's group of claims and was in the throes of trying to create a decent auto road from Montana Station to the site he had chosen for a town directly northwest of the Racetrack playa near the entrance to his mine property. This action probably contributed more than any other single factor to the influx of influential people into the area, not only from the neighboring towns of Salt Lake City and Rhyolite and Goldfield, but eventually from as far away as Boston and Philadelphia. Suddenly the desirable mining locations in the Ubehebe were accessible to all. "Mr. Lockhard says that you would almost think, from the people that are met in Ubehebe, that you were in the Bullfrog district," remarked one newspaper article.<sup>24</sup>

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23. Inyo Independent, 24 August 1906; Inyo Register, 13 September 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 5 October 1906; Inyo Register, 8 November 1906; Bullfrog Miner, 16 November 1906, 4 January 1907; Inyo Independent, 15 February 1907. Bonnie Claire, an important station on the Las Vegas and Tonopah and Bullfrog-Goldfield railroads, was originally referred to as Thorp's Wells and later for a short while as Montana Station by the Bullfrog-Goldfield Railroad. The name never became popular, however. Myrick, Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, p. 539.

24. Bullfrog Miner, 19 April 1907.

The sixty-two-mile trail from Rhyolite was well traveled, and several large teams constantly moved over Salsberry's road to Bonnie Claire. A corps of surveyors from the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad were busy determining the most feasible route to the area, and four engineering outfits were already in the region surveying properties. Two townsites, Ubehebe and Saline (Salina) City, were reportedly being platted eight miles apart to house the population of fifty or so miners. Already a warehouse and corral had been erected at the latter site, and water would be piped in as soon as possible. The desire of the people in the area to form their own mining region separate from the Big Pine District was voiced in the spring at a meeting held in the Saline Valley salt works that culminated in formation of the Ubehebe Mining District.<sup>25</sup> Boundaries of the district, whose recorder's office was established at Saline City, were delineated thusly:

Commencing at Waucoba Peak, thence southerly along the summit of the Inyo range past Cerro Gordo Peak to Hunter Ranch trail, thence along Cottonwood creek to Lost Valley, thence northerly along the trail to Surveyors' Wells, thence northeasterly along Death Valley dry wash to northeast corner township 10 south, range 41 east, thence westerly on north line township 10 to Waucoba Peak.<sup>26</sup>

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25. Rhyolite Herald, 12 April 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 12 April, 19 April, 8 June 1907.

26. Inyo Register, 25 April 1907. One article stated that the Ubehebe Mining District was unique up to the fall of 1907 because there had been no instances of claim-jumping or location conflicts. Bullfrog Miner, 21 September 1907.

e) Ubehebe Copper Mines and Smelter Company  
Determines to Construct Railroad into Area

Several large properties were now operating in the Ubehebe: the Meyers; the Los Angeles Group; the Spears Group and Ulida; the Paddocks, Rooney, Wooden, and McConnell holdings; the Lakeview Group owned by Rhyolite people; the Joseph Cook (Crook) possessions, including the Wedding Stake; and the Valentine Group of fourteen claims. The newly-organized Ubehebe Mining Company, capitalized at one million shares, had bought the six Rio Pinto (Lost Spanish Mine) claims about ten miles from the new Saline City, plus the water right to Hunter's Springs.<sup>27</sup> The Sanger and Mairs properties, options on which were held by the Fitting Company, were some of the most notable claims in the district. Water was available several miles from the mines and was hauled in by wagon at \$1 per barrel.

The largest and best-known mine in the Ubehebe area, as well as the most highly developed, was Jack Salsberry's property, operated by his newly-formed Ubehebe Copper Mines and Smelter Company, which opened offices in Baltimore to promote company stock in the large Eastern commercial centers. The mine was actively supported by a variety of Eastern capitalists who made several inspection tours to the area over Salsberry's recently-completed road to Bonnie Claire. After one such jaunt the following comment was noted:

To many readers, Ubehebe is an unheard of camp, yet it is like many other sections in the state that are

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27. Bullfrog Miner, 12 April, 3 May 1907; Inyo Register, 25 April 1907. Local capitalists involved in creation of the Ubehebe Mining Co. on 13 May 1907 were Jos. A. Small, president (cashier, Cook Bank of Rhyolite); A. D. Whittier, vice-president (Rhyolite artist); Hon. L. O. Ray, treasurer (millionaire Bullfrog mine owner); F.B. Anderson, secretary (Rhyolite broker). The other directors were all Goldfield and Rhyolite men.

wonderfully rich in minerals but have not been brought especially to the attention of the people simply from the fact that those owning the properties are not looking for notoriety or endeavoring to boom their district. They are there to develop and mine their properties and secure substantial results to those interested in common with them and not for the purpose of advertising.<sup>28</sup>

Encouraged by the optimism and generosity of their supporters, Salsberry and Ray T. Baker, the two principals in the new company, conceived a plan of constructing a railroad to their mine from Bonnie Claire and of erecting a smelter there to reduce the ore before shipment. Persuading the prestigious banking and brokerage firm of Peard, Hill & Company of Baltimore, Maryland, to underwrite the bond issue for the project, work on a permanent survey of the proposed route was started with Salsberry receiving assurances that all bonds would be placed before 15 November and grading commenced shortly thereafter. The bonds were to be sold largely in Europe. It was planned that the forty-eight-mile-long standard-gauge track would head down Grapevine Canyon past the present site of Scotty's Castle, wind around Ubehebe Crater, and eventually reach Salsberry's mine near the northwest corner of the Ubehebe valley. The one million dollars worth of railroad bonds would be floated as a separate company to comply with the law, but in reality would belong to the Ubehebe Copper Mines and Smelter Company, thus greatly increasing its assets. The railroad would also haul ore for other mines in the area and thus hopefully soon become a regular dividend payer. Cost of the project was estimated

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28. Bullfrog Miner, 29 June 1907.

at \$800,000. In anticipation of the line's arrival, a well had already been sunk on Salsberry's new townsite to a depth of 155 feet, and as soon as water was reached, the site would be platted and the selling of lots would commence.<sup>29</sup>

Suggestions for opening up the area in another manner and from another direction included a proposed change in the Keeler-Skidoo wagon road route, bringing it through the Panamints further north at Townsend Pass and thus closer to northern mining properties. By fall 1907 the Kimball Bros.<sup>1</sup> Bullfrog Stage & Transfer Company started a regular weekly service to Ubehebe City, running the twenty-two miles to Grapevine the first day and the next forty miles on the second day. Corrals and buildings for the stage company were in process of erection at Bonnie Claire and Ubehebe, and stations were being established along the route. The stage leaving Ubehebe on Wednesday would arrive at Bonnie Claire in time to meet the Clark trains from Bullfrog and Goldfield. Four horses were to be used on the road, whose condition was described as "very bad."<sup>30</sup> Two survey crews were busy preparing townsite maps. Twenty tents were already on the ground, as were two saloons and a grocery store. Application for a post office was forwarded to Washington. Having failed in the well project, plans were being made to pipe water in from nearby

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29. Bullfrog Miner, 29 June 1907; Myrick, Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, p. 542; Inyo Register, 22 August 1907; Inyo Independent, 23 August, 30 August 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 14 September 1907; Inyo Register, 19 September 1907. Two articles found, obviously referring to Saline City, mention that the townsite of "Latimer" was being laid out in "Butte Valley." It should be noted that Illus. 5 in Levy, Historical Background Study, showing routes followed by the Death Valley Expedition in 1891 shows Racetrack Valley as Butte Valley, and this misconception was evidently perpetuated by some people. Inyo Register, 4 July 1907; Inyo Independent, 9 August 1907.

30. Bullfrog Miner, 21 September, 5 October 1907.

springs.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile Salsberry was sinking wells at various points along the Ubehebe wagon road for use by the big freight teams passing back and forth between Bonnie Claire and Ubehebe. He was also buying coal lands in southern Utah and taking options on others to provide coke for the smelter he proposed to erect near his Ubehebe Mine.<sup>32</sup>

f) Work Continues Despite Panic of 1907

The influx of Eastern and European visitors and investors to the area continued over the next several months, despite the hard times and depression leading up to the Panic of 1907. Although copper mining was still very strong in spite of the slump, a prophetic opinion was voiced at this time by a certain veteran desert prospector, Jim Titus, who ventured the observation that

It is the prevailing opinion that the predominant metal in the district is copper, and while some fine copper ore has been discovered on the surface, I think it will be found with deeper exploration, that gold, silver and lead will be the leading values.<sup>33</sup>

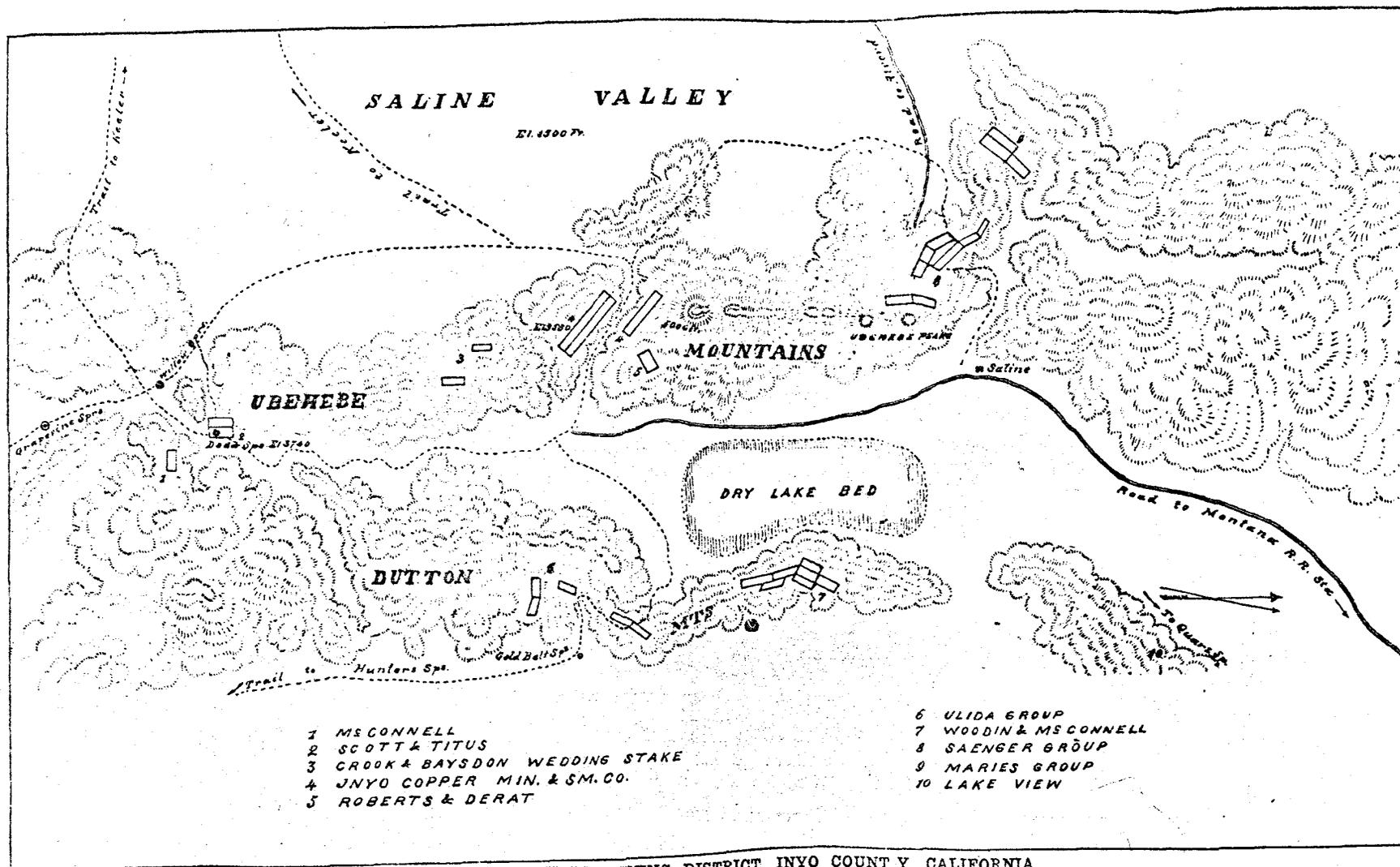
Properties in the area were being worked despite the tight money situation, with a force of about twenty-five men hoping to hold on until the financial situation across the country eased. In November Salsberry was reportedly working seventeen men on his company's claims, and expected to increase the force upon the

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31. Ibid.

32. Rhyolite Herald, 11 October 1907.

33. Bullfrog Miner, 12 October 1907.



STATE MINING BUREAU.

MAP OF THE UBEHEBE MINING DISTRICT, INYO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

Illustration 228.

Ubehebe Mining District, 1908.

From Aubury, Copper Resources of California (1908).

arrival of new machinery. Several other companies in the area also were employing good-sized forces on annual assessment work. The townsite, meanwhile, was undergoing a construction spurt; water was being hauled in in barrels from springs six miles away. Salsberry and some Rhyolite associates were also operating the Ubehebe Lead Mining Company, Ubehebe Sunset Copper Company, and the Ubehebe Contact Company, comprising a total of forty claims in the district. An Inyo Copper Company also existed.<sup>34</sup>

The bubbling optimism centering around the proposed Bonnie Claire & Ubehebe Railroad continued, although initial construction was still in abeyance until all bonds were sold. Despite the money-market depression that had delayed the start of development, it was promised that the route would be in operation before mid-summer of 1908. Arrangements were still reportedly being made to erect a fine hotel and several residences and business houses at the terminus of the line at Saline City. Salsberry never saw fulfillment of his dream, however, for the closing of banks and consequent termination of a ready money supply scuttled the project entirely. Although a camp of Saline evidently did exist for a short while, it never became the prosperous railhead and mining center envisioned by its founder.

g) Mining in Ubehebe Hampered by Isolation and Transportation Problems

A 1908 report on California's copper resources lists several claims as still active in the area (note that the western boundary of the Ubehebe Mining District was somewhat nebulous, extending west across the Saline Valley toward the east slope of the Inyo Mountains):

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34. Bullfrog Miner, 2 November, 14 December, 21 December 1907; Inyo Independent, 27 December 1907.

Valentine Group--fourteen claims halfway between Keeler and Ubehebe. Owned by I. Anthony and D. Pobst of Lone Pine.

Navajo Chief Claim--one-quarter mile south of Dodd (Dodd's) Spring. Owned by W. T. Grant of Olancha and George McConnell of Independence.

Eureka Claim--One-eighth of a mile south of Dodd Spring. Contained 80-foot shaft and 100 feet of drifts. Owned by Jacob Stininger [sic] of Tule Canyon. Originally discovered in 1880s.

Trail Claim--at Dodd's Springs. Owned by W. T. Grant and George McConnell.

Dodd's Springs Claim--on same ledge as Trail Claim. Owned by Grant and McConnell.

Ulida Group--eight prospects in Dutton Range. Owned by Spear Bros. and William L. Hunter of Lone Pine. Adjoined by Keeler, Olancha, and Spear claims on northeast.

Copper Knife--one-quarter mile east of Racetrack. Owned by Grant and McConnell.

Anton & Pobst Claims--five claims sixteen miles east of Keeler, with twenty-foot tunnel. Owned by John Anton and David Pobst of Lone Pine.

Silver Hill--seven miles east of Independence. Owned by J. C. Roeper of Independence.

Green Monster--continuation of Silver Hill prospect, with 300-foot tunnel and two crosscuts. Owned by D. C. Riddell of Gilroy, Ca.

Copper Tail--adjoined Green Monster. Owned by Roeper.

Copper Point--one mile northeast of Green Monster. Owned by Max Fausel.

Inyo Copper Mines and Smelter Co.--owner of nineteen claims at southern extremity of Ubehebe Mountain. Camp was on old Ubehebe trail and workings one-half mile east of Bonanza property. Claims on which the most work had been pushed so far were the Excelsior, Fairbury, Fairbanks No. 4, Ormonde, Ormonde No. 2, Kenilworth No. 1, Kenilworth No. 2, Pluton, and Ajax (Alta). R. G. Paddock of Keeler was managing the work. (Evidently this company's development did not ultimately amount to much.)

At the northern end of Ubehebe Mountain were the older claims on which work had just recently resumed. The Sanger Group, controlled by John Salsberry, consisted of the Tip Top; Star, at the base of Ubehebe Mountain; Copper King, one mile west of the Star and owned by W. A. Sanger of Big Pine; Prince Group, four claims also owned by Sanger & Son; Bluejay, on the east side of Saline Valley and owned by A. Mairs of Independence (its only recorded production was in 1915 when Mairs shipped copper and silver ore); Red Bird, owned by F. A. Mears of Big Pine; and the Good Luck Group owned by R. Lockhardt & Penrod of Rhyolite.

In the southern part of the Ubehebe Mountains were the Wedding Stake and Red Bear claims, owned by J. H. Crook and Sam Baysdon of Keeler. Other properties in the region were the Roberts & Derat and Woodin & McConnell claims; the Lake View Group of eight claims one-half mile from the Lost Burro and under the same ownership, carrying gold and copper and located on the east slope of Tin Mountain, owned by W. D. Blackman of Rhyolite and associates; and the Scott Group of twelve claims near Dodd

Spring, carrying gold, silver, lead, and copper, and owned by W. Scott and Mr. Titus.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the fact that improved machinery was facilitating mining operations in the early 1900s and that the high prices being paid for copper enabled the expenditure of more money in the search for it, the miners of the Ubehebe region were still hampered by several deficiencies: no ready water supply existed near many of the mines, which had to obtain water either from Dodd's or Grapevine springs or from a new well on Tin Mountain; access was still difficult, the auto road to Bonnie Claire being the only decent route other than a thirty-five-mile trail to Keeler and Darwin and a long, hot wagon route from Alvord; and no smelter had yet been built in the area. As a consequence, tons of ore had to be stockpiled on the dumps to await cheaper transportation, the wagon haul making mining of any but the best-grade ore highly impracticable. Despite the problems, extensive development continued through the winter of 1907 into early 1908, with the Watterson-Smith lead and silver mine, considered the biggest undeveloped property of its kind in California, promising so well that two loads of provisions were hauled in to support a complete summer campaign. Another Ubehebe Mining Company was incorporated in Bishop, California, with W.W. Patterson

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35. Aubury, Copper Resources of California (1908), pp. 301-10. Other properties that might have been included in the Sanger Group were the later Copper Queen No. 1, one-half mile north-northwest of Ubehebe Peak, the Copper Queen and Copper Queen No. 2, and the Bonanza (Hessen Clipper) filed on by George Lippincott, Jr., in 1951 and located on the road between Racetrack Valley and Saline Valley about 2½ miles from its junction with the road to the Lippincott Mine. According to McAllister the old Ubehebe pack-train trail from Owens Valley crossed the Bonanza property before intersecting the Racetrack Valley road to Bonnie Claire. Special Report 42, pp. 47-48. This report should definitely be studied for detailed information on other mines in the Ubehebe area.

(Watterson?) of Bishop as a principal in this company that owned 5½ claims in the Ubehebe area.<sup>36</sup>

Plans were still being formulated for a railroad connection with the area, the fact that none ever succeeded certainly not being due to a lack of effort on anyone's part. By the fall of 1908 the vast reduction works at Ely, Nevada, were in need of large quantities of lead ores for fluxing purposes, and it was suggested that this problem could be solved by projecting an Ely & Goldfield Railroad, financed by F. M. "Borax" Smith, C. B. Zabriskie, and others, to Goldfield and then southwest down the valley between the Magruder and Slate ranges, swinging around Tin Mountain and passing down its west slope into the Ubehebe region. Another plan four months later to open up the immense bodies of low-grade rock that could not be profitably shipped by wagon was to outline a route from Cuprite, north of Death Valley, through Lida to Silverpeak, with an extension of the line running into Ubehebe.<sup>37</sup>

None of these tentative propositions ever bore fruit, however, and the declining price of copper and lack of investment capital in the first decade of the twentieth century, in addition to

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36. Inyo Independent, 26 June, 28 August 1908; Mining World, 11 July 1908, p. 68. As far as can be determined, the Watterson-Smith property referred to is the Ubehebe Mine. Skidoo was also experiencing a lack of power and water at this time, but of the two areas, the Ubehebe promised to develop more rapidly because of the several companies with ample resources that were interested in her varied mineral assets of gold, silver, lead, and copper.

37. Inyo Register, 27 August, 3 September 1908; Rhyolite Herald, 9 September 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 16 January 1909; Rhyolite Herald, 24 February 1909.

the need for improved transportation facilities, precluded any extensive, large-scale development work in the area, although a large number of promising prospects were being systematically checked. Arlie Mairs, operator of the Blue Jay copper claims only twelve miles from the loading terminus of the thirteen-mile-long Saline Valley salt tramway, was solving his transportation problems by 1914 by shipping his ore via that contrivance. W. W. Watterson and Archie Farrington, operating the Ubehebe Mine, approached the problem from a different angle. Realizing that the transportation of ore by animal power would never be economically profitable, they decided to employ a ball-tread auto tractor provided by the Yuba Construction Company of Marysville for four trial trips at company expense. The distillate-burning engine would haul ore wagons loaded as trailers over the fifty miles to the Tonopah & Tidewater station at Bonnie Claire in a four-day round trip.

Such a tractor was envisioned as being more economical than trucks for hauling large amounts of ore because the latter required a separate truck and driver for each load and because often unloading over bad stretches or unusually high grades was necessary. The tractor, on the other hand, could haul loaded wagons over these difficult stretches one at a time with no unloading. It carried no load on its own wheels except the engine and a driver, making the Caterpillar-type machine so lightweight that it could be turned in a narrow road at sharper angles than trucks, which were often too top-heavy and unsafe on narrow roads with hard grades.<sup>38</sup>

h) Variety of Metals and Nonmetals Contribute to Ubehebe's Production Record

By 1916 several silver claims in the vicinity were still being worked, but tungsten strikes were also being made,

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38. Inyo Register, 20 October 1915; Engineering and Mining Journal, 13 November 1915, p. 818.

having been first discovered on the dumps of old copper prospects. Most of these were located south of the Racetrack in the area of Dodd and Goldbelt springs. Because of low prices for this commodity around 1920, the tungsten mines were shut down. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Ubehebe Mine was one of the most active mining operations, with part of it, the Butte Claim, being a principal lead producer in 1930.<sup>39</sup>

Recent copper activity in the region has occurred only at the Sally Ann Mine near the playa, but no production resulted. The principal metallic deposits in the area are the lead-silver-zinc properties stretching from the Ubehebe Mine in the northern section to the Shirley Ann Mine near Big Dodd Spring. Nonmetallic occurrences include, besides asbestos, four talc lodes (Homestake, Quackenbush, Keeler, and Ubehebe) whose reserves are thought to be substantial but whose productivity is limited by their remoteness.

Miners and prospectors were first attracted to the Ubehebe area in the late 1800s by the presence of copper ore, but it soon became evident that the isolation of the deposits made them almost impossible to work profitably. Exact figures on early production of the metal are difficult to determine because of the scanty and nebulous descriptions of these first properties. Many small mines probably kept no systematic records because they maintained no steady production. Because the only road adequate for shipping ore from the Ubehebe led to the railroad at Bonnie Claire, Nevada, most material went there, where it was often

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39. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 125; Mining Journal, 30 January 1930, p. 8.

combined with Nevada ores, a practice tending to cloud the Ubehebe's actual production record. Also hampering the determination of productivity from each site was the tendency of early shippers to neglect to state the individual sources of the ore they moved. The first actual recorded production from the area was from the Ubehebe Mine, which shipped 491 ozs. of silver in 1908. From that year up to 1951 the metallic content of 4,788 tons of ore mined from the Ubehebe Peak area could be broken down as follows: 332 ozs. gold; 44,729 ozs. silver; 120,180 lbs. copper; 2,657,559 lbs. lead; 164,959 lbs. zinc. Annual lead production from the region has been less than 145,000 lbs. The annual copper production since 1930 has been under 1,000 lbs., while silver production usually did not exceed 3,700 ozs. a year. Gold has been recovered almost entirely from the Lost Burro Mine. The record for longest productivity in the area is held by the Ubehebe Mine, although it experienced a quiet period between 1931 and 1946, while the Lippincott Lead Mine has undergone the most continuous mining in recent years, from 1938 to 1952.<sup>40</sup>

i) Other Ubehebe Properties

The following is a list of a few other Ubehebe area properties not specifically mentioned earlier. This list is by no means a complete summary of all mining activity in the area:

Red Bell Group--four claims owned by Charles del Bondio and associates in the vicinity of the Racetrack playa. Bullfrog Miner, 15 June 1907.

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40. The above is based on data found in McAllister, Special Report 42, pp. 17-21.

B & B Group--gold and copper claims in the Goldbelt Spring section, owned by Len P. McGarry and Rhyolite associates. Bullfrog Miner, 14 September 1907.

Big Gun Mine--near Racetrack, owned by George McConnell. Inyo Independent, 29 November 1907.

Emerald Group--copper and lead claims near Wedding Stake, owned by J. P. Hughes. Bullfrog Miner, 1 February 1908.

Randolph--four miles from Lost Burro Mine and adjoining Racetrack, owned by McConnell, Dr. Woodin, and W. Grant. Bullfrog Miner, 20 February 1909.

Raven Mine--lead and silver property five miles north of Dodd Spring, owned by J. Crook and A. Farrington. Idle in 1926. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 102; Journal of Mines and Geology 22 (October 1926):496.

Alvord Group--tungsten claims five miles west of Goldbelt Spring. Located by William Elliot and Ray and Ross Spear of Lone Pine in 1916. No production and little development. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 127; Journal of Mines and Geology 37 (April 1941):310.

Monarch Mine--tungsten claim between Dodd Spring and Goldbelt Spring, located in 1915 by Monarch Tungsten Co. of Denver. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 127.

Butte Group--six claims midway between the Racetrack and Dodd Spring. Assessment work only. Owned by R.C. Spear, E.L. Spear, and Hunter of Lone Pine. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 67.

Settle Up Group--five miles north of Dodd Spring, idle in 1926. Report 22 of the State Mineralogist 22 (October 1926).

Sally Ann Mine--copper mine on west slope of range east of Racetrack playa. Five lode claims owned by James Arnold, Orval Huffman, and Sally Ann Smith of Compton, Ca. Worked late 1947 to mid-1948. Copper deposit known in 1905 and as early as 1902 when referred to as Copper Knife Mine. Mine camp consisted of cabin and two tent frames at edge of playa. Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):37; McAllister, Special Report 42, pp. 46-47.

Blue Boy Group--six unpatented lode claims within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of east side of Racetrack on steep slope. Probably dates from around turn of century. Slight development. Walter Gould, "Mineral Report for the Blue Boy, Blue Boy #1, Blue Boy #2, Blue Boy No. 3, Copper King, and Homestake Lode Mining Claims in Death Valley National Monument, California, 13 June 1978," p. 1.

Homestake--about one to two miles south of Racetrack on road to Lippincott Lead Mine. Located 1934. Staked for talc. Gould, "Mineral Report," pp. 1, 3.

Tin Mountain and White Top Mountain--some copper prospecting activity was taking place on Tin Mtn. by 1908 on the property of John Miller, one of the early locators in the district. In the 1940s Huntley Industrial Minerals, Inc., owned asbestos property about three miles south of Tin Mountain in the general area of the prospects shown just northeast of Burro Spring on the Tin Mountain USGS quad. In the early 1960s roads had been bulldozed to several non-producing mines in the area worked by weekend prospectors. Anderson Minerals, Inc., at that time claimed placer locations in the Tin Mountain area and near Burro Spring and was intending to develop fluorspar. The Lawrence Asbestos and

Illustration 230.

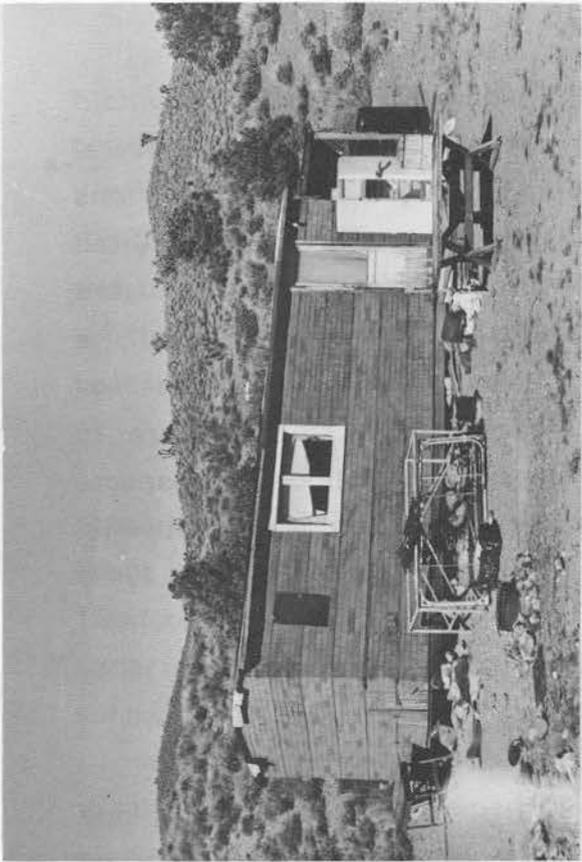
Tin Mountain mining area.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, UNLV, 1973.

Illustration 229.

Miner's cabin in White Top Mountain area.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



Fluorspar claims located on the north slope of White Top Mountain two miles northeast of Burro Spring have been explored by several lessees over the years, but have produced only a few hundred tons of asbestos and fluorspar. Much scarring in the area has resulted from dozer prospecting and road building. The property consisted of three fluorspar claims, thirty-two asbestos claims, and a millsite under location by R.H. Lawrence of Mojave. In 1970s the lessees proposed to develop the fluorspar deposits and ship the ore to Barstow via truck. Today the area consists of bulldozed prospects and a miner's shack. Wright H. Huntley, pres., Huntley Industrial Minerals, Inc., to T.R. Goodwin, Supt., DEVA NM, 27 July 1949; District Ranger, Grapevine, to Chief Ranger and Supt., DEVA NM, 15 October 1963; Supt., DEVA NM, to Dir., WRO, 1 April 1971; LCS Survey by Henry Law and Bill Tweed, 3 December 1975.

Ubehebe Peak--M.S.&W., Inc., of Bishop located Jarosite lode mining group of 111 claims on west slope of peak in late 1960s or early 1970s. Samples taken reportedly showed high copper and molybdenum values. It was intended to diamond drill the property. Supt., DEVA NM, to Dir., WRO, 1 April 1971.

j) Sites

(1) Ulida Mine and Ulida Flat Site

(a) History

Whether or not the Ulida Mine, situated in the Dutton Range about three miles north of Hunter Mountain, is the site of W.L. Hunter's original discovery that opened up the Ubehebe area to mining has not been conclusively determined by this writer. McAllister maintains that it is, and places the mine's discovery date at 1875 or before. According to observations made by Lt. Rogers Birnie, Jr., during his 1875 survey of the Death Valley region, eight locations had been filed in the Ubehebe area by Hunter in that year, and whether by

coincidence or not the Ulida Group did initially encompass eight prospects: the Ulida, Sorbia, Sardine, H.M. Stanley, Kabba Riga, Virginia, Maryland, and Hunter. A 1906 notice states that the Hunter & Spear Mines "were the first found [in the Ubehebe area] and are comparatively the best developed. . . ."41 A later 1907 article, however, stated the property had been located only twenty-five years earlier.42

In partnership with the Spear brothers by 1902, Hunter had opened up the large outcroppings on the property, which also yielded gold and silver, by means of two 150-foot-long tunnels, one above the other, and had accomplished some minor stoping. Around 400 tons of ore were recovered, hand sorted, and packed on mules the seven or so miles to the Keeler wagon road over which they were hauled to town and then shipped to the smelter. The Spearses are reported to have shipped out sixty tons of ore returning gold and copper values of \$600 a ton.43 Upon Hunter's death in 1902, Reuben Cook Spear acquired the property.

The mine evidently remained idle for the next four years or so, its remoteness making it unprofitable to work. Then a Salt Lake City group, composed of Samuel A. King, Alfred Mikesell, Raymond Ray, and a Mr. Dalton of New York, rediscovered it and procured an option on twenty-one claims. Ore

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41. McAllister, Special Report 42, pp. 17, 49; Inyo Register, 2 August 1906.

42. Inyo Register, 7 March 1907.

43. Aubury, Copper Resources of California (1902), p. 246; Bullfrog Miner, 18 January 1908; Saga of Inyo County, pp. 130-31.

with a high gold and silver showing as well as substantial copper values was developed.<sup>44</sup> Ray and Mikesell subsequently turned their option over to the firm of King (Judge William H.), Burton, and King (Samuel A.), who in 1907 sold the mine for a cash consideration in the neighborhood of \$45,000 to \$55,000 plus a sizable amount of stock shares in the Ulida Copper Company, incorporated for \$5,000,000 by New York and Salt Lake City capitalists. The mine assets now consisted of a seven-foot vein of ore averaging 14% copper and from \$3 to \$10 in gold. Much iron was present in the ore, making it ideal for smelting.<sup>45</sup>

In April 1907 the Ulida was described as the "queen bee of the camp [Ubehebe],"<sup>46</sup> the property's development now being guided by the Ulida Copper Company, which immediately applied for 100 inches of water from Hunter Ranch Creek to be diverted to their property in the Ubehebe Mining District by gravity force.<sup>47</sup> In June development work at the mine was proceeding so satisfactorily that a sign was said to be hanging out on the property advertising "Forty Men Wanted." The adjoining Los Angeles Copper Group had also been incorporated into the company's holdings and was opened up at this time.<sup>48</sup>

For the next few months a large force of men kept busy performing assessment work and it was intended

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44. Bullfrog Miner, 5 October 1906.

45. Inyo Register, 7 March 1907.

46. Bullfrog Miner, 19 April 1907.

47. Notice of Water Location, dated 26 May 1907, in Inyo Co., Land and Water Claims, Mill Sites, Book B, p. 84.

48. Bullfrog Miner, 15 June, 22 June 1907.

to keep at least five men working in the tunnel all winter. At a distance of about 250 feet in, a great strike in a blind lead was encountered, producing ore samples running 35% copper and \$100 in gold. By March 1908 the strike on the Ulida ledge was reported as carrying values up to 60% copper, \$14 in gold, and over 200 ozs. in silver to the ton.<sup>49</sup> Work was continuing to crosscut the vein and drift with it to the main contact.

In the summer of 1908 one of the groups visiting the Ubehebe area over the new Bonnie Claire road was a party consisting of Robert Wood, a London mining expert for the Ulida Copper Company; J.H. Dalton of Boston, president of the company; Samuel A. King of Salt Lake City, a company director; and R.C. Spear of Lone Pine. The company had incurred some indebtedness that it was now paying off, and under the supervision of a new local manager the development work was expected to become more extensive in a short while. Over six thousand dollars had already been expended in the mine by the company, which was sure this would evolve into one of the West's great copper properties.<sup>50</sup>

In 1912 Reuben Spear and his son Bev worked some outcroppings a few miles above the Ulida tunnel, hauling the ore by muleback the few miles to the wagon road to Keeler. In 1916 notice was printed of the discovery of tungsten by the Spear brothers on their Ubehebe copper property. Whether this refers to the Ulida Mine is not known. From here on,

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49. Ibid., 18 January 1908; Inyo Register, 12 March 1908. These figures were also reported as 75.9% copper, 280 ozs. in silver, and \$18 in gold by the Inyo Register, 2 April 1908.

50. Inyo Register, 2 April 1908; Inyo Independent, 28 August 1908.

information on the property is scanty. P.E. Day and Cliff Palmer relocated the Ulida as the Morning Star Mine in 1935, and four years later W.G. Walker filed on it as the Walker Mine. From 1947 to 1949 Edna Horstmeier kept up assessment work on the claim.<sup>51</sup>

(b) Present Status

i) Ulida Flat Site

A very faint set of tracks leads from the Hidden Valley road west across Ulida Flat to the range of hills bordering its western edge. Here, near the mouth of the narrow gully leading up to the Ulida Mine, are low stone foundation walls built into the hillside. They support leveled platform areas on which tents were probably erected. Several tin cans and 1½-inch-diameter metal rods litter the site, on which purple (light and dark) glass can be found. Also seen were dark brown bottle fragments and parts of a typical turn-of-the-century light-blue glass medicine bottle.

ii) Ulida Mine

The mine adits are located at the top of the gully directly above the Ulida Flat Site at an elevation of about 5,600 feet and are reached by a steep and rugged ½-mile burro trail. Tumbling down the ravine in the immediate vicinity of the mine are rusty tin cans of assorted sizes. The workings consist of a main adit entrance with nearby waste dump, and another caved-in adit with dump on the hillside immediately above. The main adit entrance is particularly striking because the rock face around the wooden entrance door is a vivid greenish-blue color, while the piles of ore stacked up near the entrance are of this same brilliant hue. In front of the door and north of the tram

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51. Saga of Inyo County, p. 131; Inyo Register, 18 May 1916; McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 49.



Illustration 231.

Ulida Flat Site, to northwest.

Illustration 233.

Main adit entrance, Ulida Mine. Vertical shaft to right near posts.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 232.

Larger of two stone smelters at Ulida Mine.



tracks is a shallow vertical shaft only about twenty feet deep. Assessment notices are bolted to the adit entrance door.

Immediately downhill from the mine are three stone items: furthest east are the ruins of what appears to be a large, elliptical-shaped oven or smelter, about nine feet in diameter and with remaining rock walls about 4½ feet high. Forty feet west of this toward the mine and at the base of the main waste dump is another smaller structure of the same type, only about five feet in diameter. This also appears to be a smelter operation. Between these two structures is a stone forge 3 feet high and 3½ feet long. A small burro shoe was found on one of its edges.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

i) Ulida Flat Site

It is this writer's belief that the Ulida Flat tent site was probably inhabited by miners working the Ulida Mine and possibly others in the vicinity that adjoined the Ulida holdings. According to newspaper articles of the early 1900s several people were working in the area on the same lead, the Ulida vein being very clearly defined for a distance of at least three miles. The site appears to be large enough to hold about three tents. It will be incorporated into the Ulida Mine National Register nomination.

ii) Ulida Mine

The Ulida Mine, one of the oldest mines in the vicinity, was one of the early claims, if not the first, filed on by Hunter and one whose development, along with that of other properties in the district, eventually resulted in formation of the Ubehebe Mining District. For this reason and because of the presence of two early stone smelters on the site and

an associated tent camp nearby, this property is considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register as being of local significance.

(2) Goldbelt (Gold Belt) Spring and Mining District

(a) History

First occupants of the Goldbelt Spring area were probably Saline Valley Panamint Indians, one seven-member family reportedly appropriating the site as a winter village despite its relatively high elevation.<sup>52</sup> The initial mineral discovery that precipitated a small rush to the neighborhood was that of free gold made by Shorty Harris in the closing months of 1904. Utilizing the same route followed into the Ubehebe region--via Willow Spring to Surveyor's Well and then up Cottonwood Canyon--eager prospectors staked the first locations on the northeast slope of Hunter Mountain. Access to the area could also be gained over a forty-mile trail from Keeler via Lee Landing (Lee Pump), skirting Hunter's Ranch, and then heading northeast to the new camp. Harris, L.P. McGarry, E.G. Padgett (Pegot or Paggett), Joseph Simpson, and W.D. Frey were credited with the first strikes.

Development of the area started immediately and culminated the following January in establishment of the Gold Belt Mining District, with A.V. Carpenter as recorder, and embracing the territory stretching from the Ubehebe District on the west eastward to the north arm of Death Valley and from Tin Mountain south to Cottonwood Canyon. Ledges averaging four feet in width and containing a high grade of free-milling ore in addition to copper stains were the source of this perceived wealth. Samples

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52. Wallace, Archaeological Overview, p. 59.

taken to town returned assays of \$8 to \$176 in gold, plus smaller silver values. The presence of fuel and water in abundance was considered extremely conducive to mining operations. One early location was referred to as the Gold Nugget Group, assaying from \$38 to \$240 in gold, but neither this nor any of the other reported seventy claims in the district received any extensive development work at this time. Nonetheless plans for a townsite were already forging ahead.<sup>53</sup>

In February 1905 it was stated that sufficient capital had been secured to thoroughly explore the district, this support probably having been obtained from the San Francisco parties who bonded the Goldbelt mines about that time.<sup>54</sup> No information has been found relative to the ultimate extent of the Gold Belt Mining District camp, nor has its exact location been determined. By 1905 the camp was described as abandoned, the only work in the area having been performed on thin veins and lenses.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the obvious slackening of mining activity in the Goldbelt area, a few of the original locators stuck fast to their claims, confident that a great future yet lay ahead if the extreme hardships imposed by lack of transportation facilities and insufficient working capital could be overcome. Len P. McGarry, for one, general manager of the Bullfrog West Extension, continued assessment work on his claims, which were

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53. Inyo Independent, 30 December 1904; Inyo Register, 12 January 1905; Inyo Independent, 20 January 1905.

54. Inyo Independent, 3 February, 24 March 1905.

55. Sydney H. Ball, "Notes on ore deposits of southwestern Nevada and eastern California," in Contributions to Economic Geology (1905), USGS Bulletin No. 285 (Washington: GPO, 1906), p. 73.

showing gold values of \$10 to \$150 and as high as 36% copper content, at least through 1910.<sup>56</sup> Only a scattering of notices for new claims in the vicinity exist for the next few years. Most information concerns the B & B Group, about ten miles south of Salsberry's camp, and owned by McGarry, some Rhyolite associates, and W.S. Ball, B.T. Godfrey, and H.W. Eichbaum. These men were also interested together in twenty-four other locations in the area, mostly situated about twelve miles southeast of Salsberry's headquarters. In 1907 the B & B contained a shaft and an approximately 200-foot-long crosscut tunnel intended to reach the main ledge, which showed assays from \$6 to \$622 at a depth of 18 feet. Another promising group was the Snowbound, carrying 12% copper values.<sup>57</sup> At the start of 1910 the B & B had been developed with a 280-foot tunnel and was still achieving high gold assays of \$620. The Snowbound was also receiving annual assessment work, the two properties now owned by Annetta Rittenhouse of Los Angeles, H.W. Eichbaum of Venice, L.P. McGarry of Pioneer, and W.S. Ball of Rhyolite.<sup>58</sup>

A revival of sorts hit the area around 1916 with the commencement of tungsten mining encouraged by its acceleration in price at the outbreak of World War I. Again it was Shorty Harris who first found the ore near Marble Canyon, about one mile southeast of Goldbelt Spring, shipping out a few hundred pounds worth about \$1,500 in early March. Subsequent locations were centered in the region south of the Racetrack near Dodd and

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56. Bullfrog Miner, 11 January 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 22 January 1910.

57. Bullfrog Miner, 3 May, 14 September 1907; 3 October 1908.

58. Rhyolite Herald, 1 January, 22 January 1910.

Goldbelt springs. Keeler was the closest shipping point, but though the route from Keeler to Lee Pump was now fit for auto traffic, only a trail still led from there to the mine locations.<sup>59</sup> In 1941 the Shorty Harris Tungsten Mine, composed of two claims three miles south of Goldbelt Spring and ten miles east of Dodd Spring, was owned by Bert Hunter of Olancho and E.G. Mason of Los Angeles. The only other data found on this gold and tungsten property concerns its purchase by William C. Thompson of San Fernando, California, who also owned the Saddle Rock Group near Skidoo and the Lost Burro Mine in the Ubehebe. New access roads had by now opened up the previously untapped property, and new machinery had been purchased for its immediate exploitation.<sup>60</sup> Either no production or only a very small amount resulted from these efforts in open cuts and a twenty-foot adit.

From the 1940s through the 1960s various small talc and other mineral operations existed in the Goldbelt area, but they were only sporadically active. The closest talc property whose workers might have resided at the camp site near the spring is the Quackenbush, but it is also possible that operators of the Calmet #1 through #27 wollastonite claims, about one-half mile northwest of the spring and owned by U.S. Minerals, occupied some of the cabins. This latter operation was envisioned as eventually developing into an open pit operation. Its thirty-one unpatented claims were located from 1959 on, and the #1 to #23 claims were worked as late as 1976 by Joe Ostrenger of San Fernando. In the 1960s the Goldbelt Spring camp was under lease

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59. Inyo Register, 6 April 1916; Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 125.

60. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 37 (October 1941):574. Mining Journal, 30 July 1945, p. 20.



Illustration 234.

Milk cow in garden of Goldbelt Spring community. 1959.

Photo by Wm. C. Bullard and Dan Farrel,  
courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 235.

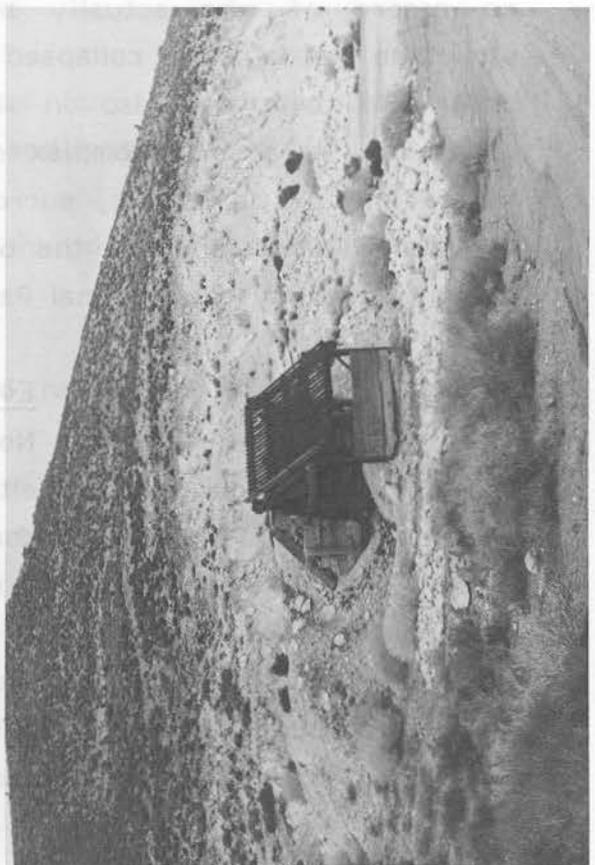
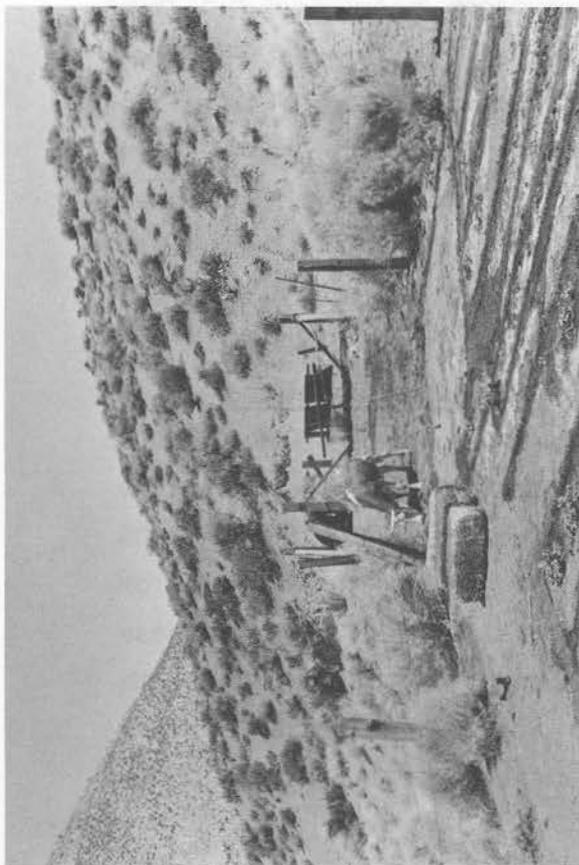
View of Goldbelt Spring community, looking southwesterly.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 236.

Loading or sorting structure, Calmet Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



to Sierra Talc, a company involved in exploration and development of several old claims in the surrounding area. (According to Belden, Mines of Death Valley, p. 65, Goldbelt Spring was an active mining camp in the 1960s.) The mill site was later obtained by William B. Grantham who quitclaimed it to Victor Materials Company, the present claimant.

(b) Present Status

Goldbelt Spring is located about 4½ airline miles northeast of Hunter Mountain at the head of Marble Canyon, the northern branch of Cottonwood Canyon. The presence of this valuable water source and its rather sheltered location made the site a natural spot for a small settlement. Today the ruins of what was once a moderately extensive mining community rest in the gully running from the spring to Marble Canyon. From their architectural style (or lack thereof) and meager furnishings, the three extant houses appear to date from no earlier than the 1930s or 1940s and probably have been occupied by talc miners, although no record of who actually built them has been found. One structure has already collapsed and another one burned. A root cellar and privy are also on site. Up toward the spring, to the southwest, is a small complex of fencing and corrals and a metal water tank. The spring, surrounded by a grove of rose bushes, lies about 100 feet above the bottom of the wash and is currently being utilized by the National Park Service as a burro trap.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

No evidence of an early 1900s mining camp was found on the Goldbelt Spring site, the houses there now appearing to be of a later construction date. Because the 1905 Gold Belt Mining District saw little actual production or development, it is doubtful that permanent structures such as these were built at that time. The few talc camps existing within Death Valley National Monument will take on added importance as their numbers dwindle. Never constructed with long-term habitation in

mind, their plywood walls and composition paper roofs fall easy victim to vandalism, fire, and natural weathering. The Ibez Hills talc mines in the southern part of the valley, in contrast to those in the Goldbelt area, possess greater production records, documented histories, and more physical remains of educational and interpretive value on site. For these reasons, the residential areas associated with them, such as the extensive one at Ibez Spring, are important also and should be accorded treatment of benign neglect.

Despite a lack of detailed information on both the Gold Belt Mining District and the Goldbelt Spring mining camp, it is recommended by the writer that the latter merits preservation as a representative type-specimen of a talc camp, displaying sufficient integrity of location, setting, and materials to provide an accurate portrayal of the types of structures and methods of construction typical of communities occupied by talc miners in the Death Valley region during the 1940s through the 1960s. Reconstruction attempts at the Goldbelt Spring site are not advisable for several reasons:

1. the history of the site as far as is known does not warrant such an expenditure of time and money;
2. no photographs have been found showing the community's original appearance;
3. adequate supervision could not be maintained over the restored area; and,
4. the site's remoteness and consequent low visitation rate do not justify the expenses involved.

It is recommended by this writer that the Goldbelt Spring camp be preserved and efforts made periodically to arrest deterioration of the remaining structures. For those visitors who venture into this secluded corner of the monument, it is an eye-opening experience to suddenly discover this small community nestled in a lonely wash in the middle of such solitude. Under these conditions it is impossible not to attempt to visualize what life would have been like here and what sacrifices were made by those talc miners and their families who lived here in such isolation during comparatively modern times.

(3) Ubehebe Mine

(a) History

The Ubehebe Lead Mine actually began operations as a copper property, but its activities were somewhat overshadowed in the early newspaper accounts of mining in the area by those on the immensely wealthy and highly publicized copper properties of Jack Salsberry that lay nearby. The Butte Nos. 6-10 and West Extension Butte No. 3 were actually located in late 1906 through 1908, while the nearby Copper Bell Claim Group was not officially recorded until the late 1920s and early 1940s. Initial accounts of the property did not begin to appear until around the fall of 1907 when it was mentioned that "Messrs. Smith and Watterson of the Inyo County bank [Bishop] have sent in supplies and are about to begin operations on an extensive scale."<sup>61</sup>

In the course of pursuing annual assessment work on their claims, located one mile northwest of the

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61. Inyo Register, 24 October 1907.

new town of "Ubehebe," one of the owners picked up quite by chance a large rock sample that proved to be galena; further investigation uncovered a four-foot solid ledge of this ore. Immediately the efforts of the eight men employed on the property were divided, four being put to work on the copper veins and four on development of the new galena ledge. During the assessment work, forty tons of lead ore were removed, running about \$60 in silver per ton, a strike momentarily topping Salsberry's mineral showings.<sup>62</sup>

The Watterson stope was the first of five ore bodies opened up on the property, sometime after 1906, ultimately producing 700 to 800 tons of high-grade ore that was shipped to smelters. By February 1908 the eight-foot solid vein of lead was perceived to run entirely through the mountain, and was accordingly being opened up with drifts on both the Saline and Racetrack valley sides, making this one of the biggest and most-promising lead prospects in the district. Already over 250 tons of ore were on the dumps awaiting shipment.<sup>63</sup>

In March 1908 Archibald Farrington bought a one-third interest in the property for \$6,000, while the other two partners, Smith and Watterson, were considering plans for construction of a road across the mountain range from the west to enable hauling of ore from the mine and salt from the Saline Valley deposits to Bonnie Claire. The new partnership incorporated as the Ubehebe Lead Mines Company, whose development work at the mine so far consisted primarily of one twenty-five-foot tunnel,

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62. Ibid., 7 November 1907; Inyo Independent, 27 December 1907. These claims were owned by W.W. Watterson, M.Q. Watterson, and Eugene E. Smith. Inyo Register, 30 January 1908.

63. Herbert N. Witt, M.E., "Preliminary Report on the Ubehebe Lead Mine, Inyo County, California," March 1949, p. 3; Bullfrog Miner, 15 February 1908.

all in ore, with a face showing of 70% lead and a high silver content. Two shifts were removing ten tons a day that were then teamed to the railhead at Bonnie Claire.<sup>64</sup>

A summer-long campaign on the property was planned, and in preparation for the isolated stay, two teams hauled 26,000 pounds of grain, groceries, and mining supplies to the site to sustain the crew during the long months ahead. A contract was also let at this time for hauling the ore recovered during the winter to the railroad at Bonnie Claire. In July it was reported that Watterson and his associates had organized the Ubehebe Mining Company to operate a group of 5½ claims on which a tunnel had been excavated extending fifty feet and from which 1,000 tons of shipping ore were now available.<sup>65</sup> A month later the property was described as "easily the biggest undeveloped property of the kind in California."<sup>66</sup> A trial shipment of ore from the Watterson property sent to a Salt Lake City smelter at this time returned only \$40 a ton on the average. This was not considered pay ore because of the long, time-consuming trip involved in getting the ore to Cuprite, north of Bonnie Claire and over sixty miles away. According to McAllister the first recorded production from property in the Ubehebe District was of silver from the Ubehebe Mine in 1908.<sup>67</sup>

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64. Inyo Register, 2 April 1908; 9 April 1908.

65. Mining World, 11 July 1908, p. 68. The mining journals were often delayed in their reporting of mining news, and it is assumed by the writer that this reference does not imply the formation of another later partnership. The discrepancy in company names is by no means unusual.

66. Inyo Independent, 28 August 1908.

67. Special Report 42, p. 4.

For the next few years mostly assessment work was performed on the claims, and no startling discoveries were recorded. Development was primarily impeded by lack of water and other hardships associated with desert prospecting. In an attempt to solve the transportation problem, Watterson and Farrington made an agreement with a Frank A. Campbell to transport ores from the district by means of a Yuba ball-tread tractor, beginning with an initial trial run of 500 tons of ore. The outcome of this novel experiment was eagerly awaited by other mine owners in the area who were tired of the inadequacies of an animal-powered transportation system. Because it had heretofore not been worthwhile to perform extended development work, the depth of ore bodies in the Ubehebe Mine was not known, but the surface showings were immensely promising.<sup>68</sup>

The auto-tractor project turned out well, and in March 1916 Campbell was not only still hauling lead ore in the Ubehebe region, but manganese as well from Owl Holes to Riggs across the southern part of Death Valley. Production from the Ubehebe Mine now was sporadic, but reached a peak in 1916 when 254 tons of ore running 15% lead were shipped.<sup>69</sup> By 1917 development at the mine consisted of two tunnels, an upper one 60 feet long and a lower one 100 feet long, connected by a fifty-foot winze. Two ten-ton-capacity Yuba tractors still transported the ore to Bonnie Claire in a fifty-two-hour round trip at a cost of \$8 per

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68. Inyo Register, 21 October 1915; Engineering and Mining Journal, 13 November 1915, p. 818.

69. Inyo Register, 23 March 1916; Black, "Mineral Report for the Ubehebe Lead Mine," p. 1.

ton. By April the mine's three employees had produced 200 tons of 60% lead ore.<sup>70</sup>

The Copper Bell property, along with the Copper Queen-Blue Jay and Bonanza-Hessen Clipper, shipped a few tons of copper from 1916 to 1918 when prices were high for this commodity. The deposits in this mine were fairly high-grade, and much of the copper production reported from the Ubehebe Mine (over 15,000 lbs.) probably actually came from the Copper Bell workings, 1,000 feet east of the Ubehebe Mine on a southwest-facing hillside and controlled by the same owners.<sup>71</sup>

During the fall of 1920 some lead-silver-copper claims said to have been owned for many years by Arch Farrington were sold to the Arrowhead Rico Company of Tonopah for \$125,000. A small crew went to work, primarily in an upper and lower tunnel. Fifty tons of ore had been sacked by January 1921 and it was estimated that three truckloads of ore would be sent to Salt Lake City monthly. The transportation cost would be \$15 a ton to Bonnie Claire and \$12 per ton over the railroad to the smelter. Sol Camp was installed as manager of the mine, which closed with a drop in lead prices.<sup>72</sup>

In 1922 W.W. and M.Q. Watterson and spouses deeded to Archibald Farrington and J.H. Crook of Tonopah all their interests in the Smith-Watterson-Farrington mines. This

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70. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Fifteenth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist (1917), p. 109; Smith, Mineral Resources, p. 24.

71. McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 47.

72. Inyo Independent, 16 October 1920, 8 January 1921.

transaction included the Butte Nos. 7-10, West Extension Butte No. 3, west half of Butte No. 6, Copper Bell No. 1, Copper Bell, and other properties. Crook and Farrington then deeded a one-third interest in these claims, plus the Copper Bell Nos. 4-6, to Charles E. Knox; smaller interests in these were later deeded to the Montana-Tonopah Mines Company and to Andy McCormack.<sup>73</sup>

The next step in the Ubehebe Mine's development was leasing of the property to Fred Dahlstrom and the Finkel brothers of Tonopah, Nevada, in 1928. The Snyder stope was opened about this time and turned out to be a very profitable venture. After paying \$15 a ton transportation costs, the lessees netted \$55,453 from twenty-five carloads of lead carbonate shipped to the U.S. Smelting, Refining and Mining Company at Salt Lake City. The ore averaged about 64% lead, 17 ozs. silver, 70¢ gold, and 1.7% zinc, and because of its adaptability for flux, gained for its shippers an additional \$1 to \$3 per ton bonus. The maximum annual recorded production of lead and silver for mines in the Ubehebe area in 1928 was attained by the Ubehebe Mine, which produced 1,120,343 lbs. of lead, 1,523 lbs. of copper, 15,222 ozs. of silver, and 17 ozs. of gold.<sup>74</sup>

Lead and silver mining was much less active in 1929 when lead prices dropped. The California lead output was down about 600,000 pounds from the previous year, and the number of miscellaneous shippers in Inyo County had vastly

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73. Ibid., 7 October 1922; 24 November 1923; 26 January 1924; 24 January 1925.

74. Mining Journal, 15 March 1928, p. 29; Earl B. Young (Combined Metals Reduction Co.), to E.H. Snyder, 21 May 1946; McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 4; Black, "Mineral Report for the Ubehebe Lead Mine," p. 2.

decreased. Principal lead producers listed in the Ubehebe District were the Estelle (?) and Butte. In these later years the Ubehebe Mine's production varied from 22 tons in 1929 to 379 tons in 1951.<sup>75</sup> Most development work was done prior to 1930. The Tramway stope was not mined until the tramway was installed, and then is said to have produced nine carloads for the lessees, one of which netted over \$5,000. The No. 4 stope, discovered in 1930 and completely gutted by lessees after that, contained small quantities of molybdenum. Successive lessees after 1930 mostly enlarged the old stopes and cleaned them out in the search for shipping ore.<sup>76</sup> In 1937 Sol Camp returned to the Ubehebe Mine in an attempt to revamp mining operations because of a rise in lead prices. A contract was let to haul the ore to Death Valley Junction for shipment over the Tonopah & Tidewater to the smelter at Murray, Utah.

The Archie Farrington Estate owned the property in 1938, but the nine or twelve claims (figures differ) were under lease to Grant Snyder of Salt Lake City and C.A. Rankin of Los Angeles who were working a crew of ten. Trucks hauled the ore, reportedly carrying 50% to 60% lead with some silver, to Death Valley Junction, and from there it was shipped to Salt Lake City smelters. Principal development consisted of a long tunnel with drifts and crosscuts, with production so far totalling approximately \$100,000 in lead-silver ore.<sup>77</sup>

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75. Mining Journal, 30 January 1930, p. 8; Black, "Mineral Report for the Ubehebe Lead Mine," p. 2.

76. Witt, "Preliminary Report on the Ubehebe Lead Mine," pp. 1, 3; Young to Snyder, p. 2; Inyo Independent, 30 April 1937, 18 February 1938.

77. Inyo Independent, 20 May 1938; Mining Journal, 15 June 1938, p. 23; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938), p. 456.

In the late 1940s Snyder was still working the property, which in 1946 consisted of eleven unpatented lode claims: the Butte Nos. 6-10, West Extension Butte No. 3, Copper Bell, Copper Bell Nos. 1-3, and the Quartz Spring Claim seven miles east of the mine. Five principal ore bodies were being worked: the Watterson, Snyder, Flat, No. 4, and Tram stopes. Facilities and equipment at the mine included a cook- and bunkhouse with three rooms, furnished with beds, a stove, and table; a small compressor house with a 100-cubic-foot compressor driven by an auto engine; a small air receiver; a dilapidated blacksmith shop with an anvil, vise, grindstone, and workbench; four mine cars; one jackhammer; and a tramway cable.<sup>78</sup>

The maximum recorded annual production of zinc in the Ubehebe District in 1948 was 53,854 pounds from the Ubehebe Mine.<sup>79</sup> Camp facilities in 1949 remained about the same. In the gulley near the portal of the main tunnel was one house with two large bedrooms and a kitchen, provided with beds and a coal cookstove, while a partially constructed house nearby could be completed for a second bunkhouse if needed. This complex adequately served about five to seven men. The mine workings consisted of two major tunnels, three short ones, and several cuts and shallow shafts penetrating the steep ridge. The Tram tunnel was located on the opposite side of the ridge from the camp, about 200 feet above the main tunnel. Ore from here was transported to the ore bin at the lower tunnel portal by a single-bucket tramway operated by a ten-horsepower gas engine on

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78. Young to Snyder, pp. 1-3.

79. McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 4.

top of the ridge. Wheelbarrows brought the ore out of the tunnel to the tramway terminal. The Uebebe Group now consisted of thirteen unpatented lode claims--the Butte Nos. 3-10 and West Extension Butte #3 in the lead zone, and the Copper Bell and Copper Bell Nos. 1-3 in the copper area to the east--plus the Quartz Spring Claim. No water supply existed on site, so that during shipping periods this precious commodity was hauled back from Beatty on the ore trucks and at other times one of the nearby springs was tapped and water stored in large drums on site. Total production of the mine at this time was estimated at 5,000 tons, containing 20% to 60% lead, an amount of ore that at the current 1949 market price exceeded \$250,000 in value. Ore was hauled to Beatty, Nevada, and then either on to Las Vegas for rail shipment to Salt Lake City or trucked directly to Salt Lake City through Tonopah and Ely.<sup>80</sup>

In 1966 a lease/purchase agreement between the Uebebe Lead Mines, Inc., and Basic Resources Corporation was initiated, but development was disappointing and BRC's interests were later quitclaimed back in 1968.<sup>81</sup> Uebebe Lead Mines Company has owned the property ever since. Revised estimates of the total tonnage produced by the Uebebe Mine are placed at about 3,500 tons, averaging 38% lead, 7% zinc, 12 ozs. silver, and .02 oz. gold per ton. The Copper Bell claims have averaged about 16% copper.<sup>82</sup>

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80. Witt, "Preliminary Report on the Uebebe Lead Mine," pp. 1-5.

81. Joseph J. Snyder, Pres., Uebebe Lead Mines, Inc., to James B. Thompson, Supt., DEVA NM, 16 October 1973.

82. Black, "Mineral Report for the Uebebe Lead Mine," p. 2.



Illustration 237.

View north of mine workings and aerial tramway, Ubehebe copper-lead Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 238.

View toward southwest of residential area across road from mine workings.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



(b) Present Status

The Ubehebe copper/lead Mine is reached via a one-lane gravel access road leading west off the Racetrack Valley Road about twenty-five miles south of Ubehebe Crater, the mine area lying off the northwest corner of Racetrack Valley. Dozer activity can be seen at the Copper Bell Mine site just north of the junction of the Ubehebe Mine and Racetrack Valley roads. The mine access ends after about one mile in the vicinity of the abandoned mine camp and main adit portal.

The camp consists of two frame and composition-paper shacks extensively damaged by weathering, washing, and obvious vandalism. West of the Main Workings is a one-chute ore bin reached by tram rails, and near the timber-lined main adit are the ruins of some small corrugated-metal, tarpaper, and wooden mine buildings once housing such functions as the blacksmith shop and hoisting apparatus. Some concrete foundations are also visible in this area. Other adits and stone retaining walls are scattered up the hillside toward the ridgetop in the vicinity of the South Workings, the first stope developed. The tramway cable is still attached to one support at the top of this ridge. The Tram stope, or North Workings, to which the cable led are on the opposite side of the ridge and accessible only by foot trail or possibly by a steep four-wheel-drive climb.

The entire area has undergone extensive washing: bits of rail and pipe sections lie about near the mine, as do crockery fragments, pieces of glass, and tin cans that have worked down from the camp site. The several dumps nearby contain nothing of historical significance.

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Ubehebe Mine was first located about 1906 and was worked sporadically up until the late 1960s, having the longest history of production in the Ubehebe region. The discovery of lead on this property diverted the district's attention from copper and helped promote the realization that other metals existed in the area in economically profitable quantities. The Ubehebe is one of two lead mines in the vicinity of Racetrack Valley, the Lippincott Mine starting operations much later but producing more continuously from the 1940s through the 1950s. Many similarities existed between the Ubehebe Mine and the Queen of Sheba Mine further south: both were first located around 1906-7; both produced important quantities of copper, silver, and gold, in addition to lead; both attempted to economically transport ore by tractor power; and development work on both was limited due to shortages of water and lack of adequate communication and transportation links, and to other problems that were a direct result of their extreme isolation. The Queen of Sheba, however, gained the backing of Jack Salsberry, who made several innovative efforts to solve these problems, and later was taken over by mining companies that possessed the financial reserves to continue large-scale development work. The Queen of Sheba is the most important of the three lead mines in Death Valley, eclipsing the Ubehebe operation both in extent of development and in production. The Ubehebe and Lippincott mines should be mentioned in any interpretive program or exhibit on lead mining in Death Valley, but neither possesses a level of significance in Death Valley mining history to warrant its nomination to the National Register.

(4) Lost Burro Mine

(a) History

The rich outcroppings of the Lost Burro Mine were first discovered, quite by accident, on 18 April

1907 by Bert Shively while in the process of rounding up some of his burros. Shively, who had formerly been involved in a lease on Ladd Mountain in Rhyolite, immediately filed on six claims that showed free gold with surface assays running from \$40 to \$1,000 per ton. In partnership with him on the property located about 3½ miles northeast of the Racetrack and six miles north of the Ulida Mine were W.D. Blackmer, general manager of the Tramp Consolidated; W.B. Morris, superintendent of the Bullfrog Mining Company; Charles N. Garden, superintendent of the Tramp Consolidated; and Jack McCormick.

Almost immediately the five discoverers bonded the property for sixty days to a Julius Lamley (Lemle) of Beatty and associates for \$45,000, the new operators intending to work eighteen shifts a week. For one reason or another their plans did not materialize, and a month later their option was turned over in the form of a working bond of \$50,000 to Thomas Cornish, a Denver capitalist, and H.B. Lind of Goldfield. By October, however, due to a complex chain of circumstances, the property had reverted to the original owners. It seems that upon Cornish's death, his partner Lind, being hospitalized, was unable to make the next payment on the property within the allotted time. His request for an extension was denied by the owners, who doubtless preferred operating what was turning into an extremely valuable property by themselves or leasing it to someone else at a much higher price. The mine was producing ore reportedly averaging \$80.86 per ton in gold, with at least \$50,000 worth of the ore in sight; probably tons more existed under ground that was as yet undeveloped.<sup>83</sup>

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83. Inyo Register, 9 May 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 26 April, 29 June, 6 July 1907; Rhyolite Herald, 18 October 1907.

The financial depression of 1907 did not halt work at the Lost Burro, by now regarded as one of the richest claims in the Ubehebe District. It was proposed, however, that some crude form of treatment, such as mortaring and panning, be used to process the ore and help make ends meet during this crisis period. A 110-foot tunnel was the extent of the property's underground workings in the winter of 1907.<sup>84</sup> By early spring 1908 the property was undergoing another change of ownership, with its appropriation by the Goldfield Consolidated interests for a reported \$35,000. Incentive for the purchase was probably provided by recent assay results ranging from \$300 to \$1,450 in gold per ton.<sup>85</sup> By February 1909 the mineralized zone on the Burro that was being worked included a ten-foot-wide blanket vein with an extraordinary showing of \$15 to \$18 in gold per ton from wall to wall, and a very rich twelve-inch-wide strike that ran through the property and produced samples running well over \$1,000 per ton.

A new sale was now pending for the property involving a reputed \$60,000, and rumors hinted that the new owners would install a mill to handle the high-grade ore. The end of February saw completion of the deal for \$40,000 to mining interests from California, the third sale concerning the property on which a payment had been made within the last two years, total cash payments amounting to \$9,000. Development at the site consisted of a 120-foot-deep shaft with lateral workings running along the vein. Several thousand tons of ore, said to be worth around \$30,000, had been stockpiled on the dump. Immediate company plans called

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84. Bullfrog Miner, 14 December, 28 December 1907.

85. Inyo Register, 12 March 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 14 March, 28 March 1908.

for shipping the high-grade ore while awaiting completion of the mill.<sup>86</sup>

Once again, in the summer of 1909, the Lost Burro came under option, this time to a Keeler man for \$4,000, but no further mention was found as to whether he made the required payment.<sup>87</sup> By 1911 Charles Garden and the McCormick brothers were still performing annual assessment work on the Lost Burro Group, where development now included a fifty-foot-long lower tunnel that intersected a vein yielding an average of \$15 in gold per ton.<sup>88</sup>

Four years later the Montana-Tonopah Company secured the property on a lease and bond basis, their tests showing that 85% of the gold could be recovered by amalgamation.<sup>89</sup> Construction was immediately begun on the foundations for a fifty-ton five-stamp mill to be shipped from Bonnie Claire. Trucks would be used to haul the machinery the first thirty miles from the railhead over the good sections of the road, and a Caterpillar tractor, maintaining a top speed of three

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86. Bullfrog Miner, 13 February 1909; Inyo Independent, 19 February 1909; Bullfrog Miner, 27 February 1909; Rhyolite Herald, 3 March 1909; Engineering and Mining Journal, 20 March 1909, p. 624.

87. Rhyolite Herald, 21 August 1909.

88. Ibid., 4 November 1911, 6 January 1912.

89. Mining World, 9 September 1916, p. 469.



Illustration 239.

Miner's cabin and outbuildings, Lost Burro Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 240.

View west up gully from cabin of additional mine workings, Lost Burro Mine. Stamp mill ruin is on hill to right.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



miles per hour, would be used over the last difficult twenty-two miles to the mine.<sup>90</sup>

In 1917 the mine property was reported to consist of several short tunnels driven along the vein and intersecting ore averaging \$25 per ton; no production of record had yet resulted. Mention was also made of foundations existing for a five-stamp mill and cyanide plant, which had never been completed, that was to have been powered by water relayed via a pipeline from Burro Spring located on Tin Mountain about 7½ miles northeast. The property, listed as owned by the Lost Burro Mining Company of Los Angeles, W.H. (D?) Blackmer, president, was idle at this time, but the report said that the property had reportedly been sold to the Montana-Tonopah Mines Company, of which Charles E. Knox of Berkeley was superintendent and manager.<sup>91</sup> This was evidently the last year the property was worked until the 1930s.

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90. Inyo Register, 25 January, 15 March 1917. Notice of a water application was found filed by Charles E. Knox of the Montana-Tonopah Co., for 20 miner's inches from Willow and Alkali springs to be conveyed by an 8-mile-long pipeline to a quartz mine in the Ubehebe Mining District at a cost of \$2,000. Inyo Independent, 16 March 1917.

91. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, pp. 75-77; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Report Twenty-two of the State Mineralogist (1926), pp. 470-71; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 34 (October 1938):406. Herman Albert, who worked at the Lost Burro for a short time, mentions a "nice little settlement of tents with board floors and walls all set up and furnished ready for occupancy" in which miners of the Montana-Tonopah Co. would live while working the mine. Odyssey of a Desert Prospector (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1967), pp. 234-35. Witt, in his "Preliminary Report on the Ubehebe Lead Mine," (1949), states that "At the old Los Burros [sic] Mine, some twelve miles east [of the Ubehebe Mine] is a spring which once supplied a forty ton gold mill operated many years ago by the Tonopah Mining Co." Pp. 2-3. It would appear, therefore, that the mill did function for a short period at least.

In 1928 a notice of deeds filed associated Andy McCormick with ownership of the Lost Burro and Lost Burro No. 2 mines.<sup>92</sup> According to the present claimant, Mr. W.C. Thompson, the Montana-Tonopah Company leased the mine from McCormick from 1906 through 1912, after which time McCormick and his partner Phil Day recovered \$85,000 in gold from the property. McCormick continued mining here until 1938, occasionally shipping small amounts of ore. Thompson also states that he and A.Z. "Shorty" Borden relocated the original claims in 1942, Borden later quitclaiming them before his death and Thompson then amending the claims in 1948. Official records, however, show the Lost Burro #1 and #2 claims were relocated by these two men in 1948 along with a Gold Belt Mill Site  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile north of the spring and later amended by Thompson as sole owner in 1970.<sup>93</sup> Thompson continued performing a small amount of mining activity and at one time intended to install a ball mill above Mosquito Spring to process the Lost Burro gold ore, then averaging \$50 per ton.<sup>94</sup>

(b) Present Status

The Lost Burro Mine is located at the northern end of the mountain range separating Hidden Valley from Racetrack Valley. It is situated in a draw reached by a dirt track extending a little over a mile west from the gravel Hidden Valley road. The site is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Lost Burro Gap. Several signs, some warning against trespass and others of a humorous nature, line the road. The claimant's wood shack is at the mouth

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92. Inyo Independent, 8 September 1928.

93. McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 44; Notices of Location, Lost Burro #1 and #2 lode mining claims, located 3 November 1948, Vol. 59, pp. 41-42, Inyo Co. Courthouse; Notice of Location, Gold Belt Mill Site, located 18 December 1948, Vol. C, p. 535, Inyo Co. Courthouse.

94. Wm. C. Thompson to Supt., DEVA NM, 16 January 1978. Thompson's dates seem open to question.

Illustration 241.

Ruins of 1917 stamp mill, Lost Burro Mine.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



of the draw along which, advancing uphill, are the remains of an ore-processing mill; several adits, some of which have been used for storage; a one-chute ore bin; and other miscellaneous mine workings. The wooden shack, with an associated shed, dugout, and outhouse in close proximity to the northwest, was vandalized sometime toward the end of 1977, and a wood-burning stove and other objects of minimal value were taken. A large trunk was broken into and its contents--papers and records--scattered about. The various sealed tunnels leading off the gully were used for storage of fuses, pulleys, canned goods, old mining equipment, mill parts, etc. The mine workings consist of two shafts plus the various tunnels. Thompson evidently built the ore bin himself.<sup>95</sup>

Much debris in the form of rusted oil drums, tin cans, old chairs, etc., as well as several lengths of the Burro Spring two-inch-diameter pipeline litter the site. The mill remains consist of the wooden framework and five or six levels of masonry foundations stairstepping down the hillside. Various items of machinery connected with the milling operation, such as a small retort or smelter (?) and sluice box (?), are scattered about over the foundations. The main underground workings include three groups of stopes connected to the surface by two adits, while separate workings surround both the east and west shafts. The Lost Burro Mine lies totally within the Lost Burro #1 and #2 claims.

#### (c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The significance of this mine lies in its being the only exclusively gold-bearing property in the Ubehebe District. Considered one of the richest mines in the area, it

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95. Wm. C. Thompson to Sen. John V. Tunney, 22 March 1975; Thompson to Supt., DEVA NM, 16 January 1978; Thompson to The President (via Repr. Shirley N. Pettis), 19 October 1977.

Tin Mountain Quadrangle

Tin Mountain

Illustration 242.

Map showing Tin and White Top mountain mining areas and approximate route of Lost Burro Mine pipeline to Burro Spring.



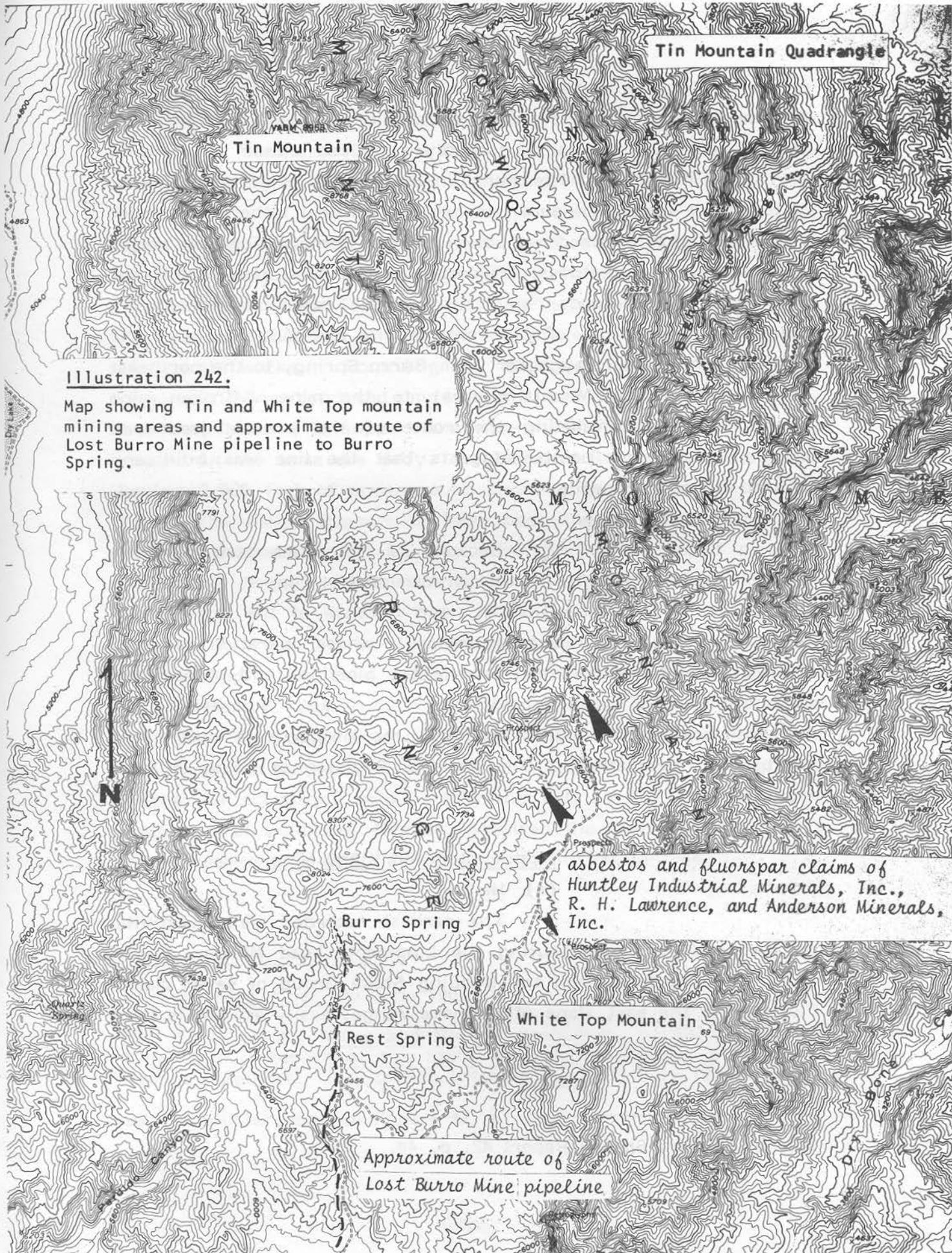
Burro Spring

Rest Spring

White Top Mountain

Approximate route of  
Lost Burro Mine pipeline

asbestos and fluorspar claims of  
Huntley Industrial Minerals, Inc.,  
R. H. Lawrence, and Anderson Minerals,  
Inc.



procured for its owners several thousand dollars in options. Despite the listing of its official production between 1935 and 1942 at 255 ounces of gold, it probably produced closer to \$100,000 during its lifetime.<sup>96</sup> The mill ruin on the site is quite extensive, although no significant data has been found on it other than notice of the initiation of its construction by the Montana-Tonopah people around 1917. No pictures of a completed mill have been found, nor any production records, so it is unclear how long it actually functioned. Remnants of pipe on the site are connected with the pipeline project to relay water from Burro Spring, to the northeast in the White Top Mountain area, to the mine. Broken pipe segments almost paralleling the route of the present jeep trail between these two points suggests that the line was built and utilized for a short while.

Because of the site's status as the largest gold producer in the predominantly copper, lead, and zinc-producing Ubehebe District, and because of the presence of impressive ruins of a large stamp mill, whose operation required construction of an eight-mile-long water pipeline, and of assorted machinery that can contribute to our knowledge of twentieth-century mining technology, the property is determined eligible for nomination to the National Register as being of local significance.

(5) Lippincott (Lead King) Mine

(a) History

The earliest recorded mining activity on the lands now constituting the Lippincott Lead Mine may have been that associated with the Wedding Stake Group of seven claims "located on the east slope of Ubehebe range, easily accessible from

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96. McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 44.

the Race Track."<sup>97</sup> They were discovered in December 1906 by Joseph H. Crook, Sim Boysdon, Walter Clements, and possibly Charles del Bondio. The Inyo Copper Mining and Smelting Company was also engaging in extensive operations in that vicinity by 1908. The Raven lead and silver property, sixty miles southwest of Bonnie Claire and five miles north of Dodd Spring, was being explored from about 1917 through 1926. It was originally owned by J. Crook and Archie Farrington of Big Pine, and was situated at an elevation of 3,800 feet, which corresponds with that of the present Lippincott works. According to George Lippincott, Jr., the Lippincott Mine produced and shipped ore during World War I, which would tend to support the theory that these two mines were located on the same ore body. In 1926 the Raven was reported as having 2,000 feet of underground tunnels, but it was idle at that time. The Raven appears to have been the only silver-lead mine between Ubehebe Peak and Big Dodd Spring mentioned prior to reports on the Lippincott Mine property beginning in the 1930s.<sup>98</sup>

According to McAllister, the Lead King mining claims (aka Southern Lead Mine in later years) were held by Phil E. Day in 1934 and quitclaimed to R.B. and L. Walls in 1939. This property included some old workings near the main tunnel (which may be the 300-foot-long Raven tunnel) and ground in the Contact Group held in 1935 and 1937 by Roy Albin. George Lippincott of Goldfield, Nevada, acquired the mine from Walls by a lease agreement in 1942, later buying it outright in 1944.<sup>99</sup>

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97. Bullfrog Miner, 15 June 1907.

98. Eakle et al., Mines and Mineral Resources, p. 102; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Report of the State Mineralogist (1926), p. 496; C. George Lippincott, Jr., to Bob Mitchum [sic], 11 July 1974.

99. McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 29.

In partnership with his sons, George, Jr., and Dick, Lippincott began development work in May 1942 on the Lead King. Eight men produced ore that was trucked to Goldfield and then shipped by train to smelters in Murray, Utah. The length of the route and difficulties encountered by the trucks passing over it necessitated the very selective mining of ore, with only that averaging between 40% and 63% lead and returning at least 35 ozs. of silver per ton being economically worthwhile. A new road to Keeler was in process of construction by the operators to make shipping from a claim carrying only 30% lead ore economically possible.<sup>100</sup> This rough, steep route passed through the south end of Saline Valley and met California State Route 190 near Darwin Junction.

During the second World War the Ubehebe area was utilized as a practice field for aerial gunnery exercises by the U.S. Government, thereby causing the temporary cessation of mining activity there. By 1946 Lippincott's Southern Lead Company had resumed operations and with a nine-man crew was producing two carloads of lead weekly, which were again being shipped to Goldfield. Lippincott's son George, Jr., was mine superintendent.<sup>101</sup> The mine was still producing in 1951 when it was described as consisting of twelve unpatented claims whose workings included a main tunnel (portions of which antedated Lippincott's acquisition of the property) 100 feet west of the mine camp on the hillside above and penetrating to a distance of 625 feet. Drifts and a sixty-foot winze provided access to the ore

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100. Mining Journal, 30 November 1942, p. 24, and 15 November 1943, pp. 20-21.

101. Mining Journal, 30 March 1946, p. 22.



Illustration 243.

Sally Ann copper Mine along hillside on east side of The Racetrack.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 244.

Mining camp originally containing three cabins on slope southeast of workings, Lippincott lead Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



bodies. These particular workings had produced 1,000 tons of ore assaying 42% lead and 8 ozs. of silver. Other workings included the Confidence No. 2 tunnel, Taylor shaft, Johnson tunnel, and Addison shaft, and early in 1951 work had begun on the Inspiration shaft. So far 2,000 tons of ore assaying 25% to 40% lead, 11 to 38 ozs. of silver, 4% to 11% zinc, and valued at \$80,000, had been shipped.

Although earlier the ore produced at the mine had been treated at custom plants in surrounding communities, the company in the early 1950s erected its own mill and blast furnace operation in Santa Ana, California, in the Bonnie Claire District sixty miles to the east. Here, especially during World War II, lead and silver were smelted for use in storage batteries. (The Lippincott Lead Company smelter closed down in 1953.) Equipment at the Lippincott Mine in 1951 included two diesel compressors, a Caterpillar bulldozer, a diesel light plant, and a camp occupied then by only three men. The most accessible water sources were Goldbelt Spring, twenty-six miles away, and Scotty's Castle, forty miles away. Big Dodd Spring was south a distance of only about 4½ miles, but could only be reached by an arduous trail. Water was never piped to the camp from this spring because of the likelihood of the line freezing during the cold months of the year and the subsequent difficulties that would attend its maintenance. The Racetrack playa was used as a landing strip by the mine operators.<sup>102</sup>

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102. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Journal of Mines and Geology 47 (January 1951):73-74; A.E. Bernard (State Inspector of Mines), Nevada Mines, Mills and Smelters in Operation as of December 1, 1953, p. 10; State Inspector of Mines, Report. 1953-54, p. 30; McAllister, Special Report 42, p. 29.



Illustration 245.

Lead King Mine. Headframe over vertical shaft, and adit. On road along north edge of ridge, Lippincott Mine area.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 246.

Framework over stope. Note aerial tramway on hillside above. Located on same road as the above photo.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 247.

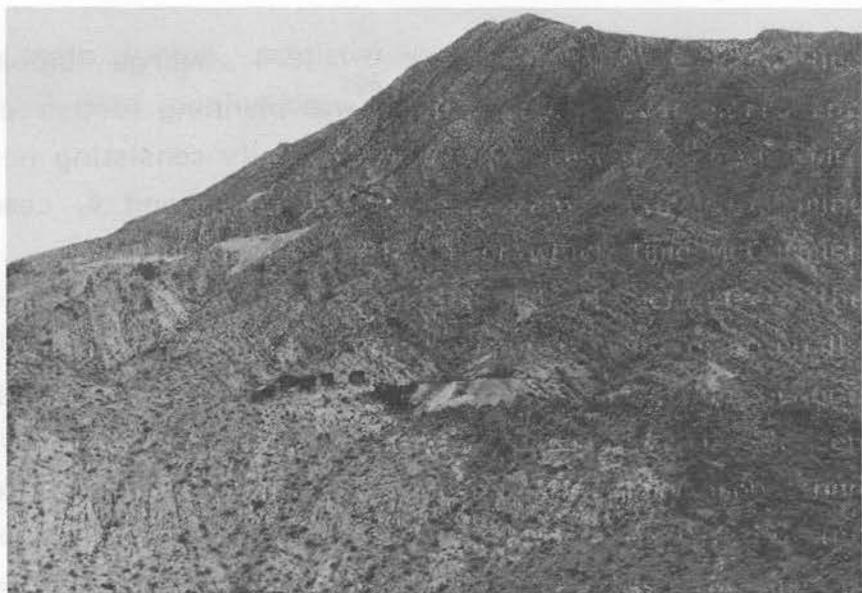
Mine camp of six cabins and ore tipple built about 1942. Light-colored dump, above left, designates road on which Lead King Mine and other adits found.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 248.

Close-up view of cabins and ore tipple pictured above.

Photo courtesy of Henry G. Law, 1975.



In 1974 George Lippincott, Jr.'s, Polaris Battery Company, Inc., was planning further exploratory work on the Lippincott mining group, formally consisting now of the Lead King, Lead King Mining Claim Nos. 1, 3, and 4, Lead King #5-#8, and the Lippincott Mill Site.<sup>103</sup>

(b) Present Status

The Lippincott claim group, comprising eight lode mining claims and one millsite, is located in the northwest corner of the monument and in the southwest corner of Racetrack Valley immediately north of the monument boundary, although the Lead King Nos. 3 and 5-8 are situated partially outside the monument. The property is about thirty miles south of Ubehebe Crater on the Racetrack Road four miles south of Ubehebe Peak on the north side of a ridge between Racetrack and Saline valleys.

The site today consists of three main areas. On the north slope is the mine camp of six wood and tarpaper cabins and an ore tipple constructed by Lippincott about 1942. It is just below the main tunnel which lies on this slope at an elevation of about 3,750 feet. Another group of three cabins was erected on the slope southeast of the workings, access to which is via a road through the middle of the Homestake Talc Claim. The mine workings seen by this writer along the road on the northeast flank of the ridge consisted of numerous adits and at least two vertical shafts, plus some tramway remains, all encompassed in an area measuring about 1,600 by 200 feet. Altogether the claim group contains about 2,000 feet of level and inclined underground

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103. Donald M. Spalding, Supt., DEVA NM, to C. George Lippincott, Jr., 29 December 1977.

workings--the main tunnel, Addison workings, Confidence No. 1, Confidence No. 2, and Inspiration.<sup>104</sup>

(c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Lippincott lead Mine is one of two such operations in the Ubehebe area, the other being the Ubehebe lead Mine at the northwest corner of Racetrack Valley. The Lippincott has been the scene of the most continuous mining activity in the Ubehebe area since 1942, producing every year except 1945 when the federal government controlled the area. (According to McAllister the mine actually functioned from 1938 to 1952, with no production recorded only in the years 1939 and 1942.)<sup>105</sup> Total production stands at something over \$80,000. The site does not possess the historical significance necessary to justify its nomination to the National Register. Its integrity has been further impaired during the last year by the destruction of two of its buildings by fire.

(6) Ubehebe, Keeler, and Quackenbush Talc  
Mines

(a) History

The Ubehebe and Keeler mines, located in the range of hills immediately east of Ulida Flat, and the Quackenbush Mine, two miles further east and about one mile north of Goldbelt Spring, are of fairly recent vintage, all three having been worked for steatite-grade talc on a small scale during World War II. In 1945 one James O. Greenan of Reno, Nevada, secured

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104. McAllister, Special Report 42, pp. 29, 31; Walter Gould, "Mineral Report for the Lead King, Lead King No. 1, Lead King No. 3 through Lead King No. 8 Lode Mining Claims and the Lippincott Millsite Claim in Death Valley National Monument, California," 29 March 1978, p. 1.

105. McAllister, Special Report 42, pp. 18, 29.

an option from Roscoe Wright of Goldfield on four talc claims in the Ubehebe area in which recent tests had determined the presence of commercial quantities of high-grade talc that could be used in the production of cosmetics and of steatite grade suitable for high-frequency radio electrical insulators.<sup>106</sup>

These deposits in the northern Panamint Range and in the Inyo Mountains to the west have been the source of practically all the California-produced steatite- and pharmaceutical-grade talc. Smaller in extent than the talc deposits in the southern end of the monument in Warm Spring Canyon and the IbeX Hills, the largest bodies in this northern part have been measured at about 500 by 50 feet. By the late 1960s most of the bodies had been mined out or were considered unworthy of further investigation.<sup>107</sup> The extent of reserves in these properties is unknown, but they are believed to be substantial. Their isolation, however, impedes any large-scale systematic development, and the long haul to market is economically infeasible. Most recent activity has been of the weekend sort.

i) Ubehebe (Stone Pencil) Mine

The Ubehebe Talc Nos. 1, 2, and 4 unpatented lode claims were located in January 1945, and the Goldbelt Springs Mill Site filed on two months later. During the 1960s and early 1970s the Ubehebe was owned or leased by the Sierra Talc Company of South Pasadena, California, which produced and transported ore from the property. Sometimes referred to as the Stone Pencil Mine, by the mid-1960s the talc zone, measuring about 500 feet long by 20 feet wide, had been developed by underground workings about 15 to 25 feet vertically. Production

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106. Mining Journal, 30 June 1945, p. 20.

107. Evans et al., Special Report 125, p. 47.

through 1955 totalled several hundred tons. In the mid-1970s Cyprus Industrial Minerals Company acquired the Ubehebe talc Mine and is the present owner. Its mining operations have been hampered by the site's inaccessibility and also by the narrowness of the access road, which the National Park Service would not allow the company to widen.<sup>108</sup>

ii) Keeler (White Horse) Mine

The White Horse Talc #1, White Horse #2, and White Horse Talc #3-#4 unpatented lode claims were located in 1943 by Alexander "Shorty" Borden, Bev Hunter, Roy Hunter, and Hellen Kraft; they are presently owned by Victor Materials Company of Victorville, California, and Rowena R. and Charles A. Munns of Brigham City, Utah.

The 65-foot-deep vertical shaft on the property was dug in 1967 by Grantham Mines Company employees, who soon ceased work because of the unavailability of milling-grade ore.<sup>109</sup>

iii) Quackenbush (Gold Belt) Mine

The Gold Belt Talc #1, #2, and #3 unpatented lode claims were located by Bev Hunter and A.Z.

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108. A.H. Chidester, A.E.J. Engel, and L.A. Wright, "Talc resources of the United States," USGS Bulletin No. 1167 (Washington: GPO, 1964), Table 9, hereafter referred to as USGS Bulletin No. 1167; Evans et al., Special Report 125, p. 43.

109. F.A. Spicker, "Mineral Report for the White Horse Talc #1, White Horse #2, White Horse Talc #3, White Horse Talc #4 Unpatented Lode Mining Claims in Death Valley National Monument, California," 16 June 1978, p. 1; Carl A. Stadler, "The Geology of the Goldbelt Spring Area, Northern Panamint Range, Inyo County, California," MS thesis, University of Oregon, 1968, cited in *ibid.*, p. 3.

Illustration 249.

Corrugated-metal cabin with screened sun porch, Ubehebe talc Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 250.

View from corral of mine workings south of cabin, Ubehebe Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



The mining activity is currently in progress on this property, which is situated at an altitude of about 5,000 feet. The site includes both a residential and mining area. On the former is one standing corrugated-metal house with plywood walls and the remains of at least two other residences. All sorts of debris—old cans, radios, a bicycle, chairs, toys, and appliances—litter the ground. At the junction of the residential road with the trail to the mining operation is a small corral. The



and the Gold Reef Mine in Death Valley National Monument, California, 16 June 1978, p. 2; Christopher et al., USGS Bulletin No. 781, Table 2.

Borden in June 1944, and the Gold Belt Springs Mill Site filed on by Bev Hunter in October 1948. Estimated production of the mine through 1955 is 750 tons. William B. Grantham worked the property in the late 1960s while his company was also investigating the Keeler Mine. Exploratory excavations, probably on the Gold Belt Talc #1 Claim, failed to uncover sufficient quantities of ore. Current owners of the property are the Victor Materials Company and Rowena R. and Charles A. Munns.<sup>110</sup>

(b) Present Status

i) Ubehebe Mine

No mining activity is currently in progress on this property, which is situated at an altitude of about 5,400 feet. The site includes both a residential and mining area. On the former is one standing corrugated-metal house with plywood walls and the remains of at least two other residences. All sorts of debris--old cots, radios, a birdcage, chairs, toys, and appliances--litter the ground. At the junction of the residential road with the trail to the mining operation is a small corral. The workings themselves, scattered over a hillside about one-eighth of a mile south of the road junction, consist of three ore bins, two in good shape and one in ruins. The largest bin, furthest east, has two dumps associated with it and services a well-timbered adit. Tram tracks lead to the dumps, and the foundations of a small building (storage shed, blacksmith shop?) lie near the portal. Only a skeletal framework remains of the middlemost bin, with fallen

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110. Stadler, "The Geology of the Goldbelt Spring Area," in F.A. Spicker, "Mineral Report for the Gold Belt Talc No. 1, Gold Belt Talc No. 2, Gold Belt Talc No. 3 Unpatented Lode Mining Claims and the Gold Belt Millsite in Death Valley National Monument, California," 16 June 1978, p. 2; Chidester et al., USGS Bulletin No. 1167, Table 9.



Illustration 251.

Small headframe, collapsed shack, and timbered inclined shaft,  
Keeler talc Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 252.

Dozer cut on White Horse #2 Claim.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



timbers and metal flashing strewn down the hillside below. The third ore bin serves an adit containing both an inclined shaft and a stoped tunnel. The entire hillside is very unstable and dotted with crater-like depressions and caved-in stopes.

ii) Keeler Mine

This property is located about one mile south of the Ubehebe talc Mine at a slightly lower elevation on the same north-south trending ridge. The White Horse Talc #1 and White Horse #2 claims, situated in the bottom of a narrow, shallow valley, can be easily reached via a dirt road, while the White Horse Talc #3-#4 claims extend further west and north up the hillside and are less easily seen. The most extensive development has occurred on the #1 Claim and consists of a timbered vertical shaft surmounted by a small headframe, a timbered inclined shaft, and two or three small adits, one of which intersects the inclined shaft. The ruins of a small collapsed shack are also present. The shafts are completely open and unsafe for exploration. At the fork of the Keeler and Ubehebe talc roads, on the #2 Claim, is an extensive dozer cut about forty-five feet long.

iii) Quackenbush Mine

This mine site consists of a number of excavations on a ridgetop at an elevation of about 5,200 feet. No buildings or foundations for such exist, the only extant structures being two lightweight headframes, both weathered and unstable. One of these is located toward the top of the hill on the Gold Belt Talc #2 Claim and covers a vertical timbered shaft adjoined on the northwest by a caved-in stope. The shaft has also caved in not far below the surface. This area corresponds to the shaft symbol on the USGS Marble Canyon quad map. Downslope to the northeast of this shaft are two adits, whose portals practically face each other, on a portion of the Gold Belt Talc #2 and #3 claims



Illustration 253.

Headframe, Quackenbush talc Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 254.

Stoped adit and headframe, Quackenbush Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

The second structure is located immediately west of the first. It is a small, rectangular building with a flat roof. The ground around it is sandy and sparsely vegetated. The building appears to be made of wood or metal. It is situated on a slight rise in the terrain.



The structure is situated on a sandy bank overlooking a valley. The terrain is arid and sparsely vegetated. The structure appears to be a simple, functional building, possibly used for storage or as a shelter. The surrounding landscape is flat and extends to the horizon.



Two months later an important place was discovered about 150 miles south of the first structure. It was a large, rectangular building with a flat roof, situated on a sandy bank overlooking a valley. The structure was made of wood and appeared to be a more substantial building, possibly a workshop or a storage shed. The surrounding landscape was flat and arid.

that overlap. The second headframe is located immediately north of the road passing through the site and on to Goldbelt Spring. Since the mill site at Goldbelt contains several residences, it is possible that the Quackenbush Mine workers resided there.

(c) Evaluations and Recommendations

No information on the Ubehebe, Keeler, or Quackenbush mines prior to their location for talc in the 1940s that would imbue the sites with any historical significance has been found. Nor are there any significant physical remains on any of them.

3. Skookum Mining District

a) Death Valley Gold Mining Company Working Property Near Sand Spring

In the mid-1920s a new and short-lived mining district was organized in the northwestern corner of Death Valley that this writer has not heretofore found mentioned in any of the historical accounts on the area. The scanty amount of information obtained, which concerns only the year between January 1927 and February 1928, does not permit of much detail and only arouses more questions than it answers.

Sand Spring, about eight miles north of the extreme northwest corner of Death Valley National Monument, was an important watering hole on the mining route to Lida, Nevada. Once briefly homesteaded by a daring soul whose only accomplishment in the area was encasing the water supply in a few lengths of iron pipe, the site was mainly utilized over the years as an overnight camping spot. In March 1909 some ore specimens extremely rich in gold were discovered in the vicinity of this spring and were later determined by prospectors from Goldfield who rushed to the area to be part of a large porphyry dyke that cut through the ground here. No further word on development was found. Two months later an important placer strike covering about 1,200 acres was made seventeen miles south of Tule and six miles from

Eureka Valley, high in the Last Chance Range. Surface material was assaying \$9 a ton and \$53 after dry washing. Although it was anticipated that capital would be acquired to finance operations here, no further word of activity emerged for the next eighteen years.<sup>111</sup>

In January 1927 the Lucky Boy Divide Mining Company, an organization based in Tonopah, Nevada, and presided over by one Harry McNamara, was working some property owned by the Death Valley Gold Mining Company "about 100 miles south of Tonopah, and not far from Death Valley Scotty's ranch in the Grapevine canyon," from which samples were returning gold values of \$22 per ton.<sup>112</sup> According to the Goldfield Daily Tribune, the new strike area could be reached by auto road leading west from Death Valley Scotty's Grapevine Canyon ranch five miles to a wash, then seven miles further to the Desert Gold (a mine?), and then finally, after another seven miles, ending at the mine camp. Water had to be hauled to the spot from either Hot Springs or Sand Spring, both about an equal twelve miles distant. The article states that this new strike zone located in the Last Chance Range would be called the Skookum Mining District.<sup>113</sup>

Sol Camp, who it will be remembered was associated with development work on the Ubehebe lead Mine in the early 1920s and later in the 1930s, was at this time managing the operations of the Death Valley Gold Mining Company, Inc., based out of Leadfield. A Skookum mining camp of four houses was already up, and new machinery, such as an air compressor and drills, and necessary foodstuffs and other supplies were being shipped in from Bonnie Claire. Development work at this point

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111. Rhyolite Herald, 10 March 1909; Rhyolite Daily Bulletin, 26 May 1909.

112. Mining Journal, 30 January 1927, p. 36.

113. Inyo Independent, 5 February 1927.

consisted of 2,000 feet of trenching and the driving of a tunnel and various shallow exploratory holes. Assays were now yielding \$34 to \$276 per ton.<sup>114</sup>

By March 1927 a carload of ore from the new district was ready for shipment to the smelter in Mason Valley. The charge by rail from Bonnie Claire was not expected to total more than \$4 per ton, and the smelter charge was estimated at around \$8. This would ensure a handsome profit from the ore, thought to be worth approximately \$100 a ton. In May 1927 word spread that large deposits of high-grade sulphur had been found on the high west slope of the Last Chance Mountains, just over the range from the north arm of Death Valley. The area could be reached by road from Goldfield via Lida, Pigeon Springs, and Cucamonga, while a good wagon road led up Oriental Wash to Sand Spring on the east slope. It is probable that this was in the general vicinity of the Skookum Mining District.<sup>115</sup>

b) World Exploration Company Enters Area

In the summer of 1927 the World Exploration Company of Fort Worth, Texas, purchased the assets of the Death Valley Gold Mines (Mining?) Company in this new district on the west side of Death Valley, for a reported consideration of \$100,000. It was stated in the newspaper articles announcing the transaction that the property was located in the Chuckwalla Mountains (?) region, where a sixty-six-foot tunnel had already been excavated. Full water rights to Sand Spring, fifteen miles away, ensured a good water supply. A new organization, the World Mining Company of Nevada, was charged with development of the mine, and the parent company's optimism toward the newly purchased property was unhesitatingly voiced by its president, Chester R. Bunker, who emphasized that

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114. Mining Journal, 15 February 1927, p. 31.

115. Ibid., 15 March 1927, p. 34; Inyo Independent, 7 May 1927.

We are after good prospects anywhere we can find them, and we think this Death Valley Gold property is one of the best prospects that we have ever investigated. Our entire resources will be thrown behind this project, and the property will be developed to fullest extent and with all the energy that our organization is known to possess.<sup>116</sup>

Later that month the county surveyor of Esmeralda County, Nevada, filed a plat of the town of "Snookum" (undoubtedly a misspelling), approximately ten miles south of Sand Spring and the focal point for mining activity in the new district.<sup>117</sup> Meanwhile, the World Mining Company was proceeding with its development work now and had just established a camp and was busy driving two shafts on the Skookum Mine vein.<sup>118</sup> Sol Camp, retained as superintendent of the Skookum property, replaced the company's jackhammer drills, which were operated by an air compressor that required twenty-five gallons of water a day, with a coal auger ordered from Denver, and proceeded to push work on the mine's main tunnel throughout the summer. A subsidiary tunnel higher on the same mountain was started to intersect an ore shoot from which surface assays had reportedly been taken yielding \$20 to \$500 a ton in gold.<sup>119</sup> Another property

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116. Inyo Independent, 4 June 1927.

117. Ibid., 11 June 1927. Efforts to locate a copy of this plat in either the Inyo Co., California, recorder's office or in that of the Esmeralda Co., Nevada, clerk and recorder were fruitless. The only Skookum Mining District known about in the latter state is the district by that name in Lander Co., outside Austin.

118. Mining Journal, 30 June 1927, p. 31. This is not to be confused with the Skookum-Bullfrog Group of claims in the Bullfrog District near Gold Center, which were active much earlier, about 1906 to 1907.

119. Ibid., p. 32; 15 July 1927, p. 30.

being worked by the World Mining group was the Mother Lode Claim, which was probably the Gold Mother Lode of Death Valley Group ten miles southwest of Sand Spring that had earlier been deeded to the Death Valley Mines Company, Inc., by Al Barcherding, James Traynor, Harry McNamara, William F. Logan, and Frank M. Maloney.<sup>120</sup> Samples from this mine were assaying from \$12 to \$95 a ton.<sup>121</sup>

By the fall of 1927 the primary development objective of the World Exploration Company was attained when the main quartz dyke at the Skookum Mine was intersected by the lower tunnel at a distance of 500 feet from the portal. A fair grade of milling ore was now being tapped, with higher values expected as the tunnel was extended deeper into the mountainside.<sup>122</sup> As this work crosscutting the dyke to encounter the downward extension of the rich surface showings progressed, a new engine was installed to speed up the development. At the same time the World Exploration Company was purchasing and installing new equipment for use at the Skookum Mine, they were also acquiring property in the Hannapah District northeast of Tonopah.<sup>123</sup>

c) Demise of Mining Operations

Just when it was beginning to appear that the Skookum Mine might be put on a paying basis, a shroud of silence falls over the entire mining operation. The October 1927 article contains the last detailed information found by these writers

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120. Inyo Independent, 20 November 1926. Messrs. Logan, McNamara, Traynor, and Maloney later became directors of Death Valley Gold Mines, Inc., the Nevada organization incorporated in November 1926 that carried out initial explorations in the area that later was designated the Skookum Mining District.

121. Mining Journal, 15 August 1927, p. 30.

122. Inyo Independent, 17 September 1927.

123. Mining Journal, 30 October 1927, p. 34.

concerning mining activity in the Skookum Mining District in northwest Death Valley. At the end of 1927 Bev Hunter and his wife deeded to Albert M. Johnson of Chicago, Death Valley Scotty's patron, the following segment of land:

bounded on the westerly side by the Ubehebe and Last Chance range of mountains, on the north by an east and west line drawn through Sand Springs, on the south by an east and west line drawn through Surveyor's Wells, and on the east by the State of Nevada.<sup>124</sup>

The reason for selling this incredibly large chunk of real estate is not known, but its purchase was probably part of Johnson's land acquisition program that began in 1915 when he started buying up old homesteads and mining claims in the northern part of Death Valley. Over a dozen years or so he took title to more than 1,500 acres in the Grapevine Canyon vicinity, in addition to several springs.<sup>125</sup> It would seem by the general description given that this property might have included, or at least bordered on, the Skookum Mining District, but no mention of a working mine is made in the transfer deed notice.

In 1928 notice was found of the transfer of the Dan D Nos. 1-4 placer mining claims, situated in the Skookum Mining District, from their Los Angeles and San Francisco owners to Continental Sulphur Corporation.<sup>126</sup> Another deed notice

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124. Inyo Independent, 3 December 1927.

125. From MS, Hank Johnston, Death Valley Scotty: The Man and the Myth, Chapter 7, pp. 2-3, in history files, DSC.

126. Inyo Independent, 25 February 1928.

concerning these properties two months later described them as "6 miles in a southerly direction from Last Chance Mountain," which would place them about directly west of Sand Spring and outside (north) of the national monument boundary.<sup>127</sup> It is unclear what happened to the mining operations or companies involved in this area, although it could well be that the rich gold vein simply petered out. From the scarcity of data available on the Skookum Mining District, it appears to be simply another Death Valley gold dream that never came true.

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127. Ibid., 14 April 1928.



D. The Valley Floor

1. Presenting Death Valley to the World

a) Resorts Open in the 1920s

Death Valley, land of terrible thirst, whose strange beauty and unique geology long have been associated with romance and mystery--and strange tales of heroism and lingering death--is about to lose its distinction as one of the few remaining regions of the globe known only to the adventuring trail breaker, the hardy prospector and the perspiring borax worker.

Soon the eye of the ubiquitous tourist will view with unconcern its legendary terrors and gaze in perfect comfort and safety upon its grim wonders. Civilization again extends its frontier--and the goodly company of adventurers lose one more of the rapidly vanishing "far places" of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

Not until the 1920s did Death Valley's general isolation from the public end and its spectacular scenic and historical resources open up not only to the neighboring populace but eventually to people across the nation and around the world. H.W. Eichbaum accelerated this chain of events by construction of his Stovepipe Wells resort in 1926 in the upper part of Death Valley--the first tourist accommodations in the area. Its northerly location and the fact that it was most easily accessible over the Panamints from the west meant that it attracted people primarily from southern California and the Owens Valley area. The road leading from that hotel south toward Furnace Creek Ranch was, however, a fair desert road, and the opening of Furnace Creek Inn in 1927, offering a whole new segment of the valley to public view, was an added incentive to journey in that direction.

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1. Inyo Independent, 8 January 1927.

This later hotel was operated by the Pacific Coast Borax Company, which after the cessation of mining activity at Ryan became interested in promoting tourist travel to Death Valley in order to continue operating and making profits off its Death Valley Railroad and its facilities at Ryan and Death Valley Junction. Important strides were made in encouraging travel to the area when the company's project gained the support of the Santa Fe and Union Pacific transcontinental railroads, whose promotional campaigns for package tours did much toward introducing people to this part of California. The chance to be transported in relative luxury on the railroad all the way from Los Angeles, and then to be motor bussed to nearby scenic wonders, meant a comfortable and relatively easy trip for many.

The blessings and approval given to the promotion of tourism here that was offered by various National Park Service officials such as Stephen T Mather, director, certainly were not detrimental to the success of the undertaking. Indeed, Mather was an active consultant with the railroad men and others concerned with the planning phases of the Furnace Creek Inn operation.

Usually it required only one exposure to the valley's awe-inspiring vistas and strange geological formations, and perhaps one day of basking in the temperate climate (further warmed by the knowledge that one's friends elsewhere were suffering winter's hardships), to convince people that here was truly another magnificent winter playground. The chance to view Mt. Whitney, highest point on the continent, and at the same time marvel at its lowest elevation, Badwater, on the floor of Death Valley, was an opportunity not to be missed.

According to Harry Gower, an engineer for the borax people for almost fifty years, this venture into the tourist business was not an easy one for the company or its employees:

Looking back, however, at the adversities of past years, no one can now imagine why we were so anxious to get into the hotel business in Death Valley in 1927. Maybe it looked like a good idea then but certainly in 30 years no great profits from it have piled up in the Company coffers. The principal headaches and drawbacks were the short winter season and the consequent bother and expense of opening up in the Fall, recruiting a staff and then closing down again before the next period of hot weather. Other problems could be listed, such as generation and failures of electric power, production of water, operation of the laundry and the ruinous effect on our equipment of the extremes of the weather, dust, flash floods, etc.<sup>2</sup>

b) Tourism Increases When Area Becomes National Monument

Increased travel was insured when the area was turned over to the federal government as a national monument in 1933, for federal guardianship of its vast acreage meant a corresponding improvement in its roads and facilities. The region's attraction was unique in that it was most endurable and hospitable during the winter when other national parks were blocked by ice and snow. Thus it was in a position to absorb much of the tourist trade crowding into California's sunnier climes. Phenomenal progress was soon made in constructing and either hard surfacing or oiling new highways within the monument, and in opening up

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2. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 124.

new trails and water holes to enable ever-expanding exploration of the valley's resources. Eventually an airport was needed, campgrounds were constructed, and housing for government employees was added. This rapid development resulted in an increase in visitation to the area from only a few thousand in 1933 to almost 50,000 in 1936.

Resorts were enlarged to accommodate the visitor influx, Furnace Creek Inn having to add a second dining room, a larger lounge, and improved furnishings. Furnace Creek Ranch added housekeeping cottages and more cabins. Even the Amargosa Hotel at Death Valley Junction enjoyed a profitable business. All three main Death Valley hotels are important and significant in their own ways. Furnace Creek Ranch is the oldest establishment, having been founded initially as a supply point for the Harmony Borax Works, producing food for both its stock and workers. It was opened for visitor accommodation in 1933. The Stovepipe Wells resort was built from scratch by H.W. Eichbaum, and first opened its doors in November 1926. Its success helped encourage opening of Furnace Creek Inn in February 1927 by the Pacific Coast Borax Company.

Since then the different hotels have enlarged and expanded their services and facilities. Today they are the main supply centers in the area and are smoothly and professionally run operations, catering to thousands of visitors annually by providing accommodations, food, books and literature on the region, and generally performing a valuable service in helping acquaint visitors with the inspiring beauty and absorbing and romantic history of this once formidable part of California.

## 2. Stovepipe Wells Hotel

### a) History

#### (1) Old Stovepipe Wells

Long before the present Stovepipe Wells resort was conceived of as a viable tourist operation, the site now referred to as old Stovepipe Wells was a life-saving source of water in the arid desert land of northern Death Valley. Situated on the eastern edge of the sand dunes about five airline miles northeast of the present hotel site, these two shallow pits dug into the sandy floor were undoubtedly originally utilized by the Indian inhabitants of the valley prior to the memorable trek of the '49ers that opened the country to white penetration. Their central location would have made them accessible to Indian groups either crossing between the Amargosa Desert and the Cottonwood Mountains via Daylight Pass, or traveling north or south along the valley's central axis. Originally unmarked, and its whereabouts often obscured by layers of blown sand, the well's location was probably first known only through word of mouth, making its detection by thirsty prospectors wandering up and down the valley an often desperate and time-consuming task. Eventually it occurred to some enterprising individual, who had access to the necessary materials, to stick a length of stovepipe a few feet into the water source and thus insure easy discovery of the site from all directions.<sup>3</sup>

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3. In 1933 when Death Valley became a national monument, the well site was marked by the present iron pump and masonry curbing. Bob Eichbaum guarded the original stovepipe and displayed it for a time at his Stovepipe Wells resort. After being lost for a short period, the relic was relocated and displayed again at the dedication of an official state historical plaque at the old well site on 10 November 1968 during the 19th annual Death Valley Encampment. San Bernardino (Ca.) Sun, 8 November 1968.

Heavy usage of the well by white men did not actually occur until the mining booms in Rhyolite, Nevada, and Skidoo, California; the intense excitement and awareness of commercial opportunities they generated initiated a steady and continuous stream of travel over the intervening sixty miles or so of steaming desert. In such a desert environment all springs and water sources are cherished, but Stovepipe's location halfway between Rhyolite and Skidoo seemed to make it a natural waystation for the area also. Sometime probably early in the 1900s a first attempt was made to make of the wells something more than a brief rest stop.

Sensing that the increased traffic along here could become a source of revenue, some hardy businessman or inventive prospector dug himself a cellar space out of the shifting sands, measuring about eighteen by twelve feet, which he then surrounded on three sides with four- to five-foot-high walls fashioned from beer bottles stuck together with mud. Several inches of earth over tarp-covered timbers insulated the roof from the burning desert sun. Initially concerned only with dispensing a limited assortment of foodstuffs along with a liberal amount of beer from the Tonopah brewery (kept reasonably cool in a tub covered with soaked sacks or tarps), the proprietor soon acquiesced to repeated demands for cool lodging facilities and installed two beds in his cellar for use by overnight visitors.

The water available from the wells was not what would be termed delightfully refreshing, as discerned immediately from one man's account of his experiences after drinking the "poisoned water" of Stovepipe Springs:

My canteens were exhausted when I arrived there [old Stovepipe Wells], and I disregarded the admonition and

Illustration 256.

Bottle dugout, old Stovepipe Wells, in the 1920s.

From Margaret Long Collection, courtesy University of Colorado  
Library, Boulder.

drank. The water is very low in the spring, is of a yellowish appearance and intensely nauseating in taste. Its odor is very disagreeable, and it can be smelted for half a mile away. Nevertheless, I filled my canteens, and drank of it while there. As I proceeded on my journey my legs became weakly and I found it difficult to continue my usual pace. I lay down thinking to gain strength, but no improvement was noticeable. The distance between Grove Pipe and Hole-in-the-Rock is about 10 miles and I took 12 days to make it. I traveled about 100 miles in all. The trip was very hard and I was very tired when I reached the Hole-in-the-Rock. I had to travel in the snow for the last 10 miles and the snow was very deep. I had to use my hands and feet to get up the snow. I had to be very careful not to slip. I had to be very careful not to get lost. I had to be very careful not to get caught in the snow. I had to be very careful not to get caught in the snow. I had to be very careful not to get caught in the snow.



Building made by the Eskimos in the valley. According to J. R. Clark, superintendent of construction on the Skidoo.

Building made by the Eskimos in August 1906.

drank. The water is very low in the spring, is of a yellowish appearance and intensely nauseating in taste. Its odor is very disagreeable, and it can be smelled for half a mile away. Nevertheless, I filled my canteens, and drank of it while there. As I proceeded on my journey my legs became unsteady and I found it difficult to continue my usual pace. I lay down thinking to gain strength, but no improvement was noticeable. The distance between Stove Pipe and Hole-in-the-Rock is about 14 miles, and I fully realized that it was by all odds a case of make this or die. . . . I struggled forward, my legs becoming more and more uncertain. In addition to this everything was getting dim before me, and I appeared to be rapidly losing my eye sight. . . . I could no longer walk and the only means of locomotion left me was to crawl on my hands and knees. I was almost blind, too. . . . I was 36 hours in making the 14 miles between the two points, and it looks more like a miracle than anything else that I am alive to tell the tale.<sup>4</sup>

With the initiation of stage and freight service between Rhyolite and Skidoo in 1906, it became apparent that a more permanent and better-stocked waystation was needed to adequately provision and succor the additional travelers. By February 1907 Stovepipe Wells, in addition to being the one-night stopover on the Kimball Bros. stage route between Rhyolite and Skidoo, was also the first telephone office in the valley. According to J.R. Clark, superintendent of construction on the Skidoo-

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4. Bullfrog Miner, 10 August 1906.

Rhyolite road and one of the proprietors of the Stovepipe roadhouse,

affairs at Stovepipe are more than satisfactory. There is a commissary tent, a boarding house, lodging house and several additional tents, a corral and feeding stable and accommodations in every respect for pilgrims crossing the hot sands. The spring is now inclosed and the water is consequently much improved. . . . The water is the only fresh water within several miles. . . . The road house at this point is an absolute necessity and facilitates travel from Rhyolite, providing a stopping point at the end of an easy day's drive.<sup>5</sup>

Two months later improvements to the complex were being made, and a feature article on the station in the Rhyolite Herald's pictorial supplement presented a clear picture of what services could be expected there:

The rusty stovepipe is gone, and there stands in its place a full-fledged road house, way down in the depths of the desert isolation. Many a prospector, tired, worn and weary, has travelled far to the protection of this water hole, marked only by the single piece of pipe; perhaps many a prospector has drunk from its slimy waters never to rise again, being too faint, too famished, to consider the advisability of bailing out the hole and waiting for a fresh supply. The water at Stovepipe is good, provided it is frequently drawn off, but alike most desert water holes it soon becomes stagnant and unfit for

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5. Ibid., 22 February 1907.

Illustration 257.

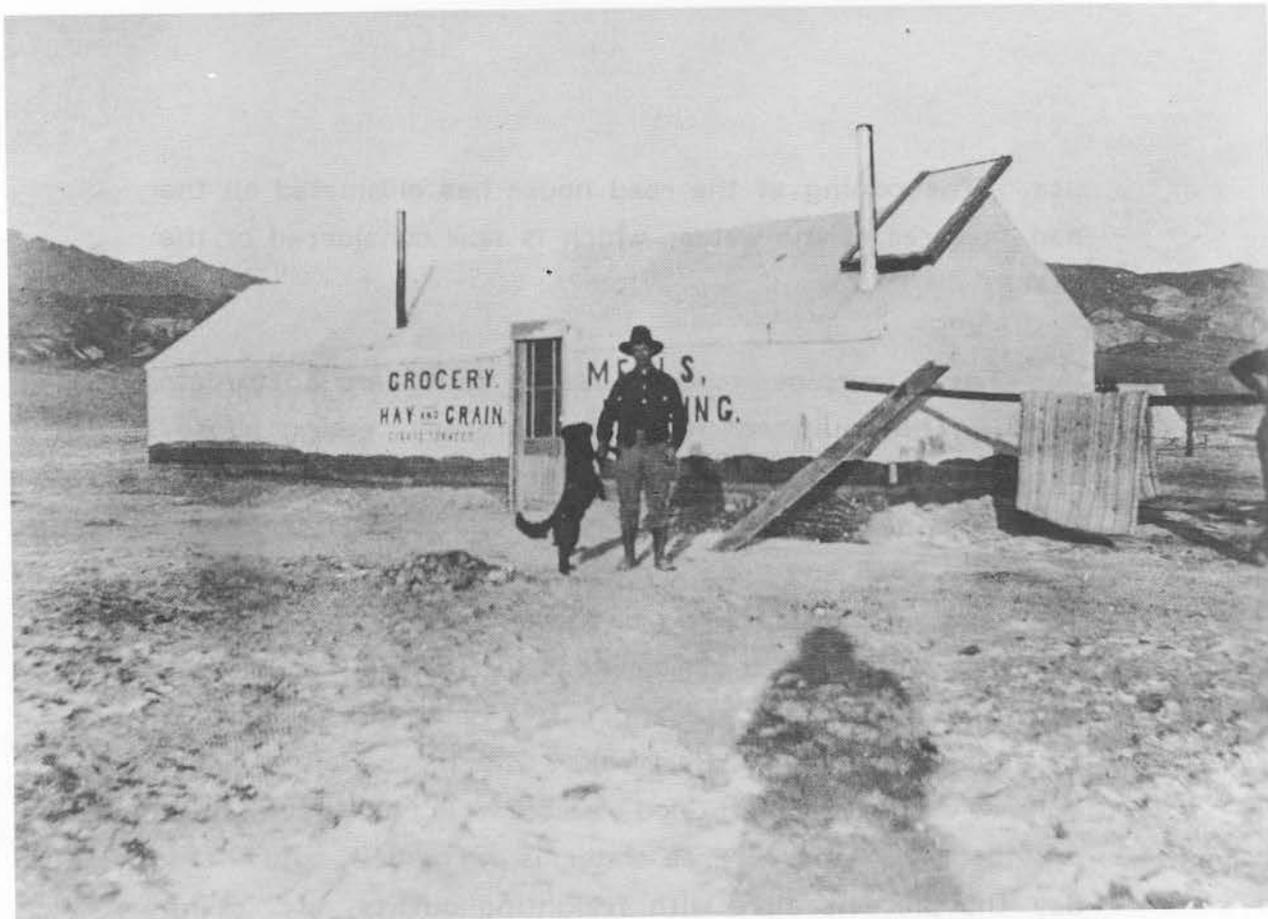
Stovepipe Wells waystation, taken by Yeager and Woodward on Death Valley Expedition, 1908.

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 258.

Present old Stovepipe Wells site.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



between Rhyolite and Shiloh. Stovepipe is 25 miles from Rhyolite, the half-way station. Meals are 15 cents, beds, 25 cents. The telephone connects Stovepipe with the outside world, via Rhyolite.



use. The coming of the road house has eliminated all the bad features of the water, which is now considered of the best.

The Stovepipe road house is quite an up-to-date place. The equipment includes a grocery, eating house, bar, lodging house, corral, stock of hay, grain and provisions,--a little community in itself where travellers may find rest and food for themselves and their beasts. Just now, decided improvements are in progress. A fly is being added to the main tent, walls are being dug, bath room installed, and a pump is being placed to take care of the water. Hammocks will be added for the comfort of guests. Good accommodations have been provided for ladies. Free water is furnished, and every day the place is alive with freighting outfits, etc. going between Rhyolite and Skidoo. Stovepipe is 25 miles from Rhyolite; the half-way station. Meals are 75 cents; beds, 75 cents. The telephone connects Stovepipe with the outside world, via Rhyolite.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps showing signs of getting carried away with the success of their venture, the owners of Stovepipe were even contemplating eventually turning the area into a winter resort:

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6. Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907. According to Death Valley Scotty's reminiscences, water and feed for pack animals and freight teams cost 50¢ a head, and a shot of whiskey for thirsty drivers and prospectors cost the same. Houston, Death Valley Scotty Told Me--, p. 88.

The water is believed to possess great medicinal properties, the winter is as a delightful spring, and with the addition of comfortable bungalows, houses of entertainment, out door games, on the hard baked sands, and many other features that might be added, Stovepipe could be made a place where those in delicate health or suffering from pulmonary troubles, might find permanent relief. If the sun cure has merit, it could be worked to the limit at Stovepipe. . . .<sup>7</sup>

With the gradual decline of Skidoo and Rhyolite as great mining centers around 1908 came the simultaneous demise of the Stovepipe Wells waystation and its gradual abandonment. The article above, however, was certainly a portent of things to come, but it was not until nineteen years later that a young engineer from southern California was able to bring the project to fruition.

(2) Eichbaum Toll Road Brings Visitors to  
Death Valley

Herman William Eichbaum, born in Pennsylvania in 1878, received a degree in engineering at the University of Virginia before the lure of the West brought him to Rhyolite, Nevada, during its initial bonanza days. Blessed with an open and inventive mind, Eichbaum's engineering talents soon surfaced with his design and construction of the first electric plant in that young city in 1906. Soon turning to mining exploration of the Ubehebe and Goldbelt areas, Eichbaum acquired a taste for prospecting and an appreciation of the beauty and potential of Death Valley that stayed with him all his life and that eventually

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7. Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907.

determined the direction of his future endeavors. When Rhyolite faded, Eichbaum went to southern California where he eventually married a society girl, Helene Neeper, and turned his inventive talents toward creating popular recreational activities on Catalina Island and at the seaside resort of Venice.

During his sojourn in Death Valley Eichbaum had envisioned the recreational potential of the area and had dreamed of constructing a resort among the buttes east of the sand dunes and overlooking Stovepipe Wells. Now, bolstered by several years experience in catering to the public, and well-versed in what the public demanded in its entertainment facilities, Eichbaum determined to make his dreams of opening up Death Valley to tourism a reality. Rejected by the Inyo County Board of Supervisors when he petitioned to construct a toll road from Lida, Nevada, into Death Valley via Sand Spring, Eichbaum alternatively proposed a route over Towne Pass. But still the supervisors were loathe to contribute at taxpayer's expense to what seemed to them such an ill-conceived venture.

Undaunted even after another application was voted down, this time for a franchise to build two toll roads at his own expense, and in an effort to alleviate previous objections, Eichbaum revised his plan to include only construction of a road from Whippoorwill Springs (Darwin Wash) across the Panamint Valley and over Towne Pass to old Stovepipe Wells.<sup>8</sup> Supported by a

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8. Inyo Independent, 8 and 29 August 1925. Eichbaum's two-route proposal had included plans for a toll road beginning at the south end of the valley and going north via Bennett's Well and Furnace Creek Ranch clear up to Mesquite Spring in the north end of the valley. This route was violently opposed by the U.S. Borax Company employees, who were frequent users of it. Mary De Decker, The Eichbaum Toll Road, Death Valley '49ers Keepsake No. 10 (San Bernardino, Ca.: Inland Printing & Engraving Co., 1970), n.p.

petition signed by several hundred persons, including representatives of the borax company and even Death Valley Scotty, Eichbaum's application was at last granted by unanimous vote.<sup>9</sup>

Although getting this far must have seemed quite a project to the young visionary, the hard work was only just beginning. After three viewers appointed by the Board of Supervisors, in consultation with an engineer selected by Eichbaum, had decided on the route over Towne Pass and the best method of building the road, construction work began:

A Mr. Miller, Eichbaum's right-hand-man, was superintendent over a crew of six to eight men, including a driver, a grader, several rock throwers, and a cook. Few of them stayed throughout the job. . . . The first road cut was made by a 30-Caterpillar tractor pulling a seven-foot road grader. Then it was widened to a passing width. Rocky outcroppings often determined the width of the road as well as its contour. No blasting was done. As one of the crew described it, they "kinda detoured around" the rough canyon of the present route toward the summit.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of frustrations over mud and washouts that often delayed supplies and construction work, the labor slowly progressed. The floor of Death Valley was reached by spring, and attempts were then made to clear and grade the roadbed on through to the east side of the valley. It was not long, however, before the futility of combatting the constantly-

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9. Inyo Independent, 10 October 1925.

10. Ibid.

shifting sands was realized, and the grade had of necessity to be stopped at the sand dunes  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles short of Eichbaum's long-dreamed-of goal. Certification of completion of the toll road was made on 4 May 1926, after which the county supervisors fixed the toll rates between Whippoorwill Springs and Stovepipe Wells as follows: \$2 for each auto or motorcycle; 50¢ for each occupant of a truck, trailer, wagon, auto, or motorcycle; \$1 per head for each animal, whether driven or led; with rates for trucks, wagons, and trailers to be determined by tonnage.<sup>11</sup> Revenue from the tolls was put in a fund for road maintenance.

The new road into Death Valley, although rough and containing curves that were often difficult for cars to negotiate without considerable backing, was acclaimed for providing direct access to the valley from Los Angeles via Owens Valley, enabling thousands to finally experience first-hand the oft-mentioned scenic splendors and unrivalled panoramas of the region. Eichbaum's immediate plans envisioned sightseeing buses leaving Los Angeles each morning and staying overnight at Lone Pine before continuing on to Death Valley for the next night's stay. The return trip would then be started the following day back to Lone Pine. In addition, Lone Pine was visualizing construction of a road west to the base of Mount Whitney, enabling a one-day ascent of that peak. It was thought that the double drawing-card of visiting the highest and lowest spots in the United States within the space of only a few days would be irresistible to tourists.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Ibid., 8 May 1926.

12. Ibid., 10 October 1925.

### (3) Construction of the Resort Begins

With the details of tourist travel to Death Valley worked out, Eichbaum's attention could now focus on construction of his resort, the first unit of which was projected to cost around \$50,000, his intention being to add more facilities as the occasion warranted. After Eichbaum's original plan to build a hotel in the buttes east of old Stovepipe Wells turned out to be impractical, an alternative decided on was to initiate construction near the wells themselves. But even this compromise location was doomed to disappointment:

One day six trucks of lumber for the new development were reported arriving at the sand dunes; though we didn't believe it we drove up there to see what it was all about. The proposed route to the Wells lay north of the big dunes and one truck was out there sunk deep in the sand as the others waited cautiously on firm ground for Eichbaum's arrival. He showed up finally, had a long look and then told the drivers to dump their loads where they stood; without a chance to reach the wells one place was as good as another. Thus, the site was selected. . . .<sup>13</sup>

It was Eichbaum's contention that in the temperate climate of Death Valley solid frame structures were unnecessary, so the premier unit of his resort consisted of modified tent houses with walls that were beaverboard below and screened on the upper portion, with roll-up canvas awnings available for any further protection against the elements that was deemed necessary. Advertising for the resort and the connecting bus service was

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13. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 112.

immediately started in Los Angeles, stressing such amenities as electric lights, running water, scenic tours, and topnotch service. The original camp consisted of twenty small cabins or "bungalettes" and some larger buildings supplemented with army tents. A revolving beacon light on the roof of the main building served to guide wanderers to the oasis. In these beginning stages of the hotel's development the toll road ran between the main building and the guest cabins and on into the sand dunes.

Bungalette or Bungalow City, as it was familiarly known for a short while, opened for business 1 November 1926, operating on the American plan. The first party of tourists arrived a few days later. Despite the relative luxuries and modern conveniences available here, the basic necessities were still important, and in a manner demonstrating remembrance of the agonies suffered by earlier and thirstier visitors to Death Valley, on 15 November "a crowd of merrymakers dined and danced in celebration of the formal opening of a new 24,000-barrel water well," making possible an additional 1,000 gallons of water an hour.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of November the virtues of the area and of the resort were being extolled in a flowery descriptive tribute by the automobile editor of the Los Angeles Examiner:

. . . Death Valley, always mysterious, intriguing and beautiful, until this time has been practically closed to the general motoring public. Now it can be reached and seen in its entirety and in absolute safety[,] comfort and convenience, either by stage or by private car. . . . It

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14. Inyo Independent, 20 November 1926; "Death Valley's Road to Nowhere," in World's Work 49 (July 1930): 51.



Illustration 259.

Eichbaum toll road, showing "Bungalow City" and sand dunes, in the 1920s.

From Margaret Long Collection, courtesy University of Colorado Library, Boulder.

Illustration 260.

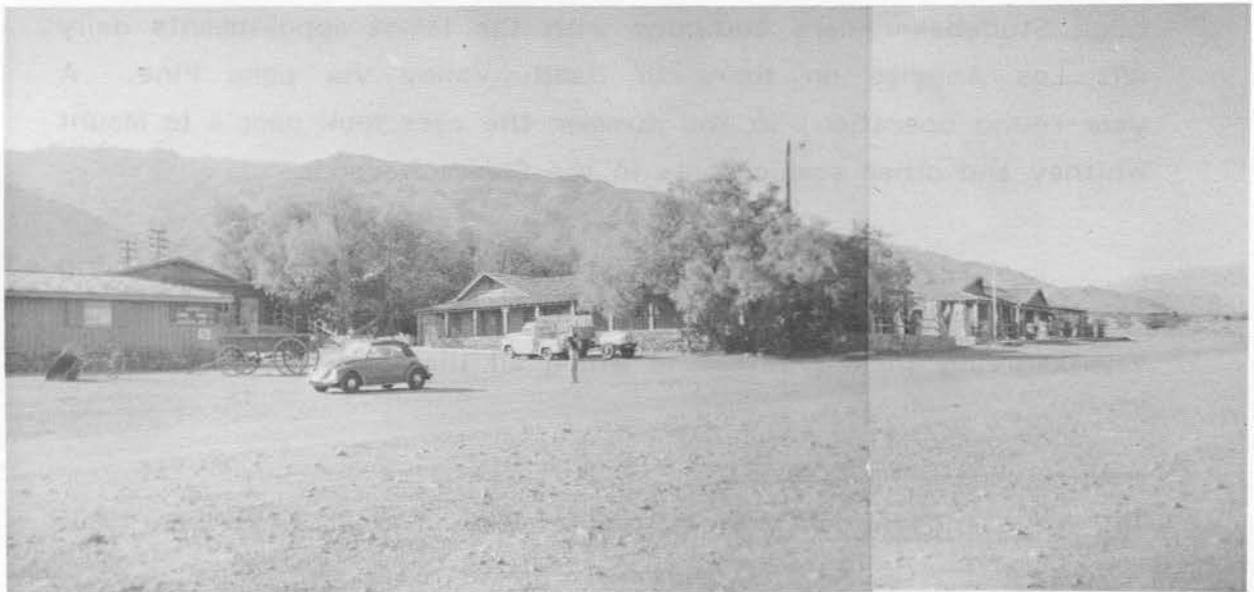
Stovepipe Wells Hotel.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



YALBY H. LIND, 2070 CROSS, DEATH VALLEY  
 AT STONE PINE WELLS, 1936

Added entertainment possibilities as listed in mention were the...  
 these complete with pack animals and with old-time...  
 prospectors as guides; or for those unacquainted to such a...  
 former mode of transportation there were large Buick sedans...  
 available for financing in comfort. A stage service enjoying



[Stovepipe Wells Hotel] is a city of fifty bungalows. Their snowy white sides, offset by green and white canvas sun shades, with green roofs, form a vivid contrast to the gray-black sands. At one end of this bungalow city is a restaurant where a former chief [sic] of the St. Catherine Hotel at Catalina serves tasty delicacies, while radio and Victrolia [sic] entertain. At the other is a store, electric light plant and baths. Across the street men toil with mortar and sand, building tennis courts, a swimming pool, which will be canvased [sic] covered and farther over a nine-hole golf course, plus a landing field for airplanes. This landing field is important, for when completed Eichbaum proposes to put into service passenger planes from Los Angeles, with a combination trip that will make a visit to this country most unusual.<sup>15</sup>

Added entertainment possibilities he failed to mention were the trail rides complete with pack animals and with old-time famous prospectors as guides; or for those unaccustomed to such a rigorous mode of transportation there were large Buick sedans available for sightseeing in comfort. A stage service employing huge Studebaker cars equipped with the latest appointments daily left Los Angeles on tours to Death Valley via Lone Pine. A year-round operation, in the summer the cars took people to Mount Whitney and other scenic spots in the Sierra Nevadas.

By far the largest and most entertaining social event of the year, eclipsing even the opening day, was the Thanksgiving turkey dinner to which all the long-time residents of

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15. Inyo Independent, 27 November 1926, and 24 November 1928.

the valley were invited, the guest list including such notables as Shorty Harris, John Cyte, Bill Corcoran, Jack Stewart, and a host of others. From this time on the resort became a favorite rest stop and gathering point for area prospectors, a place where they knew they would always be welcomed and cared for.<sup>16</sup>

This life Eichbaum had chosen was not an easy one. Despite the widespread and enthusiastic campaign inaugurated to promote tourism in the area, there were still many who remained unconvinced that the desert offered much potential for positive enjoyment. This was especially disheartening to one who was such a firm supporter of the area's natural and historical resources. Another frustration was the basic mechanics of operating an expanding complex in such an isolated area. Most supplies were hauled in from Lone Pine, a long and exhausting trip, while laundry had to be done at Beatty. Because of the salty and brackish content of the water from the hotel wells, cooking and drinking water had to be imported from Emigrant Spring. Hotel employees were hard to keep in this isolated area, the necessary complement consisting of a clerk, bellhop, cook, two waitresses, and two guides. Some if not all of these workers were evidently blacks, one woman visitor commenting on the "army of colored help all dressed in white duck."<sup>17</sup> The road was kept in shape by a crew of five maintenance men.

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16. Shorty Harris and John Cyty became almost regulars around the ranch, even participating in some of the Easter sunrise services initiated later. See Inyo Independent, 7 April 1928.

17. Letter quoted in De Decker, Eichbaum Toll Road, n.p.

(4) Easter Sunrise Celebration the First of  
Several New Tourist Services

Probably the biggest boost to tourism in Death Valley was provided by the first Easter sunrise service for the unknown dead of the valley, organized by the Eichbaums to take place on 17 April 1927 in the sand dunes northeast of the resort. The program included a stirring address "dedicated to the memory of the courageous men and women who braved the terrors of the desert in bygone years"<sup>18</sup> and delivered near a large wooden cross set on the crest of the highest sand dune; 100 schoolchildren strew desert flowers over the dunes, the entire program closing with a rousing rendition of "Onward Christian Soldiers" as the sun rose over the Funeral Mountains.<sup>19</sup> The event was so popular and attracted so many people from Los Angeles by private car and motor tour that the service became a ritual each year.<sup>20</sup>

By late October 1927 plans were being made for an ice plant at the resort, and a new unit of rooms being contemplated was to have double walls with a six-inch space between through which cool air would be forced from coils connected to the ice plant. Another ritual repeated this month was the "desert rat" Thanksgiving Dinner, offering the crusty old-timers a tantalizing assortment of delicacies ranging from lobster from Catalina Island to a shank of wild mountain goat in addition to

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18. Inyo Independent, 26 March 1927.

19. Ibid., 9 April 1927.

20. People attracted to the 1928 observance were witness to the inaugural flight by women over Death Valley. Inyo Independent, 14 April 1928. After Death Valley became a national monument in 1933 the sunrise services continued under the sponsorship of the NPS.

the traditional fowl. How times had changed for the likes of "Johnny-Behind-the-Gun" and "Shorty" Harris!<sup>21</sup>

Two innovations were introduced toward the end of 1929 and beginning of 1930. On 15 December 1929 the first passenger air service into Death Valley was begun. The 350-mile plane tour, in a tri-motored six-passenger sedan, provided its patrons with a view of Yosemite Valley and Mount Whitney before landing on the arid floor of Death Valley. Pack trains and motor cars with guides met the visitors at the Stovepipe Wells landing field and conducted trips to some of the various historical sites in the area.<sup>22</sup> Another enterprise Eichbaum became involved in was the construction of a road to Death Valley Scotty's Grapevine ranch, which would connect with the toll road near the sand dunes, reducing the distance to the ranch and Castle to only thirty-five miles from the present eighty-five-mile route via Beatty and Bonnie Claire. This project opened to the tourist trade not only Scotty's ranch and Castle but also the Ubehebe area, rich in scenic wonders and mining activity.<sup>23</sup> This road led north from the sand dunes toward Cottonwood Canyon, ran by the Indian burial mounds in this vicinity, and then cut across to the western base of the Funeral and Grapevine mountain ranges, which it followed directly to Scotty's ranch and Castle. The later modern highway to Scotty's Castle was superimposed over much of this route.

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21. Inyo Independent, 29 October 1927.

22. Ibid., 14 December 1929.

23. Ibid., 4 January 1930.

(5) Toll Road Abolished After Creation of National Monument

It is tragic that the man to whom Death Valley owes so much for its popularizing as one of California's major attractions and most popular winter vacation spots should not have lived to see the region he loved so well become a national monument. A sudden attack of meningitis struck Eichbaum at the age of forty-nine and resulted in his death a few days later on 16 February 1932. A year later, on 11 February 1933, the desolate but beautiful valley that had been the scene of so much hardship and so few rewards for so many became a national monument.

Although Helene Eichbaum was continuing to run the Stovepipe Wells Hotel and toll road, cries were now being heard that toll charges were inappropriate for a national monument and that either the county, state, or federal government should take over the route and remove them. The loudest objections to the tolls were coming from Inyo County residents who, of course, utilized the route more often, and from miners who were currently working claims within the monument and frequently needed to visit them. It was felt that purchasing the road immediately and continuing to use it for a while would give the state time to thoroughly study possible alternative entrances into Death Valley from the northwest that might then connect with other state roads not yet built.

It was hoped at first that the Inyo County Board of Supervisors could be persuaded to purchase the route, it appearing to be the most logical buyer for several reasons: first, Inyo County residents were the loudest protestors to the toll; second, acquisition of the road would more clearly define a state route through Death Valley from Shoshone to Independence, thus financially benefitting towns along the highway; and third, Inyo County was more indebted than either the state or federal

governments to the pioneer road-building work accomplished by Eichbaum and might be more liberal in the purchase price.<sup>24</sup>

It was the California Division of Highways, however, that finally purchased the 30.35 miles of toll road from Stovepipe Wells to Darwin Wash for \$25,000 in December 1934; the seventeen miles of the newly purchased road located within the monument boundaries were subsequently turned over to the NPS. Although the route over Towne Pass was a little too narrow to be easily negotiated by cars and the grades were a bit too steep, the state decided that this was still the only logical entrance point into Death Valley from the west. Only slight changes were made to the route near the summit so that it would be more easily navigable.

The Stovepipe Wells Hotel has gone through several changes of ownership, finally being sold in 1966 by the General Hotel Corporation to Trevell, Inc., a firm operating stores and filling stations in Yellowstone National Park.<sup>25</sup> The NPS has now taken over ownership of the resort.

b) Present Status

The Stovepipe Wells Village complex today offers patio rooms, motel rooms, and deluxe units with a commanding view out over the sand dunes toward Death Valley. Also present near the main building for visitor pleasure are a swimming pool,

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24. John R. White, Supt., DEVA NM, to Chief Engineer Kittredge, Office of National Parks, Buildings & Reservations, 31 October 1933.

25. Inyo Independent, 23 September 1966.

restaurant, and cocktail lounge, while across the street are a store, gas station, and a large campground with trailer hookups. Wells drilled in the 1940s now provide potable drinking water. Here and there on the grounds are several relics reminiscent of the monument's early mining days, including an arrastra, ore cars, an old wagon, and even a couple of "mountain canaries."

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Stovepipe Wells resort of today, situated in the north-central end of the monument about sixteen miles east of towne Pass and adjacent to the sand dunes, is a far cry from the small tent camp opened in 1926 by Bob and Helene Eichbaum. The rude tent cabins have given way to pleasant air-cooled rooms, while the rough and narrow Eichbaum toll road has been replaced by a stretch of modern paved highway over which visitors can easily speed between beautiful Owens Valley and the monument. The significance of the Stovepipe Wells Hotel site lies in its association with Bob Eichbaum who first recognized the potential of Death Valley as a winter resort and spent thousands of dollars turning it into one of California's major tourist attractions. Until his efforts were begun, Death Valley was for all intents and purposes inaccessible to the general motoring public who were deterred by the lack of good roads and of dining and sleeping facilities in the area.

By expending a considerable amount of time and money on advertising and on initiating sightseeing tours in this desert region, Eichbaum was able to attract the Los Angeles crowd, whose utilization of the area as a winter resort, Eichbaum knew, would ensure a prosperous future for the valley whose beauty he wished all to enjoy. Eichbaum's interest in encouraging the tourist trade in the area was certainly not mercenary; he probably never totally regained reimbursement for all his many expenditures. His

dedication to good service is shown by the fact that he even kept a crew at Stovepipe through the summer months when the resort season was over to provide aid for those inexperienced visitors who might enter the valley and become victims of the heat.<sup>26</sup>

Because of this and similar altruistic actions on the part of both husband and wife, Eichbaum was one of the valley's best-liked residents, beloved by tourists and prospectors alike. The debt owed him by the monument and by Inyo County residents, to whom his business ventures incidentally brought added profit through increased traffic in the Owens Valley area, is immense. He truly fulfilled his vision, conceived during his early prospecting days in the Panamints, "that some day he would go back and open Death Valley, with its beauty, its mystery and history to the world."<sup>27</sup>

The Stovepipe Wells Hotel site was recommended for inclusion on the National Register as being of regional significance. The publicizing of the hotel as the first resort in Death Valley lured vast numbers of tourists there, whose delight in the area and appreciation of its natural and historical resources eventually led to designation of the area as a national monument. The present buildings on the site, however, are not historically significant, having been extensively remodeled and changed over the years. The placement of an interpretive marker on the resort grounds giving some of the hotel's early history is recommended. The Eichbaum toll road (present California State Route 190) has been nominated to the National Register as being of regional significance. Portions of the original trace can still be seen near the modern resort structures. The old Stovepipe Wells site on the

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26. World's Work 49 (July 1930):51.

27. Inyo Independent, 27 November 1926.

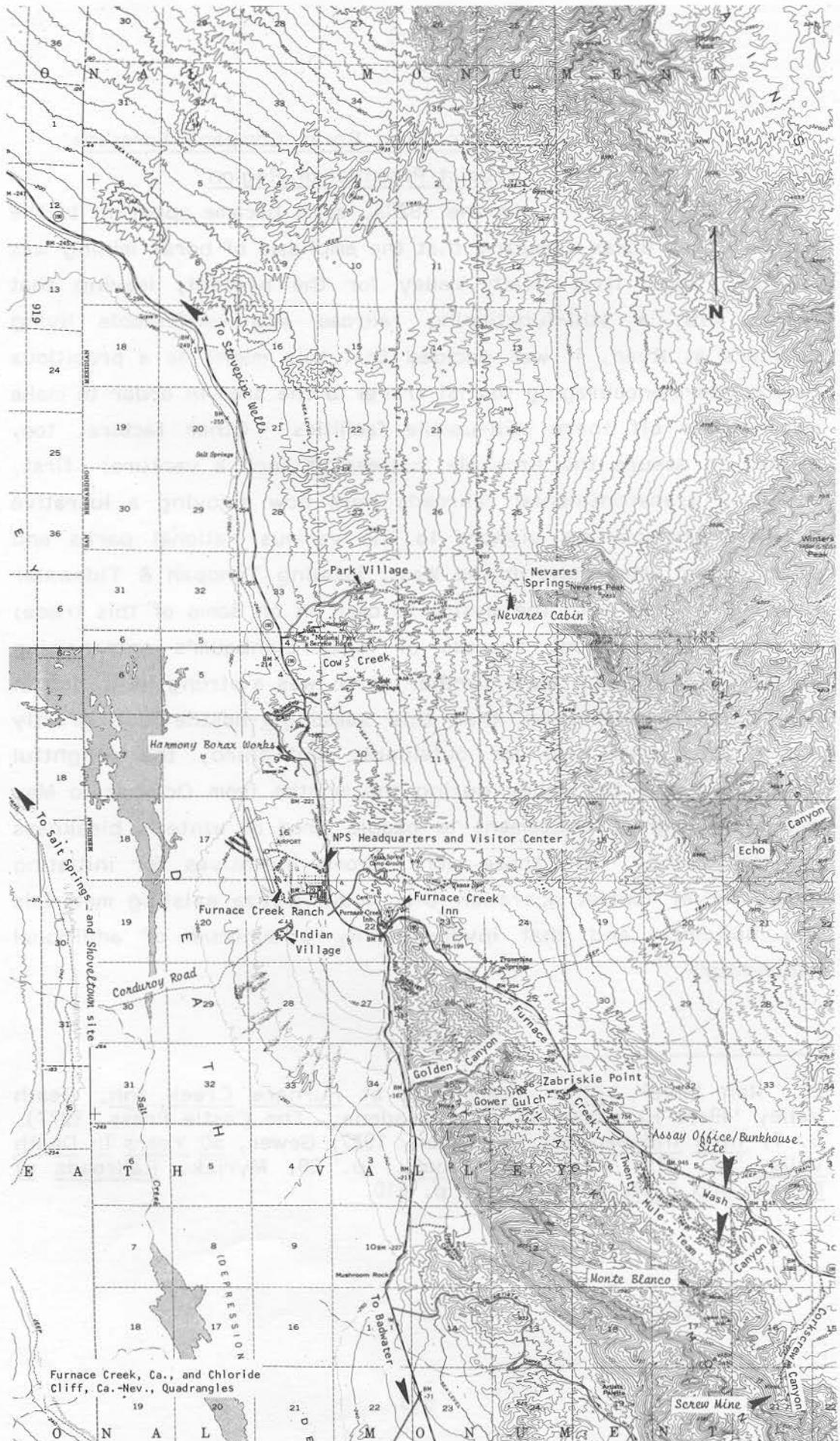
3½-mile-long unpaved road connecting State Highway 190 and the Scotty's Castle road, is also eligible for nomination to the National Register as being of local level of significance. It functioned as an important early waterhole and later was the site of an essential waystation serving the freight teams, passenger stages, and pedestrians travelling back and forth between Rhyolite and Skidoo in the early twentieth century.

(Note: The Stovepipe Wells Hotel and Eichbaum Toll Road have both been declared ineligible for the National Register by the State Historic Preservation Office due to a lack of integrity.)



Illustration 261.

Map showing Nevares cabin, Furnace Creek Ranch, Furnace Creek Inn, Corduroy Road, Shovelton, and Furnace Creek Wash sites.



Furnace Creek, Ca., and Chloride Cliff, Ca.-Nev., Quadrangles

3. Furnace Creek Inn

a) History

(1) Pacific Coast Borax Company Foresees  
Tourist Potential of Region

In the 1920s, as it became apparent to the Pacific Coast Borax Company that the emphasis of borax mining was swinging away from Death Valley for the present, leaving that region with a still-functioning railroad and comfortable living quarters at Ryan, it was decided that this might be a propitious time to start encouraging tourist travel to the area in order to make some money off these still-usable facilities. Other factors, too, seemed to assure the probable success of such a venture: first, the main transcontinental railroads were now enjoying a lucrative business transporting visitors to the various national parks and other scenic attractions in the West, imbuing Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad officials with the desire to cash in on some of this trade; second, the apparent success of H.W. Eichbaum's enterprising venture at Stovepipe Wells further north was a strong indication of the enormous attraction that this seemingly-hostile but greatly romanticized area held for outsiders; and third, the delightful temperatures of the valley during the months from October to May would be a great enticement to people tired of winter's bleakness and cold winds. All these were strong incentives for initiating some sort of tourist operation that could utilize existing materials and buildings and that involved only a minimum of additional expenditure.<sup>28</sup>

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28. Ron Miller, Fifty Years Ago at Furnace Creek Inn, Death Valley '49ers Keepsake No. 17 (Pasadena: The Castle Press, 1977), p. 7; Inyo Independent, 8 January 1927; Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 115; Papke, Guidebook, p. 20; Myrick, Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, p. 610.

The primary concern of the company centered around providing adequate and comfortable accommodations. It was first thought that the natural and easiest solution would be to house people at Furnace Creek Ranch, and plans were accordingly made to add ten or twelve bedrooms plus dining facilities to that place. On further thought, however, this locale seemed too remote from Ryan, and thus impractical as a tourist headquarters. And so, after lengthy consideration of such alternative locations as Ryan and Shoshone, it was finally suggested by a consultant knowledgeable in such matters, who had been imported from the Desert Inn at Palm Springs for just this purpose, that the small mound and former Indian ceremonial area at the mouth of Furnace Creek Wash would be an ideal site. Not only was a good fresh water supply available 6,000 feet up the wash at Travertine Springs, but the view up and down the valley and of the surrounding mountains was breathtaking. The architect Albert C. Martin was hired to prepare plans for a Spanish-style building, and native Panamint Indians were immediately put to work manufacturing adobe bricks for its construction.<sup>29</sup>

(2) Union Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads  
Encouraged to Promote Death Valley

In these early days of auto travel the surfaced highway east from Los Angeles ended at San Bernardino, with the branch roads to Ryan and Death Valley being so primitive and lonely that people hesitated to travel them. Taking advantage of this timidity, the Pacific Coast Borax Company extensively promoted use of its own standard-gauge Tonopah & Tidewater and narrow-gauge Death Valley railroads. The two transcontinental lines--the Union Pacific and Santa Fe--were then persuaded to

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29. Miller, Fifty Years Ago, p. 7; Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 115-17; Inyo Independent, 29 May 1936.

promote package tours to the area during October to May. Through-Pullman service in standard sleepers would be offered between Caliente and Beatty and Los Angeles and Beatty on an every-other-day basis, and in either direction. Initially the Pullmans would be run three times weekly, with the service increased to daily runs the following year. New cars were added to the lines to handle the anticipated influx of tourists. Crucero, 220 miles east of Los Angeles in San Bernardino County, was to be the transfer point at which the Pullman cars would be dropped and switched to the T & T tracks for the ninety-six-mile run north to Death Valley Junction. From here visitors would ride the last twenty miles to Ryan via a gasoline-powered combination express and passenger railcar on the Death Valley line. At Ryan large Union Pacific seven-passenger open touring buses used in the Zion-Bryce Canyon tours during their summer season would meet the people and transport them to the Inn. It was advertised that travelers could leave Los Angeles at six o'clock in the evening and be snugly settled at Furnace Creek Inn the next morning.<sup>30</sup> According to the T & T's general agent, cost of the entire side trip, including Pullman fares between Crucero and Death Valley Junction, fares on the Death Valley Railroad between Death Valley Junction and Ryan and return, bus tickets, hotel accommodations for one night at Furnace Creek Inn, and meals for two days, was set at an incredible \$42.

### (3) Furnace Creek Inn Opens to the Public

Construction of the hotel started in September 1926, and its official opening was held with a minimum of fanfare on 1 February 1927. The structure was only partially

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30. Miller, Fifty Years Ago, p. 9; Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 116-17; Myrick, Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, p. 611; Inyo Independent, 11 December 1926, 8, 22, and 29 January 1927.



Illustration 262.

Eleven-passenger Union Pacific tour bus used by Death Valley Hotel Company. View taken in Furnace Creek Wash. No date.

Copy of print loaned by Stovepipe Wells Hotel, courtesy of DEVA NM.

finished, and its number of rooms and furnishings soon proved completely inadequate. A stay at the resort included side trips by motor bus to such nearby attractions as Garter's View, the Devil's Golf Course, Furnace Creek Ranch, Harmony Borax Works, Gower Gulch, and the abandoned borax camp of (New) Ryan, which still evoked considerable interest despite the cessation of mining activities there. At the latter place the highlight of the tour was a grand ride over the "baby-gauger" railroad, which in former years hauled borax from the now abandoned deposits to the Death Valley Railroad at (New) Ryan. Open-air cars transported fascinated visitors through tunnels, along the precarious mountainside, and even inside some of the mines where they could actually see tools and



be operated in about the same manner as other national park facilities.

1931. 1932. 1933. 1934. 1935. 1936. 1937. 1938. 1939. 1940. 1941. 1942. 1943. 1944. 1945. 1946. 1947. 1948. 1949. 1950. 1951. 1952. 1953. 1954. 1955. 1956. 1957. 1958. 1959. 1960. 1961. 1962. 1963. 1964. 1965. 1966. 1967. 1968. 1969. 1970. 1971. 1972. 1973. 1974. 1975. 1976. 1977. 1978. 1979. 1980. 1981. 1982. 1983. 1984. 1985. 1986. 1987. 1988. 1989. 1990. 1991. 1992. 1993. 1994. 1995. 1996. 1997. 1998. 1999. 2000. 2001. 2002. 2003. 2004. 2005. 2006. 2007. 2008. 2009. 2010. 2011. 2012. 2013. 2014. 2015. 2016. 2017. 2018. 2019. 2020. 2021. 2022. 2023. 2024. 2025.

finished, and its number of rooms and furnishings soon proved completely inadequate. A stay at the resort included side trips by motor bus to such nearby attractions as Dante's View, the Devil's Golf Course, Furnace Creek Ranch, Harmony Borax Works, Gower Gulch, and the abandoned borate camp of (New) Ryan, which still evoked considerable interest despite the cessation of mining activities there. At the latter place the highlight of the tour was a grand ride over the "baby-gauge" railroad, which in former years hauled borax from the now abandoned deposits to the Death Valley Railroad at (New) Ryan. Open-air cars transported fascinated visitors through tunnels, along the precipitous mountainside, and even inside some of the mines where they could actually see tools and equipment left just as they were when mining operations ended.

During its first year of operation, Furnace Creek Inn consisted only of a main building housing a spacious lobby and pleasant dining room with wings on either side containing bedrooms opening onto a veranda that encircled the entire building. Day-to-day operations proceeded under the experienced and watchful eye of Miss Beulah Brown, summer manager of the Old Faithful Lodge at Yellowstone. Although the area had not yet been designated for national monument status, such an idea had earlier been proposed, so that both Horace M. Albright, then superintendent of Yellowstone NP, and Steven Mather were consulted during the formulation of plans for the promotion of tourism in the valley. The NPS was not officially involved in operation of the Inn either, but it was tacitly agreed that it would be operated in about the same manner as other national park facilities.<sup>31</sup>

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31. Miller, Fifty Years Ago, p. 7; Inyo Independent, 8, 22 January 1927; Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 115-16.

The tourist business increased steadily, and in the fall of 1927 five more terrace rooms on either side of the parking area had to be added. In fact, new construction at the hotel continued over the next ten years, until the present capacity of about seventy rooms was reached. The following timetable of events is roughly accurate, though sources tend to disagree on some points:

- 1927-8: terrace rooms built
  
- 1928: ten more rooms added
  
- 1929: seventeen-room annex completed for employees who had previously been housed in tents and cabins behind the hotel
  
- swimming pool and dressing rooms installed
  
- 1930: twenty-one-room adobe two-story north wing connected to main hotel; stone unit built back of kitchen for Chinese kitchen help
  
- 1934: lower lounge and recreation room added, plus gardens and pools between terrace and north wing; twenty-five fan palms planted plus Deglet Noor palm seedlings from Ranch
  
- 1935: four-story central tower unit of twenty-four rooms erected; four ten-room units built for help up the wash from the Inn
  
- 1937: two more buildings for employees built; excavation under dining room for bar and cocktail lounge

1938: present garage built

1940: new stone service station built south of garage

Local stone was used in some portions of the complex, the rustic stonework and retaining walls being built by a Spanish stonemason from Madrid, Steve Esteves.<sup>32</sup>

Electric power at the Inn was first generated by four small Kohler units, followed by installation of a 25-KW-capacity pelton wheel across the wash in 1929. As additional energy was required, a 100-hp diesel engine was installed at the Ranch with connections to the Inn, but it proved insufficient for the job. A replacement 225-hp diesel, reinforced by the pelton wheel, was then used until public utility lines were completed.

Abundant fresh water was available at Travertine Springs just up the wash from the Inn. Water was channeled in ditches to a settling box and from there conveyed 6,000 feet downhill in a 12-inch pipe to the pelton wheel at the Inn, which directed it via an open ditch through the grounds, swimming pool, and gardens, and on to the date palm grove and golf course at the Ranch. A plant now recycles up to 100,000 gallons of water a day, enabling it to be used twice. In 1936 a plant experimental station was established at the entrance to Park Village, where botanic experiments were conducted with the objective of growing native shade trees for use at desert villages and resorts. The terraced gardens at Furnace Creek Inn are a spectacular example

*e notes available*

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32. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 117-19. See Fred Harvey Fact Sheet available at the Inn and Ranch for a brief history of both structures. Some discrepancies in dates will be noted; Inyo Independent, 26 February 1937.

of what a plentiful water supply and knowledge of planting techniques can accomplish in an arid region. Domestic water came from Texas Spring to the northeast and was stored in a reservoir for use by both the Ranch and Inn.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile, about 1928 the old mine buildings at Ryan east up Furnace Creek Wash were converted into the Death Valley View Hotel. In fact, the baby gauge railroad was first run in connection with its promotion, although later it became an independent tourist attraction on its own, providing visitors with an unforgettable scenic and educational experience. The boost to rail travel so greatly anticipated by opening up Death Valley to the public never materialized, as auto travel became ever more popular. On 1 December 1930 the Death Valley Railroad filed an application with the ICC for abandonment of its thirty-mile narrow-gauge system linking (New) Ryan and Death Valley Junction. No objections being made, operations ceased 15 March 1931. Its tracks were ultimately removed, and in the process one of the large trestles from the shoulder of the Greenwater Range was dismantled and its massive timbers used for beam framing in the bar at Furnace Creek Inn.<sup>34</sup> This termination of service left the Ryan hotel completely isolated, forcing its closure in January 1930. The Gowers, who had been running it, moved to the deserted mill town of Death Valley Junction, where they remodeled the old company dining room and dormitories into the Amargosa Hotel, open to the public. This establishment never reached the status of a resort, but did serve as a pleasant overnight rest stop. The Ryan hotel

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33. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 118-19; Inyo Independent, 8 May 1936; Fred Harvey Fact Sheet on Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch.

34. Myrick, Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, p. 611.

was now used only as emergency housing during crowded holiday seasons, such as Easter week of 1936. (New) Ryan was virtually uninhabited now except for a caretaker, but the baby gauge continued carrying passengers for twenty more years, being discontinued finally in the 1950s.

#### (4) Sightseeing in the Valley

Prior to the proclamation of Death Valley as a national monument on 11 February 1933, highways in Death Valley were constructed and maintained by the county and private interests, the borax company having been able to accomplish only occasional light work on them. With the advent of the federal government on the scene, highway work was rushed through, with much help provided by the CCC, and the approach routes were taken over by the California State Highway Commission. The state soon completed blacktopping the surface of a main route from Baker, California, via Death Valley Junction to the east boundary of the monument. It also surfaced all but thirty miles of the highway from Lone Pine to the western boundary of the monument. The NPS then hard-surfaced the road between the east and west boundaries, thereby finishing a safe and comfortable route between Baker and Lone Pine that became a heavily-used communications link between the Owens Valley and eastern Inyo County.

This improved roadwork immediately generated heavy auto travel, causing the Union Pacific to pull out of the tourist trade here in the early 1930s. For a while the borax people conducted their own sightseeing tours by means of an automobile passenger line known as the Death Valley Transportation Company, using local cars and employee drivers. This company was intended both as a motor passenger and freight service operating not only between Death Valley Junction and Furnace Creek Inn, but also along the Grapevine Canyon road to Bonnie Claire, Nevada, and on the Daylight Pass road to Beatty. Soon an



Illustration 263.

Aerial view of Furnace Creek Inn.

Photo courtesy of G. William Fiero, 1976.

Illustration 264.

Furnace Creek Inn showing stonework.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Present Status

Today the Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch are the largest resorts in Death Valley, the former being the more luxurious of the two and operating from October through May. Its sixty-seven units offer superb accommodations on the mountain



agreement was concluded transferring the Death Valley Transportation Company franchise to the Hunter Clarkson Company, a Santa Fe Railroad subsidiary that previously operated cars out of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Despite their attempt to provide luxury tours, complete with a fleet of open Cadillacs driven by men attired in Western garb accompanied by women guides, the market was simply not there, and the Santa Fe also pulled out after only two seasons, convinced that the delight people experienced in driving their own cars through the beautiful scenery was a feeling too powerful to overcome. What little touring service was required was supplied thereafter by smaller private companies.<sup>35</sup>

In 1956 Fred Harvey, Inc., took over management of the Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch for the borax company; since 1969 Harvey, now an Amfac affiliate, has owned both establishments.

b) Present Status

Today the Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch are the largest resorts in Death Valley, the former being the more luxurious of the two and operating from October through May. Its sixty-seven units offer superb accommodations on the American plan, and in addition such services and recreational opportunities as beauty and barber shops, formal dining room, cocktail lounge, gift shop, golf, swimming, tennis, horseback riding, and hiking.

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

Furnace Creek Inn is the only one of the three resorts within Death Valley that has gained architectural significance by retaining most of its exterior structural integrity.

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35. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 120-21; Inyo Independent, 14 November 1931.

The basic layout of this Spanish-style complex has changed little, except to increase in size, since its construction in the 1920s.

The Inn ranks in importance with Stovepipe Wells in not only pioneering in the tourist industry by opening up an entire new scenic area for public enjoyment, but also shares credit for enhancing the state's reputation as a beautiful and enjoyable winter playground. The Inn's associations with the two transcontinental railroads and several touring services during its early years spread Death Valley's fame widely and finally introduced vast numbers of people to the central and southern sections of the monument.

The resort also is significant because of its connection with the borax industry and its promotion of tourist development at Ryan; it was even able for a short while to prolong that town's existence as well as that of the narrow-gauge Death Valley Railroad. Because of their interest in keeping tourist routes open to and throughout the valley, the borax employees were largely responsible for constructing and maintaining the monument roads during these years.

Due to its continuing role as a tourist facility that for over fifty years has helped promote California's attractions as a winter resort area, and because of its architectural and site integrity, the Inn appears to meet the criteria of eligibility for the National Register as being of regional significance. The resort should be marked by an interpretive sign briefly presenting the structure's history.

#### 4. Furnace Creek Ranch

##### a) History

##### (1) Greenland Ranch Supplies Food to Borax Workers and Serves as Mule Train Depot

The industrial phase of Death Valley history began with the discovery of borax there by Aaron and Rose Winters and the subsequent purchase of their claims by William T. Coleman in the early 1880s. After establishing a location for his open-air borax refinery about 1½ miles north of the mouth of Furnace Creek, Coleman next addressed the need for a supply point to provide essential provisions for his mules and for his workmen at this plant and at his Amargosa works.<sup>36</sup> A logical place for this operation was the spot near the mouth of Furnace Creek Wash that had been homesteaded in the 1870s by one "Bellerin" Teck, an unknown and still vastly mysterious figure who live there for a short while, raised alfalfa and barley, and then seemingly disappeared from the annals of history.

The ranch consisted of a large adobe house with a wide northern veranda, and was first referred to as "Greenland" and occasionally as "Coleman." It was given its present name by the Pacific Coast Borax Company sometime after 1889. It is recorded that about 1879 Coleman, enjoying a certain affluence at this time, sent to Italy for gardeners to supervise agricultural development of the site. At great expense the soil was scientifically fertilized and various types of trees planted in the resulting dark and heavy loam. A half-acre pond was constructed

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36. Water was provided to the plant by means of an air-pipe that lay uncovered on top of the ground, and living quarters were provided for the borax workers, skinner, and swampers. The ranch was only needed, therefore, to supply foodstuffs. John R. Spears, "Through Death Valley," in California Illustrated Magazine (February 1893), p. 317.

and water from the Funeral Range was diverted from Tavertine Springs to the ranch via a stone-lined ditch to irrigate thirty or forty acres of alfalfa and trees.

With about forty men actively employed at the borax works, and considering its vital function as a terminus station for the twenty-mule teams, where wagons could be repaired while men and animals enjoyed the luxury of a few days' leisure after their exhausting round-trip haul to the railhead, the ranch became an important center of operations. Under the guardianship of James Dayton and by dint of constant irrigation, livestock flourished in this barren desert, as did the growth of melons, vegetables, alfalfa, figs, and cottonwoods. The presence of water, shade trees, and grass in the area led to temperatures that usually ranged from eight to ten degrees cooler than elsewhere in the valley, and by 1885 the farmstead was rich in alfalfa and hay, while cattle, hogs, and sheep were supplying fresh meat for the tables of the Harmony borax workers.

(2) Pacific Coast Borax Company Takes Over  
Ownership, and Ranch Becomes Friendly  
Oasis for Prospectors

The promotional possibilities offered by this cool oasis greatly appealed to Coleman, who at one point envisioned eventual establishment of a resort here. These dreams were rapidly deflated by the downward spiralling of his economic fortunes, which ultimately forced him to mortgage all of his holdings to Francis M. ("Borax") Smith and eventually lose them all to that great entrepreneur in 1890. Smith's stewardship began with the closing of both the Harmony and Amargosa borax works, his business efforts now being concentrated solely on his new mine at Borate. Jimmy Dayton, however, remained as watchman for the borax plant and caretaker of the ranch farm. Some idea of the style of life he led here can be gained from the following account of a visit to his headquarters:

He [Dayton] cooks his food in a frame kitchen and sleeps in an adobe bedroom. The walls of the bedroom were plentifully adorned with lithographs of young women, such as the tobacco-makers distribute gratis. Two shotguns and a rifle stood in one corner. A prospector was keeping the house for Dayton during the latter's absence, and every day I was there he killed, with the shotgun, numbers of duck, teal, butter-ball and mallard, which, in their journey from the north, came down to see what kind of feed could be had on the alfalfa meadows, and in an artificial, half-acre fish pond at one corner of the oasis. The rifle is sometimes used on the sheep in the Funeral range to the east. . . . Had we wished, we might have had carp from the pond, which was stocked some years ago, while flocks of quail were seen in the brush about the fields.<sup>37</sup>

Initially Smith displayed none of Coleman's enthusiasm for creating a resort or other type of vacation spot at the ranch, and ran it solely as a commercial venture. As the shade trees grew and the fruit trees prospered, the spot turned into a friendly oasis frequently visited by prospectors and other wanderers in need of rest and refreshment. The buildings were improved and new tropical trees planted, but otherwise little change in the general layout resulted.

Dayton served as caretaker and foreman of the ranch for about fifteen years, until his death in 1900. By the early years of the next century one Oscar Denton had taken over his duties, and with the help of local Indians was continuing to

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37. Ibid.

raise alfalfa and figs. After the turn of the century, the ranch was the scene of increased activity as dozens of prospectors combed the nearby ranges as part of the new southern Nevada mining boom centering around Tonopah and Rhyolite and their environs. The ranch was the resting place where these "desert rats" could lounge beneath the trees and bathe in the ditches while awaiting supplies ordered to be sent to Denton from Death Valley Junction. This was

the place to which everyone went whenever loneliness overcame him and he needed human association and conversation. The old time Death Valley prospectors traveled alone, their burros the only companionship they had. Without Furnace Creek Ranch, Oscar Denton, and the Panamint Indians, Death Valley would have been intolerable.<sup>38</sup>

(3) Precautions Necessary Because of Unbearable Summer Heat

There were, however, a few drawbacks to life at this veritable shangri-la, not the least of which was the intense summer heat. The 1883 report of the California state mineralogist attempted to describe the difficulties experienced by residents of the Furnace Creek area:

The atmosphere presents many peculiar features, among others, causing a feeling of lassitude and weariness and an intense thirst upon very slight exertion. Many of those who have been for a month or more residents of the valley complain of an affection [affliction] of the eyes, which become sore and weak. . . . During the visit of

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38. Crampton, Deep Enough, Preface.

Mr. Hawkins, in May and June, 1882, almost every afternoon a burning wind, fierce and powerful, sprang up, blowing articles of considerable weight some distance, and hurling the coarse, hot sand with such force as to lacerate the face when exposed, the men being frequently obliged to wear veils and goggles. The heat was severe, the thermometer averaging from 95° to 100° Fahrenheit in the shade. . . . The stones and cement became so hot by ten o'clock A. M. that work was suspended until late in the afternoon, and at night the men frequently rolled themselves in thoroughly wet blankets in their endeavors to keep cool.<sup>39</sup>

A New York reporter who visited the spot in the early 1890s presents a vivid description of the consequences of the environment and the effort necessary to survive the extremes in temperature:

While making the ditch which supplied the ranch with water, J. S. Crouch and O. Watkins slept in the running water. . . . Philander Lee . . . while at work on the ranch, regularly slept in the alfalfa where it grew under the shade of some willows and was abundantly irrigated.

Other effects of the arid air are found in the utter ruin, within a few days, of every article of furniture built elsewhere and carried there. . . .

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39. Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Third Annual Report of the State Mineralogist for the year Ending June 1, 1883 (Sacramento: James J. Ayers, 1883), p. 32.

Meat killed at night and cooked at 6 in the morning had spoiled at 9. . . . Eggs are roasted in the sand.<sup>40</sup>

The ranch's location 178 feet below sea level on the floor of the valley and at the foot of the Funeral Range, (making it the lowest place in the western hemisphere where vegetation thrives), promotes such a constantly warm environment that young palms and other tropical plants had to be set in the shade of houses or older trees to ensure their survival. In summer, activity on the ranch ceased during the daylight hours, the enervating atmosphere making all but the most perfunctory tasks impossible. Mostly time was spent lounging in hammocks hung across the wide veranda. Water bags within arms reach provided necessary periodic relief. Harry Gower mentions dining with Oscar Denton on the ranchhouse porch in the breeze generated by a five-foot fan revolved by water power.<sup>41</sup> The pervasive stillness of the day, however, was in contrast to the evening bustle, when ranch chores were performed and the more pleasant aspects of life--eating, drinking, and playing cards--were indulged in with gusto.

The products of the ranch were being continually improved over the years. In 1906 it was noted that

One of the most wonderful sights in Death Valley is the Furnace Creek Ranch, owned by the Pacific Coast Borax Company. They can raise almost anything there. They

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40. Spears, Illustrated Sketches, pp. 36-37.

41. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 6.

have fresh eggs and milk the year round. The weary prospector may put his hungry burro in the corral, and fill him up with good alfalfa for 35 cents per night. There is plenty of water, over fifty inches running in the ditch, and more in a pipe line.<sup>42</sup>

Around fifty head of cattle were being raised and five crops of hay gathered a year. The poet-pro prospector Clarence Eddy wrote during a visit to the ranch that for four bits a head one could eat fresh eggs, lettuce, turnips, carrots, parsnips, and pumpkin pie, plus real cow's milk. In July 1907 the only white man present at the ranch was reportedly a W.A. Northrop who continued the cultivation of watermelons, muskmelons, corn, alfalfa, and cantaloupes.<sup>43</sup>

#### (4) Indian Population

One interesting aspect of life on the ranch was the Indian population that gathered there. Furnace Creek had habitually been a social center and contact point for three linguistic groups: the Shoshonis from the north, the Southern Paiutes from east of the valley, and the Kawaiisü from southern Death and Panamint valleys.<sup>44</sup> After John Spears had stopped at the ranch in 1892 he described the following visit by a neighboring Indian and gives some indication of their lifestyle:

While at the ranch it was visited by a native sportsman--a little black, dirty Paiute. He was dressed in cast-off

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42. Inyo Independent, 9 February 1906.

43. Ibid.; Rhyolite Herald, 19 April 1907; Bullfrog Miner, 6 July 1907.

44. Steward, Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups, pp. 91-92.



Illustration 265.

Pacific Coast Borax Company's Furnace Creek Ranch, about 1909.

From Rhyolite Herald Pictorial Supplement, March 1909.

clothing of white men, and was armed with a bow and  
 three arrows. The bow was of juniper, backed with raw  
 sinew, and the arrows were of reed, tipped with juniper.  
 They were effective against rabbits, rats, and lizards,  
 and so satisfactory to the Panz's attention. The  
 Indians had burned some acres of mesquite and brush  
 along Furnace Creek in their hunting for rabbits and  
 rats. There is very little meat about them, but



**"BORAX" SMITH'S DEATH VALLEY RANCH.**

There is no water in the corral waiting for supplies to

22. Cited in Smith's Death Valley, p. 10.

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ibid.

clothing of white men, and was armed with a bow and three arrows. The bow was of juniper, backed with raw sinew, and the arrows were of reed, tipped with juniper. They were effective against rabbits, rats, and lizards, and so satisfactory to the Paiute sportsman. . . . The Indians had burned some acres of mesquite and brush along Furnace Creek in their hunting for rabbits and rats. There is very little meat about them, but everything is fish that comes to the Paiute net, including the kangaroo rats.<sup>45</sup>

The Indians employed as ranchhands were described by a desert photographer, Clarence Back, in 1907 as being extremely uncommunicative, often not speaking to their employer for weeks.

In 1910 George Bird Grinnell described Indian women and children in April trapping rodents and lizards in the mesquite thickets around the ranch, catching them in deadfall traps or nooses and boiling them in kettles.<sup>46</sup> In 1922 Edna Perkins described the "Panamint" Indians living at the ranch in this manner:

The Indians . . . are employed as laborers, when they will work. The superintendent, a vigorous, silent Scotchman, was extremely pessimistic about them. While we were there they had "the flu" and all we ever saw them do was sit around the corral waiting for supplies to

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45. Cited in Hunt, Archeology of the Death Valley Salt Pan, p. 12.

46. Ibid.

be handed out. The women and girls, with heavy melancholy faces, gathered and stared at us. They stared with the stolid curiosity of cattle, not like burros who twitch their ears saucily, though they have the burro's reputation for thievishness. The superintendent kept everything under lock and key. The only Indian who showed a sign of life was an old fellow who prowled around with a gun after the birds and wild ducks that make the ranch a resting-place in their flights across the desert. We were told that there was only one gun in the whole encampment and that the younger men hunted with bows and arrows. Most of them looked stunted and their faces were wrinkled like the skins of shrunken, dried-up apples, as though the valley were taking toll of the generations of their race.<sup>47</sup>

(5) Ranch Contemplated as Health Resort

In the fall of 1907 rumors were circulating to the effect that Borax Smith was now entertaining visions of developing his Furnace Creek ranch as a winter resort, and was even contemplating extending a branch line of the Death Valley Railroad to provide access to both his borax deposits along Furnace Creek Wash and the ranch. This plan was amplified somewhat in early 1908 into establishment of a health resort for persons suffering from pulmonary disorders and related afflictions. The climate here, especially the density of the air, its increased pressure, and the higher percentage of oxygen, were all thought to have a curative effect on such diseases. It was said that a large sanitarium plus a hotel and bathhouse would be erected.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Perkins, White Heart of Mojave, p. 120.

48. Bullfrog Miner, 9 November 1907; Inyo Register, 20 February 1908; Bullfrog Miner, 15 February 1908.

By February 1907 the Furnace Creek ranch was described as "a great stretch of green--a magnificent spread of emerald in a grimy, desolate bed of shale and sand."<sup>49</sup> Three hundred acres were reportedly under cultivation, with experiments successfully carried out in growing alfalfa grasses, vegetables, melons, apples, and pears.<sup>50</sup>

(6) Official Weather Station

Back in April 1890 Greenland Ranch had been selected by the Weather Bureau of the Department of the Interior as an official weather station, and it had been duly fitted with rain gauges and a thermometer. In 1922 the U.S. Weather Bureau established a substation here, tests run over the previous ten years having shown that this was the hottest region in the United States. The average of the extreme maximum temperatures reported since 1911 had been 125°F. Almost daily during June to August at the ranch temperatures of 100°F. or higher occurred, with the temperature of 134°F. on 10 July 1913 believed to be the highest natural-air temperature ever recorded with a standard thermometer exposed in the shade under approved conditions. Even the water providing irrigation for the ranch has a temperature of between 74° to 100°F. During this time period the ranch was experimenting with poultry raising in addition to a lucrative business in the production of dressed meat.<sup>51</sup>

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49. Bullfrog Miner, 22 February 1907.

50. Ibid. This amount of acreage is doubtful, since the irrigation ditches could never have supplied enough water to cultivate so large an area.

51. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 140; Inyo Independent, 13 May 1922.



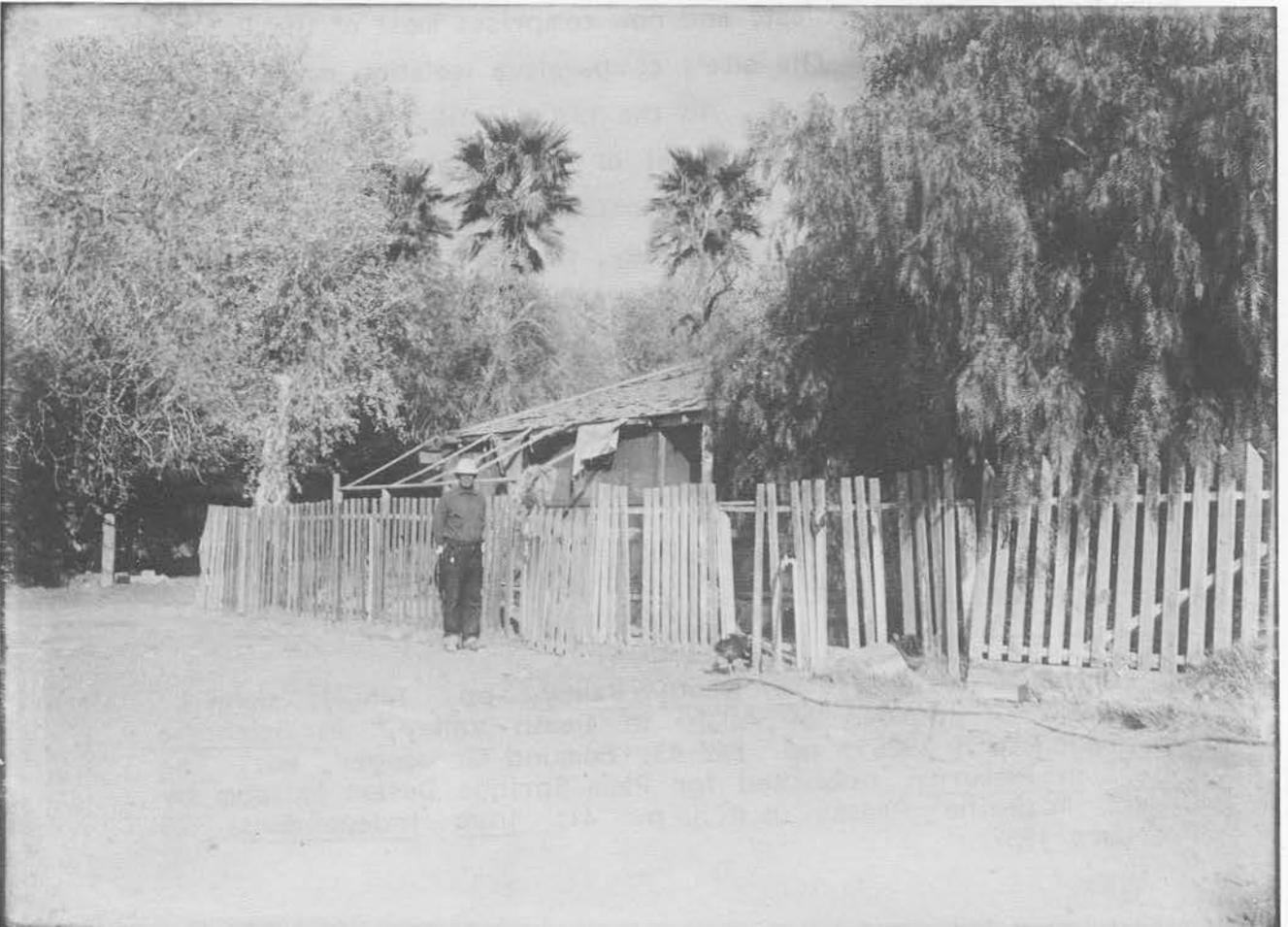
Illustration 266.

Furnace Creek Ranch, about 1915.

Illustration 267.

Furnace Creek Ranch, 1916.

From Dane Coolidge Collection, courtesy of Arizona Historical Foundation.



(7) Date Growing Introduced

The growth of dates was introduced to the Furnace Creek ranch about 1921 or 1922, supposedly at the behest of Pacific Coast Borax Company officials who suggested it as an added source of revenue. This planned extension of the date industry in a most unexpected direction was arrived at after extensive research conducted by Dr. Walter Swingle, principal originator of the date industry in America. The man who had supervised the successful government date operations in the Coachella Valley of California, Bruce Drummond, was engaged to direct the Furnace Creek venture. In addition to some California native "wild date palms" and specimens of a Canary Island native, selected samples of the Deglet Noor (Date of Light) palm were also set out. This latter tree is not native to the New World but was introduced from Africa in 1898. Of the several varieties of soft dates experimented with by the government in these initial years, it quickly proved the hardiest, and now comprises most of the Ranch's present large grove. The site's comparative isolation made it ideal for growing pest-free stock. In the 1930s fertilizer was trucked in from the Pahrump ranch southeast of Death Valley Junction to be applied to the palms. One major obstacle to their growth, the fact that there were no bees in the valley, necessitated hand pollination of the trees. Dates have been the principal product of the last fifty years, the other experiments with winter vegetables, cotton, and citrus trees enjoying lesser success. Excellent crops are produced, and the fancy dates are shipped to market and are also available in gift packages at the ranch.<sup>52</sup> During the 1920s the

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52. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 140-41; John L. Von Blon, "A 'Garden of Allah' in Death Valley," in Scientific American (April 1926), pp. 242-43; Edmund C. Jaeger, ed., The Desert in Pictures, published for Palm Springs Desert Museum by Desert Magazine Press, n.d., p. 41; Inyo Independent, 26 February 1937.

ranch also produced two hundred tons of alfalfa annually that were fed to a herd of high-grade beef cattle that were in turn fed to the men at Ryan.

(8) Ranch Turned into Tourist Resort

In 1930 when the hotel at Ryan closed, the borax company felt that some type of accommodations should be offered in the valley that would be less expensive and of a more relaxed sort than were found at Furnace Creek Inn. Because of their ranch's abundance of water and its level building site, it seemed the logical place for such an undertaking. Eighteen tent houses that had formed the construction camp at the Inn were moved down to the site. To these were added several workers' bungalows from the just-completed Boulder (later Hoover) Dam, which were moved to the site and remodeled for tourist use. A 16 x 36-foot boarding house and cabins (now removed) from the abandoned Gerstley Mine near Shoshone were also used to bolster the accommodations.

The Ranch first opened its doors for business in 1933, and for two years the wives of the Ranch foreman and mechanic operated the hotel, which underwent a continual program of enlargement and expansion over the next ten years. The balance of the cabins were built in the period from 1935 to 1939, with the lobby, store, and dining room constructed in 1934-35. In 1936 a building originally erected for drying dates was being used as a schoolhouse for fifteen or twenty elementary schoolchildren. (Also in that year the Ranch was the terminus again for a commemorative run by the U.S. Borax Co. twenty-mule team.) The recreation hall was built in 1936, the kitchen enlarged in 1952, and the office and swimming pool added during 1951 to 1952.<sup>53</sup>

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53. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 123; Fred Harvey Fact Sheet on Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch; C.A. Scholl, "Historical Facts in the Development of Furnace Creek Inn and Furnace Creek Ranch," typescript in history files, DSC; Inyo Independent, 11 December 1936, 23 July 1937, and 29 September 1939.

Illustration 268.

Date orchard at Furnace Creek Ranch at harvest time.

Photo by George Grant, 1939, courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 269.

Furnace Creek Ranch entrance.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



The highlight of a tour of the Ranch today is a visit to the barn museum, begun in 1932 as an educational opportunity for guests. The old barn still building from Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon was moved to the Ranch around



1934, and replaced by a new building. The archway and the building are made of stone and are a fine example of the architecture of the Southwest. The archway is a landmark of the Ranch and is a reminder of the early days of the settlement. The building is a fine example of the architecture of the Southwest and is a landmark of the Ranch. The archway and the building are made of stone and are a fine example of the architecture of the Southwest. The archway is a landmark of the Ranch and is a reminder of the early days of the settlement. The building is a fine example of the architecture of the Southwest and is a landmark of the Ranch.

The advent of World War II not only postponed a \$150,000 building program for the Ranch planned by the Pacific Coast Borax Company's London offices, including a projected new lobby, dining room, coffee shop, and kitchen, plus new parking facilities and fifty new cabins, but also resulted in a shutdown of services. By the time this took place, however, the Ranch did have accommodations for 350 people, plus a nine-hole all-grass golf course that had been added in 1930 for the Inn guests but that was used equally by Ranch customers. After the three-year hiatus, the Ranch, Inn, and Amargosa Hotel reopened in 1945 and were run for ten years by Charles Scholl. In 1955 they were all leased to the Fred Harvey organization, which decided to concentrate its operations within the valley, resulting in sale of the Amargosa Hotel in 1959. The newest units at the Ranch, located alongside the golf course, were completed in 1975, and other recreational facilities, such as tennis courts, were completed in 1977.<sup>54</sup>

The highlight of a tour of the Ranch today is a visit to the borax museum, begun in the 1950s as an educational opportunity for guests. The old borax office building from Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon was moved to the Ranch around 1954, and its interior filled with exhibits on mining, Indian populations of the valley, and railroad history. Back of this structure is an outdoor museum exhibit of antique vehicles and mining equipment, including an old steel-tired buckboard belonging to Borax Smith, an early stagecoach used on the run between nearby mining towns, and other assorted wagons, plus a stamp, a ball mill, a whim, the Death Valley Railroad Engine No. 2, and

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54. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 123; Fred Harvey Fact Sheet on Furnace Creek Inn and Ranch; Inyo Independent, 26 April, 10 May 1940.

miscellaneous souvenirs such as the small Death Valley Chuck-Walla printing press rescued from Greenwater and the original twenty-mule-team barn moved up from Mojave. On one side of the entrance to the Ranch is Old Dinah--the high-wheeled oil-burning steam tractor used on the Borate to Daggett route for a year or so and then put into service hauling between Beatty and the Keane Wonder gold mine in the Funeral Range. After its twenty-year abandonment in Daylight Pass, it was towed down to the Ranch in 1932 to be added to the Furnace Creek Ranch museum collection. On the other side of the entrance are some borax and water wagons.

b) Present Status

Today this Fred Harvey-owned resort offers simple wooden cabins, fancier pool- and golf-side rooms, and deluxe motel units. Opportunities for recreation are provided, including a beautiful golf course, a swimming pool, and horseback riding, and also available are an outdoor restaurant, a coffee shop, a cafeteria, a general store selling food, books, and souvenirs, a post office, and an airstrip. Trailer and camping sites are located nearby. The resort's location is enhanced by the presence of the National Monument Visitor Center immediately to the north.

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The site on which Furnace Creek Ranch is now located is one of the most historically significant spots in the monument. Its location near the mouth of Furnace Creek--a steady water supply throughout the year--made possible its development as a farm operation as early as the 1870s. Prior to this the area was probably visited frequently by members of the surrounding Indian populations to the north, south, and east. Little is known of the extent of this early aboriginal activity or of the life of the first Anglo homesteader on the site. The Furnace Creek ranch gained

major importance as the supply point for the Harmony and Amargosa borax works and as the northern terminus of the twenty-mule-team wagon route between Harmony and the railhead at Mojave. Perhaps its most important contribution, if the many prospectors and other desert travelers in the area during the early 1900s could be polled, was its service in providing shade, water, and some semblance of social amenities in a harsh, often brutal, environment, and its status as a meeting-place where fellow "desert rats" could get together and socialize, swapping stories and dreams before embarking again on the never-ending quest for riches. Initially producing mostly alfalfa and hay for stock, the ranch later raised and dispersed beef to feed workers at the nearby borax camp of Ryan.

An interesting sidelight to the ranch's history would be a determination of the amount of influence it exerted on the development of the various Indian groups who either resided at or visited the ranch. One would gather from the rather scathing comments on the native inhabitants presented earlier in this section that hardly any mingling of the races occurred, but it must be remembered that these observations were made by one-time visitors to the area, and fairly sophisticated ones at that. The more mundane and less "cultured" mining community undoubtedly had daily, and thus more influential, contact with the native population.

The ranch's later evolution into a tourist resort is not considered notable because the tourist industry had already been given its start by the construction of Stovepipe Wells Hotel and then of Furnace Creek Inn. Most of the early buildings of the complex that were architecturally significant because they were a curious mixture of old mining cabins and construction bungalows imported from surrounding desert communities have long since been removed. The present structures date from the 1930s on. The site should be provided with an interpretive marker presenting highlights of the ranch's early days and pointing out its significant role in Death Valley history.

## 5. Nevarés Cabin and Homestead

### a) History

The small undramatic wooden cabin with nearby root cellar that comprises the Cow Creek Ranch are located immediately southwest of Nevarés Spring. The site was evidently co-owned in the early 1900s by Adolphus ("Dolph") Nevarés, a Death Valley prospector of Spanish-American descent, and Montillus Murray ("Old Man") Beatty. The former was a native of San Bernardino who retained a permanent home there all his life. He worked as a prospector for the Pacific Coast Borax Company in the early years of the twentieth century, acquiring the job mainly because of his part in one of the company's most publicized episodes--the search in 1900 for the company caretaker, Frank Dayton, who was long overdue from a trip into the desert. When he was finally found, the victim of a heart attack or sunstroke, Nevarés was appointed caretaker in his place and served in that capacity until his advanced age forced his retirement. While working for the borax company he lived on a homestead near their headquarters at Furnace Creek in a cabin bought at a nearby mining town, dismantled, and rebuilt on its present location. The copiously-flowing spring nearby facilitated the growth of a small orchard in which fruits and vegetables were raised.<sup>55</sup>

"Old Man" Beatty's son remembers periodic visits to what he considered the family ranch at Cow Creek in Death Valley during the early 1900s. Beatty's at least partial ownership of the homestead is substantiated by a 1905 newspaper article that recounts Beatty's return from the ranch, where he was in the process of developing the spring for power purposes. Eastern capitalists were already hounding him in efforts to buy the

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55. San Bernardino (Ca.) Sun, April 1969.

ranch as a site for an electric power plant to furnish much-needed energy to the Bullfrog and South Bullfrog districts. In 1906 a visitor reported that "another garden spot is Cow Creek. There is a hot spring at this point, and Mr. Beatty has done a lot of hard work in cleaning the ground and developing and gathering the different streams."<sup>56</sup> In September 1907 another paper reported that the Beatty family had gone off to their Cow Creek ranch "where they have a well-irrigated garden on the edge of Death Valley."<sup>57</sup> According to the Weights, however, Nevares did not acknowledge Beatty as co-owner, but described him as a squatter residing in a wickiup in the area with his Paiute wife and owning nothing but a wagon and team. Nevares stated he acquired the property when Beatty died and the land was not claimed by anyone else.<sup>58</sup> Some confusion of facts and identities is apparent here, for when Nevares received final papers and title to the Cow Creek property of 320 acres in 1908 from the government, an article describing the change of ownership mentions that Nevares resided there with the Beattys. Fields of alfalfa are mentioned on the homestead, as well as many types of vegetables and melons.<sup>59</sup>

During the mid-1930s the first CCC camp in Death Valley was established at Cow Creek, and according to a picture in the monument files, it appears that some of the men were housed in tents in the vicinity of the Nevares homestead. After

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56. Rhyolite Herald, 22 December 1905; Inyo Independent, 9 February 1906.

57. Bullfrog Miner, September 1907, in Harold Weight and Lucile Weight, Rhyolite, The Ghost City of Golden Dreams (Twentynine Palms, Ca.: The Calico Press, 1970), p. 13.

58. Weight and Weight, Rhyolite, p. 14. The exact extent of ownership of each of these parties in the Nevares Spring property has yet to be determined. Time did not permit exhaustive research on this subject in the course of this study. Nevares and Beatty evidently filed a joint water right on the spring.

59. Rhyolite Herald, 19 August 1908.

Nevaras was forced to quit his job with the borax company about 1942, he lied about his age and obtained further work with the National Park Service until forced to retire in 1952 at the age of eighty.

Nevaras Spring has always been the important aspect of the site both because of its potential as a power supply to generate electricity and operate stamps and because it is a plentiful and usable drinking source for people and animals in an arid land. Naturally a schism over its future development would arise between mining operators in the central Funeral Range and the National Park Service. From the early 1900s on, companies operating in nearby Echo Canyon coveted the water supply as a power source for any mills they might contemplate constructing. The spring was thought to possess enough force to run one thousand stamps.<sup>60</sup> As late as 1937 Inyo Consolidated Mines, Inc., was interested in obtaining the water to operate a twenty-five-ton mill connected with their mining activity in the Schwab area.<sup>61</sup> In order to prevent such extreme development of the property and to prevent its falling into private hands, the NPS anxiously began negotiations to acquire it or at least obtain an option. The homestead finally came under federal ownership around 1949.

b) Present Status

The Nevaras homestead is located at the end of a restricted-access road leading east from Park Village, the principal residential area for monument personnel. The wooden cabin on site contains two rooms, each about twelve feet square. The front room has a loft area, but is devoid of furnishings. It

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60. Ibid.

61. John R. White, Supt., DEVA NM, to Dir., NPS, 25 October 1937.

Illustration 270.

Dolph Nevares, no date.

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 271.

Nevares homestead and remains of (CCC?) tent cabins, 1950.

Photo by L.F. Keller, courtesy of DEVA NM.



### (c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Nevada Homestead is not an impressive complex either in physical extent or in architectural style. The historical value it possesses is attributable to the role it played in the settlement of the Nevada Territory.



does, however, contain a pelton wheel, an early type of water-powered generator, one of which was used at the Skidoo Mill and another at Furnace Creek Inn. This item should immediately be incorporated into the monument's interpretive collections. The only other objects in the room are the remains of a heavy, coarsely-woven rug and two burners from the old four-burner stove that used to reside in the southeast corner of the kitchen.

The second room to the south was used as the kitchen and eating area, and contains a porcelain sink, faucet, washbasin, and a wooden cupboard, bench, table, and shelves. East of the house is the orchard, and twelve feet west is a six-by-eight-foot root cellar. In front of the house and also southwest of the root cellar are piles of adobe left by the CCC workers who were employed in making adobe bricks used in reconstruction efforts at the Harmony Borax Works. About one mile west on the access road (back toward the residential area), and south of it, is a post and barbed wire corral.

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

The Nevares homestead is not an impressive complex either in physical extent or in architectural style. The historical value it possesses is attributable on the one hand to its position as a surviving example of a twentieth-century farming/ranching desert homestead made self-sufficient by the presence of nearby springs that facilitated the growth of a variety of fruits and vegetables. It also has associative significance due to its connection with two early Death Valley pioneers--M.M. Beatty and Dolph Nevares. The Nevares homestead will be nominated to the National Register as being of local significance on the basis of its connections with Beatty and Nevares and as a type specimen of a permanent Death Valley home concerned with stockraising and farming and unrelated to mining activities.



Illustration 272.

Nevares cabin entrance.

Illustration 274.

Pelton wheel inside cabin.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

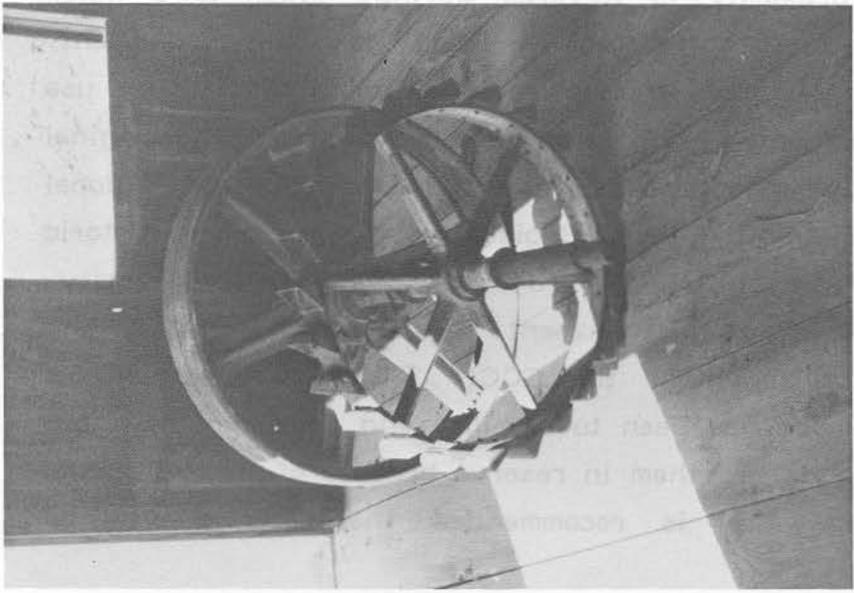
Illustration 273.

Entrance to root cellar.

Problems in interpreting the homestead sites

because of its proximity to Nevada Spring which is a water

collection point  
contamination of  
could be permitted  
location, an actual  
Park Service policy  
scene around the  
having been an  
occupation and  
National Park Service  
and outbuilding  
interpretive value  
continued.



Problems in interpreting the homestead arise because of its proximity to Nevares Spring, which is a water collection point and drinking source for the monument. Contamination of the spot is undesirable, meaning that visitor use could be permitted only if the cabin were removed from its original location, an action unacceptable from the standpoint of National Park Service policy and National Register compliance. The historic scene around the cabin has already lost some of its integrity, having been altered by development of the spring and by its occupation and utilization by the CCC. The past policy of the National Park Service has been to stabilize and preserve the cabin and outbuilding and hold them in reserve because of their potential interpretive value. It is recommended that this course be continued.

## 6. Corduroy Road

### a) History

The origin of the corduroy road leading west from the Indian Village just south of Furnace Creek Ranch and across the salt playa where it connects with an old trail skirting the eastern base of the Panamint Range is unknown. Harry Gower referred to this route as the "old Salt Creek Indian Crossing," and mentions in 1914 viewing mesquite logs imbedded in the salt and mud that formed a usable road raised above the level of the salt pan.<sup>62</sup> It is probable that the route was originally an old Indian trail, providing access between Furnace Creek and Blackwater Wash, up which trails led directly to the Emigrant Spring area near the site of present-day Harrisburg. The Blackwater route was later utilized by miners rushing toward the new mineral discoveries in the vicinity of Skidoo. When scattered borax operations took place at Shovelton near Salt Springs and at other locations on the floor of the valley, this route might have been one way of reaching them and extracting from the area any material recovered. Indians frequented the playa area, obtaining salt here and some of them even wintering in the mesquite-covered sand dunes adjoining the salt pan on the west.<sup>63</sup> It is not known how late the road was used.

### b) Present Status

During the writer's visits to Death Valley, heavy rainfall had turned the corduroy road area into an impassable mudfield, successfully discouraging close investigation of the route. The LCS crew in 1975, however, photographed it, showing many of

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62. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, p. 6.

63. Hunt, Archeology of the Death Valley Salt Pan, pp. 7, 163.

the logs still in place. The road is not used today.

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

Although this particular part of the Blackwater trail is not specifically mentioned in any of the early data studied, it was examined by the LCS crew who felt that this old crossing is historically and possibly archeologically significant as one of the oldest communication and transportation routes across the valley, providing access to the Panamint Range for both Indians and miners alike. It is an especially valuable resource because the route is clearly marked and there are some bridge ruins remaining. It is recommended for nomination to the National Register as being of local significance.



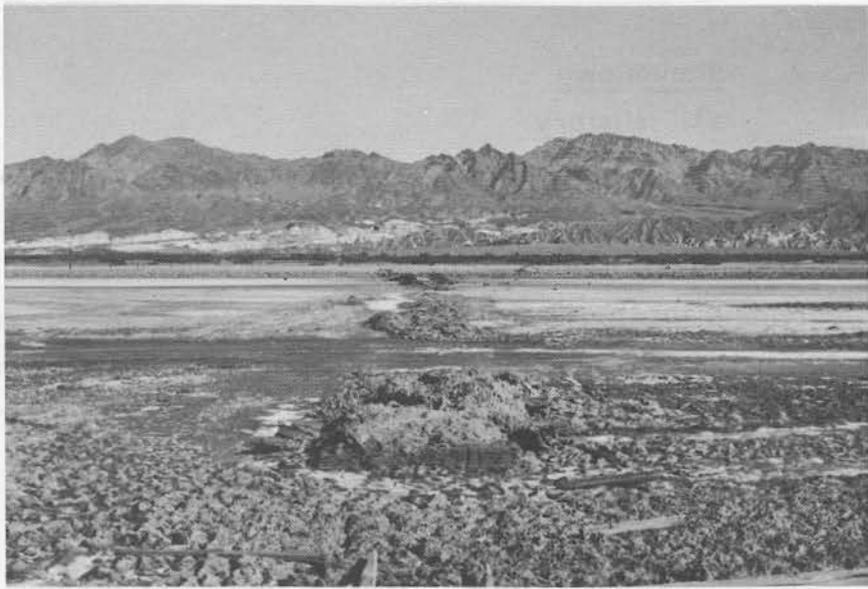
Illustration 275.

View east along Corduroy Road. Note Furnace Creek Inn in distance. Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.

Illustration 276.

Bridge on route of Corduroy Road.

Photo courtesy of William Tweed, 1975.



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The site was not visited by this writer, but according to pictures and information acquired from Peter Sanchez of the monument staff, any furrows of salt mud can be seen on the site near. No structural remains exist. The site is located approximately 1/2 airline miles west of the Cow Creek residential area.

### 3. Evaluation and Recommendations



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## 7. Shoveltown

### a) History

This townsite (?) is located immediately at the base of Tucki Mountain near Salt Springs. Absolutely no mention of this site was found in the historical literature. It is undoubtedly one of the many properties located at various spots on the California and Nevada salt flats during the borax boom of the 1870s and on into the early twentieth century. Much of this land was patented and required regular development work.

### b) Present Status

The site was not visited by this writer, but according to pictures and information acquired from Peter Sanchez of the monument staff, only furrows of salt mud can be seen on the flats here. No structural remains exist. The site is located approximately 7½ airline miles west of the Cow Creek residential area.

### c) Evaluation and Recommendations

Due to a lack of data, no historical significance can be attached to this site.

[It might be mentioned here that a monument visitor donated to their files a polaroid photo taken of a well and camp site on the salt flats two miles west of the Cow Creek residential area in T28N, R1E, Sec. 32. This picture, taken December 1970, shows wood debris, tin cans, forge remains, and a huge pile of empty whiskey bottles. No information on this site has been found either.]



Illustration 277.

Site of Shovelton, 1969.

Photo by Peter G. Sanchez, courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 278.

Furrowed salt mud at Shovelton, 1969.

Photo by Peter G. Sanchez, courtesy of DEVA NM.



E. Furnace Creek

1. Borax Mining in Death Valley

a) Early Production in Region Limited

Borax was first produced commercially in the United States in California at Clear Lake north of San Francisco, from about 1864 to 1868, at which place the industry flourished until the early 1870s when borax began to turn up in large and purer quantities in several of the alkaline marshes of western Nevada (notably Columbus and Teel's) and eastern California. Large deposits were located in the Saline Valley playa northwest of Death Valley as early as 1874, prompting an extensive number of borax land locations up through the 1890s; the discoveries underwent only limited development, however, because of the lack of railroad facilities, the extremely harsh climatic conditions, and the basic fact that they were simply not rich enough to make their exploitation economically viable. In 1874 minor production began in earnest at Searles Lake in San Bernardino County west of the Slate Range where construction and operation of a refinery ultimately turned that valley into one of the most extensively worked and most productive borax areas of the region. Neighboring deposits were subsequently found in marshes near Resting Spring southeast of Death Valley and on the salt pan north of the mouth of Furnace Creek.

b) Harmony and Eagle Borax Works Process  
"Cottonballs"

The discovery of borax in this latter location was made in 1881 by Aaron and Rose Winters, whose holdings were immediately bought by William T. Coleman and Company for \$20,000. He subsequently formed the Greenland Salt and Borax Mining Company (later the Harmony Borax Mining Company), which in 1882 began operating his Harmony Borax Works, a small settlement of adobe and stone buildings plus a refinery. The homestead later

known as Greenland Ranch immediately to the south was intended as the supply point for his men and stock. The Amargosa Borax Works in the vicinity of Resting Spring and also a Coleman enterprise was run during the summer months when the extreme heat adversely affected the refining process in the valley. A small-scale borax operation--the Eagle Borax Works--had been begun by a Frenchman, Isadore Daunet, in 1881, and was located further south in the valley near Bennetts Well. It lasted only until 1884 when the inefficiency of its operation combined with personal setbacks resulted in Daunet's suicide. It is frankly amazing that any of these works experienced half the success they did, for their distance from main transportation systems and the daily hardships involved in working under uncomfortable desert conditions were severe obstacles to their economic success.

c) Discovery of Colemanite Revolutionizes Industry

The type of borate being exploited on the salt flats of Death Valley was ulexite, in the form of "cottonballs" that were scraped off the salt pan and then refined by evaporation and crystallization. It was initially believed that this was the only form of naturally occurring borax that was commercially profitable. Continuing exploration in the area by Coleman Company prospectors and others soon confirmed that the playa borates that were presently being worked were actually a secondary deposit resulting from the leaching of beds of borate lime. The primary deposit, a richer form of borate later named in honor of W.T. Coleman, occurred in beds and veins similar to quartz-mining operations. In 1883 three men--Philander Lee, Harry Spiller, and Billy Yount--stumbled upon a large mountain of such ore south of Furnace Creek Wash in the foothills of the Black Mountains. Selling "Mount Blanco (Monte Bianco)" to Coleman, reportedly for \$4,000, they left, having made their fortune off the borax industry. Within a year an even larger deposit east of the Greenwater Range and

about seven miles southwest of Death Valley Junction was also found. It was beginning to appear that this was the southernmost lode in a rich colemanite belt stretching northwest to southeast along Furnace Creek Wash from here to the area of present-day Furnace Creek Ranch. Coleman also bought this property, naming it the Lila C.

These discoveries that were soon to revolutionize the borax industry in the United States seemed destined for the moment to lie untouched, for several basic reasons: first, these larger and more concentrated deposits required underground mining methods; second, more sophisticated techniques were necessary for their refinement as they were not readily soluble in hot water; third, no transportation lines extended into this undeveloped area; fourth, no nearby supply center existed; fifth, this badlands region was so scorchingly hot in summer that it precluded mining activity during that season; and last and perhaps most important, Coleman's desert refineries were doing so well that he seemed justified in continuing their operations for a while yet.

d) Pacific Coast Borax Company Turns Attention to Calico Mountain Deposits

These extensive and pure deposits would probably have remained undeveloped if not for the discovery in 1883 of more colemanite ledges in the Calico Mountains twelve miles northeast of the railroad at Daggett in San Bernardino County. Because of their proximity to the railroad these deposits posed a serious threat to Coleman's Death Valley business. Immediately buying up the most important lodes, he decided to look to the future and initiated research at his Alameda, California, refinery in order to determine a profitable method of refining this material. Meanwhile, his Harmony and Amargosa works continued production.

With the dissolution of Coleman's financial empire in 1890, Francis Marion ("Borax") Smith took possession of his holdings at Borate, in the Death and Amargosa valleys, and his Alameda refinery, and consolidated these and other miscellaneous properties into the Pacific Coast Borax Company. In addition he took over the colemanite deposits in the Furnace Creek Wash area. Declining borax prices due to borax imports from Italy and a consequent glut of the product on the market prompted Smith to close down his Death Valley holdings and concentrate on operations at Borate, where richer ore could be refined by less expensive processes. These became the first major underground borate workings in the United States, and during the years 1890 to 1907 Borate became the chief producer of borax and boracic acid in the country. In time, however, the workings had been carried to such a depth that the cost of their further development was prohibitive, causing Smith's attention to turn once more to his Death Valley reserves.

e) Borax Mining Returns to Death Valley and the Lila C

Hindering development of the Lila C Mine was its isolation, but fortunately profits from the Calico operation were sufficient to subsidize construction of the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad, projected to stretch from Ludlow on the Santa Fe line to Death Valley Junction and on to Goldfield, Nevada. Work at the mine started even before the railroad was finished, the initial ore recovered being transported to market via twenty-mule teams, once more pressed into service. The T & T Railroad, begun in May 1905, reached Death Valley Junction by 1907, and a seven-mile-long spur was immediately laid reaching to the Lila C camp of Ryan station. Borate was abandoned and all its equipment moved to the new area where a calcining plant was also installed. The Pacific Coast Borax Company had not forgotten its holdings further west

Illustration 279.

Ruins of buildings, and waste dumps, at Lila C Mine, 1943.

Photo by Alberts, courtesy of DEVA NM.

Illustration 280.

Mining camp of Ryan, 1964.

Photo by Bill Dengler, courtesy of DEVA NM.



The Death Valley Railroad Shifts Activity to

(New) Ryan

A new railroad was needed in order to open up these deposits, and this resulted in construction of the Death Valley narrow gauge operating from Death Valley Junction to the newly-opened mine. In January 1912 the Lils C was closed, though not completely abandoned, and American borax activity



near Death Valley, however, as evidenced by a newspaper report in 1909 that due to the low price of borax the Lila C might have to be abandoned in favor of the more cheaply-mined deposits of Mount Blanco that existed in inexhaustible quantities, such a move being possible with construction of a narrow-gauge from Ryan to the deposits.<sup>1</sup> As the ore at the Lila C began to play out about 1914, plans were already underway to shift operations to reserves further west on the edge of Death Valley. Company engineers had determined that the large deposits here would keep the company going for years, while more was always available on the Monte Blanco and Corkscrew claims.

f) The Death Valley Railroad Shifts Activity to  
(New) Ryan

A new railroad was needed in order to open up these deposits, and this resulted in construction of the Death Valley narrow gauge operating from Death Valley Junction to the newly-opened mines. In January 1915 the Lila C was closed, though not completely abandoned, and American borax activity shifted to the new town of Devair, almost immediately renamed (New) Ryan, on the western edge of the Greenwater Range overlooking Death Valley. A new calcining plant was built at Death Valley Junction to handle the lower-grade ores coming from the Played Out and Bidly McCarty mines. According to the original Death Valley Railroad survey, (New) Ryan was to be only the temporary terminus for a line eventually extending down Furnace Creek Wash to the Corkscrew Canyon and Monte Blanco deposits as they were needed. This projected extension never materialized, however, because the Ryan mines--the Played Out, Upper and Lower Bidly, Grand View, Lizzie V. Oakley, and Widow--proved

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1. Inyo Register, 11 November 1909.

even more productive as development increased until 1928 when a deposit of easily-accessible rasorite, more economical to mine due to its proximity to the company's new processing plant, was discovered near Kramer (later Boron), California, again precipitating a shift in mining operations. When the Death Valley Junction concentrating plant shut down in 1928, a significant era in borax production and processing in the Death Valley region came to an end. From then until 1956 borate mining all but ceased, with mines being kept on a standby basis and furnishing only small tonnages to fill special orders. This lull continued until Tenneco, Inc., started open-pit operations at the Boraxo Mine near Ryan in 1971, and subsequent activity seems to suggest that borax mining will again become a significant part of the region's industrial future.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Several sources have been drawn upon for this capsulized history of the borax industry in the Death Valley region. Among them are: Marius R. Campbell, "Reconnaissance of the borax deposits of Death Valley and Mohave desert," USGS Bulletin No. 200 (Washington: GPO, 1902), pp. 7-8; Hoyt S. Gale, "The Lila C. borax mine at Ryan, Cal.," in Mineral Resources of the United States, Calendar Year 1911 (Washington: GPO, 1912), p. 861; Evans et al., Special Report 125, pp. 21-22; Weight, Twenty Mule Team Days, pp. 37-38; Spears, Illustrated Sketches, p. 62; Calif. St. Mng. Bur., Third Annual Report of the State Mineralogist (1883), pp. 26-30, 36; Myrick, Railroads of Nevada and Eastern California, p. 609; "100 Years of U.S. Borax, 1872-1972," in Pioneer (1972), passim.

## 2. Furnace Creek Wash

### a) History

#### (1) Early Mining Districts

The claims staked in the vicinity of Furnace Creek Wash in the early 1880s became part of either one of two mining districts. On 3 November 1882 the Monte Blanco Borax and Salt Mining District was established with boundaries

Commencing at the south east corner of Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, 2 miles east of the mouth of Furnace Creek, thence running north 15 miles, thence east 15 miles, then south 30 miles, thence west 15 miles and then north 15 miles to point of beginning.<sup>3</sup>

This district included most of the borax sites being worked or held in reserve today, such as the DeBely, Low Grade, Little Shot, Dot, Hard Scramble, and Monte Blanco borax deposits. The Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, formally established on 25 May 1883, had boundaries

commencing two miles East of the mouth of Furnace Creek wash and running North parallel with the Mountains fifteen miles, Thence West across Death Valley fifteen Miles Thence South along Panamint Mts. fifteen miles Thence East to place of beginning.<sup>4</sup>

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3. "Organization and Laws of Monte Blanco Borax and Salt Mining District, Inyo Co., California, Furnace Creek Cannon [sic], Inyo Co., State of California, November 3rd, 1882," in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D. See Appendix C for a full copy of the by-laws.

4. By-Laws of Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, 25 May 1883, in Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, pp. 345-49. See Appendix D for a full copy of this document.

(2) Development of Area by Pacific Coast  
Borax Company

During all the years that the colemanite deposits south of Furnace Creek Wash had been held in abeyance by the Pacific Coast Borax Company, they had not been totally neglected. The company had, in fact, been very careful to establish legal title to the many claims that had been located for them in the area by various prospectors (many subsidized by the Pacific Coast Borax people), and also diligent in performing the necessary \$100 worth of improvements necessary each year to maintain ownership. The original discoveries had been located in 1883 and patented in 1887 as placer claims, but it was later perceived by the extent and depth of the ore that these were actually lode deposits, making the basis for the original patents somewhat shaky. This obstacle was overcome by simply incorporating the earlier strikes within the boundaries of newer lode claims. Encouraging prospecting in the area and keeping track of resulting locations, carrying out the necessary surveys, and patenting location rights according to government regulations, while also performing annual assessment work, were time-consuming and often legally-complicated tasks, but by the 1900s when it was thought that these resources might be needed to bolster the failing supplies of the Lila C, the company had successfully obtained indisputable mining rights throughout the Monte Blanco and Corkscrew Canyon areas.

In the 1880s the company's annual assessment work, performed until federal courts confirmed their patents and made protective work unnecessary, was carried out by men either from Harmony Borax Works or the Monte Blanco camp. When borax activity moved to the Calico Mountains around 1890, groups of men left there by wagon each winter to tackle this duty. In the early 1900s men from the Lila C and then from Ryan set up

temporary camps on the various claim groups and performed the work. When around 1916 the ever-present threat of claim jumping materialized and some disgruntled employees spurred on by competitors tried to take over some company claims in the area, it took the U.S. Supreme Court to confirm the original ownership. To prevent further encroachment the company proceeded to surround their more valuable Mount Blanco claims with fences of telephone wire string to wood posts. Annual work was thereafter performed more conscientiously and careful records kept of the improvements made.<sup>5</sup>

Although only very limited development work was carried out on the slopes of Mount Blanco, the area's resources were fully recognized and considered ripe for development if ever needed. When, for instance, a closure of the Lila C was being considered around 1909 or 1910 because of the low price of borax and the expense of recovering it from here, work in the Furnace Creek Wash area increased in preparation for a possible shift of operations.<sup>6</sup>

In the early 1920s another colemanite deposit of exceptional purity was located about 1½ miles from the Death Valley Railroad and supposedly adjoining Pacific Coast Borax Company property. The "discoverers"--W. Scott Russell, C.A. Barlow, and a W.H. Hill--formed the Death Valley Borax Company, moved gasoline hoists and other equipment onto the site, erected a camp, and determined to work the properties "declared by geologists to be the most remarkable and among the richest deposits

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5. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 35-36, 107-8; Glasscock, Here's Death Valley, pp. 270-71.

6. Rhyolite Herald, 22 January 1910.

on record."<sup>7</sup> These claims were filed for patent the next year as the Boraxo Nos. 1 and 2 lodes. A sticky legal question arose due to the fact that this property had earlier been located as the Clara lode Claim by the Pacific Coast Borax Company, and a patent applied for that, unknown to the company, had been rejected on rather nebulous grounds. The company, therefore, assuming ownership, ceased annual assessment work, unwittingly opening the way for later relocation of the site. Ensuing litigation found in favor of the usurpers, forcing the Pacific Coast Borax Company to later buy it back. It ultimately became known as the Boraxo Deposit, and, as stated earlier, its exploitation by Tenneco, Inc., starting around 1970 has renewed borax operations in the Death Valley region.<sup>8</sup>

In 1924 W.F. Foshag of the U.S. National Museum wrote a piece on the mineral deposits of Furnace Creek Wash, noting that the mines of the area were found in either of two districts: the Ryan District, composed of the Bidly McCarthy (McCarty), Widow, Lizzie V. Oakley, Lila C and Played-Out deposits, and the Mount Blanco District, which was not being mined at that time but had been opened earlier by several exploratory tunnels. This latter area, he said, could be reached from Ryan "by continuing down the Wash past The Tanks and taking the only road to the south leading into the clay hills flanking the Black Mountains on the north. The road leads directly to the deposits but the last mile must be made on foot."<sup>9</sup>

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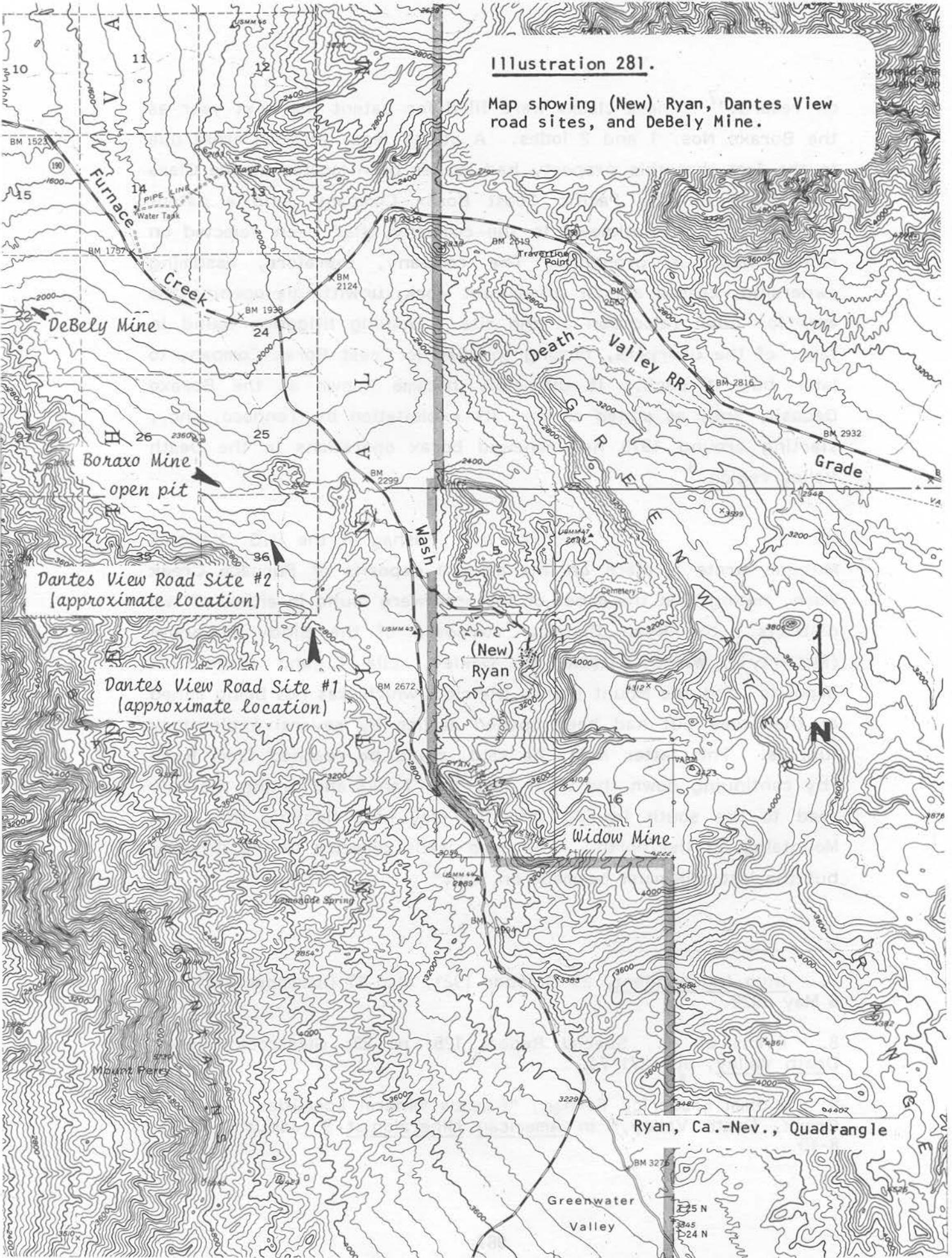
7. Inyo Independent, 29 October 1921, also 17 December 1921 and 6 May 1922.

8. Evans et al., Special Report 125, p. 23; Glasscock, Here's Death Valley, pp. 271-74.

9. William Frederick Foshag, "Famous Mineral Localities: Furnace Creek, Death Valley," in American Mineralogist 9 (January 1924): 8-10.

**Illustration 281.**

Map showing (New) Ryan, Dantes View road sites, and DeBely Mine.



Ryan, Ca.-Nev., Quadrangle

25 N  
24 N

In 1956 the Pacific Coast Borax Company was reorganized into the U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation, which still retains the early mining properties of the former smaller organization in the Death Valley region, including those in the Furnace Creek Wash area extending from the monument boundary west of Ryan northwest to Monte Blanco and then on to Gower Gulch. In this latter canyon quite limited exploratory and assessment work has been done through the years, as evidenced by the presence of only short adits and shallow shafts. The Corkscrew Mine at the head of Corkscrew Canyon has been developed by two adits, but its ore body is considered about exhausted. From 1953 to 1955 colemanite recovered here went into air-dispersed fire retardants for use against forest fires. Utilization of such a retardant, and consequently any further development of the mine, was doomed in the early 1960s by the U.S. Forest Service's determination that boron-based retardants caused soil sterility and were in addition less effective than other products. The DeBely Mine also operated in the mid-1950s to supply borates for this purpose.<sup>10</sup>

b) Present Status

Field work concerned with the Furnace Creek Wash historical sites was conducted in several areas which will be covered here individually, beginning with two sites west of the Dantes View road.

(1) Dantes View Road Sites #1 and #2

At the junction of the Ryan and Dantes View roads a gravel access branches off to the southwest, currently

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10. Clarence Wendel, Special Report on Borate Resources: A Supply and Marketing Study (San Francisco: NPS Mining and Minerals Division [Washington Office], 1978), pp. 26, 29.

Illustration 282.

Adit at Dantes View road site #1.

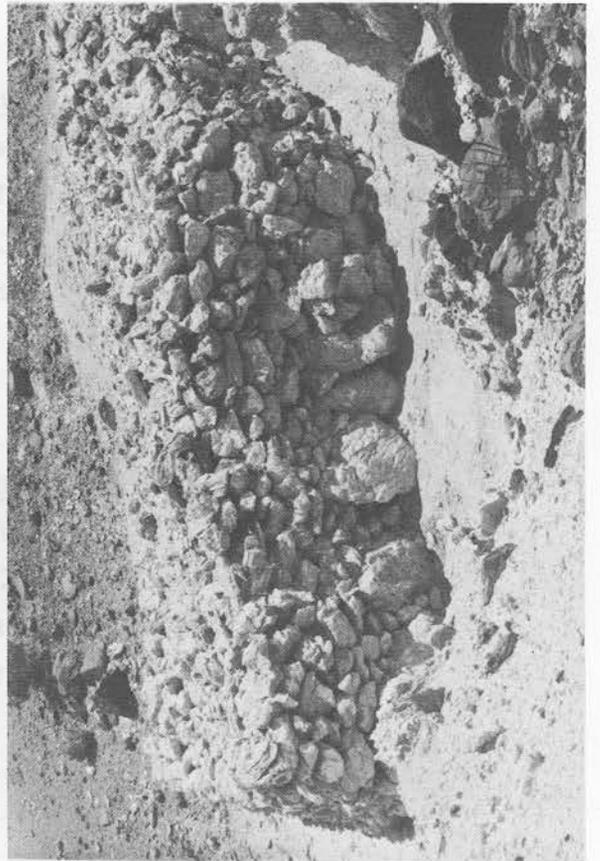
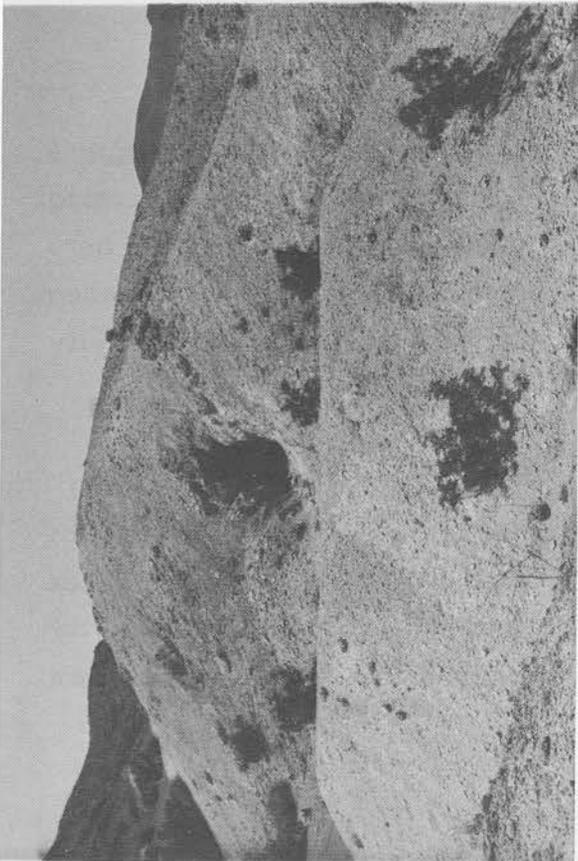
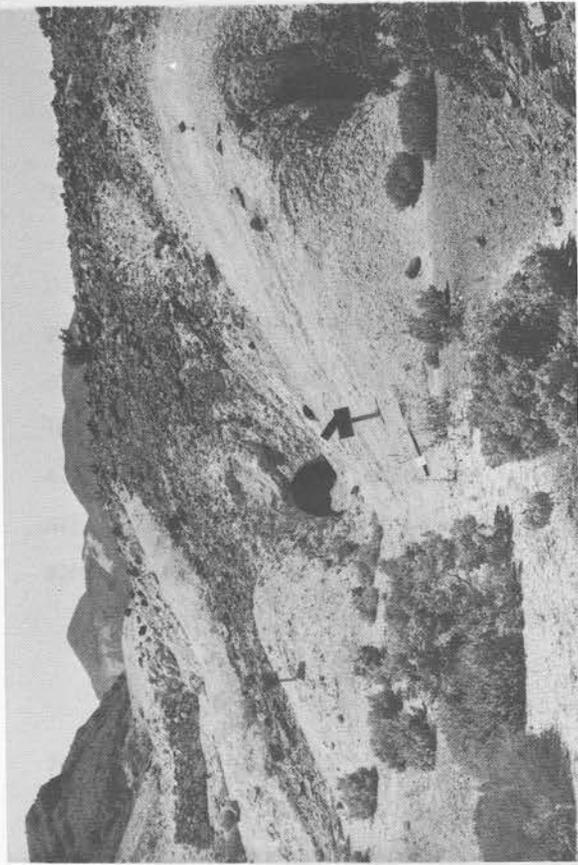
Illustration 283.

Adits and stone wall at Dantes View road site #2.

Illustration 284.

Close-up of one side of stone wall at Dantes  
View road site #2.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



used in connection with mining operations on the Sigma-White Monster ore body. Off this main road tracks lead slightly further west and southwest toward two or three adits dug into the foothills. There is slight evidence of possible habitation sites (ground depressions, wood refuse) but no structural ruins are extant. Site #2 is north of this area and appears to be a borax site contemporaneous with those examined further west in the vicinity of Monte Blanco. At least it manifests the same type of stone walls and mounds. Metal refuse, mainly tin cans, lies all around. The only mine development consists of two adits. This site overlooks the Boraxo open-pit mine on the north side of the ridge.

(2) DeBely Mine

This open-pit site is reached via a faint road branching to the southeast off the Corkscrew Mine road. Most of the activity here has been limited to the south side of the ridge where surface scraping is evident. Some underground activity has resulted in adits on both sides of the ridge and a couple of vertical shafts.

(3) Corkscrew (Screw) Mine

The entrance to this site is through a locked gate east on Route 190 about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles beyond the exit road from Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon. Mine workings found here alongside a wash consisted of several adits, a huge wooden four-chute ore bin, and an adjacent platform loading area. Activity here was all underground.

(4) Monte Blanco

This district is about one-half mile south of Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road and extends about three-quarters of a mile east-west. Extensive prospecting activity has taken place throughout the hillsides along Twenty-Mule-Team



Illustration 285.

DeBely Mine, view to northwest.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 286.

Ore bin at Corkscrew Mine.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Canyon road and between it and the Monte Blanco area. Resources found near Monte Blanco include a collapsed dugout, used either for habitation or storage, fashioned from sandbags. Some timbering was exposed and bits of pinyon pine bark were found imbedded in the sand. Stretching over every ridge are fence posts, some with wire still attached, and several bails of wire were also found lying on the ground. These are boundary lines remaining from the early 1900s when the Pacific Coast Borax Company endeavored to discourage claim-jumping by enclosing their richest claims.

The pyramidal-shaped light-colored formation referred to as Monte Blanco shows signs of thorough exploration. On its north face are five stone foundation walls, probably loading or machinery platforms. One wooden chute remains intact, though there is evidence nearby of others. A wagon road circling in front of the mountain makes a complete loop back to the access road, which eventually intersects with another mining road further east and leads back down toward the Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road.

Southeast of Monte Blanco is another lofty ridge on which several adits have been worked and on which more stone walls are periodically visible. The long road leading up toward this area has been shored up at one point by means of a low stone wall that carries it across a wash. Many signs of human habitation of the area (leather fragments, tool parts, canvas, broken glass, tin cans, etc.) have collected here in the dry streambed. From a vantage point further up this trail, views are afforded over the ridges at other small mining operations and remnants of tram rails leading from adits. The road finally ends after a steep climb at an adit and waste dump site. Alongside the road skirting the edge of the hill here are two large stone mounds, similar to those at the Dantes View road site #2. The first is



Illustration 287.

Adit typical of those along Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 288.

Ruins of sandbag dugout in small wash near Monte Blanco mining area.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 288.

"No ledge or series of ledges anywhere in the world contains the immense amount of borate crusts known on the surface of this mountain of Colorado. It is a body of ore measuring 100 feet in width and 2000 in length. . . . It is a dark quarry, whose location cannot be roughly conjectured, but it must exceed by thousands of tons any known borate deposit."

Quote from Goldfield News, photo.



Illustration 289.

Stone leading platform and note other stone walls at left of photo by Linda W. Green, 1972.

Illustration 289.

"No ledge or series of ledges anywhere in the world contains the immense amount of borate quartz shown on the surface of this mountain of colemanite. It is a body of ore measuring 100 feet in width and 5000 in length. . . . It is a borax quarry, whose limitation cannot be roughly conjectured, but it must exceed by thousands of tons any known borate deposit."

Quote from Goldfield News, photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

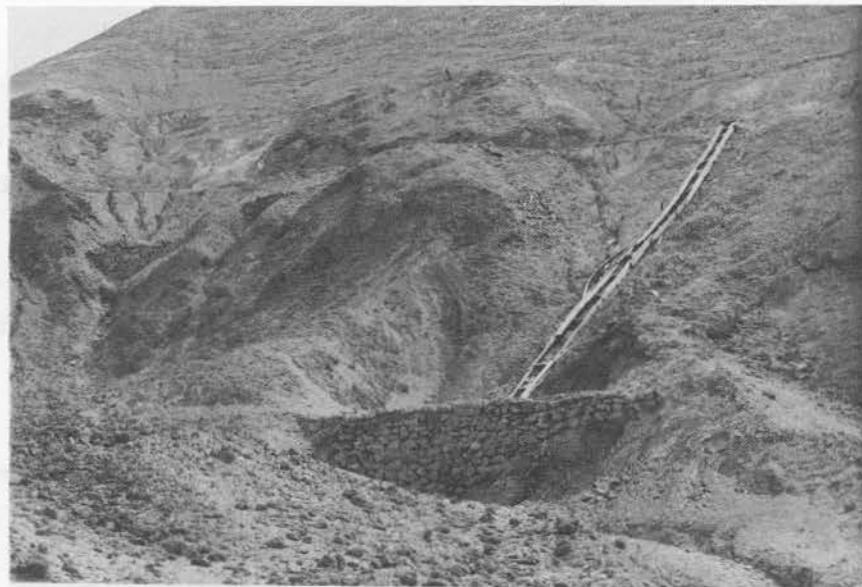
Illustration 290.

Stone loading platform and wooden chute on face of Monte Blanco. Note other stone walls at left of picture.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Although the original wooden structure was  
moved to Furnace Creek Ranch and remodeled on the interior in the  
1920s, the layout still remains. Much debris from the occupation  
period is shown on the ground. Northwest of the cellar is a tank  
the distinguished by four weights forming an irregular shape  
alignment. Across Twenty-Nine-Canyon Road is another such  
tank also shown in the vicinity.



77. Caves, 35 years in Death Valley, pp. 108-9

fifteen feet long, five feet high, six feet wide, and fairly level on top. The second triangular-shaped mound east of this is a mass of piled rocks with sides measuring fifteen to eighteen feet long. Narrow passageways have been left between the rock piles and the hillsides.

Descending from this ridge, the road eventually joins with the Monte Blanco road and together they head back toward Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon. Immediately north of the intersection of these last two roads is the site of the office/bunkhouse/ore-checking station serving the Monte Blanco miners in the 1880s. Although the original wooden structure was moved to Furnace Creek Ranch and remodeled on the interior in the 1950s, the dugout cellar remains. Much debris from the occupation period is strewn on the ground. Northeast of the cellar is a tent site distinguished by tent weights forming an irregular stone alignment. Across Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road is another such tent site. Dumps abound in the vicinity.

#### (5) Gower Gulch

The Gower Gulch mining area is reached either by trail south from Golden Canyon or by following the old 1½-mile-long wagon/auto road from Zabriskie Point that was built in the 1880s by the *Pacific Coast Borax Company* to facilitate annual assessment work on the ten claims they held in the gulch. The road led to a two-tent camp established as headquarters for men working in the area.<sup>11</sup>

Approximately one-half mile southwest of Zabriskie Point and down in the gulch is a building site on the

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11. Gower, 50 Years in Death Valley, pp. 108-9.



Illustration 291.

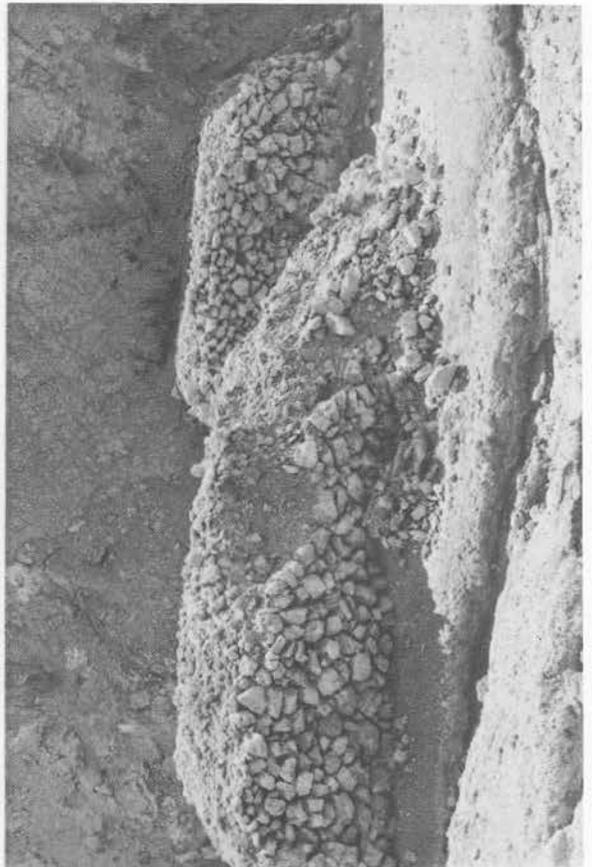
Wagon road and mining area on hillsides  
east of Monte Blanco. View toward southeast.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 292.

Close-up view of two stone mounds found at  
end of wagon road in above picture.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



View of Eagle Borex Wapiti photograph  
stone mound (shelter ruins) 1953

Illustration 293.

View of Eagle Borax Works, photographer and date unknown. Note stone mound (shelter ruin?) similar to those found in Monte Blanco area.

Photo courtesy of DEVA NM.

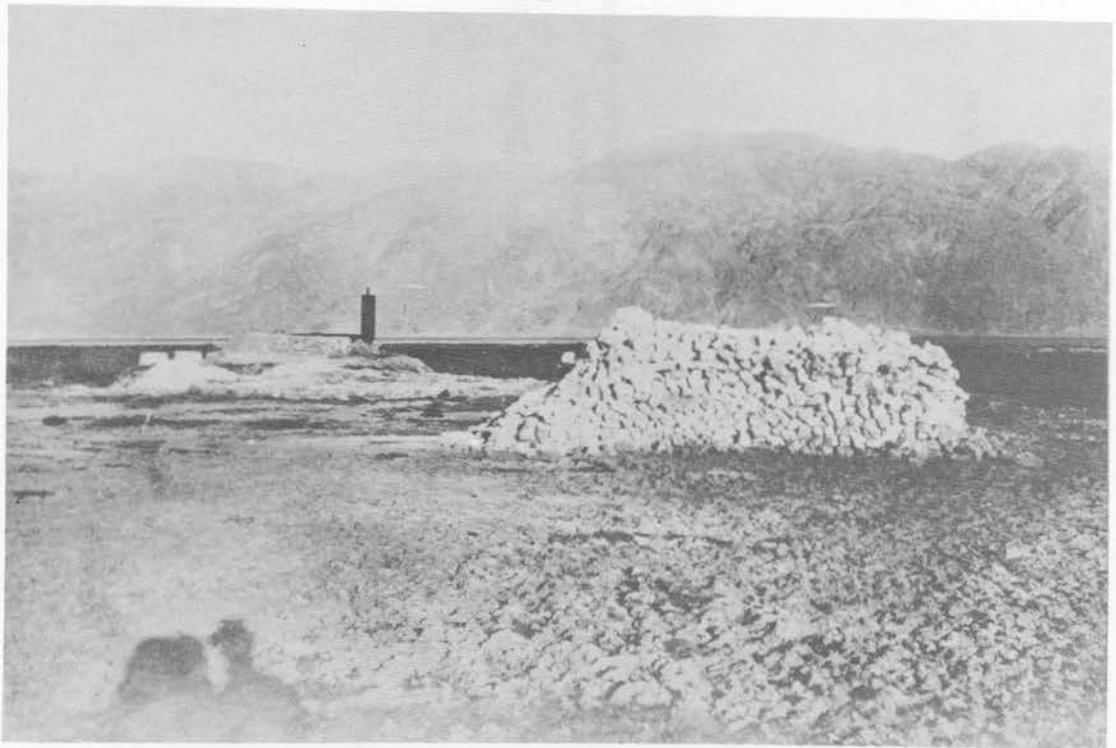


Illustration 294.

Monte Blanco assay office on site in Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon.  
Note cellar entrance on right side of building.

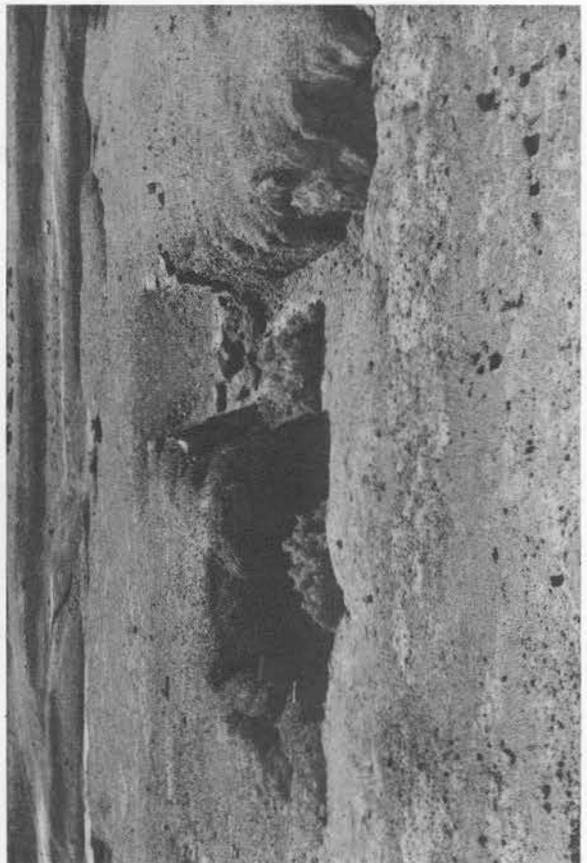
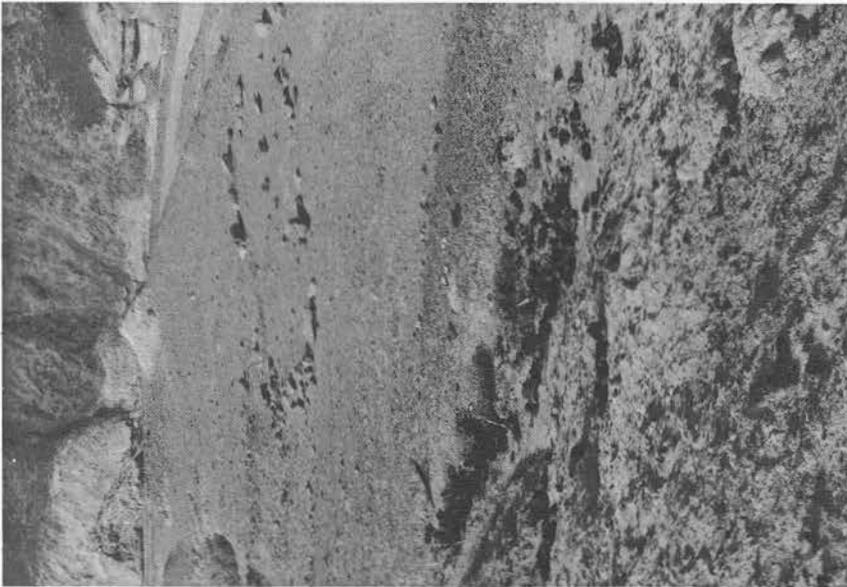
Illustration 296.

Tent site across Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road from cellar site.  
Note dump in foreground.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 295.

Cellar of above structure.  
Entrance is at top of picture.



south side of the dry streambed. Timber remnants are found here in association with a sturdy rock wall, four to five feet high and relatively clear on top, structures similar to which were found at all borax sites in the Furnace Creek Wash area. Also nearby along the side of another gully are two smaller isolated stone mounds, one two feet high, two feet wide, and seven feet long, the other three feet wide, two feet high, and ten feet long. Short exploratory tunnels have been dug into the ridges here.

Continuing west down the road, which follows the gulch streambed, numerous adits can be seen to the north and south up various gullies and washes. Another large foundation, built of crumbly clay "bricks" and about seven feet wide, showed up at another site south of the watercourse near an adit. About 1½ miles down the gulch is a large group of adits (six plus) and more stone walls. A long switchback trail extends up over the ridge to the northwest, shored up at points along the hillside. From here on to the mouth of the canyon the gulch narrows considerably, eventually ending in a high dry waterfall, so that this area would be the last place from which entrance or exit could be easily made to these claims. This is the point at which Harry Gower implies a temporary campsite was established for assessment work in the area.

c) Evaluation and Recommendations

(1) Importance of Borax in Death Valley Mining History

The Furnace Creek Wash sites, although subjected to exploratory and assessment work, have not sustained extensive underground mining development. Since 1883 the ore beds here have been regarded as reserve deposits that would be developed if the more accessible and thus more easily mined deposits owned by the Pacific Coast Borax Company in the Calico Mountains and later at the Lila C or Ryan became depleted.



Illustration 297.

Wagon road leading from Zabriskie Point into Gower Gulch.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 298.

Building site located at spot where wagon road reaches bottom of Gower Gulch.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 589  
Two types of stone structures found in Gowar Gulch  
Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1975

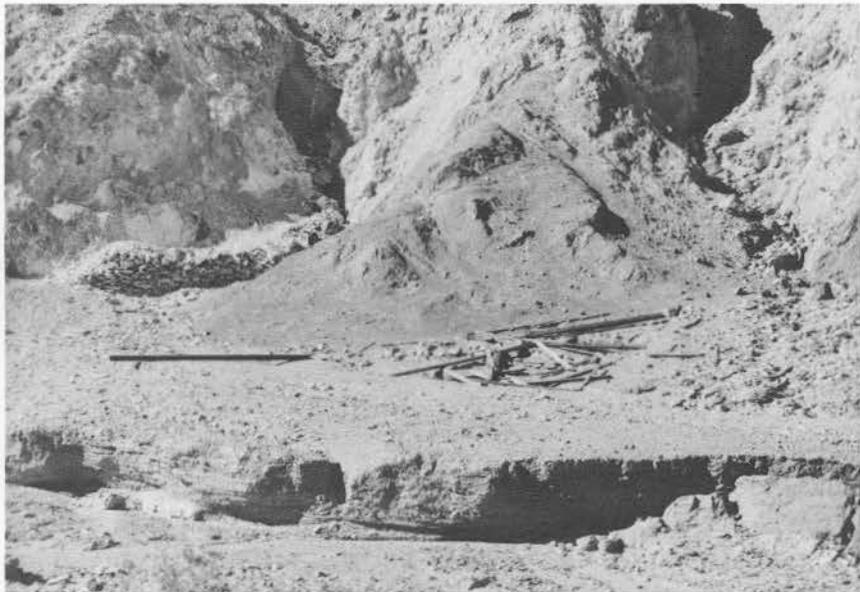


Illustration 299.

Two types of stone structures found in Gower Gulch.

Photos by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Illustration 300  
Area of rocky terrain  
At least five miles  
from by lake of



Illustration 301  
Subsided trail leading off to northwest from area in picture above  
Photo by Lind

Illustration 300.

Area of borax mining activity at west end of Gower Gulch.  
At least five adits are visible.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.

Illustration 301.

Switchback trail leading off to northwest from site in picture above.

Photo by Linda W. Greene, 1978.



Although the possibility once arose that these deposits would be opened up in connection with mining activity at Ryan in the 1900s, the discovery of, and subsequent preoccupation with, the rasorite deposit near Kramer, California, effectively halted further extension into this area. It has only been since the early 1970s that borate mining on a large scale has returned to Death Valley. As borax deposits east of Furnace Creek Wash near exhaustion (the Boraxo ore body is now almost depleted), the mineral belt extending from Ryan northwest along Furnace Creek Wash to the Death Valley floor takes on renewed importance as a still untapped and potentially valuable source of colemanite and the possible site of continuing borax operations.

Certainly the evolution of borax mining--from the establishment of the relatively short-lived Eagle and Harmony Borax Works through the productive years of Borate, the Lila C, and Ryan, up to present-day sophisticated mining operations at the Boraxo and Sigma open pits--is an essential though complex component of the monument's history. The romantic legends that arose around the long, dusty treks of the early borax teams, and later the impressive production records of the region's colemanite properties, drew public attention to the Death Valley area. Construction of the railroad to Ryan facilitated establishment of a large-scale and self-sufficient settlement there, and with the resultant influx of miners and, later, visitors to the town, further development of the valley as a scenic recreation area was inevitable.

The badlands country south of Furnace Creek Wash is closely connected to borax development both on the valley floor and outside the monument at Borate, the Lila C, and Ryan. It is the largest undeveloped borax area within the monument and potentially extremely valuable to the borax industry. Complicating the issue is that it also contains several cultural

resources important to the area's mining story and that are not found elsewhere in the area. As stated earlier, it was the discovery of colemanite here that contributed to the demise of the cottonball gathering and evaporation and crystallization techniques carried out at Harmony Borax Works. The evidence of underground work here and the varied types of mining-related resources found during the survey provide a marked contrast to the technological processes and living styles connected with the salt pan operations. Incorporating the history of this area into monument programs would be a logical extension of the interpretive effort centering around borax mining in Death Valley and environs.

## (2) Variety of Cultural Resources Present

Several significant cultural resources found in this area have thus far not been found elsewhere in the monument to the writer's knowledge. Three types of tent sites may be represented: in some instances the tents were placed directly on the ground and secured by wires attached to stone weights. Examples of these are found near the Monte Blanco assay office site along Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road marked by rock alignments. In Gower Gulch tents might have been erected on some of the high stone platforms constructed along the sides of washes. In one instance, at least, they appear to have been erected on low stone foundations and reinforced with wood around the sides. The sandbag dugout found west of Monte Blanco, although it might have only been used for storage, might also have been a shelter against the intense heat and blinding sandstorms before it caved in. The subterranean excavation alongside Twenty-Mule-Team Canyon Road is all that remains on-site of the oldest extant building in Death Valley. This area, with its accompanying tent sites, privy pit, and refuse dumps, has potential significance for historical archeology.

The large stone mounds and the many rock walls and platforms found in the Furnace Creek Wash area require further study to determine their exact purpose. No documentary data alluding to such structures in connection with borax operations has been found; it is possible that historical archeologists could discover some clue as to their function. The large wooden ore bin at the Corkscrew Mine is not significant structurally, resembling bins at many of the quartz-mining operations in the monument, and is of fairly modern vintage. It is, however, the only ore bin in the monument connected with borate mining of the 1950s.

Considering its role in the development of the borax mining industry in California, and the varied cultural remains from the 1880s through the 1950s in evidence along Furnace Creek Wash, this area of Death Valley National Monument is particularly significant. Because some of these sites were not covered during the 1977 archeological survey, it is recommended that an archeologist from the Western Archeological Center inspect the area from Corkscrew Canyon northwest to Gower Gulch and evaluate the significant historical and archeological resources there.

### (3) National Register Nominations

The Monte Blanco mining area and the assay office site that was contemporary with it possess National Register eligibility for several reasons: Monte Blanco was the location of the original colemanite discovery in Death Valley in the early 1880s; an interesting dugout variation and large stone platforms and mounds not found elsewhere in the monument to date are found in the vicinity of Monte Blanco; the cellar site, in addition to being the original location of the oldest extant building in Death Valley, contains early tent sites in association and has potential for further discoveries by historical archeologists. The Gower Gulch area should be included in such a historic district

because the sites here are a continuation and expansion of Pacific Coast Borax Company activities at Monte Blanco.

According to John Craib's 1977 archeological survey of Death Valley mining claims, some of the prehistoric archeological sites found in the Wash area have been determined to be of regional significance, and nomination forms are being prepared by the Western Archeological Center nominating the Furnace Creek Wash unit as part of a larger archeological district.

Furnace Creek Wash (California State Route 190) has added National Register eligibility as the "Gateway of the '49ers," the route followed into Death Valley by early gold-seekers searching for a shortcut to the California goldfields.



## APPENDIXES



## Appendix A:

### Mining Laws of the Panamint Mining District

"Pursuant to the above notice a special miners meeting was held on February 10, 1873, at the camp aforesaid of R. C. Jacobs & Co., with the following result:

W. L. Kennedey was elected Chairman, and R. C. Jacobs Secretary of the meeting.

On motion the following resolutions were offered, voted upon separately and adopted:

Resolved, That we the miners of Panamint Mountains, here assembled, do ordain and establish the following:

1. The new district shall be known as, and called the "Panamint Mining District," and its boundaries shall be as follows: Commencing in "Windy Canyon" (a point four miles north of Telescope Peak) at a point called Flowery Springs, and running thence in an easterly direction, following the said "Windy Canyon" to the summit of the range; thence down the east side and out to the center of Death Valley; thence southerly to "Mesquit Springs," on the eastern slope of "Slate Range;" thence westerly to the summit of "Centrie Canyon," and down the same to its mouth, continuing the same course westerly to the center of "Slate Range Valley;" thence northerly to a point in "Panamint Valley" ten miles due west from "Flowery Springs;" thence easterly ten miles to the place of beginning.

2. We adopt as the laws of this district the act of Congress approved May 10, 1872, with the regulations issued thereunder from the General Land Office, bearing date of June 10, 1872, and September 20, 1872, with the following additional local regulations:

3. An exact copy of the notice of location of a mining claim, tunnel claim, mill site or timber claim must be handed to the Recorder of this district for record within twenty days from the posting on claim of said notice, or the location will be held as abandoned, and for every such record and certificate of same the Recorder shall be entitled to a fee of two dollars.

4. On locating a claim, if the locator so desires, it shall be the duty of the Recorder to visit the same personally and examine the boundaries thereof, for which he shall be entitled to a fee of

five dollars and mileage at the rate of fifty cents per mile for every mile or part of a mile that the claim may be situated distant from the Recorder's place of residence.

5. One foot in blasting ground in either shaft, drift or tunnel, of ordinary size, shall be valued at \$20, and in picking ground at \$5 dollars, and when application is made by a claim holder, or legal representative of a claim, for a certificate showing the amount of labor performed or improvements made upon a claim, it shall be the duty of the Recorder to make a personal inspection of the same, and if in his judgment the amount seems correct he shall give a certificate to that effect, and for such inspection and certificate he shall receive a fee of five dollars (\$5), with mileage at the rate of (50c) fifty cents per mile for each mile or part of a mile that the claim may be situated from the Recorder's place of residence.

6. The owner of a mining claim, tunnel claim or mill site situated in this district may hold for the use of such claim or claims the timber contained in an area of (320) three hundred and twenty acres of land.

7. It shall be the duty of the Recorder to call meetings of the miners whenever a petition is presented to him signed by ten or more persons owning claims in this district, or by legal representatives of such owners of claims, requesting him to give notice of such meeting for the purpose of altering or amending the laws of this district, and he must post such notices, stating the object of the meeting, in at least three different and conspicuous or public [places] in the district, but no such meeting shall be held in less than 10 or more than 20 days from the date of such notice, and no person except a claim owner or his legal representative shall have a vote at such meeting.

8. A Recorder shall be elected on the 10th day of February of each year, and it shall be his duty to post notices in three or more public places in the district, ten days previous to the expiration of his term of office, to the effect that a miners meeting is called for the purpose of electing a Recorder, stating where the election is to be held, and appointing two claim owners, or legal representatives of such, as judges of such election, who shall permit none but claim owners, or legal representatives of such, to vote at any such election. The Recorder shall purchase the books, etc., necessary at his own expense, and on retiring from office shall deliver them to his successor, receiving payment from the said successor of the original cost of said books.

9. At all meetings held in this district a majority of the claim owners present voting for or against a measure shall constitute the adoption or rejection of such measure.

10. These laws, rules and regulations shall take effect from the date of their passage.

11. The Records of the district will be kept in Surprise Valley, Panamint Mountains.

After the adoption of the foregoing resolutions, an election for Recorder was declared in order. Robert Stewart was put in nomination, and on a vote being taken was unanimously elected for the annual term commencing February 10, 1873.

It was unanimously resolved that R. C. Jacobs compile the laws of Panamint Mining District and forward them for publication to the office of The Inyo Independent, Independence, Inyo county, California.

W. L. KENNEDAY, Chairman, R. C. Jacobs,  
Secretary.

Mormon Canyon, Panamint Mining District, Cal., February 10, 1873."



## Appendix B:

### Establishment of Rose Springs Mining District

"At a meeting of the undersigned miners, held here at Rose Springs, Inyo Co. California This 4th day of April A. D. 1888, being desiraus [sic] of forming and organizing a Mineing [sic] District. Owing to the fact that the Books and records of the former District that was organized here having been lost and no Books Records or Recorder have known to exist here for two years last past. Therefore we the undersigned miner [sic] have assembled for the purpose and do proceed to form and organize a Mining District. The following business was transacted —

"On motion J. D. Channell was elected as chairman of the meeting. On motion J. N. Medbury was elected Secretary. A motion was made and carried that we now proceed to organize a Mining District By addopting [sic] Laws and electing a Mining Recorder &c. A motion was made and carried That this Mining District shall be known as Wild Rose Mining District in Inyo Co. California. Its Boundries are as follows.

"The north boundary line shall be Townsends Pass in the Panamint range of Mountains. The western boundry line shall be Panamint Valley. The Southern boundry line shall be the North line of Panamint District. The Eastern boundry line shall be Death Valley. A motion was made and carried that the time for recording claims after notice of location has been posted shall be thirty days. A motion was made and carried that the recorders fees shall not exceed \$2.00 (Two dollars) for recording each mining claim, A motion was made and carried that the Records Books of Record of Mining claims shall be open to any one for inspection at reasonable hours during the day and also that Record Books shall be kept under lock and key. A motion was made and carried That the Mining recorder shall hold office for one year or until his successor is elected. A motion was made and carried That in all other matters, we addopt the United States and State Laws to govern this District. A motion was made and carried that we proceede to elect a Recorder.

"J. D. Channell was placed in nomination for recorder and on motion was elected Mining Record [sic] of this Wild Rose Mining District by acclamation.

"A motion was made and carried That the District Recorder have the proceeding of this meeting recorded in the County Recorder Office of this County.

J.D. Channell  
J. N. Medbury  
Paul Pfefferle  
Wm. Avery  
Henry Ohm  
Joseph Danielson  
John Schober

"The above are a copy [sic] of proceedings held here on the 4th day of April 1888, and are sent to be recorded.

J. D. Channell  
District Recorder

Recorded at request of J. D. Channell April 10th A. D. 1888  
at 7 mins. past 10 o'clock A.M.

P. N. Mack  
County Recorder"

Appendix C:

"Organization and Laws of Monte Blanco Borax and  
Salt Mining District, Inyo Co., California,  
Furnace Creek Cannon, Inyo Co.  
State of California, November 3rd, 1882

At a meeting of miners held this day at above place the following persons were present R. Neuschwander J. S. Crouch Cesar de Belli Fred Schutte and Albert Munger--On motion J. S. Crouch was elected as temporary Chairman and R. Neuschwander as Secretary of this meeting--On motion it was unanimously decided to organize a new Borax and Salt Mining District to be called Monte Blanca [sic] Borax and Salt Mining District and its boundary's [sic] to be established as foll: Commencing at the south east corner of Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, 2 miles east of the mouth of Furnace Creek, thence running north 15 miles, thence east 15 miles, thence south 30 miles, thence west 15 miles and thence north 15 miles to point of beginning.

On motion, the United States Mining Laws without qualification were unanimously adopted to govern this district. On motion J. S. Crouch, was unanimously elected Recorder of said district to serve for the term of one year from date.

On motion the following resolution was unanimously adopted: That the Recorder shall have the power to appoint a Deputy, who shall perform all the duties and act instead of the Recorder in his absence and said Recorder shall have the power to rescind such appointment at any time he may see fit to do so.

Whenever the Recorder makes or rescinds such appointments it shall be recorded in the records of this District with the signature of the recorder signed thereunder. In case of Death or resignation of the Recorder, if there be a Deputy Recorder he shall act as Recorder until a new Recorder is elected.

No further business appearing for transaction the meeting was then adjourned sine die--

Attest:

Cesar De Bely  
Fred. Schulten  
Albert Munger

J. S. Crouch--Chairman  
R. Neuschwander, Sec.

Recorded at request of Wells Fargo & Co. November 20th AD 1882, at 5 min past 8 o'clock A.M.

John Crough [sic], County Recorder  
By Daniel Crough, Deputy

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From Land, Water & Mining Claims, Book D, Inyo County Courthouse



Appendix D:

By-laws of Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, 25 May 1883

At a meeting of the Miners of Death Valley held at the mouth of Furnace Creek John A. Robinson was elected President and Richard Louey was appointed Secretary when the following rules, regulations and By Laws were adopted to govern the same.

1st that This shall be Known as the Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District

2nd The boundaries shall be as follows, commencing two miles East of the mouth of Furnace Creek wash and running North parallel with the Mountains fifteen miles, Thence West across Death Valley fifteen Miles Thence South along Panamint Mts. fifteen miles Thence East to place of beginning.

3rd That the United States Mining Laws are adopted in full force with the following additional Local regulations, that no association of Locators shall Locate more than one hundred and sixty acres and no one person more than twenty acres but this shall not be so construed as to prohibit actual Locators from holding a plurality of claims in this district

4th That A Winters is duly elected recorder to hold office from the twenty first day of November one year or until the twenty first day of November 1882, or until his successor shall be elected.

5th That it shall be the duty of the Recorder to go on the ground before recording any claim and he shall have a fee of seven dollars and fifty cts for recording each claim

Dated, Mouth of Furnace Creek Inyo Co Cal Nov 21st 1881.

J. A. Robinson Pres  
Richard Louey Sec.

A Meeting of the Miners of the Death Valley Borax and Salt mining District was held at Camp Winters in said District about 3/4 of a mile North of the Mouth of Furnace Creek on the 21st day of February 1882, in pursuance to a call signed by A. W. Winters and others as follows Notice of Miners Meeting. A Meeting of the miners of Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District, Inyo County California, is hereby called to meet at Camp Winters in said District on the 21st day of February 1882 [sic] to elect a Recorder to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of A. Winters to take effect on the 21st day of February 1882, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before it.

We concur in the above call.

A Winters Recorder  
Wm B. Robertson Jr.  
R. Neuschwander [sic]  
Fred<sup>k</sup> Maw  
U[?], B. Spiller  
T. [?] C. Simmonds  
Fred. Reinhackle  
S. J. Parks  
O. Watkins  
E. Osborne [?]

Mr. Wm B. Robertson called the Meeting to order and read the Resignation of A Winters Recorder of this District to take effect Febry 21st 1882. The following miners were present at the Meeting Wm B Robertson Jr R. Neuschwander Fred Maw O Watkins F. Reinhackle [U?] B Spiller J S Crouch

Mr. J. S. Crouch was duly elected chairman and R. Neuschwander Secretary, and by a unanimous vote R. Neuschwander was duly elected Recorder of this District to fill the unexpired term of A Winters resigned.

Mr. Wm B. Robertson Jr moved the adoption of the following amendment to the Rules and Regulations of this District.

Resolved that the third clause of the Rules and Regulations and By Laws of this District which reads as follows: That the United States Mining Laws are adopted in full with the following additional Local Regulations. that no association of Locators shall locate more than 160 acres and no one person more than 20 acres, but this shall not be so construed. As to prohibit actual Locators from holding a plurality of claims on differencnt [sic] Deposits in this District; be and the same is hereby repealed and here-after the United States Mining laws without qualification shall govern as to the Location of claims in this District and there shall be no restriction as to the Number of Locations which any person or association of persons may locate.

The above amendment was unanimously adopted

Mr. Wm B. Robertson then moved the adoption of the following Resolution

Resolved that the Recorder of this District shall have the power to appoint a Deputy who shall act instead of and perform all the duties of the Recorder in his absence and said Recorder shall have the power to rescind such appointment at any time he may see fit to do so. Whenever the Recorder makes or rescinds such appointment it shall be recorded in the Record of this District with the signature of the Recorder signed thereunder. In case of Death or resignation of the Recorder if there be a Deputy Recorder he shall Act as Recorder until a new Recorder is elected. The above Resolution was unanimously adopted.

No further business being brought before the meeting it was then adjourned sine die.

R. Neuschwander  
Recorder

Greenland Death Valley Borax and Salt Mining District Inyo  
County California. April 6th 1882. To all whom it may concern I  
hereby appoint Mr J S Crouch Deputy Recorder of Death Valley  
Borax and Salt Mining District with full power to act during my  
absence

R Neuschwander  
Recorder

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From Land, Water and Mining Claims, Inyo Co., Book D, pp.  
345-49.