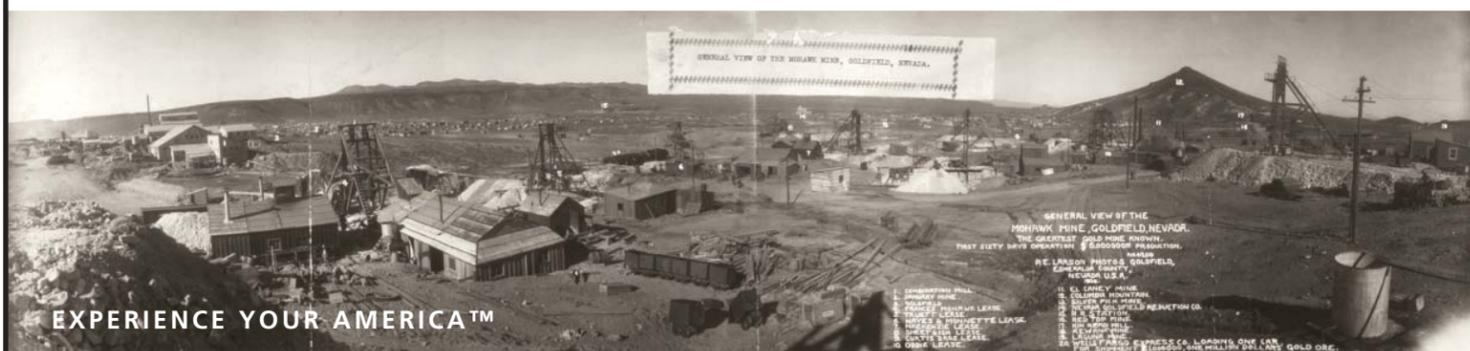




# Goldfield, Nevada Reconnaissance Survey

May 2009





**Cover photos:**

FRONT: Top Photo: Goldfield, Nevada, Sept. 30th, 1909, the greatest gold camp in the world, West Coast Art Co., Library of Congress. Bottom Photo: Street scene, Goldfield, Nevada, c1907, Waldon Fawcett, Washington, D.C., Library of Congress.

BACK: Top Photo: see above. Center Photos: Goldfield Consolidated Mines Co. Building, Goldfield Hotel, building foundation remains, Foundation of 100 Stamp Mill, Esmeralda County Courthouse. NPS photos.

THIS PAGE: Goldfield National Historic District sign, Florence Mine, G. L. "Tex" Rickard House, Curtis Building, Curtis Building interior, Goldfield High School, Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad engine repair pit, mining homes, red light district structures, John Ekman of the Goldfield Historic Society holding an IWW Local No. 77 Union House Card, and a window of the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Co. Building. NPS photos.



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100010/May 2009





**Previous page** - Top: Goldfield, Nevada, The World's Greatest Gold Ming [sic] Camp known, Larss, P. E. (Per Edward), 1906; Bottom: Head frame. Goldfield, Nevada, Library of Congress photos. **This page** - both photos are zoomed in areas of Goldfield, Nevada, Sept. 30th, 1909, the greatest gold camp in the world, West Coast Art Co., 1909, Library of Congress.

# CONTENTS

<b>1 SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 BACKGROUND</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Background of the Study	2
2.2 Purpose and Scope of the Study Document	2
2.3 Evaluation Criteria	2
<b>3 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Location and Setting	4
3.2 Land Use and Ownership	4
3.4. Natural Resources	6
3.5 Cultural Resources	8
3.6 Recreational Resources and Community Use	10
<b>4 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Introduction	13
4.2 Preliminary Evaluation of Cultural Resources	13
4.3 Cultural Themes	25
4.4. Opportunities for Public Enjoyment or for Scientific Study	25
4.5 Resource Integrity	25
4.6 Conclusion	26
<b>5 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF SUITABILITY</b>	<b>27</b>
5.1 Introduction	27
5.2 Preliminary Evaluation of Cultural Resource Themes	27
5.3 Conclusion	30
<b>6 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF FEASIBILITY</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 Introduction	31
6.2 Preliminary Evaluation of Feasibility Criteria	31
6.3 Potential NPS Roles / Assistance	33
6.4 Conclusion	33
<b>7 RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>8 APPENDICES</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>9 References</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>10 Preparers</b>	<b>40</b>

# Goldfield, Nevada Today



NPS photos

# 1 SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS) Pacific West Regional Office prepared this reconnaissance survey report of Goldfield, Nevada, at the request of Senator Harry Reid. Senator Reid asked the NPS to consider Goldfield's role in the American frontier mining experience, the national significance of the labor union struggles at Goldfield, and to include a sense of historic site boundaries. Senator Reid also described the importance of the 1906 Gans-Nelson boxing match to our nation's racial history.

This report includes a description of Goldfield's resources and a preliminary evaluation of the historic resources based on a field visit and available documentation. Based on the analysis, Goldfield's historic resources representing the last gold rush in our nation and the labor strife of unions, appear to be nationally significant and may be eligible for designation as a national historic landmark. The resources also appear to be suitable for inclusion in the national park system. The NPS is unable to make a preliminary determination of feasibility for Goldfield to be included in the national park system. The historic resources are nearly all privately owned by a large number of separate owners, and

contacting these owners is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey. Other analysis that is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey includes evaluation of safety issues, preservation costs, and the level of public support.

The NPS study team recommends: (1) a National Historic Landmark nomination be prepared for Goldfield, and (2) a special resource study be authorized for Goldfield. The special resource study process should include extensive involvement of local landowners, government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to determine whether NPS involvement is desirable and feasible. Additional assessment will provide further substantiation of the significance of Goldfield's resources and further information on existing threats to resources and safety issues such as hazardous materials.

The NPS suggests that the study area be expanded to consider other historic mining resources that are also key to this gold rush story in southwestern Nevada, including Tonopah. Further management options considered in a special resource study should focus on a range of creative approaches, designations, and partnership arrangements.



The Goldfield Hotel, NPS photo

## 2 BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Background of the Study

In May 2008, Senator Harry Reid of Nevada requested that the NPS conduct a reconnaissance survey of Goldfield, Nevada, to evaluate Goldfield's historic resources for inclusion as a unit of the national park system. Senator Reid asked the NPS to consider Goldfield's role in the American frontier mining experience, the national significance of the labor union struggles at Goldfield, and to include a sense of historic site boundaries. Senator Reid also described the historical importance of the 1906 Gans-Nelson boxing match.

On August 1, 2008, a team of NPS staff from the Pacific West Region and Death Valley National Park conducted a field visit to Goldfield to become familiar with its historic resources. The field visit was led by members of the Goldfield Historical Society. In addition, additional local resource experts provided background information. (Refer to the Preparers section at the end of this report).

### 2.2 Purpose and Scope of the Study Document

The purpose of this reconnaissance survey report is to evaluate the significance and suitability of Goldfield's historical resources and the feasibility for inclusion of those resources in the National Park System.

Though the NPS cannot initiate feasibility studies of potential new units of the national park system without the specific authorization of Congress, Congress does permit the NPS to conduct preliminary resource assessments and gather data on potential study areas or sites. The term "reconnaissance survey" has been used to describe this type of assessment.

A reconnaissance survey provides a preliminary evaluation of the significance of the resource values present in a study area, and a preliminary evaluation of the suitability and feasibility of including the area in the national park system. A reconnaissance survey does not typically include the development of management alternatives, but it may briefly note management issues and potential

management options if the area is clearly not appropriate for NPS designation.

At its conclusion, the reconnaissance survey provides a recommendation as to whether a full special resource study should be prepared for the area. This recommendation is provided to Congress for their deliberation. If the area appears to have some potential as a unit of the National Park System, Congress may authorize a special resource study.

When authorized by Congress, the NPS conducts special resource studies regarding the potential for creating new units of the national park system. These studies apply established criteria, evaluate protection and management alternatives, and provide the basis for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior and to Congress.

### 2.3 Evaluation Criteria

NPS applies criteria for significance, suitability and feasibility listed in *NPS Management Policies, 2006*. To be eligible for favorable consideration as a unit of the National Park System, a study area must:

- possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources
- be a suitable addition to the system
- be a feasible addition to the system
- require direct NPS management instead of protection by some other governmental agency or the private sector.

A reconnaissance survey is a partial and preliminary application of these criteria. The criteria and their use in the reconnaissance survey are described in further detail:

#### 2.3.1 National Significance

As described in *NPS Management Policies*, the NPS considers a resource nationally significant if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public

enjoyment, or for scientific study.

- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

Cultural resources are evaluated using the evaluation process for national historic landmarks contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (see Appendix B), in addition to the criteria above.

The reconnaissance survey makes a preliminary evaluation of the national significance of the resources in the study area.

### 2.3.2 Suitability

Suitability addresses whether the area includes nationally significant natural and/or cultural resources that are not already adequately represented in the national park system or comparably protected for public enjoyment by other public or private organizations. Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the proposed area to other units in the National Park System for differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resources, and opportunities for public enjoyment. The suitability analysis also considers whether the area offers interpretive and educational potential and visitor use opportunities.

The reconnaissance survey provides a preliminary evaluation of the study area's suitability for inclusion in the national park system.

### 2.3.3 Feasibility

The study team will evaluate whether it would be feasible to include Goldfield as a unit of the national park system, considering size and configuration, efficient administration at a reasonable cost, and other factors.

The reconnaissance survey offers a preliminary assessment of the feasibility of including the study area in the national park system.

### 2.3.4 Management Options

Other entities such as state or local government or the private sector may be able to protect resources in the study area, even if the resources are deemed significant, feasible and suitable for addition to the national park system. Management by the National Park Service will not usually be recommended

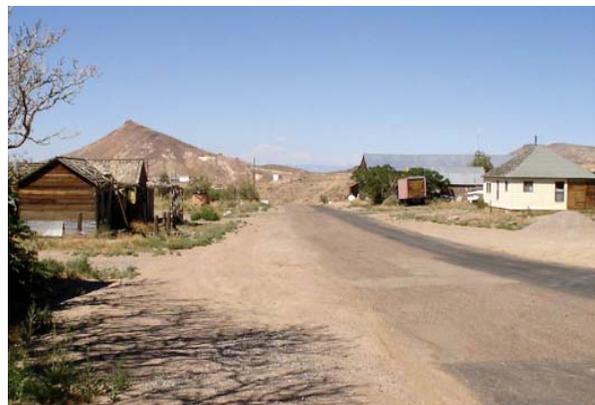
if another arrangement can provide adequate protection and opportunity for public enjoyment.

A reconnaissance survey does not evaluate management options, but it may note significant management issues and potential management options. If Congress authorizes a subsequent study, and that study deems the area significant, suitable and feasible for inclusion in the NPS system, then the study process will fully evaluate management options.

(Also see Appendix A. National Park Service *Management Policies*, 2006, Sections 1.2 and 1.3)



Columbia Mountain, NPS photo



Goldfield with Columbia Mountain in background, NPS photo

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

### 3.1 Location and Setting

The historic mining town of Goldfield is an unincorporated community of approximately 1,900 acres in western Nevada. It has been the county seat of Esmeralda County since 1907. Las Vegas is approximately 180 miles to the south and Reno is approximately 250 miles to the north of Goldfield (See Figure 1). The town of Tonopah, which is historically connected to Goldfield, is approximately 26 miles north.<sup>1</sup> Primary access to Goldfield is by Highway 95 which crosses through the town.

Esmeralda County is sparsely populated with about half of its population in Goldfield. Its other main population centers are Silver Peak, approximately 26 miles west, and Dyer, approximately 100 miles west. In 2007, the population of Goldfield was 448 and the entire population of Esmeralda County was 1,236.<sup>2</sup> The United States Census designates the entire county as rural.

Shortly after Goldfield was founded in 1902, it became the largest town in Nevada with a population of more than 20,000 in 1907. Many described it as “the place to be” during this time. It had several multi-story masonry buildings including the Goldfield Hotel, a high school which served 400 students, the county courthouse, banks, newspapers, roads, railroads, electricity, and telephone lines. There were numerous mines surrounding the town. Many structures were lost during fires and a flood, but Goldfield still retains several historic buildings, structures and features today. There are a few businesses in town and tourists come to visit Goldfield for its history.

### 3.2 Land Use and Ownership

#### 3.2.1 County Government

Esmeralda County has a commission form of government. There are three county commissioners that serve four-year terms. One commissioner is elected by residents of Goldfield, one by residents of Silver Peak, and one by residents of Fish Lake Valley. Other county officials include an assessor, auditor–recorder, clerk-treasurer, district attorney,

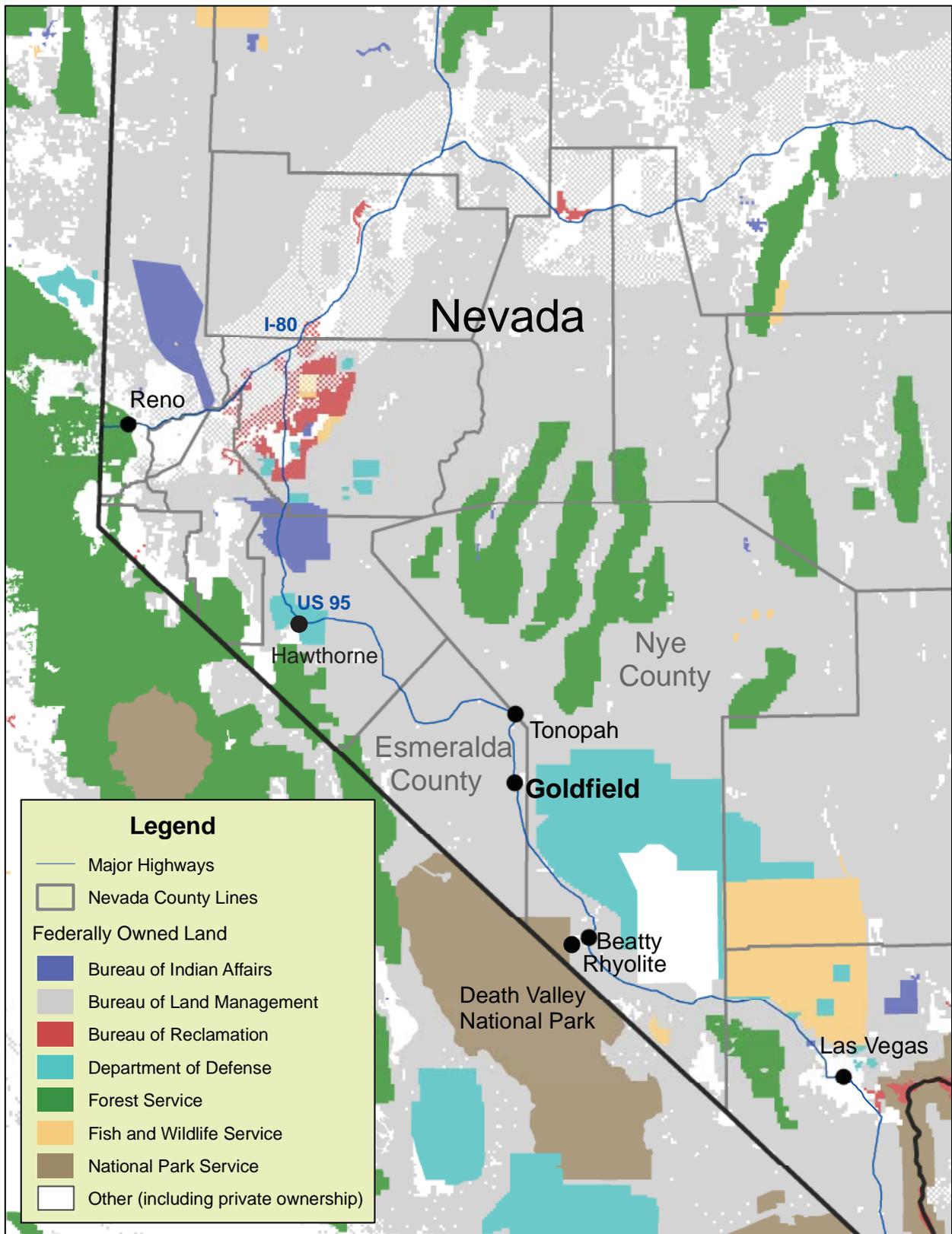


Aerial View of Goldfield, Esmeralda County Repository Oversight Program photo

<sup>1</sup> Esmeralda Repository Oversight Program Office & NWOP Consulting, Inc., *Esmeralda County Repository Oversight Program, Baseline Update*, 2007, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Nevada State Demographer, Nevada Small Business Development Center, Dec. 2008 [[http://www.nsbdc.org/what/data\\_statistics/demographer/](http://www.nsbdc.org/what/data_statistics/demographer/)].

**Figure 1: Regional Context**



two district judges, justice of the peace, and sheriff. The county administers many services and properties including, roads, recreational facilities, libraries, airstrips, social service programs, fire protection, emergency services and public works. Because of the sparse population and wide distribution of residents within the county, the cost of providing public services is relatively expensive, on a per capita basis.<sup>3</sup> Esmeralda County has recently formed the Esmeralda County Land Use Advisory Committee to address land use planning issues.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.2.2 Public Lands

Esmeralda County contains the highest percentage of federally-owned land among the 17 counties in Nevada. Ninety-eight percent of the county's 2,284,800 acres are managed by the federal government. Of these federally-managed public lands, approximately 2,183,146 acres of Esmeralda County are managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 61,520 acres are managed by the U.S. Forest Service (Inyo National Forest), and 3,197 acres are managed by the National Park Service (northeast corner of Death Valley National Park). The BLM manages two herd management areas (HMAs) within the vicinity of Goldfield – the Goldfield and the Montezuma Peak HMAs. The BLM also manages the Montezuma grazing allotment.

### 3.2.3 Private and Other Lands

Only 1.21 percent of the county is under private ownership. Private lands within the county are located in Goldfield, Silver Peak, Dyer, Lida and sections of land within Tonopah. A variety of land uses occur throughout the private lands including rangeland, irrigated crop lands or pasture lands, and mineral production. Patented mining claims are located in Silver Peak and Goldfield.<sup>5</sup>

The Timbisha Shoshone Tribe has trust land in both Nye and Esmeralda counties. They have approximately 2,800 acres at Scotty's Junction, and approximately 3,000 acres at Lida, Nevada.

### 3.2.4 Transportation

U.S. Highway 95, which crosses through Goldfield, is the primary route linking Reno in the north and

Las Vegas in the south. Traffic has been increasing on Hwy 95 north of Goldfield due to its connection to Interstate 80. U.S. 95 through Esmeralda County also serves as a major route connecting Las Vegas to the northwest communities of Hawthorne, Fallon and Reno/Sparks. There are no local transit operators or commercial rail service to the county. Esmeralda County is currently in the process of relocating the Goldfield Airport.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2.5 Local Economy

The mining and agriculture industries are the main source of income for Goldfield and Tonopah. They have been the two most constant economic activities in the county. They were the town's original sources of income and continue as sources of income today. However, the county's lack of economic diversification and few alternative employment opportunities have limited growth. A decrease in population numbers in the county is believed to be attributed to a severe decline in mining, with extensive out-migration, along with immigration by semiretired and retired persons.<sup>7</sup> The average price of homes in Goldfield from 2001 to 2006 ranged from approximately \$15,000 to \$50,000.

## 3.4. Natural Resources

### 3.4.1 Topography and climate

The topography of Esmeralda County generally consists of alternating, linear mountains between broad flat valleys characteristic of the Basin and Range Province. Principal mountain ranges include the White Mountains in the northwest and the Silver Peak Range and Palmetto Mountain to the east. The area consists of groups of mostly topographically closed valleys with internal drainage. Most of this region is within the Great Basin Desert.

Goldfield is located at an elevation of 5,700 feet. The climate is arid with only 3 inches of annual precipitation in the valley bottoms and 5 to 8 inches of precipitation falling in the hills. The average annual precipitation is 6.47 inches and the average snowfall is 15.1 inches.

### 3.4.2 Air quality

Esmeralda County is in the attainment status and

<sup>3</sup> Esmeralda Co Repository Oversight Prog & NWOP 29.

<sup>4</sup> Esmeralda County web site, Dec. 2008 [<http://www.accessesmeralda.com/LUAC.htm>].

<sup>5</sup> Esmeralda Co Repository Oversight Prog & NWOP 40.

<sup>6</sup> Esmeralda Co Repository Oversight Prog & NWOP 37.

<sup>7</sup> Esmeralda Co Repository Oversight Prog & NWOP 11.

is qualified as “better than national standards” in emissions of total suspended particulates (TSP), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>).

### 3.4.3 Geology and Soils

The principal rocks in the Goldfield district are Miocene volcanic rocks that overlie a basement of Ordovician shale and chert (Palmetto Formation) and Mesozoic granitic rock. The main district of the Goldfield mining area is at the western margin of a Tertiary volcanic center of composed silicic and intermediate tuffs and volcanic breccias, and rhyolite, quartz latite, trachyandesite, and rhyodacite flows. These volcanic rocks cover Ordovician metasedimentary rocks and Mesozoic granitic rocks that crop out in many small inliers to the north and northeast of the main district. The oldest Tertiary rocks at Goldfield are rhyolite and quartz latite tuffs and flows approximately 31 million years old.<sup>8</sup> Most of the gold produced in the Goldfield mining district came from a 0.6 square mile area of hydrothermally altered Tertiary volcanic rocks immediately northeast of the town.

The soils in this region are mainly mineral soils of two types: those which do not have water continuously available for three months when the soil is warm enough for plant growth (Aridisols); and soils showing little evidence of the soil forming process, the development of horizons or layers (Entisols). Soil loss through wind and water erosion is a normal occurrence throughout the region.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.4.4 Water Resources

Within the region, there is limited perennial surface water. Watersheds located within the vicinity of Goldfield include Alkali Springs Valley, Lida Valley, Stone Wall Flat, and Ralston Valley. Data gathered in 1982 for the preparation of the *Esmeralda-Southern Nye RMP* indicate that many water sources did not meet the Environmental Protection Agency's minimum standards for drinking water at that time. Water quality violations reported by the USEPA from 1994 through 2006 in Esmeralda County include coliform, nitrate, chlorine, lead and copper along with trace amounts of uranium. Water quality violations in Goldfield from 2002 –

<sup>8</sup> Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology, Report 19 “Guidebook to the Geology of Four Tertiary Volcanic Centers in Central Nevada,” R. P. Ashley, 1974, 49.

<sup>9</sup> Bureau of Land Management, *Tonopah Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, 1994, 3-1.

2006 include coliform, nitrate, and chlorine.<sup>10</sup>

Esmeralda County secured grant funding from the Water Rights Technical Support Fund in 2006 to help protect public agencies' water rights and ensure a future for growth by creating a water rights management plan completed in 2007. This plan is intended as a living document to enhance and protect the county's water rights for current and future public water demands.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.4.5 Vegetation and Wildlife

Vegetation types in Esmeralda County include salt desert shrub, black greasewood, alkaline meadows and bottoms, hot desert, sage brush, pinyon juniper woodlands, mountain mahogany, playas, and riparian. Vegetation is sparse in Goldfield. The vegetation types in Goldfield are predominantly salt desert shrub and sagebrush.<sup>12</sup>

Wildlife includes bighorn sheep, mountain lion, mule deer, rabbit, sage grouse, partridge, quail and dove.<sup>13</sup> A BLM mule deer study site is located on Montezuma Peak, west of Goldfield. Two bighorn sheep study areas are located on the western and eastern edges of Goldfield.<sup>14</sup>

There are no federally listed Threatened or Endangered plants in Esmeralda County. The Fish and Wildlife Service lists the Mojave population of desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), federally Threatened, as a protected species with designated critical habitat in Esmeralda County.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> US Environmental Protection Agency, Safe Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) Violation Reports, 2008, [<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo/nv.html>].

<sup>11</sup> Esmeralda Co Repository Oversight Prog & NWOP 33.

<sup>12</sup> BLM 3-1.

<sup>13</sup> Esmeralda County Repository Oversight Program 35.

<sup>14</sup> BLM 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, Dec. 2008, [[http://www.fws.gov/nevada/protected\\_species/species\\_by\\_county.html](http://www.fws.gov/nevada/protected_species/species_by_county.html)].

## 3.5 Cultural Resources

### 3.5.1 Historical Resources

#### **Goldfield Townsite - early 20th century:**

Goldfield's boom years were 1904 to 1908, and it became, like Tonopah, a substantial town with electricity, telephone and telegraph service and piped water by 1904; rail service reached Goldfield the next year. The town of typical false-fronted wood frame buildings soon included handsome brick and stone commercial buildings and business blocks, a four story hotel, and a two story high school, most of which were constructed in 1907. By 1908, Goldfield had five banks, two daily and three weekly newspapers, two stock exchanges dealing principally in mining stocks, four fine schools, four railroads, and of course saloons, gambling halls and a sizeable red light district. The central business district encompassed approximately twelve blocks; and in 1909 Goldfield and the outlying communities of Columbia and South Goldfield stretched across one and one quarter square miles.<sup>16</sup>

A series of natural and manmade disasters, including a flash flood in 1913 and fire in 1923 destroyed a great portion of the town. The fire destroyed about half of the town, principally in the downtown and northern residential districts. Many homes and businesses that were destroyed by these events were not rebuilt.

**Goldfield Townsite - Today:** Despite the physical devastation of the townsite in the first quarter of the twentieth century, there are remaining resources that convey the historic character of the place during the 1904-1908 boom period. Today there are intact buildings, including several large brick and masonry buildings within the central commercial core; the residential areas to the north, south and east; and the red light district to the southwest. Empty lots where buildings once stood contain various building ruins, mining machinery and debris. The circulation system remains intact as well. There has been very little infill construction; however, there are a substantial number of mobile homes, especially south of the central townsite core and some lots are currently used to store abandoned modern-day cars, machinery, and other discarded material (see photos at the end of this section and Figure 2).

<sup>16</sup> James Woodward, Garrison, Myers, & Drobbin, "Goldfield Historic District National Register Nomination," 1981.

The Goldfield Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 at the national level of significance. A comprehensive survey of the buildings in a 35-block area of the townsite was completed in 1981 as part of the National Register nomination. The nomination identified 106 contributing buildings and four contributing building ruins. Most of these buildings were constructed during the 1904-1908 boom period of town.<sup>17</sup> The survey did not include roads, structures, or objects. Since the survey, a few of the resources have been lost.<sup>18</sup> These lost resources, with the exception of the Dunn Mortuary and Noone Mortuary, were residential buildings.<sup>19</sup>

Today, the buildings that remain within the National Register District and beyond represent a wide variety of types, architectural expressions, and construction methods ranging from vernacular wood-frame and adobe buildings, to restrained expressions of Neo-Classical and Georgian Revival design found in many of the public and commercial buildings such as the Goldfield Hotel (1907), Goldfield High School (1907), and the former West Crook Street School (1908). Residential buildings include stone, brick, wood-frame, adobe, and bottle construction that exhibit a range of modest and at times eclectic interpretations of architectural styles including Neo-Colonial, Georgian Revival and Neo-Classical Revival. The condition of these buildings range from good to poor.

Architecturally unique resources include residential, commercial and public buildings. The Esmeralda County Courthouse (1907) exhibits a rusticated stone fortress appearance with crenellated corner parapets. The Byler House (1905) is notable as a surviving residence constructed of bottles mortared together with an adobe mixture. The Mayer Residence (1906) is an intact adobe building; and the Tex Rickard and Charles Sprague residences (1906, 1907) are notable examples of eclectic architectural expressions.

**Goldfield Mine Sites.** An up-close survey of the mining sites was not included in this reconnaissance level survey; however, mining structures and buildings are visible from the townsite and accessible roads. Head frames and other mining appurtenances dot the landscape in the outlying

<sup>17</sup> Woodward, Garrison, Myers, & Drobbin.

<sup>18</sup> John Ekman, Goldfield Historical Society, pers. comm., August 1, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Goldfield Historical Society, Historic Buildings Booklet, 2007.



areas to the northeast of the townsite and are in some instances accompanied by mine company buildings. One prime example is the Florence Mine Complex. The 1981 Goldfield Historic District National Register nomination did not include a survey of resources within the mining areas.

### 3.5.2 Archaeology of the Goldfield Area

Historical period archaeology in the town of Goldfield and the surrounding mining district includes sites relating to the formation, occupation, and abandonment of the area. As thousands of miners flocked to the area in pursuit of mineral wealth, they left their mark on the landscape, excavating, constructing, and discarding equipment and items that form the archaeological sites still present today. Evidence of these sites includes mining ruins/remains such as prospects, adits, shafts, headframes, and mills, as well residential related buildings, and a variety of trash and equipment scatters. The historic district likely contains a wealth of archaeological sites, such as building foundations, infrastructure such as roads and the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad yard, and artifact scatters associated with residences and businesses. The potential of additional subsurface sites in the commercial area as well as the mining district as a whole is extremely high.

While this report is mainly concerned with the historic period occupation of the town of Goldfield, the southern Great Basin has been inhabited by Native Americans for thousands of years. The earliest inhabitants are generally thought to have occupied the area at least 12,000 years before present, and the Western Shoshone still live in the region today. It is likely that prehistoric and historic period Native American archaeological sites are present in the Goldfield Mining District, which could range from small isolated scatters comprising



Foundation remains, NPS photo

only a few chipped stone artifacts, to large hunting, habitation, and quarry sites.

Many archaeological sites, both prehistoric and historic, have been documented on public land within a few miles of the town of Goldfield. Large surveys have been conducted to the north in the Tonopah area by the Bureau of Land Management and the Nevada Department of Transportation, to the east on the Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, and to the west in advance of mining operations near Silver Peak. In all, thousands of acres of public land have been surveyed in the vicinity of Goldfield, and hundreds of archaeological sites have been documented.

### 3.6 Recreational Resources and Community Use

Goldfield, Nevada is a place of historic interest. Travelers on US Highway 95 stop in Goldfield to see the historic community. Tourist attractions in the broader region include ghost towns, historical mining sites, historical buildings and structures. Special events, including a land auction, are held in the county each year. Because of its remote location, tourism is not a large industry in this area as it is in other parts of Nevada.<sup>20</sup>

Esmeralda County has outdoor recreation opportunities, most of which are undeveloped areas. Goldfield Park includes a picnic area, tennis court, playground, and a lighted baseball field. Nearby recreation opportunities in Esmeralda and Nye Counties include hiking, photography, hunting, fishing, backpacking, primitive camping, bicycle trails, horseback riding, rock hounding, off-highway vehicle use, shooting, and boating. A BLM off highway vehicle restriction for competitive events limits use to existing roads and trails.<sup>21</sup>

Community organizations in the county include: Chambers of Commerce, Historical Societies, Girl Scouts, Order of Eastern Star, Montezuma Lodge, and Red Hat Society.

<sup>20</sup> Esmeralda Co Repository Oversight Prog & NWOP 35.

<sup>21</sup> BLM 3-15

# Photos of Historic Structures in Goldfield, Nevada

Examples of key resources related to the mining landscape and the town.



Florence Mine



Foundation of 100 Stamp Mill



Emeralda County Courthouse



G. L. "Tex" Rickard House



Goldfield High School



Interior of the Goldfield Hotel



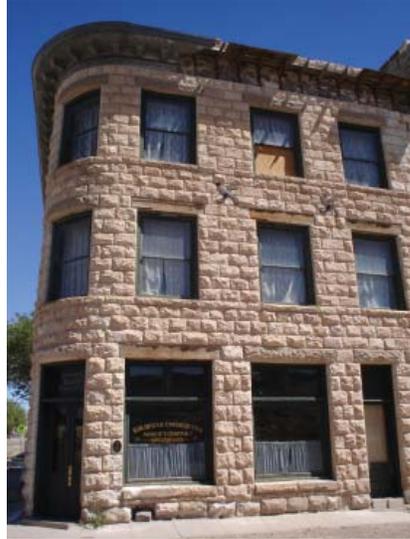
Red light district area  
NPS photos, 2008



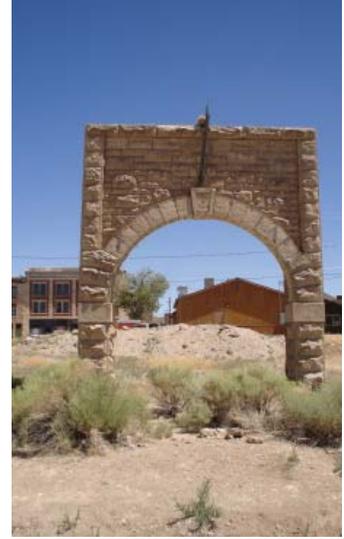
Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad Depot & Repair Yard



Fire Station



Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company



Remains of Sideboard Saloon



S. NV Consolidated Telephone-Telegraph Company



Charles S. Sprague House



Ish-Curtis Building



NPS photos, 2008

## 4 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF RESOURCE SIGNIFICANCE

### 4.1 Introduction

The National Park Service has adopted four criteria to evaluate the national significance of proposed areas. These criteria, listed in the NPS *Management Policies*, 2006, state that a resource is nationally significant if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (Code of Federal Regulations) (see Appendix B). Before resources can be designated as NHLs, they must be evaluated by the NPS's National Historic Landmark Survey, reviewed by the NPS Advisory Board, and recommended to the Secretary of the Interior.

The study team conducted a preliminary analysis of Goldfield's resources based on existing documentation, the study team site visit in August 2008, and discussions with local resource experts.

Nationally significant natural resources were not identified; however, the study team identified potential nationally significant cultural resources. The evaluation of these resources is described in this chapter.

NPS cultural resource experts contributed expertise, research, and technical review of this preliminary statement of significance.

### 4.2 Preliminary Evaluation of Cultural Resources

The following evaluation of cultural resources begins with a historic context followed by an analysis of potential nationally significant resources in Goldfield, Nevada.

#### 4.2.1 Historic Context

**Introduction.** This section provides a historic context of the early 20th century Gold Rush in central Nevada, the labor strife in Goldfield, and the Gans-Nelson championship boxing match.

The California Gold Rush was the United States' first major gold rush and the greatest one ever. James Marshall's discovery of gold in 1848 while building a water-powered sawmill for John Sutter touched off the California Gold Rush; however, it remained localized largely to California until 1849 after the news of the strike spread and reached the eastern United States and abroad. The California Gold Rush continued in diminishing fashion throughout the 1850s and established a pattern for mining rushes to follow.

Numerous rushes for gold and other minerals such as silver, copper, lead, tin, zinc, tungsten, magnesium, aluminum, borates, talc, and coal followed during the next half century throughout the American West, culminating in four large rushes in the last decade of the 1800s. A silver rush to Creede, Colorado in 1890 was followed by rushes for gold to Cripple Creek, Colorado in 1891, the Canadian Yukon Territory around Dawson in 1897; and at the close of the decade a rush to Nome, Alaska in 1899. By the end of the 19th century interplay between political and economic power matched against growing unionization had transformed the character of gold mining practices in the American West.

These last mining rushes of the 19th century set the stage for one more to follow: the rush to the region around Tonopah, Goldfield and Rhyolite, Nevada, during the first decade of the 20th century. It was destined to be the last great gold and silver rush in American history and one that would have a significant impact on the character and power of mining unions in the American West.

By the end of the 19th century, interplay between political and economic power matched against growing unionization had transformed the

character of gold mining practices in the American West. Struggles between corporate mining companies and labor unions were now common place, with several of the struggles in the west ending in bloodshed. The Western Federation of Miners (WFM) was closely associated with the labor strife in Cripple Creek and Leadville, Colorado and Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. In 1906 WFM local No. 220 in Goldfield united with the more radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), local 70. The leader of the union was Vincent St. John, who was well known to mine owners as a successful organizer. They understood that St. John's presence in a mining district meant that they were in store for strident challenges to their labor practices, including strikes and possibly violence, even if they were the perpetrators of these acts. An aura of possible fortune and the presence of the IWW, and union organizers, mine operators and miners from Cripple Creek framed the mine owner and labor disputes that would ensue at Goldfield 1906 -1908. These struggles would deal a deadly blow to the united front of the IWW & WFM.

Before labor strife came to dominate the public image of Goldfield, the town briefly basked under a different cast. Amongst the many activities, struggles, and opportunities that developed in Goldfield, a single boxing match held on Labor Day, September 3, 1906 and orchestrated to promote the town captured the attention of more than 6,500 spectators and launched Goldfield into a new national spotlight. The story of this championship boxing match, referred to by some as one of the classic bouts of all times between two of the greatest lightweights of all time, would not have taken place in this isolated desert landscape if the confluence of people, money and opportunity associated with the rush had not occurred.

**Rush to Goldfield.** Jim Butler's discovery of rich ore in 1900 near Tonopah Springs, Nevada touched off a mining rush that began in 1901 and soon encompassed the area now known as Goldfield located 25 miles to the south. Although the rush to the region was still modest in 1901, the Tonopah and Goldfield mining camps, which would soon be large towns, would each rise as "the center of two of the greatest mining districts in the United States."<sup>22</sup> Tonopah would dominate in the production of silver and Goldfield in the production of gold. Together, the two camps would record production of more than \$230,000,000

<sup>22</sup> Shamberger, Hugh, *Goldfield*, (Carson City: Nevada Historical Press, 1982), 3.

### Gold Rushes in the West

The first and greatest western gold rush began in 1848, and expanded not only nationwide, but worldwide, in 1849. James Marshall discovered placer gold while building a water-powered sawmill for John Sutter at Coloma, California. The rush spread along the Mother Lode on the west side of the Sierra Nevada. As placer mining in California, which depended upon the individual prospector, faded and evolved into industrial hydraulic and underground hard rock mining, the individual prospectors and miners fanned out across the mountain west beyond the Great Plains and began to find new bonanzas.

The next gold rush was to the Fraser River in western Canada in the late 1850s. Another rush focused on the new mining camp of Virginia City, Nevada, on the Comstock Lode. Having found gold there, miners soon discovered a rich deposit of silver as well, and the Comstock region produced both minerals throughout its history. Concurrently came a rush to the Rocky Mountains of central Colorado in 1858 and 1859. Mining camps such as Central City, Georgetown, Leadville and others boomed, as did the supply center called Denver. Miners often turned from gold to silver, lead, and other minerals, depending on what riches they found in the underground veins that were worth refining. It became common for mines to produce a number of metals. Another rush, this one to the mountains of Montana, came in 1862. As in Colorado, the mining boom soon spread to many other camps, eventually encompassing the discovery of rich deposits of copper.

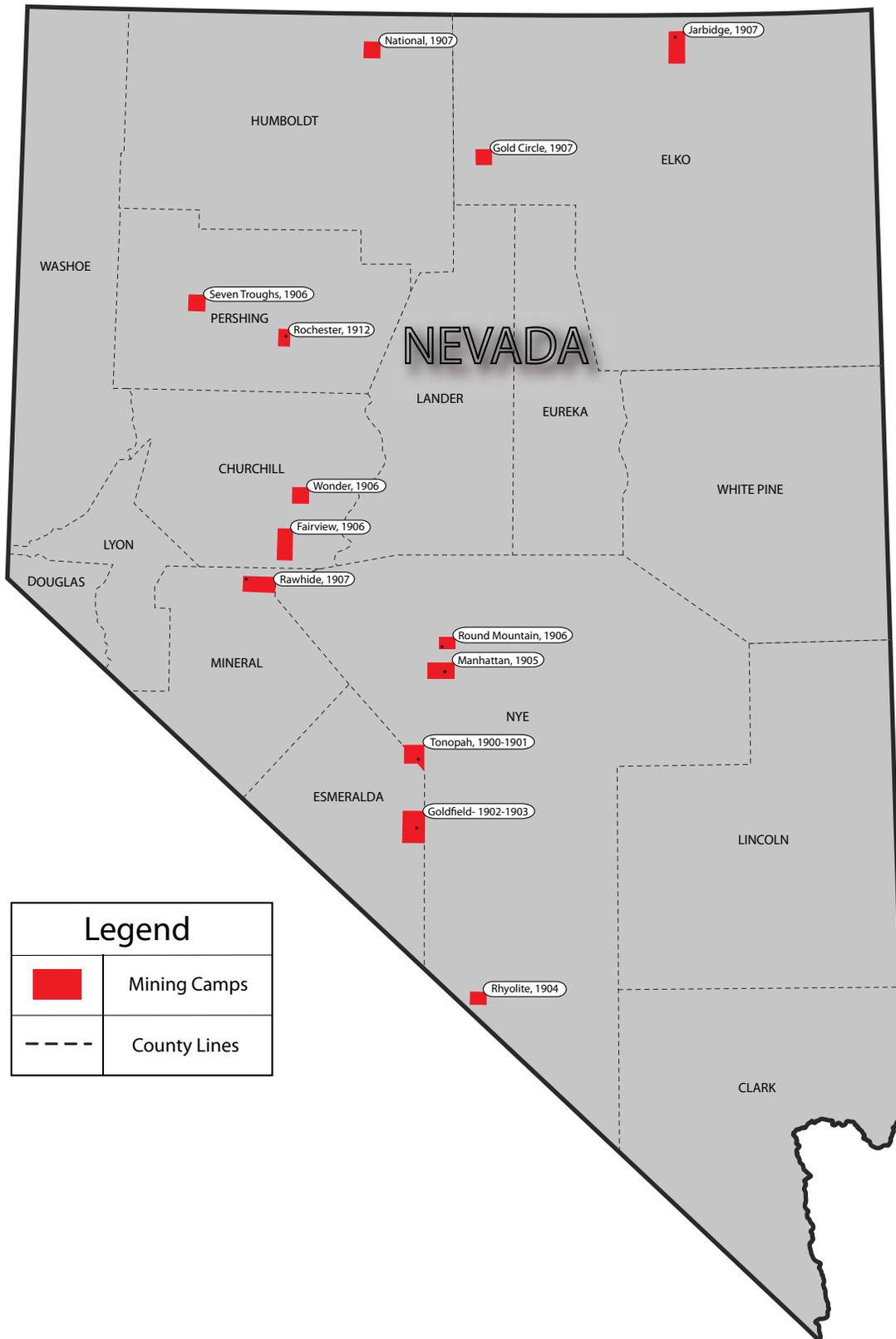
The Civil War interrupted the progress of western mining during the 1860s. Once the war ended, mining rushes took place to Silverton, Red Mountain, Eureka, Lake City and Rico in Colorado, among others, to the Coeur d'Alene region in Idaho, the South Pass region in Wyoming, and to mining camps in the Black Hills of South Dakota, such as Deadwood and Lead. New hard rock mining camps sprang up in arid Nevada, such as Austin, Pioche, and Ely, and across the border in California, Bodie, Cerro Gordo and Panamint. As the Apache Wars faded, mining camps populated Arizona and New Mexico Territories, and there the development of copper deposits soon took center stage around Bisbee, Morenci, Clifton, and Jerome, as they soon would in Montana and Utah.

The 1890s brought a new phase of gold rushes to Creede and the Cripple Creek district in Colorado, and late in the decade, to the Klondike Mines around Dawson in Canada's Yukon Territory. The century ended with a rush to the gold-bearing beach sands of Nome in Alaska Territory.

Typically these mines evolved from the individual gold miner seeking placer gold in the creeks and rivers, into hunting the quartz veins in the hills from which the rivers had washed out their flakes and nuggets of gold. But "quartz" mining required a great amount of labor in digging tunnels and shafts, and then expensive machinery such as hoists, stamp mills, and crushers to separate the gold from the rock. Such mining required capital that the original discoverers of such lodes typically did not have, so often they sold their claims for a pittance to the entrepreneurs and bankers who had the capital needed to further exploit the claims. Thus mining soon evolved into a corporate, industrial enterprise. Then too, as mining spread geographically throughout the west, it expanded also to exploit other valuable minerals, notably lead and copper, but also borates, nitrates, tungsten, manganese, aluminum, and eventually uranium.

The last mining rushes of the 19th century set the stage for one more to follow, one final great rush, the gold and silver rush to Tonopah, Goldfield and Rhyolite, Nevada, during the first decade of the 20th century (a copper rush to the vicinity of the old mining camp of Ely occurring at the same time).

Figure 3: Gold and Silver Mining Camps Established During the Early Twentieth Century



(Note: This is not an exhaustive list. This list of mining camps is from H. S. Shamberger, *Goldfield*, 1982, p. 6)

before mid century.<sup>23</sup> However, it wasn't until the 1902 discovery of gold by a Shoshone prospector, named Tom Fisherman that the mining rush would be destined to become the last great mining boom in the United States. The claim and mining district were originally named Gran pah, Shoshone words that have been translated to mean "the land of much water." In May 1903, the mining district was named "Goldfield" and a town using the same name developed. On May 24, 1903, Al Myers and Bob Hart discovered the Combination Lode in the same general area, they found rich ore on that claim in October 1903, began shipping ore in December 1903, and the rush was on early in 1904.

Goldfield would soon be recognized as one of the greatest gold producing camps in the United States during the early twentieth century. Goldfield had a short but intense production of ore that made it the population and mining center of Nevada. For awhile, it became Nevada's largest town and the Esmeralda County seat was moved from Hawthorne to Goldfield in 1907. At that time, the population of the mining town was estimated at more than 20,000. 1910 proved to be the peak year for production of gold from the Goldfield area mines, a total of \$11,137,150. After that, the mines and the town entered a steep decline. By 1915 the town had lost most of its population, and in 1919, the Goldfield Consolidated Mill closed. It survived as a small town only by virtue of being the county seat.

**Labor Struggles.** The years leading up to Goldfield's heyday were rife with labor struggles between mine owners and the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) unions who joined forces under one local union, Local No. 220. The conflicts between mine owners and laborers were interwoven with a power struggle between the united force of Local No. 220 and the American Federation of Labor (AFL). These two intertwined struggles lead to the collapse of the unions' power in Goldfield; however not before the IWW brought to fruition, at least in part, their theory of industrial unionism.

Historian Russell Elliott identified two noticeable catalysts of change in Goldfield that were evident by the fall of 1906 – "... the influx of miners and operators from the Cripple Creek District in Colorado, bringing with them all of the bitter animosities developed from the many years of labor troubles in that district; and secondly, the entrance of the Industrial Workers of the World

<sup>23</sup> Shamberger 3.



into the Goldfield district."<sup>24</sup> Formed in 1905, the IWW "made the first real test of its theory of revolutionary unionism" at Goldfield. While it is disputable that the gains made by the IWW at Goldfield should be characterized as the Golden Age of the organization as some might claim, it is true that the IWW came close to achieving their goal of industrial unionism at Goldfield even if it was for a brief period of time. And, it is arguable that this was the closest they ever came to fulfilling this goal. Historian Melvyn Dubofsky provides an apt characterization of the IWW in Goldfield, "No more complete amalgamation of workers had ever existed in the labor movement. Yet, Goldfield could better be called the IWW's Gilded Age. Never achieving anything approaching complete success, the IWW left Goldfield in total defeat."<sup>25</sup> Despite the defeat, it is clear that activities at Goldfield played a significant role in the history of the IWW and the power of mining unions in the West.

Goldfield offered an ideal set of circumstances for the IWW. The mining district was lucrative; the mines were corporate owned; the entire town was dependent on mining; there was a large workforce that included a range of workers from waitresses to mine laborers; the district was isolated; and the Western Federation of Miners had an established presence in Goldfield. Vincent St. John was the local organizer for the WFM local 220 at Goldfield. The WFM was considered a radical union with history of labor unrest and violence in Coeur d'Alene silver mines in Idaho and Cripple Creek, Colorado. St.

<sup>24</sup> Russell Elliott, "Labor Troubles in the Mining Camp at Goldfield, Nevada, 1906 -1908," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 19. No. 4 (November 1950), 369-384. [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3635819> (01/08/1009)].

<sup>25</sup> Melvyn Dubofsky and Joseph Anthony McCartin, *We Shall be All* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), 67.

### **Mining Labor Union Conflicts (1890-1914)**

1892 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho: Miners went on strike because of a reduction of wages and the increase in work hours. Mine owners hired Pinkertons to infiltrate the union and break the strike. Miners later dynamited the Frisco Mill, leaving it in ruins.

1894 - Cripple Creek, Colorado: Miners went on strike when mine owners announced an increase from eight to ten hours per day, with no increase in wages. The state militia was called out to protect miners from sheriff's deputies.

1896 - Leadville, Colorado: The state militia was sent to break a miner's strike.

1897 - Lattimer Massacre -- 19 unarmed striking coal miners and mine workers were killed and 36 wounded by a posse organized by the Luzerne County sheriff for refusing to disperse near Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

1899 - Coeur d'Alene, Idaho: Violence erupted because miners became frustrated with mine operators that paid lower wages.

1902 - The Anthracite Coal Strike, Pana, Illinois: Fourteen miners were killed and 22 wounded by scabherders. The miner hours were reduced to a 9-hour day and wages were increased by 10%.

1903 - Cripple Creek, Colorado: Troops were dispatched to defeat a strike by the Western Federation of Miners - driving the union out of the district. The strike had begun in the ore mills earlier in 1903, and then spread to the mines.

1904 - Dunnville, Colorado: A battle between the Colorado Militia and striking miners ended with six union members dead and 15 taken prisoner. Seventy-nine strikers were deported to Kansas two days later.

1907-1908 - Goldfield, Nevada: The mine owners, with the aid of federal troops were able to break the mine unions (WFM and the IWW).

1912 - Ely-McGill, Nevada: A strike broke out because of wage scale disputes and because a mine company failed to recognize the WFM union. Two strikers were killed and state police were brought in.

1914 - Ludlow, Colorado: 20 people were killed, 11 of them children, during an attack by the Colorado National Guard on a tent colony of 1,200 striking coal miners and their families at Ludlow, Colorado. These deaths occurred after a day-long fight between strikers and the Guard.

John had been a leader at Cripple Creek where the WFM was forced out. The IWW presence in Goldfield was initially organized under Local No. 77. Within months the IWW and the WFM were united under Local No. 220. St. John became a leading organizer for the IWW in Goldfield.

During the two-year period of 1906-1908, four major strikes would change the course of labor history at Goldfield and mining union history throughout the West. The strikes commenced with gains for labor and the union; but ultimately ended with their defeat. A strike settlement in January 1907 achieved an increase in wages for both skilled and unskilled laborers; and the strike settlement of September 1907 gave the union a say in how changing rooms<sup>26</sup> would operate. The success was short lived and interspersed with heightened tension and power struggles as the IWW sought to further their broader mission and unite all Goldfield workers under one union.

Following the strike settlement in January, the IWW stepped up their exertion of power by dictating to all businesses whom to hire and how to set the pay scale. The AFL Carpenters' Union Local 1761, refused to abide by the IWW's demands. The underlying tensions between the conservative AFL as well as conservative WFM members and radical union members swelled into sharp relief. Mine owners and businessmen were poised to exploit the internal union conflict and soon seized the opportunity. The dispute between the unions soon pervaded the town; and the fatal shooting of an armed restaurant owner, John Silva, by an IWW delegate proved fatal for both Silva and the IWW's power in Goldfield. The incident provided an easy foil for mine owners and businessmen to defeat the union.

Morrie Preston and Joseph William Smith, both IWW officers, were arrested for the shooting. Preston, by all accounts, fired in self defense after Silva aimed a weapon at him. Smith reportedly was not present at the scene. Other members of the union also were arrested, including IWW leader Vincent St. John. They were charged with conspiracy; however, the charges subsequently were dropped. Preston and Smith were tried and convicted, Preston of 2nd degree murder and Smith of manslaughter. Both Smith and Preston were posthumously pardoned in 1987 by the Nevada

<sup>26</sup> Miners had a changing room to change from their mining clothes to their street attire. Introduction of changing rooms in Goldfield was a means to protect mine owners from the looting of their properties by "high graders" (Sam Post Davis, *The History of Nevada*, 438).

State Pardons Board due to trial irregularities. However at the time of the convictions, mine owners and other interested parties built an alliance around common interests and formed the Goldfield Business Men's and Mine Operators' Association. They succeeded, with the help of the press to define the WFM and IWW as dangerous organizations with the intent to perpetuate bloodshed and strife.

The mine owners and businessmen of Goldfield used the past history of violence between mine owners and unions in other mining districts as well as the incidents at Goldfield during the spring to claim an imminent threat of uncontrollable unrest. In December 1907, Governor John Sparks surreptitiously persuaded President Theodore Roosevelt to deploy Federal troops to suppress the unrest, even though the local law enforcement institutions had not collapsed and no violence was underway. Soon after deployment, reports from the Army to President Roosevelt indicated that all was peaceful in Goldfield. The President soon suspected that troops had been requested to back the mine owners in their effort to break the unions and he deployed a commission to Goldfield.

The Commission concluded that there was no cause for Federal Troops:

*In short, up to the time the troops arrived, and for six months prior thereto, there had been no unusual conditions of violence or disorder or any such conditions as would in any way justify the presence of Federal Troops<sup>27</sup>*

Furthermore, it was their assessment that the presence of troops had exacerbated the situation. One day after their arrival, mine owners announced a premeditated decision to reduce wages by \$1 a day and to require workers to renounce affiliation with the Western Federation of Local Union 220; the latter action was in violation of Nevada state law. The troops withdrew shortly thereafter; however, their presence combined with ruthless local law enforcement aided by perjury against the miners helped George Wingfield of Goldfield Consolidated Mines Co. and the other mine owners to break the mining unions at Goldfield and arguably in the West. The Goldfield labor

<sup>27</sup> Papers Relative to Labor Troubles at Goldfield, Message from the President of the United States, Transmitting Report of Special Commission on Labor Troubles at Goldfield, Nev., and Papers Relating Thereto, 60th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, Document No. 607, 23.

troubles probably were not as well-publicized as the Pullman strike or the Cripple Creek strife in the 19th century, or the coal mine strike at Ludlow, Colorado, but they may have been more significant historically in its outcome of the collapse of the unions' power in Goldfield.

### **The Joe Gans - Oscar Nelson Championship Boxing Match.**

Professional Boxing was in its infancy in the first decade of the twentieth century and the United States and Britain were in the forefront of world championship boxing. Professionalization of boxing started to take form with the adoption of the Queensbury rules in 1867, which established 12 rules for the sport including, a standard size and shape for the ring, the wearing of gloves, a 3 minute limit for each round with 1 minute resting periods between rounds, and the ten second count for a downed boxer. The Queensbury rules created a distinction between boxing as a sport and bare knuckle fights to the finish.

Boxing was legally sanctioned in Nevada in 1897, 6 years before the town of Goldfield existed. Boxing quickly found its way to Goldfield soon after the town was established. It is unclear how frequently boxing matches took place in Goldfield or the quality of the boxing. The Gans-Nelson match was promoted and succeeded in drawing national attention. Featherweight World Champion Abe Attell fought a match in Goldfield in 1909. Tex Rickard, a saloon owner, was instrumental in securing and promoting both events.

The Gans-Nelson match had the elements of any promoters dream. Joe "The Master" Gans was the first African American World Boxing Champion. He won the World Lightweight Title in 1902; and held it until 1908. Gans was considered a master of boxing mechanics and today is recognized as one of the greatest boxers of all time. His opponent, Oscar "Battling" Nelson, was a Danish born boxer known as one of the toughest boxers in ring history and also known for "dirty" fighting. Nelson held the lightweight title from 1908-1910.<sup>28</sup> Gans was recognized by most as the lightweight champion at the time of the match; however, Nelson made claims to the title, based on a tenuous set of circumstances. The Goldfield match would settle the dispute. The date was set, September 3, 1906. A \$33,500 purse was raised and displayed in twenty dollar gold coins to promote the match; construction of a 7,872 seat outdoor arena was

<sup>28</sup> Joe Gans was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1990; Oscar Nelson was inducted in 1992.

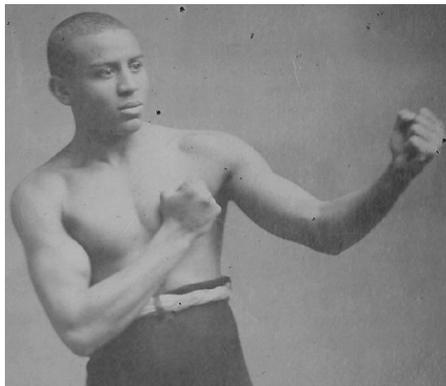
begun; a motion picture contract for the fight was awarded to Miles Brothers of San Francisco; and the town prepared to accommodate spectators from across the country.

The match proved to be a crowd pleasing spectacle despite nearly 3 hours in high desert temperatures. Gans knocked Nelson to the mat down several times. Nelson kept coming back and according to a *New York Times* article "repeatedly adopted rough tactics and approached as close to foul work as the rules, even by stretching, would permit." Gans broke his hand in the 33rd round, but continued to box. The fight was called in favor of Gans during the 42nd round after Nelson delivered an egregious low blow. The dispute was settled and Gans retained his World Lightweight Title.

The Gans-Nelson fight was remarkable on many levels. The 42 rounds stand as a world record for a title fight. The box receipts for the fight exceeded \$69,700, a record for a boxing match at the time; and, the success of the match launched Tex Rickard's career as one of the greatest sports promoters in the United States. Perhaps more notable was that the issue of race was present but not decisive in determining the crowd favorite and winner of the match.

Although Gans was the recognized world lightweight champion at the time of the match, he received one third of the purse, while Nelson received the remaining two thirds. These terms were agreed to by both Nelson and Gans before the match, which suggests that Gans may have been accustomed to receiving less than his Caucasian counterparts. The disparity of treatment exhibited in the uneven splitting of the purse was not reflected in the enthusiasm that Gans earned from the crowd. The support for Gans from the people of Goldfield made the headlines in a *New York Times* article that appeared the day after the bout. The headline read: "**FOUL BLOW**

**BY NELSON GAVE GANS BIG FIGHT** - Referee Ended Championship Battle in Forty-second Round - DECISION CHEERED BY THE CROWD - Title and Bets Awarded to Negro Before \$80,000 House in Goldfield, (Nev.) Arena." The article went on to say that, "There was not a murmur of dissent when Referee Siler stepped forward and, stopping the fight, declared the negro the winner of the championship . . . Siler was loudly cheered as he left the ring, as was Gans . . . Nelson and his seconds were hissed as they departed." The article concluded that "Gans was the favorite with the people. His behavior won the admiration of the Goldfield people, and they showed it."<sup>29</sup>



Above: Joe Gans  
Below: Commemorative marker at the site of the Gans-Nelson match

The observations of the *New York Times* reporter may not seem notable if not viewed within the broader context of race relations and racism in early 20th century United States. The Gans-Nelson match took place during the era of Jim Crow. Less than four years later, the racially charged match held in Reno, Nevada between World Heavyweight Champion, Jack Johnson who was African American and James Jeffries, the "Great White Hope," triggered riots across the country after Johnson defeated Jeffries.

Prior to the bout in Reno, Johnson had been refused a shot at the World Heavyweight Champion Title, because he was African American. In 1908 he was given the opportunity in Sydney, Australia in a match against World Heavyweight

Champion, Tommy Burns, whom he soundly beat. Johnson's victory ignited racial animosity amongst whites. He was vilified and caricatured in the press and search for a "Great White Hope" to "win back" the title commenced. Former heavyweight champion James Jeffries came out of retirement to fulfill the hope. After Johnson's defeat of Jeffries, he was destined for a life of harassment and eventually as a fugitive living in exile.

<sup>29</sup> *New York Times*, September 1, 1906.

# Photos of Historic Structures in Goldfield, Nevada

Examples of the mining landscape, town streetscape, residences, and other features



NPS photos, 2008



NPS photos, 2008



NPS photos, 2008

#### 4.2.2 Significance Analysis

During the first decade of the 20th century, Goldfield, Nevada, stood at the center of the last great gold rush in the United States, and the only one in the 20th century. The towns of Tonopah and Rhyolite, Nevada also were products of and associated with this last great gold rush in U.S. history. As a terminus in a pattern begun by the California Gold Rush of 1849, the gold rush associated with Goldfield contributes to our understating of the broad national patterns of United States mining and labor history.

The centrality of Goldfield in this last great gold rush and the town's significance in the history of gold mining is overlaid with a rich layer of labor struggles that are in and of themselves highly significant. At the height of its boom (1906-1908), Goldfield became the center of labor strife and union struggles pitting the allied Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) against mine owners, local business men, the American Federation of Labor,

and Nevada politicians, including the governor who surreptitiously sought from President Theodore Roosevelt and obtained the intervention of federal troops. Goldfield is associated with the IWW and its mission to unite all industrial laborers under a single union, to remove control over the labor force from owners as well as the events that diminished/ crushed the power of mining unions in the west. A preliminary comparison with labor troubles in Cripple Creek, at Ludlow, and elsewhere suggests that Goldfield offers a unique opportunity to represent and tell a pivotal chapter in United States mining labor history.

The gold rush that took place in and around Goldfield resulted in an instant rapid convergence of people and activities fueled by individual hopes of striking it rich and a better life as well as greed and opportunism. Assay offices, banks, schools, churches, labor halls, saloons and a red light district soon occupied the desert landscape now transformed into a small town against a backdrop with the appurtenances of gold mining

#### OVERVIEW

- The study area resources evaluated for potential national significance are located in both the **Goldfield mining district and townsite**.
- The period of significance for the study area is **1902 – 1923**.
- **Goldfield is potentially nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criteria 1 and 5** (see below) in association with mining in the United States, as the center of the last great gold rush and labor struggles that had a nationwide impact on mining unions in the West. Goldfield also may be nationally significant in the realm of sports promotion as the site of one of the earliest nationally promoted sporting events
- Goldfield is potentially nationally significant under the following **themes and topics**:  
*Primary Theme:* Developing the American Economy  
*Topics:* Extraction and Production, Labor Organizations and Protests  
*Secondary Theme:* Expressing Cultural Values  
*Topic:* Popular Culture
- **Previous Recognition:**  
Goldfield Historic District – National Register of Historic Places (1982), national level of significance; Nevada State Register of Historic Places (2005)  
Goldfield Hotel – Nevada State Register of Historic Places (1981)  
Goldfield High School – Save America's Treasures Grant (2008 earmark)

**Criteria 1:** Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained.

**Criteria 5:** Properties that are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture.

in the not too distant outlying areas. It was in this metaphorical landscape of opportunity that a local saloon owner, George L. "Tex" Rickard, sponsored and promoted one of the first nationally-promoted sports events in the history of the country. Rickard had never before promoted a boxing match. Goldfield received nationwide publicity as a result, which was Rickard's purpose from the beginning. The championship fight was notable especially because the champion, Joe Gans, was African-American and the challenger, Oscar Nelson, was Caucasian and because the fight reportedly grossed more than \$69,000, the largest gate receipts ever for a boxing match. The 42-round match remains in the Guinness Book of World records as the longest world title fight in history.<sup>30</sup> Rickard also used the fight to promote Goldfield mining stock. He was able not only to capitalize on this fight to publicize Goldfield, but he also built a career for himself and eventually became manager of Madison Square Garden in New York City, which he developed into a leading venue for boxing matches. The gold rush attracted Rickard to Goldfield. He had struck gold during the Klondike rush, was familiar with the patterns and opportunities of a mining boomtown and an opportunist.

Goldfield is potentially nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 1 in association with mining in the United States, as the center of the last great gold rush and labor struggles that had a nationwide impact on the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World and the power of mining unions in the West. Under Criterion 1, Goldfield also may be nationally significant in the realm of sports promotion as the site of one of the earliest nationally promoted sporting events, which captured nationwide interest before the era of commercial radio and television, and set its principal promoter, Tex Rickard, on a path that led to management of Madison Square Garden, creation of Boston Garden and as one of the greatest boxing promoters in the United States.

Goldfield also is potentially nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 5. The townsite of Goldfield and the mining related resources that dot the surrounding landscape

<sup>30</sup> The Economic Development Authority of Nye County held a Gans-Nelson Centennial Celebration in 2006 that featured boxing matches between members of the UNLV and UNR boxing teams and the celebration featured an auction to benefit the Tonopah Historical Society, food sales by and to benefit the Goldfield Fire Department, [<http://www.eden-nv.com/Gans.htm>].



represent the boom and bust cycles of mining towns. Unlike many western towns, there are four patterns of development that characterized this 20th century mining boom – the three key mining camps, with Goldfield at the center, took on when they were at their height the aspect of modern cities with multi-story masonry buildings; the presence and use of the automobile, including its use in automobile prospecting, increasingly replacing the prospector's burro; third, the quick introduction of railroads further altered the familiar equation; and fourth, at least Goldfield soon was illuminated with electricity. These factors gave this early 20th century mining rush a different appearance and character than those of the past. The extant resources at Goldfield from this era represent a unique collection of western mining boom towns that tells a different part of the United States mining story than is represented by those from an earlier period. Together, the resources within the townsite and mining sites offer a palette through which the historic significance of Goldfield can be told and understood.

Further inventory, documentation, and assessment will provide further substantiation of Goldfield as the last great gold rush of the twentieth century, the significance of the labor struggles between the unions and mine owners, and the significance of the Gans-Nelson boxing match in the realm of sports promotion and race relations in sports during the early 20th century.

### 4.3 Cultural Themes

Goldfield is potentially nationally significant under the following themes and topics:

**Primary Theme:** Developing the American Economy

**Topics:** Extraction and Production (Mining), Labor Organizations and Protests.

Goldfield was the center of the last great gold rush and of labor struggles that had a nationwide effect on the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World and the power of mining unions in the West.

**Secondary Theme:** Expressing Cultural Values

**Topic:** Popular Culture

The Gans-Nelson championship boxing match promoted by Tex Rickard was one of the first nationally-promoted sports events in the history of the country.

### 4.4 Opportunities for Public Enjoyment or for Scientific Study

The extent of the historic resources provide opportunities to interpret the gold rush and labor strife. There are limited opportunities to interpret the Gans-Nelson boxing match because the site no longer retains its context.

Goldfield's historic structures are of exceptional interpretive value and offer public enjoyment opportunities. The historic structures including the mines are privately owned. Visitors are able to explore the historic and still active town, viewing the exteriors of the substantial masonry buildings such as the Goldfield Hotel, High School, and the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company. The Esmeralda County Courthouse is the only publicly-owned historic building. These buildings illustrate the former size of the town. The mine sites, which can be viewed from roads in town, still contain many resources, such as headframes, that represent the mining activity. In addition, archival and object resources from state and local museums and libraries could also be used in telling Goldfield's story. Several groups including the Goldfield Historical Society provide guided tours of Goldfield. Although Goldfield is remote, it is located along Highway 95, a major access route between Las Vegas and Reno. Current visitor services in town include a motel, gas station, and a few cafes/restaurants.

### 4.5 Resource Integrity

#### 4.5.1 Integrity of the Resources Related to the Cultural Themes:

**Mining and Labor.** The extant resources associated with the Goldfield Mining District convey the feeling and association of a twentieth century mining town. The history of mining and labor struggles at Goldfield are intertwined and they are associated with the mining district as a whole. Absence of the union hall, which is no longer extant does not preclude telling both the mining and the labor history of the place. The open field in the vicinity of the Florence Mine site where federal troops were stationed during the height of the labor struggles has been identified and appears to retain integrity.

**Sports Promotion.** The Gans-Nelson boxing match took place in a venue of temporary construction built specifically for the fight. As such, nothing of the ring and the spectator seats remains today. The site is commemorated with a marker; however the integrity is compromised by the current use of the property to house discarded machinery and vehicles. The land is in private ownership. The Tex Rickard house located at the corner of Franklin and Crook Avenues is intact and offers an additional opportunity to tell the story of the Joe Gans-Oscar Nelson Championship boxing match.

#### Integrity of the Study Area:

**The Goldfield Mining District.** The overall integrity of the resources at Goldfield appear to be high, with variation across the historic themes. The mining district retains the pattern of density concentration in the town site with sparser mining related development in the surrounding area. Railroad grades and remnants, such as the Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad turntable pit and engine repair pits, the 100 stamp mill ruins, the varied buildings, as well as roadways that lead to the surrounding mining landscape dotted with head frames, help to preserve the setting and evoke a strong feeling and association of the early 20th century mining district.

**Goldfield Townsite.** The overall integrity of the Goldfield townsite can be considered high for a resource of this type despite the natural and manmade disasters that swept through the town. The rapid and significant decline in population in Goldfield has resulted in relatively little new construction in the townsite area. Goldfield retains integrity of location and setting. The sense of an

isolated town in the desert lands of Western Nevada is still present. The range of resources that remain at the townsite exhibit the materials and convey the design and workmanship that was present in the town at its height as well as the variations in construction methods and building types. Extant buildings and structures range from simple single wall utilitarian construction, metal buildings, adobe, multistory masonry buildings and wood frame residences (see photos on pages 20-22). The magnitude and sheer area of development that made Goldfield a small town is missing; however, the permanence of the masonry and brick buildings that remain as well as the scale of these buildings convey the former glory and grandeur of Goldfield. The extant high school, which was built in 1907, was constructed for 400 students. The extant Goldfield Hotel, which was also built in 1907, retains an elegant and spacious lobby space and 154 bedroom capacity. The masonry courthouse and multistory masonry commercial buildings add to this layer of the historic fabric, which conveys the scale and wealth of the town.

This is a preliminary assessment; further study would be needed to fully determine overall integrity of the study area.

## 4.6 Conclusion

Based on this preliminary analysis, the National Park Service has determined that Goldfield has resources that are potentially nationally significant and may be eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark.

Goldfield is potentially nationally significant for mining and labor history.

- Goldfield, Nevada, stood at the center of the last great gold rush in the United States – the only one in the 20th century.
- The labor struggles at Goldfield had a nationwide impact on the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World and the power of mining unions in the West.

Finally, Goldfield also may be nationally significant in the realm of sports promotion as the site of one of the earliest nationally promoted sporting events, which captured nationwide interest.

Further inventory, documentation, and assessment will provide further substantiation of Goldfield as the last great gold rush of the twentieth century, the significance of the labor struggles between the unions and mine owners, and the significance of the Gans-Nelson boxing match in the realm of sports promotion and race relations in sports during the early 20th century.



# 5 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF SUITABILITY

## 5.1 Introduction

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the proposed area to other national park system areas for differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values, and opportunities for public enjoyment. The suitability analysis also considers whether the area offers interpretive and educational potential and visitor use opportunities. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas (NPS *Management Policies*, 1.3.2).

## 5.2 Preliminary Evaluation of Cultural Resource Themes

### OVERVIEW

Goldfield is potentially suitable for inclusion in the national park system under the following themes and topics:

- ▣ **DEVELOPING THE AMERICAN ECONOMY – Extraction and Production, Labor Organizations and Protests.** Goldfield was the center of the last great gold rush in the nation and the first large-scale testing ground for the Industrial Workers of the World's philosophy of industrial unionism. The labor and union struggles at Goldfield had a significant impact on the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World unions that would shape their future labor struggles in other parts of the United States.
- ▣ **EXPRESSING CULTURAL VALUES – Popular Culture.** Goldfield is potentially suitable under the theme Expressing Cultural Values – Popular

Culture. The Gans-Nelson championship boxing match promoted by Tex Rickard was one of the first nationally-promoted sports events in the history of the country. The 42-round match stand as a world record for a title fight.

### SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

This preliminary suitability analysis compares Goldfield to national park units, NHL properties, and other sites representing western mining boom towns and labor union struggles.

#### Developing The American Economy

The theme “Developing the American Economy” reflects the ways Americans have worked, including slavery, servitude, and non-wage as well as paid labor. It also reflects the ways they have materially sustained themselves by the processes of extraction, agriculture, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. In examining the diverse working experiences of the American people, this theme encompasses the activities of farmers, workers, entrepreneurs, and managers, as well as the technology around them.<sup>31</sup>

#### Extraction and Production (Gold Rushes)

America's first major gold rush began at Coloma, California in 1849. Following the California Gold Rush, many mineral rushes occurred during the next half century throughout the American West, for gold and other minerals such as silver and copper. Goldfield provides excellent representation of “extraction and production” related to gold rushes because it was at the center of the final great gold rush in United States history and was the only great gold rush of the 20th century.

**National Park Service Units.** The National Park Service has only one national park unit representing a gold mining boom, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (NHP), located principally around Skagway and Dyea in Alaska, with a small component in Seattle. The Klondike Gold Rush NHP preserves historic buildings in the supply town of Skagway and historic trails, including the Chilkoot Trail, leading principally from Dyea and Skagway across the Alaskan panhandle from the ocean to the Canadian border. The Klondike gold mines, located several hundred miles inside Canada's Yukon Territory, are not within the park boundary. In comparison to Klondike Gold Rush NHP, Goldfield

<sup>31</sup> NPS, *History of the National Park Service, Themes and Concepts*, 2002

tells a broader story of a gold rush because the town is immediately adjacent to the outlying mining district. In addition, because Goldfield was at the center of the last gold rush in the United States, and the only one in the 20th century, it could be a center of information, interpretation, or a gateway to other sites that tell the story of gold mining history. The labor struggles that became commonplace in late 18th - 20th century mineral extraction also are an integral part of this broader story.

The National Park Service also manages national park units that include other historic precious metals mining resources:

- Keweenaw NHP in Michigan preserves numerous remains of the 1840s to 1960s copper mining era.
- Wrangell St. Elias National Park and National Preserve includes the surviving structures of a later major copper mine at Kennecott.
- Death Valley National Park and other western desert and mountain parks preserve a scattering of historic mines and remains of mining camps.

**Comparably Managed Areas.** Outside the national park system, there are state park systems that preserve precious metals mining resources, such as Columbia State Park in California which preserves a part of a Mother Lode mining town, and Bodie State Historic Park which preserves the surviving remains of a mining camp east of the Sierra Nevada. Throughout the Mother Lode, various historic mining towns such as Placerville and Auburn preserve historic buildings from Gold Rush days. Similarly, throughout other western states, a variety of historic mining town buildings and mine remains are preserved by state, county, local, and private efforts. Many individual mining camp structures and districts have been entered in

the National Historic Landmark (NHL) System or on the National Register of Historic Places. National Historic Landmarks related to gold rushes that are not within NPS units include:

- Bannack Historic District, MT
- Bodie Historic District, CA
- Cape Nome Mining District Discovery Sites, AK
- Central City/Black Hawk Historic District, CO
- Coloma, CA
- Columbia Historic District, CA
- Cripple Creek Historic District, CO
- Deadwood Historic District, SD
- Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District, CO
- Ludlow Tent Colony Site, CO
- Telluride Historic District, CO
- Virginia City, MO
- Virginia City District, NV

In comparison to other sites representing gold rush sites, Goldfield stands out as the center of the final gold rush in American history and the only one in the 20th century. Goldfield differs in character and quality from other gold mining areas because of its size and its modern early 20th century features that resulted from a gold rush.

**Labor Organizations and Protests**

As corporate/industrial mining became the dominant pattern for mineral extraction, mine labor and union disputes would become a familiar occurrence. Several mining camps and sites suffered intense often violent labor and union disputes with mine owners and operators. The Western Federation of Miners (WFM), organized in 1893, was founded out of the violent labor dispute at the Coeur d’Alene mining district in Idaho. The WFM engaged in other labor disputes prior to Goldfield including another violent confrontation at Coeur d’Alene in 1899, a successful although violent



General view of the Mohawk Mine, Goldfield, Nevada, 1906, P. E. Larson, Library of Congress

strike at Cripple Creek, Colorado, in 1894 as well as two more in 1898 & 1903-1904, strikes in Leadville, Colorado, in 1896-1897, Salt Lake City, Utah in 1899, Telluride, Colorado in 1901, and Idaho Springs in 1903. While the WFM would become known as a radical union organization not afraid of confrontation, other unions suffered violent encounters with mine owners, state militia and federal troops. The tragedy at Ludlow, Colorado, and the bloody mine wars of West Virginia are two more examples of these labor controversies. Goldfield provides excellent representation of “labor organizations and protests” because the labor struggles at Goldfield had a nationwide impact on the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World.

**National Park Service Units.** There are no sites in the national park system that represent western gold mining labor disputes.

**Comparably Managed Areas.** Outside the national park system, there are several sites representing mining labor disputes that are National Historic Landmarks or are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Resources representing mining labor disputes are preserved by state, county, local, and private efforts. Comparable NHLs related to western mining labor disputes that are not within NPS units include:

- Cripple Creek Historic District, CO
- Leadville Historic District, CO
- Ludlow Tent Colony Site, CO
- Central City/Black Hawk Historic District, CO
- Deadwood Historic District, SD
- Telluride Historic District, CO
- Virginia City District, NV

The labor struggles at Goldfield tell a different part of mining labor and union history that is significant in the history of these struggles in the United States. It is a site where a unique part of mining labor history as well as the struggle between unions is represented. The defeat of the unions at Goldfield changed the course of the IWW’s efforts to unify industrial workers and broke the mining unions’ power in the American West, arguably to a greater degree than better known mining labor struggles. Goldfield, would come to represent a golden age of the IWW where for a brief period in time the union succeeded in achieving their mission of industrial unionism. Goldfield has been characterized as the “first real test of the strength and philosophy of revolutionary industrial unionism.<sup>32</sup>” However, the unions’ defeat at Goldfield effectively ended the power of unions in Western mining. The wrested power boosted mine owners control and dominance of the mining industry. The union and labor struggles at Goldfield also differed from other labor struggles because they did not break down into violence, despite the presence of federal troops surreptitiously requested by the Governor.

### EXPRESSING CULTURAL VALUES

The theme “expressing cultural values” covers expressions of culture – people’s beliefs about themselves and the world they inhabit. This theme also encompasses the ways that people communicate their moral and aesthetic values (NPS 2000). The following topic related to Expressing Cultural Values is represented in Goldfield:

<sup>32</sup> Russell Elliott, “Labor Troubles in the Mining Camp at Goldfield, Nevada, 1906 -1908,” *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (November 1950), 369-384. [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3635819> (01/08/1009)]



Esmeralda County Courthouse and other buildings along Crook Avenue, NPS photo

### **Popular Culture**

The Gans-Nelson championship boxing match promoted by Tex Rickard was one of the first nationally-promoted sports events in the history of the country. The 42-round match stand as a world record for a title fight. The box receipts for the fight exceeded \$69,700, a record for a boxing match at the time, and the success of the match launched Tex Rickard's career as one of the greatest sports promoters in the United States. The Gans-Nelson match also represents race relations in sports during the early 20th century.

The Gans-Nelson fight could possibly also be considered under the leisure establishments category identified in the Draft American Labor History Theme Study. The cultural context of Goldfield was integral to the nationwide coverage and attention the match received as the success for Tex Rickard.

There are no units in the national park system established to tell the story of a nationally-promoted sport event. Further study would be needed to conduct a comparative analysis.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on this preliminary analysis, Goldfield's significant historic resources appear to be a suitable addition to the national park system as they represent resource types that are not adequately represented in the national park system. Goldfield's resources represent several aspects of the theme "Developing the American Economy." Goldfield historic resources provide opportunities to interpret the last gold mining rush in the United States and the defeat of the Western Federation of Miners and the Industrial Workers of the World labor unions which had a nationwide impact. There are mining resources and industrial labor strife stories represented to some extent in other locations, but the combination of Goldfield's resources are not represented in the national park system.

## 6 PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF FEASIBILITY

### 6.1 Introduction

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area's natural systems or historic settings must be of sufficient size and shape to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment, and must have potential for administration by the National Park Service at a reasonable cost. In evaluating feasibility, the NPS considers a variety of factors for a study area, including:

- size and boundary configurations
- landownership patterns; local planning and zoning; current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
- access and public enjoyment potential
- current and potential threats to the resources; existing degradation of resources
- the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
- costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation; staffing requirements
- the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values (NPS Management Policies section 1.3.3).

This preliminary feasibility analysis is based on available public information and the study team's site visit in August 2008. A reconnaissance survey

is limited in scale and does not include broad public input and review. Therefore, some factors cannot be fully addressed such as the level of local and general public support, availability of land for acquisition, and the socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system. If a full special resource study is conducted, these factors would be addressed at that time.

### 6.2 Preliminary Evaluation of Feasibility Criteria

Goldfield includes significant historic resources dispersed throughout the main town and mining sites. Many of these resources are located within the Goldfield Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district boundary includes the key historic resources within the main town, but does not include the historic mining resources in the outlying areas. The historic structures including the mines are privately owned. The county courthouse building is the only historic building under public ownership.

There are opportunities for public access to historic resources. Highway 95, which is a major thoroughfare between Las Vegas and Reno, crosses through Goldfield. There are opportunities to view the exteriors of Goldfield's historic structures from streets and sidewalks. Several organizations provide walking tours of Goldfield. There are both active and inactive mines in the outlying mining district that can be viewed from mostly dirt roads. These mines are privately owned. Many mining areas in general contain hazards and are not appropriate areas for the general public to visit. Further study is needed to examine opportunities and constraints for providing public access to historic mining resources while addressing hazards, safety issues, and the interests of the private landowners. Costs related to the mining landscape, including hazardous material clean-up, risk assessment, and improving safety of abandoned mines would be substantial.

The condition of historic resources in Goldfield varies. The historic resources include:

- Well maintained resources like the Goldfield Fire Station, Esmeralda County Courthouse, the First Methodist Church, the Charles Sprague House and other significant buildings in the core of the townsite that appear to be in good condition;

- Buildings that are undergoing stabilization or have been maintained to some degree that are in fair to poor condition such as the Tex Rickard House and the three-story High School which was closed and abandoned in 1952, but is now undergoing efforts to save the building (the project has received a 2008 Save America's Treasures Grant)
- Buildings that seem to be abandoned or unoccupied that are in fair to poor condition and likely in need of stabilization such as the first Goldfield Jail and other buildings in the red light district area.
- Building remnants in the townsite that appear stable and in fair to good condition and railroad remnants further out such as the Bullfrog Goldfield Railroad turntable pit and foundation and repair pits that appear to be in fair condition but in need of stabilization.
- Buildings, head frames, and other buildings and structures located at the mine sites are visible; however, were viewed only from a distance during the site visit due to private ownership of the properties; therefore the condition of these resources was not assessed.

The costs for preservation of these structures are expected to be very high. The masonry buildings, while substantial in size and appearance, may pose the biggest challenge as far as ongoing maintenance and preservation. At least one of the buildings exhibits signs of significant uneven settlement. We do not have full information about how the buildings were constructed or condition of the foundations. There are signs of mortar failure; other issues may be present upon further investigation. Stabilization and preservation of the wood structures



would be less daunting; however, the number of extant resources would pose a challenge.

Because these buildings are privately-owned, it is up to each owner to decide if and how they would like to preserve their property. There are several owners and organizations who are taking measures to protect and preserve the rich history of Goldfield. Continued deterioration of structures would negatively impact the historic resources that contribute to Goldfield's national significance. The isolation of Goldfield and the relative lack of new development have helped to preserve the integrity of the resources. Any future infill and rehabilitation projects would have to be carefully developed to avoid negative impacts to the feeling and association of the place.

A full special resource study would include identification of preservation needed for historic resources.

Existing threats to historic resources include vandalism, modification or removal of structures, and hazardous materials in buildings and the mine sites. There have been several break-ins at the Goldfield Hotel. Future mining activities could cause impacts on the historic mining landscape, including removal of historic resources and the addition of modern structures. Landowners and local and state agencies and organizations could collaborate to identify and reduce threats.

The reconnaissance study process did not include contacting landowners, determining whether there might be any willing sellers, and what land acquisition costs might be. Property values are low due to the remoteness of the area and condition of the buildings.



Interiors of the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company building and the Goldfield High School, NPS photos

Land acquisition is not necessary for the establishment of a national park unit. The national park system includes park units in which the NPS owns little or no land. For example, Rosie the Riveter / World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, California, does not include any NPS-owned lands. Instead, the NPS works in partnership with the city, county, and other landowners within the park boundary.

A full special resource study would determine the willingness of landowners to engage in a range of approaches to preservation of historic resources, including cooperative management with the NPS or other agencies.

The costs for operation of some portion of the Goldfield area as a unit of the national park system would depend on the nature of the park unit and the type of role for the National Park Service (see below for a description of potential NPS roles). A range of feasible management options and an analysis of operation costs would be included in a special resource study.

### **6.3 Potential NPS Roles / Assistance**

A reconnaissance survey does not include the development or analysis of alternative management options. However, the study team has identified some NPS models that may be worthy of consideration in Goldfield. The National Park Service manages a wide variety of types of parks, including national historic sites, recreation areas, preserves, reserves, monuments and seashores. The NPS also offers a number of technical assistance services and oversees several programs that provide special recognition. Landowner support is an important consideration.

*National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation* – the National Park Service could prepare an NHL nomination for Goldfield. Based on the nomination process, this may result in designation of NHL status for some or all of Goldfield’s nationally significant historic resources. The National Park Service provides technical preservation advice to owners of NHLs. Limited federal grants through the Historic Preservation Fund would be available.

*Grants and technical assistance for preservation* – NPS could provide support through existing grants and technical assistance programs, such as the Save America’s Treasures (SAT) grant. There is a 2008 SAT grant earmark for the Goldfield High School. The NPS also has several technical assistance programs to provide historic preservation guidance.

*Interpretive trail* – a long-distance trail based on mining history could include interpretation of mining sites related to the gold mining boom. Since Goldfield was the center of this last gold rush, it could be a center of information, interpretation, or a gateway to other sites that were part of the gold rush. Interpretation and preservation of sites along the trail could be a collaborative effort among many agencies and communities including Tonopah and Rhyolite.

*National Historic Site* – if determined appropriate through a special resource study and if authorized by Congress, the NPS could manage a national historic site that includes nationally significant historic resources. This option could include limited NPS ownership if appropriate sites are available. Alternatively, it could include no NPS landownership, and could involve cooperative management with local landowners, public agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and Nevada State Parks, and private organizations.

Death Valley National Park is located within 100 miles from Goldfield. There could be potential for Death Valley National Park to provide technical assistance with additional park staff and funding.

Development and analysis of these options or any others is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey. A special resource study would include the development and comparison of alternative management options, and their feasibility, impacts, and costs.

### **6.4 Conclusion**

Based on available information, the NPS is unable to make a preliminary determination of feasibility for Goldfield to be included in the national park system. The historic resources are nearly all privately owned by a large number of separate owners, and contacting these owners is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey. Other analysis that is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey includes evaluation of safety issues, preservation costs, and the level of public support. A full special resource study would include extensive public involvement, explore the level of public support for different options, determine whether appropriate resources are available for acquisition or other management approaches, examine safety issues, explore the feasibility of a range of management options, and make a recommendation to Congress.

## 7 RECOMMENDATION

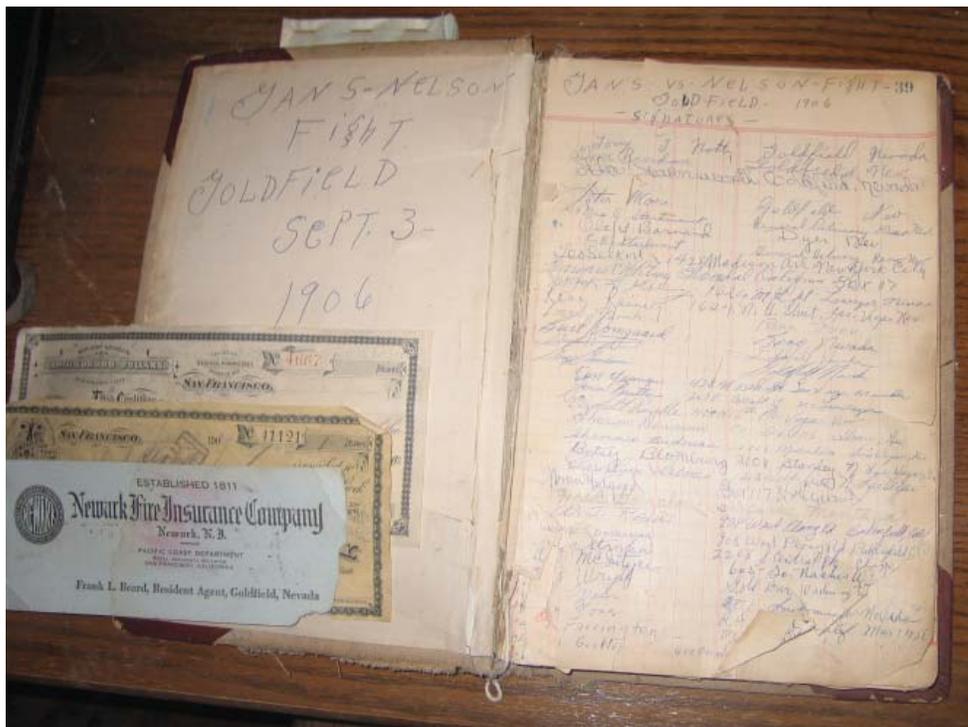
The historic resources of Goldfield, Nevada, represent the last gold rush in the United States and the labor struggles of mining unions in the West, and are worthy of protection. The National Park Service study team has conducted a preliminary analysis of resource significance and suitability and feasibility of including the study area in the national park system.

Based on the preliminary analysis, Goldfield's historic resources appear to be nationally significant and may be eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark. The resources also appear to be suitable for inclusion in the national park system. Further study and documentation would be needed to compare the resources of Goldfield to other similar areas in the nation, and to determine whether there are other resources in the region related to this last gold rush that should be included. The NPS is unable to make a preliminary determination of feasibility for Goldfield to be included in the national park system. The historic resources are nearly all privately owned by a large number of separate owners, and contacting these owners is beyond the scope of this

reconnaissance survey. Other analysis that is beyond the scope of this reconnaissance survey includes evaluation of safety issues, preservation costs, and the level of public support.

Based on these preliminary findings, the National Park Service study team recommends: (1) a National Historic Landmark nomination be prepared for Goldfield, and (2) a special resource study be authorized for Goldfield, Nevada. The special resource study process should include extensive involvement of local landowners, government agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to determine whether NPS involvement is desirable and feasible. Additional assessment will provide further substantiation of the significance of Goldfield's resources and further information on existing threats to resources and safety issues such as hazardous materials.

The NPS suggests that the study area be expanded to consider other historic mining resources that are also key to this gold rush story in central Nevada, including Tonopah. Further management options considered in a special resource study should focus on a range of creative approaches, designations, and partnership arrangements.



Signature book from Gans - Nelson championship boxing match, NPS photo

## 8 APPENDICES

### Appendix A. National Park Service Management Policies, 2006 (Sections 1.2 and 1.3)

#### 1.2 The National Park System

The number and diversity of parks within the national park system grew as a result of a government reorganization in 1933, another following World War II, and yet another during the 1960s. Today there are nearly 400 units in the national park system. These units are variously designated as national parks, monuments, preserves, lakeshores, seashores, wild and scenic rivers, trails, historic sites, military parks, battlefields, historical parks, recreation areas, memorials, and parkways. Regardless of the many names and official designations of the park units that make up the national park system, all represent some nationally significant aspect of our natural or cultural heritage. They are the physical remnants of our past—great scenic and natural places that continue to evolve, repositories of outstanding recreational opportunities, classrooms of our heritage, and the legacy we leave to future generations—and they warrant the highest standard of protection.

It should be noted that, in accordance with provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, any component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that is administered by the Park Service is automatically a part of the national park system. Although there is no analogous provision in the National Trails System Act, several national trails managed by the Service have been included in the national park system. These national rivers and trails that are part of the national park system are subject to the policies contained herein, as well as to any other requirements specified in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act or the National Trails System Act.

#### 1.3 Criteria for Inclusion

Congress declared in the National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 that areas comprising the national park system are cumulative expressions of a single national heritage. Potential additions to the national park system should therefore contribute in their own special way to a system that fully represents the broad spectrum of natural and cultural resources that characterize our nation. The National Park Service is responsible for conducting professional studies of potential additions to the national park system when specifically authorized by an act

of Congress, and for making recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, the President, and Congress. Several laws outline criteria for units of the national park system and for additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and the National Trails System.

To receive a favorable recommendation from the Service, a proposed addition to the national park system must (1) possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources, (2) be a suitable addition to the system, (3) be a feasible addition to the system, and (4) require direct NPS management instead of protection by other public agencies or the private sector. These criteria are designed to ensure that the national park system includes only the most outstanding examples of the nation's natural and cultural resources. These criteria also recognize that there are other management alternatives for preserving the nation's outstanding resources.

#### 1.3.1 National Significance

NPS professionals, in consultation with subject-matter experts, scholars, and scientists, will determine whether a resource is nationally significant. An area will be considered nationally significant if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is an outstanding example of a particular type of resource.
- It possesses exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the natural or cultural themes of our nation's heritage.
- It offers superlative opportunities for public enjoyment or for scientific study.
- It retains a high degree of integrity as a true, accurate, and relatively unspoiled example of a resource.

National significance for cultural resources will be evaluated by applying the National Historic Landmarks criteria contained in 36 CFR Part 65 (*Code of Federal Regulations*).

#### 1.3.2 Suitability

An area is considered suitable for addition to the national park system if it represents a natural or cultural resource type that is not already adequately represented in the national park system, or is not comparably represented and protected for public enjoyment by other federal agencies; tribal, state, or local governments; or the private sector.

Adequacy of representation is determined on a case-by-case basis by comparing the potential addition to other comparably managed areas representing the same resource type, while considering differences or similarities in the character, quality, quantity, or combination of resource values. The comparative analysis also addresses

rarity of the resources, interpretive and educational potential, and similar resources already protected in the national park system or in other public or private ownership. The comparison results in a determination of whether the proposed new area would expand, enhance, or duplicate resource protection or visitor use opportunities found in other comparably managed areas.

### 1.3.3 Feasibility

To be feasible as a new unit of the national park system, an area must be (1) of sufficient size and appropriate configuration to ensure sustainable resource protection and visitor enjoyment (taking into account current and potential impacts from sources beyond proposed park boundaries), and (2) capable of efficient administration by the Service at a reasonable cost. In evaluating feasibility, the Service considers a variety of factors for a study area, such as the following:

- size
- boundary configurations
- current and potential uses of the study area and surrounding lands
- landownership patterns
- public enjoyment potential
- costs associated with acquisition, development, restoration, and operation
- access
- current and potential threats to the resources
- existing degradation of resources
- staffing requirements
- local planning and zoning
- the level of local and general public support (including landowners)
- the economic/socioeconomic impacts of designation as a unit of the national park system

The feasibility evaluation also considers the ability of the National Park Service to undertake new management responsibilities in light of current and projected availability of funding and personnel.

An overall evaluation of feasibility will be made after taking into account all of the above factors. However, evaluations may sometimes identify concerns or conditions, rather than simply reach a yes or no conclusion. For example, some new areas may be feasible additions to the national park system only if landowners are willing to sell, or the boundary encompasses specific areas necessary for visitor access, or state or local governments will provide appropriate assurances that adjacent land uses will remain compatible with the study area's resources and values.

### 1.3.4 Direct NPS Management

There are many excellent examples of the successful management of important natural and cultural resources by other public agencies, private conservation organizations, and individuals. The National Park Service applauds these accomplishments and actively encourages the expansion of conservation activities by state, local, and private entities and by other federal agencies. Unless direct NPS management of a studied area is identified as the clearly superior alternative, the Service will recommend that one or more of these other entities assume a lead management role, and that the area not receive national park system status.

Studies will evaluate an appropriate range of management alternatives and will identify which alternative or combination of alternatives would, in the professional judgment of the Director, be most effective and efficient in protecting significant resources and providing opportunities for appropriate public enjoyment. Alternatives for NPS management will not be developed for study areas that fail to meet any one of the four criteria for inclusion listed in section 1.3.

In cases where a study area's resources meet criteria for national significance but do not meet other criteria for inclusion in the national park system, the Service may instead recommend an alternative status, such as "affiliated area." To be eligible for affiliated area status, the area's resources must (1) meet the same standards for significance and suitability that apply to units of the national park system; (2) require some special recognition or technical assistance beyond what is available through existing NPS programs; (3) be managed in accordance with the policies and standards that apply to units of the national park system; and (4) be assured of sustained resource protection, as documented in a formal agreement between the Service and the nonfederal management entity. Designation as a "heritage area" is another option that may be recommended. Heritage areas have a nationally important, distinctive assemblage of resources that is best managed for conservation, recreation, education, and continued use through partnerships among public and private entities at the local or regional level. Either of these two alternatives (and others as well) would recognize an area's importance to the nation without requiring or implying management by the National Park Service.

(See *National Significance 1.3.1; Suitability 1.3.2*)

## Appendix B. National Historic Landmark Criteria

### (36 CFR, Sec. 65.4)

The criteria applied to evaluate properties for possible designation as National Historic Landmarks or possible determination of eligibility for National Historic Landmark designation are listed below. These criteria shall be used by NPS in the preparation, review and evaluation of National Historic Landmark studies. They shall be used by the Advisory Board in reviewing National Historic Landmark studies and preparing recommendations to the Secretary. Properties shall be designated National Historic Landmarks only if they are nationally significant. Although assessments of national significance should reflect both public perceptions and professional judgments, the evaluations of properties being considered for landmark designation are undertaken by professionals, including historians, architectural historians, archeologists and anthropologists familiar with the broad range of the nation's resources and historical themes. The criteria applied by these specialists to potential landmarks do not define significance nor set a rigid standard for quality. Rather, the criteria establish the qualitative framework in which a comparative professional analysis of national significance can occur. The final decision on whether a property possesses national significance is made by the Secretary on the basis of documentation including the comments and recommendations of the public who participate in the designation process.

- (a) Specific Criteria of National Significance: The quality of national significance is ascribed to districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture and that possess a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:
- (1) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained; or
  - (2) That are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States; or
  - (3) That represent some great idea or ideal of the American people; or
  - (4) That embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
  - (5) That are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture; or
  - (6) That have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.
- (b) Ordinarily, cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are not eligible for designation. Such properties, however, will qualify if they fall within the following categories:
- (1) A religious property deriving its primary national significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
  - (2) A building or structure removed from its original location but which is nationally significant primarily for its architectural merit, or for association with persons or events of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or

- (3) A site of a building or structure no longer standing but the person or event associated with it is of transcendent importance in the nation's history and the association consequential; or
- (4) A birthplace, grave or burial if it is of a historical figure of transcendent national significance and no other appropriate site, building or structure directly associated with the productive life of that person exists; or
- (5) A cemetery that derives its primary national significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, or from an exceptionally distinctive design or from an exceptionally significant event; or
- (6) A reconstructed building or ensemble of buildings of extraordinary national significance when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other buildings or structures with the same association have survived; or
- (7) A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own national historical significance; or
- (8) A property achieving national significance within the past 50 years if it is of extraordinary national importance.

## **Appendix C. Goldfield Historic District Statement of Significance from 1981 National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form**

Between the years 1900 and 1920 Nevada experienced a tremendous resurgence of mining activity comparable only to the Great Comstock era of the previous century. The result was the rejuvenation of the State's political and economic strength, as well as renewed national attention. This period witnessed the birth of dozens of mining camps and towns throughout central Nevada as new mining discoveries or rediscoveries were made. Goldfield was one such camp and by 1906, it had become the regional and national center of attention of Nevada's twentieth century mining boom.

Goldfield's pattern of development, from discovery, to boom, to decline, was not unlike the cycles undergone by most other mining camps during the historic period. However, the intensity to which Goldfield was exploited, the magnitude of wealth generated, scale of the town's development, and its resounding economic and political impacts make it the most noteworthy in the history of mining during the twentieth century.

The Goldfield Historic District contains key resources associated with the architectural, political, economic, governmental and social developments of Goldfield during its boom period. Embodied within the boundaries of the district is the essence of Goldfield's heritage; a heritage significant for its outstanding contributions to local, state, and national history.

# Appendix D. List and Map of Goldfield Historic Sites by Goldfield Historic Society

Map of Goldfield Nevada based on the 1909 official map by James H. Parks, re-drawn June 2006 for the Goldfield Historical Society, to include Highway 95 by Gary Bawden and Dominic G. Pappalardo.



**Index: Alphabetical listing**

Adobe House #65/66 (7-F)  
 Adobe House #67 (7-G)  
 Adobe House #102 (7-J)  
 Adobe House Site #107 (3-H)  
 Assay Office #85 (7-J)  
 Beets Garage #44 (8-G)  
 Belcher / Detwiler House #77 (7-E)  
 Blake, E. E. / Peter Fellis House 39 (7-H)  
 Bottle House #95/96 (4-I)  
 Bragdon, H. T. House 318 (7-I)  
 Brick House #105 (4-G)  
 Brick House Ruin #56 (8-G)  
 Brick Residence / Charlie Kline #132 (3-F)  
 Brinn Double House #83 (7-I)  
 Brown Palace Hotel Site #149 (6-J)  
 Brown Parker Auto Company #52 (5-H)  
 Budge, James House #108 (7-F)  
 Byler, E. A. House #4 (7-G)  
 Carney, D. D. House #20 (8-G)  
 Carpenters Union Hall Site #167 (5-J)  
 Casey Hotel Site #151 (6-K)

Catholic Church, First Site #143 (6-Q)  
 Catholic Church, Sacred Heart #55 (8-I)  
 Champion House #57 (8-G)  
 Columbia Bar / Frame House #86 (6-J)  
 Commercial Building, Frame #51 (5-H)  
 Commercial Building Site #117 (9-G)  
 Connolly, Tim House Site #101 (7-K)  
 Cook, Herbert T. House #26 (7-E)  
 Cook, John S. House #21 (9-G)  
 Court House and Jail, Temporary Site #157 (6-L)  
 Cullyford, G. T. House #74 (8-G)  
 Dahlstrom's Garage #50 (6-H)  
 Detch, Milton M. House #7 (8-H)  
 Devoll & Demans Double House #106 (6-E)  
 Downer Brothers Assay Office Site #156 (6-K)  
 Dreams Come True Antiques / Northern Cafe #114 (6-H)  
 Dunn Mortuary / Noone Mortuary Site #103 (7-I)  
 Durgan, George W. House #5 (8-G)  
 Elder, Jennie B. House #45 (8-H)  
 Elks Building #16 (6-H)

Enterprise Mercantile Adobe Warehouse Building #88 (6-I)  
 Erb W. M. House #87 (7-I)  
 Esmeralda County Courthouse #1 (7-H)  
 Esmeralda Hotel Site #182 (5-H)  
 Exploration Mercantile Block Site #166 (5-J)  
 Fellis Brothers Block / Site of Goldfield News Building #11 (6-H)  
 Feutch and Gasser Warehouse #38 (6-K)  
 First National Bank Building Ruin #37 (5-I)  
 Florence Goldfield Mining Co. Building #13 (6-H)  
 Frame Duplex Site #70 (7-G)  
 Frame House #43 (7-I)  
 Frame House #46 (7-H)  
 Frame House #47 (7-H)  
 Frame House #60 (8-G)  
 Frame House #61 (8-G)  
 Frame House #63 (7-G)  
 Frame House #64 (7-F)  
 Frame House #68 (7-G)  
 Frame House #72 (7-F)  
 Frame House #75 (8-F)  
 Frame House #76 (8-E)  
 Frame House #79 (8-I)  
 Frame House #80 (8-H)  
 Frame House #81 (8-H)  
 Frame House #94 (4-H)  
 Frame House #98 (8-H)  
 Frame House #118 (7-G)  
 Frame House #119 (7-F)  
 Frame House / Dahlstrom's Garage #49 (7-H)  
 Frame House Site #69 (7-G)  
 Frame House, Two Story #120 (8-F)  
 Gans-Nelson Prize Fight Site #128 (3-L)  
 Gerghauster, J. House #109 (7-E)  
 Goldfield Athletic Club Site #183 (5-H)  
 Goldfield Bank & Trust / Whitmore Building Site #147 (6-J)  
 Goldfield Brewery Ruin #122 (3-C)  
 Goldfield Bullfrog Railroad Museum Maintenance Yard #130 (10-M)  
 Goldfield Cemetery #191 (1-P)  
 Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Building #15 (6-I)  
 Goldfield Consolidated Water Company Well Site #174 (3-I)  
 Goldfield Elementary School #121 (7-I)  
 Goldfield Fire Station #1 (#3) (7-G)  
 Goldfield Fuels / Butler Garage Site #116 (8-G)  
 Goldfield Greenhouse Site #140 (3-A)  
 Goldfield High School #8 (7-H)  
 Goldfield Hotel #12 (6-H)  
 Goldfield Jail, First #40 (4-H)  
 Goldfield Mining Exchange Site #162 (6-J)  
 Goldfield Motel #135 (8-E)  
 Goldfield News Site, Original location #150 (6-K)

Goldfield Review and Chronicle Building Site #152 (6-J)  
 Goldfield School Gymnasium #110 (9-H)  
 Goldfield Steam Laundry Site #160 (4-K)  
 Goldfield Stock & Exchange Site #179 (6-I)  
 Goldfield Turkish Bath Facilities #100 (7-K)  
 Green Parrot Saloon #134 (9-E)  
 Grimshaw Hotel Site #154 (6-K)  
 Hamilton, W.B. House #73 (6-G)  
 Hayes, Granville H. House Site #25 (9-F)  
 Hays, J. A. House #58 (8-G)  
 Hermitage Saloon Site / Chat & Chew #90 (5-I)  
 Hippodrome Theater Site #177 (7-J)  
 Historical Equipment Display #127 (2-J)  
 Holt, M. L. House #48 (7-H)  
 Holt, M. L. House #123 (5-G)  
 Homer Wilson Trust Company Site #163 (5-J)  
 Ish-Curtis Building #14 (6-I)  
 Ish, Milton C. House #24 (9-F)  
 Kelly's Korner #112 (7-H)  
 Kline, Charles / Frank L. Beard House #28 (6-G)  
 Ladies Aid Hall Site #172 (5-I)  
 Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad Passenger Depot Ruin #129 (3-M)  
 Lee, T. J. Bakery / Goldfield Tavern #99 (6-K)  
 Lind, H. B. House #23 (9-G)  
 Lockhart, Thomas G. House #27 (6-F)  
 Loftus, J. P. House #29 (6-G)  
 Louvre Site #169 (5-I)  
 Lucky Strike Winery and Saloon Site #159 (7-L)  
 Lyric Theater / Enterprise Mercantile Co. Stone Warehouse #10 (7-I)  
 MacKenzie Building Site #173 (5-I)  
 Mary McLaughlin / Cedar Street School Site #146 (5-L)  
 Max Meyer & Co. Millinery Site #180 (6-I)  
 Mayer, H. G. House #42 (6-E)  
 McArthur's Shoe Shop Site #155 (6-K)  
 McCormick-Dorsey Building Site #164 (6-J)  
 Mens Athletic Club Site #126 (5-I)  
 Methodist Church, First / Community Center #2 (7-H)  
 Miles, Henry W. and Company Stone Cellar #33 (5-H)  
 Miners Hospital Site #136 (6-B)  
 Miners Union Hall Site #170 (5-I)  
 Montezuma Club Building Site #17 (6-H)  
 Morgan, D. W. House #35 (3-J)  
 Mozart Club #53 (6-I)  
 Museum, Future / Commercial Building #113 (7-H)  
 Myers, Alva D. House #39 (7-J)  
 Myers Family Museum / Frame House #64 (7-F)  
 Nevada Hotel Site #189 (6-J)  
 Nixon Block Site #178 (6-I)  
 Noone Mortuary Garage Building #82 (7-I)  
 Norrington, R. W. House #34 (3-I)

Northern Saloon #54 (6-I)  
 Northern Saloon Site / Northern Filling Station #89 (5-I)  
 Northern Saloon Warehouse Site #19 (8-G)  
 Nye Ormsby County Bank Site #124 (5-H)  
 Palace Block / Nye Ormsby Bank Site #91 (5-H)  
 Palace Block Site #125 (5-H)  
 Palace Livery and Blacksmith Shop Site #165 (6-J)  
 Palm Grill Site #168 (5-I)  
 Palm Studio Site #190 (6-J)  
 Post Office, Current #175 (2-H)  
 Presbyterian Church Site #141 (7-I)  
 Presbyterian Tent Church Site #142 (6-J)  
 Rickard, "Tex" G. L. House #6 (8-G)  
 Rosenthal, Ben House #97 (3-J)  
 Ross Theater Site #148 (6-J)  
 Saint Mary's County Hospital Site #137 (5-B)  
 Saint Mary's County Hospital Site, New #139 (8-M)  
 Saint Mary's Hospital Site Original Location #176 (5-M)  
 San Carlos Hotel Site #158 (6-M)  
 Santa Fe Saloon #131 (10-M)  
 Service Station #115 (8-G)  
 Sideboard Saloon Ruin #32 (5-I)  
 Sprague, Charles S. House #22 (9-G)  
 Southern Nevada Consolidated  
 Telephone-Telegraph Company Building #31 (6-I)  
 Stanton, Major W. A. House #30 (8-F)  
 State Bank and Trust Company Branch Site #161 (6-J)  
 State Bank and Trust Company Site #171 (5-I)  
 St. Francis Hotel Site #184 (5-H)  
 St. Nicholas Hotel Site #181 (5-H)  
 Stone House #93 (4-H)  
 Stone House #111 (8-H)  
 Stone House Site #104 (3-H)  
 Stone Row House #41 (4-H)  
 Sundog Elementary School Site #145 (8-E)  
 Tait, Fred J. House #71 (7-F)  
 Tent Hospital Site #138 (4-H)  
 Texas Saloon Site #188 (6-I)  
 Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad Maintenance Shop Site #144 (6-Q)  
 Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad Passenger Depot Site #133 (1-Q)  
 Wampler, R. B. House #59 (8-H)  
 Watson House Site #186 (7-J)  
 Wee Bottle Shop / Candy Company #92 (5-I)  
 West Crook Street School #36 (2-J)  
 Western Union Site #187 (6-I)  
 Whitmore, W. H. House #62 (8-F)  
 Wies, D. B. House #78 (9-F)  
 Williams, Walt Two Story Stone Building Site #153 (5-J)  
 Wood-Sullivan Building Site #185 (5-H)



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## 10 Preparers

### **National Park Service Team Members and Reviewers:**

Joseph Balachowski, Historical Architect, Pacific West Region

Leah Bonstead, Archeologist, Death Valley National Park

Jean Boscacci, Planner, Project Manager, Pacific West Region

Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian, Pacific West Region

Mamie Choy, GIS/Graphics, Pacific West Region

Martha Crusius, Senior Planner, Pacific West Region

Keith Dunbar, Chief of Park Planning and Environmental Compliance, Pacific West Region

Linda Greene, Resources Management Division (retired), Death Valley National Park

Elaine Jackson-Retondo, National Register & National Historic Landmarks Program, Pacific West Region

Stephanie Toothman, Chief, Cultural Resource Programs, Pacific West Region

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Ronald M. James, Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer

Allen Metscher, Central Nevada Historical Society, Goldfield Historic Society

Virginia Ridgway, Nevada Silver Trails, Nevada State Tourism Commission

Guy Rocha, Nevada State Archivist (retired)