

Idaho Ghost Towns

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Of literally hundreds of Idaho ghost towns, the following list includes some of the more interesting and more accessible old mining camps which have declined severely or turned entirely into ghosts.

In northern Idaho, Pierce, founded in 1860, is anything but a ghost town. Yet an old country courthouse built in 1862 is an important reminder there of the early mining days. In contrast, Florence shows little trace, except old diggings, of the 10,000 or more of miners who came there in 1862. Nearby Warrens, however, still has many buildings and some population. Around Elk City (which really isn't a ghost town either) are Dixie, Orogrande, and Newsome. Farther north, Murray still has buildings and people as well, but little remains of Eagle City and Pritchard, which also were prominent in 1884 during the rush to the Coeur d'Alene mines.

In the southwest, most of the Boise Basin ghost towns trace back to 1862. Placerville, Pioneerville, and Quartzburg still have buildings or old mills, while little remains to mark early Centerville. Idaho City, although scarcely a ghost town, has preserved many important early structures from the time that it reigned as the leading early mining center. To the northeast of the Basin, a number of interesting log cabins are still to be found in the ghost town of Banner. Of the old Owyhee communities, Silver City and Delamar are visible and accessible: much of the mining days of Silver City still is to be seen in that "patriarch of Idaho ghost towns." Representing the early Alturas mines, Rocky Bar, a true ghost town, and Atlanta, now largely closed down, also had their beginnings in 1863 and 1864.

In the Salmon River mountains, Leesburg (1866), Bonanza and Custer (both 1878), and Bayhorse retain some old buildings and relics of the mining days. Other Lemhi ghost towns of interest include Gibbonsville, Gilmore, Shoup, and Ulysses. At the head of the Salmon, parts of old cabins are to be seen at Vienna and Sawtooth City. An old bar survives at Galena in the Wood River mines; some cabins still stand at White Knob, directly above Mackay on Big Lost River; on neighboring Little Wood River, Muldoon once had a smelter.

Further to the southeast, a few traces of log cabins and of early mining still mark some of the camps which once existed on Cariboo Mountain. And on the north side of Snake River at

Bonanza Bar, a few old cabins of the mining days still are visible across the river from the present highway. On the whole, though, the old mining camps of the Snake River placers have pretty largely disappeared. Even the ghosts have gone.

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