

Mining in Idaho

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In a little more than a century of mining, Idaho has produced an estimated \$2,920,000,000 worth of minerals, mostly in metals. This map of metallic mining areas in Idaho shows all the regions of major production, plus most of those of lesser importance along with a few of the better known places thought to be mining areas, but which produced little or nothing at all.

Of the \$2,440,000,000 Idaho yield in metals, by far the greatest share--over 80%--has come from the fabulous Coeur d'Alene mines. This area--one of the few really important mining regions in the world--attracted some attention with a gold rush in 1883, and 1884, but lead-silver-zinc properties soon proved to be the big producers there.

Six Idaho mining regions stand out considerably above the others: aside from Coeur d'Alene--which, with more than a \$2,000,000,000 production, is in a class by itself--they are Boise Basin, Wood River, Stibnite, Blackbird, and Owyhee. Each of these has turned out more than \$40,000,000 according to the best estimates. Boise Basin, going back to 1862, and Owyhee, following the next year, are early gold and silver producers. Wood River, in contrast, is a lead-silver region which did not become prominent until 1880, when it became the leading mining section of Idaho. Stibnite (primarily antimony and tungsten) and Blackbird (primarily cobalt) are noted recent producers of metals that scarcely were mined at all during the earlier years when gold and silver, and then lead and silver, predominated. Eight additional areas--Atlanta, Bear Valley, Bayhorse, Florence, Gilmore, Mackay, Patterson, and Yankee Fork--ranged from something like \$10,000,000 to \$25,000,000 in yield, while Elk City, Leesburg, Pierce, Porthill, Rocky Bar, and Warrens make up the rest of the twenty major Idaho mining areas which stand out in the sixty or so regions of production worthy of mention on the map.

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