

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - SEVEN DEVILS

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Historic-site reports contain information designed to assist in two preservation functions. One is preservation planning at the local level. The other is the work of federal agencies in carrying out their responsibilities to comply with historic-preservation requirements prescribed by federal statutes and regulations. These reports summarize local archaeological, historical, and geographical contexts; existing surveys of historic sites; architectural, engineering, industrial; and other cultural resources; and available maps and literature concerning each area. Natural geographical, rather than governmental, boundaries have been used to identify seventy-two areas that vary greatly in size. Site reports reflect a broad cultural and geographical disparity characteristic of diverse regional components found in Idaho, but the areas are designed to incorporate cultural elements of immediate local significance that need to be taken into account for preservation planning.

1. Geographical context: Towering about 8,000 feet above Snake River, Idaho's Seven Devils range forms a canyon wall substantially higher than its Oregon counterpart which rises to a maximum of 6,982 feet at Hat Point over North American's deepest gorge. Three ridges contain significant commercial mineral deposits, but form a barrier to travel. They contain important wilderness values as well as spectacular road grades where mining, forestry, and ranching justified construction. Timberlands at higher elevations give way to desert vegetation farther down. A series of Snake River reservoirs impounded by power dams reach from Olds Ferry to Eagle Bar.

2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites:

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:

4. Historical summary: Major historical episodes include:
 1. Exploration and fur trade, 1811-1842
 2. Prospecting
 3. Mine development, 1880-1906
 4. Forest Service administration, 1906-1932
 5. CCC era, 1933-1940
 6. Wartime adjustment, 1941-1945
 7. Recreational development, 1946-196_
 8. Mining revival, 19__

Levi Allen, heading a party of twelve fortune-seekers, set out in a boat from Wallula, Washington, on March 12, 1862. Because of huge cakes of ice in the Snake River, it took the party a month to reach Lewiston. They continued south to Pittsburg Landing, where half the crew remained to guard the boat and prospect nearby streams. Allen, Edmond Percy, James D. Agnew, William Simpson, and one other prospected up the Little Salmon River to its headwaters in a broad mountain meadow (Salmon Meadows); from there they continued over a ridge, past a large lake (Payette Lake), and on down its outlet to a large bend in the stream (Horseshoe)--never knowing that they were within twenty miles of what would prove, two months later, to be one of the largest gold strikes of the century, the Boise Basin placer diggings.

Two months after they had left their companions on the Snake, Allen's group started on their return trip up the Payette and over the hill into what is now called Meadows Valley. They strode up a ridge toward the Snake River and around a high mountain (White Monument) adjacent to the Seven Devils peaks. Here they celebrated the Fourth of July in a snowstorm. They found little gold; but they did find a huge outcropping of highly colored blue rock, reputedly 550 feet long and 80 feet wide, which they could not identify. Suspicious of its content, they staked out the area and, because of the colors, called the claim the Peacock. The mineralized zone extended about five miles north to south, three miles east to west.

Some of the ore in the claim--which turned out to be copper--was extremely rich; and although the region was practically inaccessible, Allen returned periodically and finally took steps to bring important capital to the district. Because of the popularity of copper in the eastern states, Marcus Daly (who owned the smelter in Anaconda, Montana) had already become

fabulously rich. Allen thus knew what he had and was able to interest his friends Granville Stewart, a discoverer of Alder Gulch, and S. T. Hauser, another wealthy miner of Helena, who later became territorial governor of Montana. They paid Allen \$1,500 for one-fourth interest in the three claims that he had located but took no immediate action toward development. I. I. Lewis, who went in with Allen in the fall of 1877 to locate claims and examine the prospects for Hauser, also sold a like amount to Stewart and Hauser.

Another wealthy investor, Albert Kleinschmidt, had gone into Helena as a merchant. Like many of that era, he had grubstaked numerous gold-seekers for a share of the wealth that they might find. His reward was sensational. He had the curiosity, the money, and the spirit of adventure to invest in mines. In 1885, he purchased shares in the three mines--the Peacock, the Helena, and White Monument--from Allen and Lewis. The latter disposed of all his interests, but Allen continued to hold some shares. In 1885, Kleinschmidt also acquired for himself three prospects on Indian Creek: the Blue Jacket, the Queen, and the Alaska, which had been located by Charles Walker, Arthur David, and Charles Anderson some five or six years earlier. Since the Blue Jacket was the nearest to any type of road and its samples assayed exceptionally high, Kleinschmidt had a crew working all summer sorting ore and discarding any that might assay less than 20 per cent copper. In 1887, this high-grade was sacked and piled on pack-horses that carried their loads seven miles over the mountain to Bear Creek. There it was shipped to the Anaconda smelter. When the results showed a surprising profit, Albert Kleinschmidt was ready to enter this copper district in earnest.

He immediately went to work to solve the transportation problem. Without access to a railway, even a relatively rich copper district could not be developed. Kleinschmidt at once began plans and surveys for a road to reach from his mines to Ballard's Ferry on the Snake, where he was sure boats could be relied upon to transport his ore to the railroad at Olds Ferry, near Weiser. Surveys for a Weiser-Salmon Meadows railroad--which might have run a branch to the Seven Devils--and for a line down the Snake from Huntington toward Lewiston had been made after the Oregon Short Line and the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company began transcontinental rail service through Weiser and Huntington in 1884. But a whole boatload of surveyors was lost in the Snake, and even the Weiser-Salmon Meadows project faced difficult enough terrain that construction was delayed for more than another decade.

Meanwhile Albert Kleinschmidt was, while having road surveys made, organizing the American Mining Company with himself, Carl Kleinschmidt, and James Millich as incorporators. The actual roadwork was begun in 1890, and that same year the post office of Helena, Idaho, was established almost under the dump of the Peacock Mine. The twenty-two-mile grade from Helena to Ballard's

Landing was declared completed on July 31, 1891, at a cost of \$20,000. It was hoped that the mines could now be served by a Snake River steamboat, but the Norma, built for that purpose in 1891, failed to meet the need. Meanwhile the price of copper dropped, and the panic of 1893 set copper mining back for several years.

In September of 1891, Levi Allen sold his remaining shares in the three lodes that he had located to A. M. Holter for \$10,000. With Allen eliminated, the American Mining Company was reorganized with Albert Kleinschmidt, Lewis Hillebrandt, Edgar Mills, and James Millich as incorporators. Albert Kleinschmidt now sold his shares in the Peacock, Helena, and White Monument (par value \$10.00 per share) for stock in the newly organized American Mining Company. With this exchange, his control of these three mines was jeopardized to an extent that he did not realize. The Adams County records show that for the next twenty years or more, the lawyers and courts were kept busy with litigation concerning these properties, with Reinold Kleinschmidt generally named as a participant.

Both Holter and Hauser were heavily interested in the American Mining Company and in the progress of the railroads. T. W. Bates was seeking business in order to promote financial support for his railroad scheme into the Seven Devils District. In 1895, Holter and Hauser agreed to ship all ores from the Peacock, Helena, and White Monument mines at \$5.00 per ton over the railroad which was to be completed to the Blue Jacket Mine by August of 1897.

In 1897, the Seven Devils region began to show even more life. The Metropolitan Trust Company of New York became interested in the Blue Jacket group, which was leased from Albert Kleinschmidt under the management of Frank French. A water-jacket type of smelter was built four miles down Indian Creek from the mine, and this started a stampede of "thousands" into the area. A post office was established on December 1, 1897, under the name of Cuprum (Latin for copper). Most of the men who came into the region at this point were seeking jobs and fleeing from the murderous tensions and bloodshed in the miners' union of North Idaho. No member of a miners' union, or even one who breathed sympathy for such an organization, was ever tolerated in the Seven Devils District.

The trial run of the smelter in the spring of 1898 resulted in a loss of forty percent of the copper. A second trial convinced French and his assayer, a man named Antz, that the smelter was a failure. So the Metropolitan Trust sold the smelter to the Iron Dyke, on the Snake River; Antz went with the smelter to supervise the operations, which proved a success. To show the worth of the mines, thirty-five carloads of the high-grade ore, consigned to a New York smelter, were hauled to the railroad and showed a profit.

That summer of 1898 was the period of greatest activity for

Cuprum, which was the meeting spot for all the miners who came flocking into the district. A steady stream of freight wagons hauled ore from the Peacock and Blue Jacket mines; the Ford brothers from Cripple Creek, Colorado, had purchased gold claims in the Black Lake area and were building roads and making extensive plans for the installation of a cyanide mill. The railroad grade was advancing north from Weiser, destined for the Seven Devils mines. This railroad, the Pacific and Idaho Northern, was creating a great flurry, Lewis A. Hall, its president, was young, enthusiastic, full of energy and showmanship, and backed partly by eastern capitalists, mainly by his father's millions. The Boston and Seven Devils Copper Company was organized with Lewis Hall as manager. They acquired a score of small claims, the main one being the Arkansas--five miles upstream from Cuprum, where Hancock built his log office. For \$1,000,000 they acquired the Peacock, Helena, and White Monument group from the American Mining Company. Money flowed in fantastic sums.

T. C. Jones, former manager of the Homestake Mine in the Black Hills, located a claim adjacent to the Arkansas Mine, had it surveyed and plotted into lots; thus the "city" of Landore was born. This activity continued into 1899. The beginnings of railway construction promised to solve the transportation problem; the Pacific and Idaho Northern was advancing up the Weiser River, and scores of Austrians were digging a grade around White Monument at an elevation of 8,000 feet to meet the Weiser section at Council. A hospital, supervised by a licensed physician, was built in Cuprum to care for anticipated accident victims. A railroad line down the Snake River to Homestead was receiving attention again. In view of all this activity, J. H. Czizek, State Mine Inspector, happily reported that in 1899, "for the first time in the history of the Seven Devils, a systematic and thorough effort under good management was made to show the vast wealth in this copper district. The Seven Devils district has some of the best copper prospects in the United States, if not in the world. It is destined at no distant day to rival Butte, Montana, in the wealth and productiveness of its copper mines." However, that summer marked the end of work on the railroad grade around White Monument. The newly installed weekly newspaper of Cuprum meticulously reported all these happenings.

By the first week in January, 1900, the Pacific and Idaho Northern Railroad, with all its high officials aboard the train, arrived in the newly created town of Cambridge. Construction of the railroad grade was proceeding with all possible speed toward the Seven Devils, but the new terminus was Landore. The management had plans for a gravity aerial tramway three-and-one-half miles long, to operate from the Peacock Mine, with full buckets pulling the empties back up. This tram would eliminate the long haul by wagon via the Kleinschmidt grade. Then suddenly this promotion subsided, the Boston and Seven Devils Copper

Company withdrew, and there was another lull.

Only limited production of ore continued; but, backed by the strength of all the publicity, a new promotion scheme was conceived. Ten miles out of Weiser, a smelter was started to serve the district. But only the building was built, and machinery was never ordered. The townsite of Appleton was surveyed and gullible easterners bought lots on which some were still paying taxes in 1960. The smelter building was never used--except by cattle, as a shelter. By 1901, the railroad reached Council, which became a shipping point for Salmon River, Thunder Mountain, and the Seven Devils.

Litigation among the leading Montana mine owners who had Seven Devils interests shut down the district entirely in 1902. A little ore was shipped out in 1903, and important Utah copper companies, with mines at Bingham Canyon, considered expanding into the Seven Devils. But the large open-pit type of operation they had pioneered in the Bingham Canyon could not be utilized in the remote Seven Devils. Black Lake mines and mills were operating a good crew even during the lull, however. Iron Springs and Rankins Mill, beyond Black Lake, were both doing exploratory work that was backed by eastern investors, but Landore was in a slump and families were moving out fast.

With the spring of 1904 came the period of Landore's greatest prosperity. The operation of the mines and smelter at Mineral, near Weiser, was no longer profitable, so the Ladd Metals Company of Portland, Oregon, decided to move their equipment to Landore. They leased the Seven Devils mines from the American Mining Company, bought five acres of land from T. G. Jones, and had men working on the excavation and framework for the smelter; more men were cutting and sawing trees for the wood-burning furnaces, and new roads were being built. All the mines had full crews, and upwards of eighty freight wagons were hauling in equipment and supplies and returning over the same roads with profitable loads of ore. T. G. Jones, the "mayor," reported the city's greatest population to be slightly over one thousand souls.

An attempt to run the new smelter on wood failed in 1904, so new boilers and furnaces were installed for fueling with coke--which, added to the expense of imported flux, made smelting ore at the Landore smelter beyond consideration. Some of the best ore was hauled down the Kleinschmidt grade and smelted at Sumpter, Oregon, mainly in 1906. By this time R. M. Bell, State Mine Inspector, indicated that the Seven Devils district "has been badly handicapped since its discovery by title litigation and some of the rankest kind of mining mismanagement. A large amount of capital has been expended on several different properties in the camp, but without definite results in the way of intelligent development." But Landore was a thriving community with daily stage service to Council, and the outlook seemed good, for well-known capitalists or their delegates seemed

to be always showing up.

During this entire period, the Black Lake Mining and Milling Company continued steady operations under the Ford brothers. The Peacock and Blue Jacket mines were leased for periods of two or three years, and both operators left debts behind before vanishing into parts unknown. A third man was threatened with a hanging in effigy and left camp the next day. The last two men to work the Arkansas Mine hired only a small crew but paid all wages and debts before quitting in 1916.

Undeterred by their inability to operate around Landore without better transportation facilities, the Kleinschmidt interests took an option on the Red Ledge (ten miles north of Landore) in 1906. The Red Ledge was described in that year as being a mile long, 2,000 feet wide, and "as red as a freshly-painted barn" because of oxidized iron that colored the copper ore. Hope that the Union Pacific might build on down the Snake from Homestead (seventeen miles above the Red Ledge) to Lewiston encouraged them; such a railroad would have passed right by their mine above Eagle Bar. New surveys for such a line were made in 1911 and 1912, but no one ever actually got around to building it. Finally, in 1925, Idaho and Oregon provided the Ballard Landing bridge across the Snake at the base of the Kleinschmidt grade below Homestead, and the Red Ledge owners extended a narrow road on down the canyon to Eagle Bar in 1926. A fraudulent promotion of the Red Ledge, along with properties at Landore, set back the district after 1926; operations in all the major Seven Devils mines were suspended on November 4, 1927, and the companies remained in receivership until after the perpetrator of the fraud was convicted in federal court on December 14, 1928. These calamities, however, only intensified the problem of developing the district--a problem that sprang primarily from the lack of transportation which has thwarted the Seven Devils copper mining for over a century since the original discovery.

Intermittent work has continued in the Seven Devils, and most of the extremely high-grade ore has been hauled out to smelters. But most of the potential ore has not been touched, even in the mines that have been worked, and the Red Ledge as yet has not produced anything at all. But 1960, something more than \$400,000 in copper, and much less than that amount in gold and silver, had been recovered at an overall cost of well more than 400 per cent of that amount in investment. Thus the Seven Devils mines were aptly named: in spite of concerned efforts by a number of important and well-established copper mining companies, the Seven Devils could not be persuaded to release their wealth of buried treasure, and only the surface of the district has been scratched as yet.

Meanwhile, production continues. Leasers on the Peacock shipped out \$150,000 worth of ore from 1960 to 1963, and another 27,000 tons of eighteen-per-cent copper ore, with \$3.25 per ton

of silver and gold, came in 1966-1967. In the summer of 1968, ore trucks were hauling rock from the Peacock down the Kleinschmidt grade to Cuprum, then on to Council, Grangeville, and Anaconda, over a different route but to the same place where the original Peacock ore was smelted in 1887. There are still optimists who firmly believe in the potential of the region, and that in this era, when metals can be recovered by electrolysis, the Seven Devils region, aided by the Hells Canyon power lines, may finally come into its own.

A still more significant Copper Cliff open-pit development was started above Cuprum in 1974. A flotation mill there processed 80,000 to 150,000 tons annually, with large reserves available to maintain production until 1979, when Iron Dike ore imported from a nearby Oregon mine--with Kleinschmidt grade access to Cuprum--continued to support Copper Cliff milling. A \$1,500,000 Red Ledge mine purchase in 1979 made additional Seven Devils ore available for this operation. After more than a century of promise, Seven Devils mining has become more practical.

5. Historical documentation and literature:

6. Historic sites inventory:

7. Industrial archaeological and engineering sites summary: Surface evidence of placer mining in this area offers opportunities for study of industrial procedures utilized in historic production. Hydraulic pits, patterns of dredging operations, or tailings that distinguish hill claims from stream claims--or that identify Chinese services--provide information of historic importance. Prospector's pits disclose gravels that were searched unsuccessfully for gold. Ditches, flumes, stream diversions, and similar evidence of water sources also are important.

Lode mining operations left a variety of indications, many of them relatively permanent in nature. Disturbance of surface outcrops includes trenches and exploratory shafts. In other places, tunnels and raises or stopes that reached surface outlets reveal important aspects of mining activity. If accessible, underground workings have still greater importance for industrial archaeology and engineering analysis. Abandoned tools and equipment, along with items like timbering in tunnels and stopes, add to this record.

8. Architectural resources: Survey of the Seven Devils study area is limited to a few isolated areas, and generalization about the nature of the area's architecture would be premature. Sites related to the area's development as a mining and ranching area

after 1890 include ranch and mill buildings as well as Forest Service structures. Cuprum has survived as a mining and resort center, but Landore is largely a ghost town.

Four sites of architectural interest have been recorded in Bear and Cuprum. All parts of the study area deserve further survey.

National Register sites of architectural significance include the following:

T2N, R3W, Section 8: Huntley, A. O., Barn

9. United States Geological Survey Maps:

Copperfield (15') 1957
Cuprum (15') 1957
Heavens Gate 1964
He Devil (15') 1957
Homestead (15') 1957
Hornet (15') 1957
Kessler Creek 1964

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: