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PINE, BENNETT MOUNTAIN, LIME CREEK, AND WOOD CREEK

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Extensive prospecting along Boise River's south fork had gone on for more than two decades prior to location of the Franklin lode at Pine on May 16, 1887. Oliver Sloan, who had lived for years at Pine Grove, got a number of prospectors to explore lode possibilities there in the summer of 1886. Their delay in finding anything came from lack of an outcrop of ore. Finally they struck a good vein in a blind tunnel. From then on, exploration came quickly. By the spring of 1888, lodes at Pine Grove attracted a considerable gold rush. A St. Louis company built a stamp mill there that summer, and others were brought in from Hailey and Rocky Bar. Sloan managed to sell part of his interest for \$45,000 and to develop a town of two to three hundred miners there. Four saloons, two stores, a restaurant, and two barber shops served his new community that spring. High grade samples from the Franklin assayed from \$300 to \$900 a ton. More important, a fourteen-day St. Louis company mill run, averaging fifteen tons a day, returned twenty to thirty dollars profit per ton. A neighboring mine tested at almost ninety dollars a ton at a Rocky Bar mill, and forty men were employed in developing the Franklin that summer. With British investment in 1892, Pine took advantage of national economic depression that favored gold mining for several years after that.

Although not an enormous producer, a ten-stamp Franklin mill eclipsed all other Elmore County mining operations (including Rocky Bar, Atlanta, and a number of other later discoveries) for several years after a \$20,000 sale in 1897. Running night and day when not broken down, that modest operation could produce a

hundred thousand a year. Even "with its little old ten-stamp mill hung up half the time for repairs," the Franklin managed to recover \$70,000 in 1904, an addition of a hundred-ton cyanide plant to process a two-and-a-half-year accumulation of tailings (worth \$7 a ton) helped out still more in 1905. Loss of their entire \$20,000 plant in an unfortunate fire, May 16, 1908, did not help, but miners at Pine still managed to produce about \$750,000 in gold.

Additional mineral discoveries farther down the south fork attracted investment to some Bennett Mountain properties near Dixie in 1892. A Salt Lake purchase of a \$50,000 half-interest there brought in essential development capital in 1894, enlarging minor development operations financed by a small quartz mill's yield. A large 60-foot vein of \$20 ore showed great promise after a 210-foot development shaft was sunk the next year. By 1896, 75,000 tons of \$14 ore had been blocked out. Within a decade, a 300-foot tunnel was commenced in order to reach a depth of 1,100 feet on the vein. This project proved overly ambitious, however.

Between Bennett Mountain and Pine, a number of additional lodes gained prominence along Lime Creek. A 200-foot tunnel exposed three low-grade veins at the Hawthorne, where a ten-stamp mill was under construction in 1903. Two other Lime Creek properties were developed by small companies with Salt Lake capital, with a twenty-five roller mill brought in for one of them in 1904. Then an 1,800-foot Copper King outcrop was traced on Wood Creek the next season. With additional finds, an extensive area between Pine and Dixie had quite a number of interesting possibilities which did not become major producers but which kept quite a number of prospectors and developers busy for many years.

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