

# IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Although development of lode mining around Pearl did not come until much later, a considerable stir was created in Boise on December 7, 1867, when the proprietor of the Dry Creek station and ranch showed up with some good looking quartz specimens from two substantial veins on Willow Creek. The ledges, two hundred feet apart, were parallel and well defined. The gulch between them prospected well, and miners hoped to be able to recover \$8 a day by putting in a reservoir to provide water for their operations. At the very beginning of the excitement, the sale of a hundred feet on one of the veins for \$400 showed that there was interest in Willow Creek properties. But after a limited amount of work was done at the Red Warrior at Pearl in 1870, the district remained dormant until gold mining staged a comeback during the Panic of 1893. In the meantime, lode discoveries on Squaw Creek expanded the Pearl area's mineral potential northward across the Payette, primarily after 1880. With silver mining ruined by price collapses in 1888 and particularly in 1892, interest in gold revived. Mines at Pearl, as a consequence, finally became productive in 1894. A total of \$30,000 in 1894 and 1895 was increased to \$80,000 in 1896. W. H. Dewey, who had become a wealthy Owyhee mine developer, took over the major mine at Pearl in November, 1896. By the time his son, Edward H. Dewey, got through, a shaft had been sunk to a depth of 585 feet. Below the 400 to 500 foot level, sulfides became too much of a problem and operations had to shut down after about a decade of production. Another major extension of the shaft to 540 feet in 1919 proved unrewarding, as did a limited amount of additional development in 1926 and 1932. Lesser properties there encountered the same problem. Since Pearl's mines have not been exactly worked out, interest in them has continued long after significant production ceased. About 20,000 ounces of gold, valued at about \$400,000 when mined, has come from early operations at Pearl. Testing of old lodes at Pearl finally brought renewed activity to that old camp in 1980.