IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

SITE REPORT - SHOUP-ULYSSES AREA

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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: Salmon River canyon west of North Fork receives a long series of north-side streams before intercepting Horse Creek. These drain high timbered ridges into a more arid, rocky canyon. Mining resources around Shoup and Ulysses join ranches and range lands as supplements to a timber products economy. Recreational boating, hunting, and fishing also are important. A Salmon River road, with Forest Service roads reaching high ridges, serves this area. Elevations reach 8,854' at Waugh Mountain above at Horse Creek.

2. Prehistory and significant archaeological sites: People have inhabited southern Idaho for fourteen thousand years or more. Until about eight thousand years ago they were noted primarily as big game hunters. Since then, they specialized more in camas, bitterroot, and other natural crops and seeds, as well as in smaller game. But they continued to hunt large game that remained after earlier elephants, camels, giant sloth, and other ice age creatures left as climatic conditions changed. Snake River plains big game hunters came into the Salmon River mountains to fish and to hunt mountain sheep and other local game. Evidence of their activity there goes back for eight thousand years or so. Salmon River archaeological sites below

Shoup document early occupation of that area.

3. Cultural resource surveys and archaeological literature:

4. Historical summary: Major historical episodes include

    1. Exploration and prospecting, 1805-1881

    2. Salmon River navigation, 1898-

    3. Forest Service administration, 1906-

    4. Wild river investigation and management, 1968

Exploration of Idaho commenced with William Clark's examination of Salmon River in 1805. Clark and his men really were not out looking for gold, but they came by Indian Creek (where mining around Ulysses later became important) and got almost to Shoup before concluding that Salmon River Canyon was more of a barrier than a route for travel. Four Hudson's Bay Company trappers came by on their way down Salmon River in search of beaver in 1832, but they paid no attention to mineral resources either. A generation later, after a major gold rush to Florence brought more than ten thousand prospectors to Salmon River, miners became interested in that entire area. By 1862, a few prospectors had gone both directions through Salmon River canyon without finding placers rich enough to be of interest. Then gold discoveries at Leesburg in 1866 led to a more careful investigation of Salmon River mining possibilities, and within a year or two several new placer camps were established.

Several independent prospectors based at Leesburg began to placer some Salmon River bars at Shoup in 1868 and 1869, but lode discoveries there were delayed for more than a decade. Eventually Samuel James and Pat O'Hara came along late in 1881. Arriving at Pine Creek November 24, they spent more than two weeks prospecting before identifying a major lode--the Grunter. Sam James later described their problems in hunting for gold to Jay A. Czizek (an early Idaho state mine inspector who had lived at Shoup in 1889), who reported their difficulties in detail:

> Undaunted by all obstacles which then beset their way, such as being the most unfavorable time of year for mountain travel, having to make their own trails in whatever direction they went, the river freezing and full of floating ice, but these were but trifling annoyances in comparison to a degraded remnant of a most fiendish tribe of Indians which then lurked about the hills.

Actually, Idaho's Indian wars had ended. In any event,

local Indians around Shoup were less ferocious than their white neighbors. Unaware of that situation, many prospectors had more than passing fear--not totally unfounded--of an Indian menace.

John Ralston bought O'Hara's half interest for $250 before recording this important new claim in Salmon City, March 24, 1881. Then James sold his share for $5,000 in a much more profitable deal. James did not leave Shoup, though. He went on to discover one new lode after another. In this series of finds, he located the Kentuck (which became Shoup's other leading property) June 17, 1882. That October he arranged to sell his new lode to Salt Lake investors (including a former Utah governor, Eli H. Murray) for $16,500. H. C. Merritt managed to bring California's prominent mine developer George Hearst into this syndicate, which also included J. T. Gilmer and O. J. Salisbury, who operated a stage system in Idaho and Montana. A highly successful, professional prospector, James went right on discovering more lodes.

By the fall of 1881, Shoup had a post office (named for Lemhi County's leading citizen George L. Shoup, later to become governor and a United States senator, after the postal service rejected the local name of "Boulder" for that new community) and a bright future. Testing of ore there commenced in November when a 6,300-pound lot, packed to Salmon for shipment to Salt Lake, returned $375 in gold. So supplies were floated down Salmon River for winter operations. Jay Czizek described what must have been an interesting initial trip:

> On the first day of December, 1881, five men and fourteen gallons of whisky embarked with a cargo of 7,000 pounds of supplies, which they safely landed on the tenth day out. Now two men will make the trip in two days with a cargo of 24,000 pounds, but whether the quantity of whisky is decreased in the same ratio as the number of men required, we are unable to state.

After they got sober again, Shoup's early miners installed a ten-stamp water power mill that turned out about $90,000 each year from low grade ore that ran about $12 per ton. Production continued at that level for two decades after that without interruption--not too common a record in Idaho's mining history.

Shoup's original lode property, however, underwent a less than satisfactory early development. Robert N. Bell (another later state mine inspector) explained that:

> The Grunter mine, situated a mile east of the Kentuck on the same vein, is a fine example of one of the most flattering gold enterprises in the State that was butchered by a would-be mining capitalist who, through blundering misconception of the enterprise he was undertaking, started in to put up a first-class ten-

> stamp concentrating mill for a half interest in the property, and wound up by furnishing a five-stamp mill with a hog-trough mortar and an overshot wheel that was just about as effective as a good sized coffee mill and never gave the property half a chance to show its merits.

A substantial number of lesser lode locations followed after 1881. In 1886, Robert N. Bell joined Sam James as a successful prospector at Shoup, and George Hearst came in to make an additional discovery in 1888. By that time Shoup had a couple of hotels in addition to the usual budget of saloons. Culture was represented by an opera house (which ran during the summer and fall) and an art gallery, operated by W. P. Pilliner, a professional artist. Not every Idaho mining camp could support such an array. By 1890, more than three hundred lodes--mostly low grade--had been located. A Salmon River railway (projected by a Northern Pacific mainline survey in 1872, but abandoned in favor of a route around Lake Pend d'Oreille) was needed to make more of them productive. Most of Shoup's supplies came in by river freight boats from Salmon City--a service that had commenced in 1882.

Aside from Shoup, a small mining community on Pine Creek grew up after 1886 near another group of lodes there. This settlement had not attained all the amenities available in Shoup by 1890. But life there matched that in more than one isolated early Idaho mining camp:

> A 10-stamp mill, a saw mill, one arastra and a boarding house are also company buildings. One half a mile further on is the burg of Pine Creek, and two miles from here on upper Pine creek is the group of mines owned by James & Brown, and on this property is a one-stamp mill owned by Kenney & Pollard of Salmon City. The town of Pine creek includes the remaining buildings--which are built in a style of architecture similar to that of the raven, only differing in one respect, and that is where the raven has used mud to hold his structure together, mud has been used in this instance as a protection against the reverse elements of the weather. Crude and uncouth as these habitations may appear, they serve to keep up the illusion called home, but the romance of love in a cottage or in the cot on the mountain is often dispelled by the embarrassing discomfortures of living in one with a family. We have overlooked the company dwelling house which is built of sawed logs and includes the company office and store house. This building bears the only outward semblance of a human abode, inasmuch as it has doors and windows. It also boasts the luxurious

> dimensions of two sleeping apartments and an attic which is very conveniently reached by a ladder put up to a window on the outside. The present appearance of these camps is by no means a disparaging feature, but makes an era of progress nearing the close of one decade, which has been attained without the spasmodic aid of a boom.

Shoup for that matter, could not be compared with a more permanent community:

> After eight years growth as a mining town, Shoup now contains two 10-stamp quartz mills, four arastras, one saw mill, two one story boarding houses, a Postoffice and one saloon. No one has ever settled here with the intention of making a permanent home, therefore houses are an unknown quantity. The first glimpse of town, coming down the trail, is apt to give any one the impression of a collection of hen-coops, and though bearing the illustrious name of Shoup, the population of Chinese and Italians to be seen in passing through the town, suggests that it might be more appropriately be called Pekin or Milan.

But life there went on for more than another decade. Large-scale lode operations were supplemented by promising new properties. A rich Clipper-Bullion outcrop provided sixty-five tons of ore yielding $2,900 in 1892. That summer, another mill as rafted into Shoup, and national economic depression favored additional gold production. Mills with a total of fifty-five stamps had come into production by 1902, when over $750,000 in gold had been recovered there. Yet within two years, Kentuck mill operations were suspended, and other lodes were needed to utilize Shoup's enlarged processing capacity. By that time, new discoveries not far away on Indian Creek increased production of that area.

Although gold lodes had been discovered in 1895 on Indian Creek, their location up stream from Salmon River delayed production there. Early arastra operators demonstrated that large ore reserves there could be milled profitably, and purchases by Geneva and Rochester investors introduced New York capital there in 1898. Access was far more difficult than at Shoup, although Shoup's River boats sailed right by Indian Creek. Their problem came from lack of a good landing site. In 1899, when machinery was being taken there for a stamp mill at Ulysses, more than a little trouble was encountered. George M. Watson reported their rather interesting trip:

> I left the mouth of the north fork of Salmon river in a boat on the 6th day of July for Indian Creek. The boat

> was loaded with machinery for the new stamp mill that is being built there. Indian Creek is located down Salmon River, about forty miles from Salmon City. It is now creating great excitement since the recent rich strikes of free milling ores, and I think it will come to the front as one of the best producers of ores in Idaho. They are now building a 5-stamp mill there and are going to prospect the leads and if satisfactory will build two 10-stamp mills next summer. The ore is free milling, of a very high grade and is glittering with free gold, but after depth is reached the ores will likely turn into refractory or sulphuride ores the same as at Gibbonsville.
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> There is no road after you leave the mouth of the north fork of Salmon river and that is very risky business, as the bottom of the river is strewn with machinery from recent wrecks.
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> Salmon river is a very bad river, as the writer knows by experience. Five of us left the mouth of the north fork of Salmon with a big flat-bottom boat loaded with machinery and supplies, and when we got to the mouth of Indian Creek we could not make the landing as the river was very high so we went down the river about a mile before we could stop the boat. Then we had to build a road back up the river to Indian Creek and drag the machinery after us, so you can see what kind of a country this is. It is insulated from every where and all it needs is roads and capital to make it one of the greatest countries in the west.

In spite of such obstacles, Harry Gulecke brought a five-stamp mill to Ulysses in 1899. Production of $10 ore continued for two years before a $30,000 sale led to importation of a 15-stamp mill, which commenced production in 1902. Enlarged to thirty stamps the next year, this operation processed enough low-grade ore--about $150,000 a year--to yield a monthly profit of 3% on a large capital investment through 1904. Then a fire destroyed the plant, September 13, 1905, and set Ulysses back seriously. When burned out, Ulysses had Idaho's largest active gold mine. A new 15-stamp mill was erected, but it operated only two years. A revival of mining there in 1909 and a thousand-foot access tunnel driven in 1910 supplied a 15-stamp mill and cyanide plant through 1912. Expenses for mining and milling in such an isolated area were so high that none of the mills there managed to operate profitably in the long run. Their $600,000 production finally came at an overall loss, and since much of their low-grade rock could not cover expenses of shipment to a smelter, Ulysses did not achieve as great a yield as could have been

obtained in an area of less expensive operation. Leasors continued to produce there for two more decades, but by 1929, they had such little success that they no longer could maintain a post office. Mining at Shoup also was spasmodic for two decades and more after 1902. By 1908, Kentuck and Grunter development provided very large ore reserves, with some extremely high grade pockets. Each mine had a successful ten-stamp water power mill, and two other mills (with twenty and five stamps) served nearby mines. But that activity did not last too long. New investors at Shoup in 1916 managed a revival there, with an access road finally completed in 1918 and a tramway in 1919. A new 15-stamp mill followed in 1920. But another decade of inactivity interrupted large-scale lode mining.

Introduction of new Gold Hill Company investment capital at Shoup in 1930 led to another decade of mining there. Production continued on a modest scale until 1935, when a hundred-ton ball mill brought increased capacity to that operation. Meanwhile, a new Grunter mill and floatation plant produced for two years prior to a destructive fire, August 21, 1935. Gold Hill milling continued, however, and Grunter ore was processed at Gibbonsville until 1938, when transportation costs were reduced by transferring Gibbonsville's mill to Shoup. A new 200-ton Grunter mill was installed at Shoup in 1940, but in 1942, wartime restrictions led to another suspension of gold mining. Altogether, Shoup and Ulysses accounted for about $2,500,000 in gold by that time, in spite of repeated setbacks and hardships.

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 Shoup-Ulysses study area is limited to a few isolated areas, and generalizations about the nature of the area's architecture would be premature. One would expect to encounter sites related to the area's development as a mining area and Forest Service land during the period after 1880.

No sites of architectural interest has been recorded in the study area. All parts of the study area deserve further survey.

The area has no sites of architectural significance listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

9. United States Geological Survey Maps:

Blue Joint 1962
Buttes Creek Point 1962
Horse Creek Butte 1962
Long Tom Mtn. 1962
Painted Rocks Lake (15') 1960
Piquett Mtn. (15') 1960
Shoup (15') 1960
Square Top 1962
Ulysses Mtn. 1960
Waugh Mtn.
Wood Hump 1962

10. Cultural resource management recommendations: