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ALTURAS COUNTY SEAT, 1864

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When Idaho's territorial legislature established Alturas County, February 4, 1864, to accommodate South Boise miners, a county seat had to be designated. A problem arose, though, because no one in Lewiston at that time had any idea what actual mining towns had grown up as a result of a gold rush to that area. But someone had heard of Esmeralda, a town that had been established across (and west) from Junction Bar--a town in a placer flat where Feather River flows into Boise River's south fork. So Esmeralda became county seat of Alturas County. That created a still more awkward problem. By that time Esmeralda had already become a ghost town--eventually composed of only two deserted cabins. As a result, Alturas County was organized in Rocky Bar, which occasionally was referred to as Esmeralda by officials disturbed by that statutory problem. But pretty soon, they simply identified Rocky Bar as county seat in total disregard for what Idaho's legislature had done.

(This information has not been edited.)

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