

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Chinese Sites in the Warren Mining District

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Chinese Sojourners in the Warren Area, 1870-1920

C. Geographical Data

The Warren Mining District is an area of approximately 270 square miles in north central Idaho. It extends approximately 27 miles north to south, and 12 miles east to west. The area is isolated, with deep canyons and tall mountain peaks. Soil deposition is shallow and the underlying granitic batholith contains ore bearing quartz. The Warren Mining District is part of the Payette National Forest, and includes portions of Idaho and Valley Counties, and part of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The Warren Mining District includes all or part of 275 sections and is defined by township boundaries and rivers.

The northern boundary lies on the south bank of the Salmon River in T24N;R7E and T24N;R8E. The eastern boundary is the west bank of the South Fork of the Salmon River from T20N;R6E to T24N;R8E. The western boundary lies east of T24N;R7E and T20N;R6E through T23N;R6E of the Boise Meridian. The western boundary also follows the east bank of the Secesh River in T21N;R6E and T20N;R6E till the Secesh River meets the South Fork

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

*Goran J. Nilsson*

4-12-90

Signature of certifying official

Date

USDA Forest Service

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

*Antoinette Jhee*

6/27/90

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

Date

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of the Salmon River. These boundaries are graphically depicted in the accompanying map titled "The Warren Mining District".

## E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

In the Warren Mining District exists a record of a significant ethnic group who had a major impact on the economic and cultural development of the Idaho mining frontier. The Chinese came to the Warren Mining District in 1870, shortly after its discovery. For a period Chinese sojourners were the dominant population group in the Warren, Idaho area. The large number of Chinese miners generated a support system which supplied materials and services geared toward maintaining traditional Chinese diet and lifestyle. This multiple property submission includes three commercial Chinese terraced gardens and one Chinese pack trail, representing one facet of life on the Idaho mining frontier. Other Chinese sites are known to exist in the Warren area. As these sites are identified and researched, they will be submitted as part of this multiple property nomination.

In the late 19th century thousands of Chinese immigrants flocked to the western United States. They came to make a fortune in the American gold fields, railroad camps, and fish canneries. These sojourners planned to return to China when they acquired enough money. The Chinese sojourners spread from California to other western states, reaching Idaho during the 1860's. Chinese miners were present in northern Idaho, and the Boise Basin of southwestern Idaho, before they reached the isolated Warren Mining District.

The Warren Mining District was organized in 1862, when gold was discovered near Warrens Creek. At that time typical exclusionary policies of miners' unions prevented Chinese immigrants from working claims in the Warren Mining District. The area experienced a boom period for a few years, but most of the easily recovered deposits were exhausted by 1868.

In 1869 miners voted to open the camp to Chinese and large numbers of Chinese miners arrived in 1870. Most of these sojourners leased claims from Euro-American miners. The Chinese reworked the placer deposits in Warren Creek and its tributaries. Lode mining was initiated in the Warren District in 1866, but most placer gold from 1870 to 1900 was recovered by the Chinese. Chinese placer miners used labor intensive methods to extract ore and were able to recover significant amounts of gold where Euro-Americans refused to mine. It is estimated that from 1862 to 1935 the Warren Mining District produced approximately \$15,000,000 of placer gold.

The Chinese population of the Warren Mining District varied. Many of Warren's Chinese wintered in Portland, Oregon or other cities with large Chinese communities. The mining season in the Warren area opened in mid-summer after snow melt and high waters in the placer claims subsided. U.S. Census records list 367 Chinese in 1870, 394 in 1880, 20 in 1900, and 6 in 1910 (Census records for 1890 are not available). Census tallies were taken in April, May and early June for these years. The true population figures are probably much higher than census records indicate. Contemporary sources say there were often 800 to 1200 Chinese miners in the Warren area.

Although the population fluctuated seasonally, from 1870 to 1900 the majority of Warrens' residents were Chinese. Census records and other

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documentary sources indicate traditional adult male sojourner households were common in the Warren area. The social and cultural composition of Warren and the surrounding district was extensively influenced by these Chinese.

The Chinese of Warren, like other sojourners in the United States, placed a high value on maintaining traditional diet and lifestyle. The number of Chinese miners in the Warren Mining District encouraged the growth of service oriented businesses geared to this ethnic market.

Chinese businesses in Warren included a store, gambling house, saloon, laundry, commercial terraced gardens, mining companies, packing outfits, a butcher shop, and a doctor and pharmacy. By 1880 Chinese were also employed as cooks, handymen, farmers, barbers, blacksmiths, prostitutes, woodchoppers, fishermen, and shoemakers. Warren also had a segregated Chinese cemetery.

The declining Chinese population after the turn of the century effectively brackets the end of the Chinese occupation of the Warren Mining District. The dates 1870 to 1920 correspond with population shifts in Chinese communities in other western states. The mobile character of Chinese sojourners, whether dictated by choice or legislation, is evident in the history of the Warren Mining District. Most of the Chinese in Warren immigrated to the United States in the 1860's and 1870's. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 curtailed new immigration. As fortunes were made and sojourners returned to China, they disappear from census records.

The isolated setting of the Warren Mining District has preserved remnants of Chinese material culture that might not have survived in other areas. In the Warren Mining District, from 1870 to 1920, a large body of Chinese immigrants contributed to the development of the area. This multiple property submission will examine two types of properties which survive on China Mountain in the Warren Mining District.

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## F. Associated Property Types

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I. Name of Property Type Chinese Terraced Gardens

### II. Description

Chinese terraced gardens in the Warren Mining District are located on steep slopes near permanent water sources. Alluvial terraces or fields were limited in the mountains of the Warren Mining District. Any fertile, easily cultivated land in the area was owned or homesteaded by U. S. citizens. Chinese squatters were compelled to develop land on rugged slopes considered unsuitable by Euro-American farmers. Most of the Chinese immigrants in Idaho originated in the Kwangtung province of China. Terraced slopes are a common adaptation in the mountainous areas of Kwangtung. The terraced gardens in the Warren Mining District reflect the agricultural technology of 19th century Kwangtung. (Continued on F II, Page 2)

### III. Significance

Chinese terraced gardens are significant under Criterion A, by representing a distinctive property type in the Warren Mining District from 1870 to 1920. The Chinese are unique in the history of United States immigration, in that their stay was temporary. Chinese sojourners generally remained in the United States only long enough to make a fortune and return to China. The influx of large numbers of Chinese in the latter half of the 19th century had major impacts in the economic and social development of the American western frontier.

The Chinese terraced gardens are significant to the history of the Warren Mining District and to the region. Maintaining traditional diet was important to Chinese in the United States. Fresh produce was a critical component of the Chinese diet. Obtaining produce was difficult in isolated mining areas, and the presence of Chinese terraced gardens (Continued on F III, Page 2)

### IV. Registration Requirements

Chinese terraced gardens listed on the National Register will vary in their relationship to the natural landscape. In general, terraced gardens will be located on steep slopes, or ground considered agriculturally unprofitable by Euro-American farmers. The gardens will be situated near permanent water sources. Favorable soil conditions, climate, and aspect are geographic features critical to original placement of these sites. Terraces in the gardens will be visually obvious.

Design of Chinese terraced gardens is dependent on the setting, but gardens will be oriented to maximize physically desired attributes of the natural landscape. Any associated structures will reflect a spatial relationship to the gardens that is decreed by function. When spatial organization and visual relationships have been altered by natural or cultural impacts, the integrity of design must remain evident in visible boundaries between cultivated and natural terrain. (Continued on F IV, Page 2)

See continuation sheet

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See continuation sheet for additional property types

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(Continued from F II description)

In the Warren Mining District, Chinese terraced gardens are likely to be located on slopes near habitations or trails leading to the town of Warren. Garden sites will be located in an area where soil, climate, aspect and drainage conditions are favorable for plant cultivation.

Since Chinese garden sites tend to be isolated in geographical areas considered unsuitable by Euro-American farmers, most adverse effects should be natural. Erosion, animals, or vegetation will be the principal agents of site deterioration. In recent years interest in Chinese artifacts has increased, particularly with ceramic wares or items associated with opium smoking. Artifact hunters have disturbed some Chinese sites and are likely to vandalize other sites if adequate measures are not taken to protect these sites. Through artifact dating and historical records, Chinese gardens in the Warren Mining District are known to have been cultivated from the early 1870's until approximately 1920.

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(Continued from F III, Significance)

indicates the population was large enough to support a commercial agricultural complex. The presence of Chinese terraced gardens implies proximity to other types of Chinese sites. Habitations and placer mining sites would be most commonly associated with Chinese terraced gardens. In a larger community, stores, saloons, joss houses, and other commercial or social buildings may be associated with gardens. Chinese terraced gardens are a direct response to the dietary requirements of placer miners in the Warren Mining District. The presence of Chinese placer miners is important in the history of the American mining frontier in Idaho and the western United States.

The Chinese terraced gardens in the Warren Mining District were a commercial venture developed to supply fresh produce to the nearby town of Warren, Idaho. The population of Warren was predominantly Chinese from the 1870's through the 1890's. The crops cultivated by Chinese gardeners were packed by horseback to the town of Warren.

The Chinese gardens are significant in terms of Asian Ethnic Heritage, Agriculture and Commerce. At one time Chinese were the largest minority group in Idaho. The Chinese sites of the Warren Mining District have survived due to their rural nature and isolated locale. While buildings in urban or more populated areas have been destroyed or replaced, the terraced gardens retain much of their integrity. These gardens show the presence of Chinese sojourners, a distinct ethnic group, engaged in an agricultural activity for commercial reasons during the early settlement and development of the Warren Mining District.

The gardens also illustrate traditional Kwangtung agricultural technology, and its adaptation to suit the environment of the Salmon River Mountains. It is known there are at least three other terraced gardens in the Warren Mining District. These sites have been located, but not yet recorded. It is expected that these Chinese gardens will be examined, recorded and submitted to the National Register for listing at a future date.

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(Continued from F IV, Registration Requirements)

The setting of Chinese terraced gardens has integrity when the physical environment of the site is consistent with surrounding features. Setting includes water sources on or near a site, and rock formations or stands of trees that may define site boundaries. Smaller elements of setting may include cleared, aligned, or mounded rocks, earthen irrigation systems, fences, and neglected domestic plants that have survived.

Any surviving materials extant in Chinese terraced gardens will be native stone and wood. Lumber used on or near Chinese terraced gardens will be consistent with species known to be present within the significant historic time period. Any other materials located on a Chinese terraced garden site should have a similar character to original materials, to retain integrity.

Workmanship in Chinese terraced gardens is manifest in terrace construction and irrigation systems. The presence of these features should be consistent with known technologies developed in the Kwangtung province of China in the 19th century. Variations may occur that take advantage of natural features. Often the very presence of terraces is indicative of Chinese workmanship. Rock features on Chinese terraced garden sites are likely to be unconstructed mounds or walls of uncoursed cobbles.

Feeling in Chinese terraced garden sites may be diminished due to natural or cultural impacts. Encroaching vegetation or soil erosion may blur terrace outlines. The absence of cultivated crops will contribute to some loss of feeling. Feeling should exist in a Chinese terraced garden in the contrast of cultivated or cleared areas carved out of the surrounding terrain. Since the Chinese terraced gardens will often be in isolated, rugged locales, this contrast should be especially powerful.

The Chinese terraced garden should demonstrate integrity of association by the presence of other identifiable artifacts or structures of Chinese manufacture or origin. Since the material culture of Chinese sojourners contains colorful and distinct categories of ceramics, opium smoking paraphernalia, and bottles. It is expected that some of these artifacts will be present or near Chinese terraced garden sites. In areas where later occupation or usage of the site area may obscure Chinese structures, enough of the original features must remain so as to characterize the site as Chinese.



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## F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

## I. NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE - Chinese Trails

## II. DESCRIPTION

Chinese trails in the Warren Mining District are packed dirt trails wide enough to accommodate a pack horse. Chinese trails date from 1870 to approximately 1920. A Chinese trail in the Warren Mining District is not formally constructed. It follows topographic features and winds along ridges and drainages. The route will follow the easiest, rather than most direct route between destinations. At present the only Chinese trail identified in the Warren Mining District is the Old China Trail. This property is a packed dirt trail one meter wide and 1.5 miles long. The trail was used for pedestrian and equestrian traffic and links three Chinese terraced gardens on China Mountain.

It is known that the Chinese packed produce from China Mountain to the mining town of Warren, 9 miles away. It is expected that other portions of the Old China Trail may be located and identified at some time in the future. Since other trails exist from the significant time period, a trail defined as a Chinese trail must have a very strong relationship to associated Chinese sites or structures.

## III. SIGNIFICANCE

A Chinese trail in the Warren Mining District derives significance under Criterion A. Chinese immigrants in the Warren Mining District arrived in 1870 and were active throughout the district for over forty years. Many sojourners resided close to the town of Warren, but some Chinese settled in isolated areas of the district. Travel between destinations was by horseback or foot. A network of trails, paths, and wagon roads developed to access different sites. These trails or wagon roads are the primary arteries that connect different property types in the Warren Mining District between 1870 and 1920. In areas where a trail was constructed, maintained, and used principally by the Chinese, the trail is considered a Chinese trail.

Chinese trails are significant in terms of Asian Ethnic Heritage, Agriculture, and Commerce. Many Chinese sites in the Warren Mining District have survived due to their rural nature and isolated locale. While sites in urban or more populated areas have been destroyed or replaced, sites in the Warren Mining District retain much of their integrity.

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The only identified Chinese trail in the Warren Mining District is the Old China Trail, which connects three Chinese terraced gardens on China Mountain. This trail derives significance from intimate association with known Chinese sites of the significant time period. It is expected that other Chinese trails in the Warren Mining District will manifest significance through equally strong associations with Chinese sites.

#### IV. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Chinese trails on the Warren Mining District must primarily meet associative integrity requirements for listing in the National Register. The aspects of integrity which can be applied to Chinese trails are location, setting, and association. These aspects are most clearly applicable to Chinese trails, while qualities of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling are either nonexistent or too intangible and indistinct in reference to Chinese trails.

To assess integrity, those aspects of location and setting must correspond with a strong association to Chinese sojourners in the Warren Mining District from 1870 to 1920.

The only known Chinese trail in the Warren Mining District at present is located in the ridges and drainages of a rugged mountain slope. The location and setting are crucial because of proximity to Chinese terraced gardens in the area. Construction and workmanship reflect minimal labor. Perhaps clearing vegetation from the route was the only construction or maintenance needed. The packed dirt path is identical to trails produced by Euro-American miners and settlers in the significant time period. No ethnic construction methods identify a trail as a Chinese trail. The integrity of a Chinese trail rests on its location, and association with a Chinese site known to be occupied between 1870 and 1920.

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**G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

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Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

This multiple property nomination is the result of three pedestrian surveys and one archaeological excavation conducted from 1982 to 1988 by the Payette National Forest. The multiple property nomination initially includes three terraced garden sites, and one trail constructed by Chinese gardeners in the Warren Mining District of central Idaho. These sites were identified by pedestrian survey of the area, and by further archival research in the files of the Payette National Forest, and the Idaho State Library and Archives.

A determination of eligibility was made using National Register criteria in conjunction with the historic context. The historic context was developed to include all Chinese sites which may be located in the relevant geographic area. The context is designed to provide an understanding of the movement and activities of Chinese sojourners in the Warren area. By understanding patterns in Chinese residency and occupations, other types of sites may be evaluated at a state and local level.

See continuation sheet

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**H. Major Bibliographical References**

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See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency                 | <input type="checkbox"/> University       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal agency          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |

Specify repository: Payette National Forest Supervising Office

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**I. Form Prepared By**

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The typology of significant properties is based on known association with Chinese immigrants in the Warren Mining District from 1870 to 1920. The four properties identified in this submission are associated with Chinese gardening, commerce, and transportation. These sites were selected for their close association with the historic context and their qualities of integrity. These sites are geographically contained in an area the managing agency plans to use as an interpretive exhibit.

The standards of integrity were based on National Register standards for assessing integrity. Information from survey and excavation data, Payette National Forest reports and other research literature was used to assess the condition of each property. Research literature from other areas in the region aided in determining significance of the site types, and the degree to which allowances should be made for modification or deterioration within the sites.

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### United States Bureau of the Census

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